



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT NEWSLETTER

Creating Opportunities in South-Central Alberta

MAY 15, 2019

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Featured



O-NET Offers Broadband Solutions for Alberta Communities

By Peter Casurella

On March 28th, Chris Thompson, General Manager of O-Net, took the stage at the Annual SouthGrow Economic Summit in Coaldale, Alberta, to promote their newly launched suite of services to help Albertan communities advance their broadband infrastructure. If you haven't heard [the story of O-Net](#), it's worth a listen. In the early 2000's a group of visionary residents and professionals in Olds decided that to be ahead of the curve, Olds needed

their own broadband fibre-optic network. After a decade of work, lessons learned the hard way, and continuous adaptation, they have emerged onto the modern scene as a game-changer, and a community to emulate.

Today, O-Net provides ISP services over a modern fibre network to all of the service areas in the Town of Olds, and they are looking to export their expertise to help make municipally owned broadband a reality for other ambitious communities.

And that value isn't just making sure that every citizen of a town can get access to reliable video streaming. Thompson told a packed room of SouthGrow representatives that having your own community broadband returns an immense amount of value to the community. Fibre networks certainly support gigabit connections for families, but they also allow for efficient operation of municipal services and facilities, such as video surveillance, facility and infrastructure control and monitoring, and consolidated broadband service for local government and staff. Furthermore, fibre networks can support increased cost savings for the municipality, aid with future-readiness to lower eventual adaptation costs, and serve as a smart grid resource for future applications.

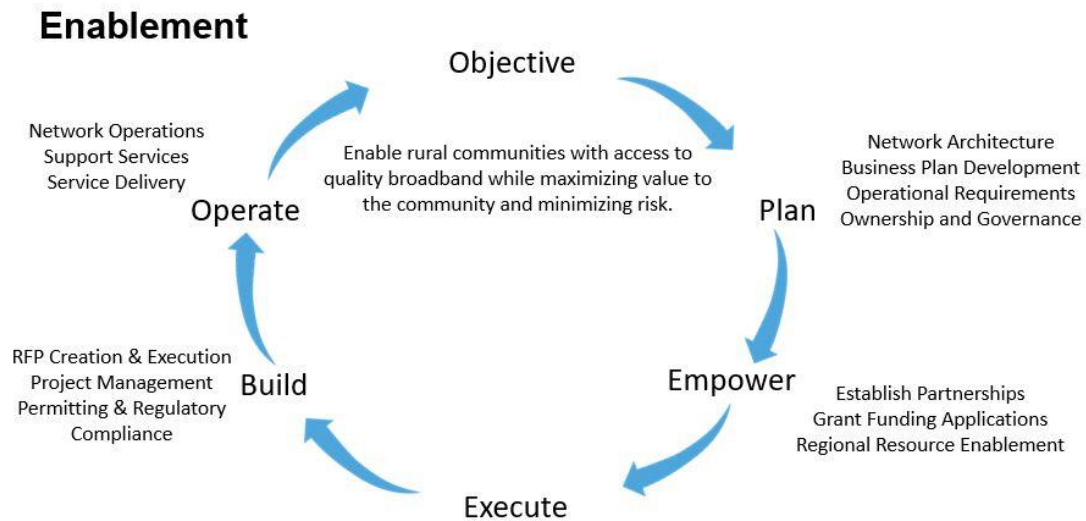
With all the lessons they've learned and the systems to propel success that they've built, O-Net now wants to help others achieve solutions that work for them. Thompson said also that there isn't any single solution or model for every community, and that solutions are individual. In the Village of Waterton, for example, O-Net helped the village deploy a fibre network, and now provides network operations and support for the Waterton Community Broadband Network.

Is O-Net a good partner to help your community? The best way to find out is to pick up the phone and call them.

Contact: Chris Thompson - General Manager

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403-556-6638



Reserve your Spot at the SouthGrow 2019 Annual General Meeting

Thursday, June 13, 2019 at the Legion in Claresholm, Alberta.

The SouthGrow 2019 Annual General Meeting

Hosted by the Town of Claresholm

Featuring Presentations by:

Jeff Nielson of Custom Cannabis
and
Brady Schnell of the Town of Claresholm

SouthGrow
Regional Initiative

SouthGrow in the News

Officials look at future of renewable energy sector in Alberta - Global News

Weekly Economic Review



Issue of *May 10, 2019*

[Full Document Access](#)

 Alberta Treasury Board and Finance

Exports post a strong rebound

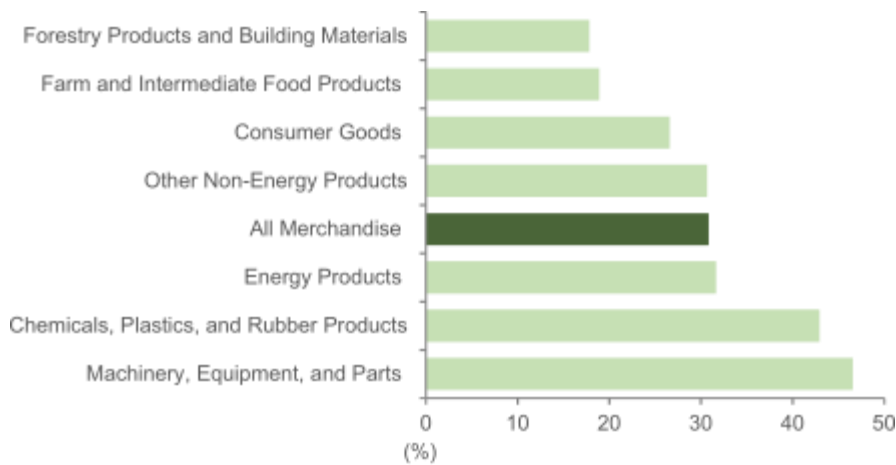
Merchandise Trade

Energy exports jump on higher prices and volumes

Goods exports posted the largest monthly rebound on record in March after a four-month slide. The value of merchandise exports in Alberta jumped improvement across 11 out of 12 products (Chart 1). This strong increase was led by energy exports (+32% m/m), which got a lift from a bounce back in Canadian crude prices and higher export volumes of crude oil amid easing curtailments. Non-energy exports also posted a solid increase (+29% m/m) boosted by chemicals and machinery exports. With the monthly increase, exports were up 12% year-over-year (y/y). They remained down 3.4% year-to-date (YTD) due to weakness in the first two months of the year.

Chart 1: Broad-based surge in Alberta goods exports

Month-over-month percent change in Alberta merchandise exports, March 2019



Source: Statistics Canada

Employment

Private sector drives monthly gain

Alberta employment advanced after declining in three of the last four months. There were 21,400 jobs added in April. The increase was spread across most industries and likely buoyed by election-related spending. The gain was concentrated in the private sector (+13,500), which jumped to the highest level since February 2015 (Chart 2). This was supported by a modest increase in public sector employment (+2,600), while self-employment bounced up (+5,400) after substantial declines over the previous eight months. Both part-time and full-time employment also grew in April. With the sturdy job gain, the unemployment fell 0.2 percentage points to 6.7%, reversing the increases since the start of the year. Compared to a year ago, employment increased by 26,600 jobs, or up 1.1% y/y.

Chart 2: Private sector positions jump to a four-year high

Total and private sector employment in Alberta



Source: Statistics Canada

Housing Starts

Apartment starts surge

After a weak start to 2019, housing starts got a lift in April as apartment starts spiked to an eight-month high. Housing starts surged 31% m/m to a seasonally adjusted annual rate (SAAR) of 26,012. Starts jumped more than 50% in both Edmonton and Calgary, while they declined to a

New Home Price Index

New home prices continue to slide

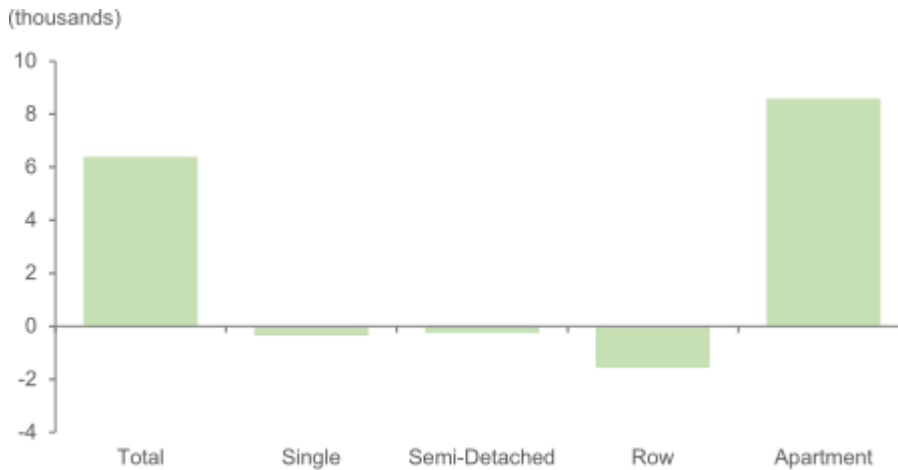
New home prices continue to decline in Alberta. The new home price index (NHPI) fell 0.1% m/m for the third month in a row in March as prices in both Calgary and Edmonton continued to ease. New home prices have been trending down over the last 13 months and were 0.5% lower than a

two-and-a-half-year low in other urban centres. The strength in the large urban centres was driven by apartment starts, which jumped over three-fold from the previous month, while single starts continued their downward trend, reflecting weakness across the province. Despite the monthly rebound, housing starts remained well below 2018 levels and down 14% YTD.

year ago. The house-only component (-0.8% y/y) accounted for all the declines, while land prices were steady (+0.1% y/y). Regionally, the divergence between land and house only component was pronounced in Edmonton, as the house-only component pulled back and the land component was steady. Conversely, both land and house prices eased in Calgary.

Chart 3: Monthly increase due to apartment starts in urban centres

Monthly change in Alberta SAAR housing starts in 10,000+ centres, April 2019



Source: Statistics Canada

Rigs Drilling

Spring breakup continues

Drilling activity in the province continues to wind down following a modest winter drilling season. There was an average of 51 rigs drilling for oil and gas in April, down 44% from the previous month, on par with the April 2018 monthly decline. With the seasonal slowdown, the rig count dropped 36% y/y and remained at the lowest level in two years (Chart 4) as weaker oil prices in the fourth quarter of 2018 and market access challenges continued to weigh on conventional activity. Similarly, drilling activity in the rest of Canada remains restrained, down 19% YTD.

Chart 4: Rigs activity weaker than in the past two years

Alberta rigs drilling



Source: Statistics Canada

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Please see the [Alberta Economy - Indicators at a Glance](#) for a current snapshot of Alberta indicators

Things You Need To Know

IEDC Webinar

Put Your Best Foot Forward: Marketing Tourism

Thursday, May 16
2:30 p.m - 4:00 p.m. ET

See more topics and dates for Virtual Learning Opportunities!
Register now at www.iedconline.org/virtual

 INTERNATIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CO-OPERATION

IEDC May Webinar: Marketing Tourism

\$95 for IEDC Members | \$135 for Non-Members

How is your community taking advantage of that impact and growth potential? Join IEDC's May webinar as we explore the ways in which communities can better market their communities to tap into the economic potential of tourism. Our discussion will offer the latest in tourism marketing techniques, while also examining recent successful campaigns.

[Learn more about the webinar >>](#)

Learning Outcomes

- Skills to design and launch a successful tourism marketing campaign
- Strategies to use in both rural and urban communities
- Tools for measuring results and return on marketing investments

[Register](#)

Stories to Follow



Government

[Ottawa plans to impose levy after Kenney tables legislation to kill Alberta's carbon tax](#)

The Globe and Mail | May 14, 2019 | News

Ottawa plans to move quickly to impose a carbon tax on Albertans once Premier Jason Kenney kills the province's own tax as part of his government's wider attack on federal environmental policies ...

[Alberta pot barons join forces to form advocacy, lobbying group](#)

Calgary Herald | May 13, 2019 | News

Last week, the Alberta Cannabis Council became a registered lobbyist with the province, aiming to promote the six-month-old industry, educate and protect consumers, and advocate on behalf of its ...

[Former Saskatchewan finance minister advising Alberta government on fiscal plan](#)

CityNews1130 | May 7, 2019 | News

A former NDP finance minister from Saskatchewan is heading a panel of experts looking into Alberta's finances. Alberta Premier Jason Kenney says Janice MacKinnon will chair the group and come up with ...

Economy & Markets

[Bankruptcy rates on the rise in Alberta](#)

Edmonton Journal | May 14, 2019 | News

The first quarter of 2019 saw the number of consumer insolvencies in Alberta rise by 15.2 per cent compared to the first quarter of 2018 according to a report by the Office of the Superintendent of ...

[U.S. livestock: Lean hog futures bounce, cattle end lower](#)

Alberta Farmer Express | May 14, 2019 | News

Chicago | Reuters — U.S. lean hog futures on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange (CME) closed higher on Tuesday in a technical rebound after Monday's limit-down close, with firm cash hog values lending ...

[Forestry in Alberta](#)

The Owl: ATB Financial's Economics + Research Team | May 8, 2019 | Research & Analysis

In honour of Alberta Forest Week, The Owl is looking at economic statistics related to Alberta's forestry

sector. Forestry and forest products* contributed \$2.2 billion dollars of real GDP to Alberta's economy ...

Communities

[Lethbridge County exploring options to improve municipal internet access](#)

Sunny South News | May 7, 2019 | News

Lethbridge County council has been given an update on potential broadband solutions. During their regular May 2 meeting, Lethbridge County council received an update on the high-speed broadband ...

[Sustainable practices reap rewards for longtime Hereford breeders](#)

Canadian Cattlemen | May 7, 2019 | News

Sustainability has always been a guiding principle for the Radau family at Coulee Crest Farm. "It's something that we've always practiced before we even knew what the word meant, just to ensure the ...

[Project aims to connect Lethbridge and Coaldale with bike path](#)

Global News | May 7, 2019 | News

The Southern Alberta Council on Public Affairs (SACPA) hosted an information session Tuesday night with speakers discussing a bike path project that would link Lethbridge and Coaldale. The project has ...

[Taber environmentally-friendly elementary school wins \\$20K grant for new tech](#)

Global News | April 17, 2019 | News

Students at St. Patrick School in Taber will be getting their hands on some new technology after winning a \$20,000 grant from Staples Canada for their efforts to limit their carbon footprint and learn more about ...

Science, Technology, & Innovation

[Contagious pig virus appears to be contained in Alberta](#)

Calgary Herald | May 14, 2019 | News

It has been eight weeks since the last discovery of porcine epidemic diarrhea (PED) in Alberta, giving officials reason to hope the deadly pig disease has been contained ...

[Opinion: Alberta could afford a basic income that reduces poverty — but the devil is in the details](#)

Calgary Herald | May 14, 2019 | Opinion

Alberta is a prosperous province, but our poverty rate has hovered around 10 per cent for decades, costing the government over \$2 billion each year. Add to this context the looming spectre of automation ...

[WHO releases new guidelines for reducing dementia risk](#)

CTV News | May 14, 2019 | News

The World Health Organization has unveiled new guidelines on reducing the risk of dementia, which include advising people to exercise and quit smoking. Dementia is a rapidly growing public health ...

Events



MAR 5 - 7

2019 Western Canada Alberta Chambers of Commerce Excellence Summit

Host: [Alberta Chambers of Commerce](#) & [Disney Institute](#)

Time: [8:30 AM - 4:30 PM Daily](#)

Location: [Best Western Premier Hotel & Conference Centre - Calgary](#)

Discover ways to positively impact your organization and the customers you serve as you're immersed in leadership, service and employee engagement at the three-day ACC Excellence Summit featuring Disney Institute March 5-7, 2019 at the Best Western Premier Calgary Plaza Hotel & Conference Centre, Calgary Alberta.

For nearly three decades, *Disney Institute* has helped professionals discover ways to positively impact their organizations and the customer they serve through immersion in leadership, service and employee engagement.

Throughout these courses, you will discover insights that drive Disney parks and resorts organization and gain awareness of how these insights could be adapted to strengthen your own organizational efforts.

ACC Excellence Summit featuring Disney Institute presenting Disney's Approach To Leadership Excellence, Disney's Approach To Employee Engagement, and Disney's Approach To Quality Service.

[Learn More & Register](#)

Employment Opportunities

[AUMA | Association of Urban Municipalities of Alberta](#)

[RMA | Rural Municipalities of Alberta](#)

[Government of Alberta](#)

Resources

At SouthGrow's main office, we are working hard to further improve our implementation of technology and

data to improve our organization and service. Here's what we are using, as well as some other tools we think would help the businesses within our communities.

[Community \(Local\) Economic Development - Government of Alberta](#)

Tools and resources to help support local economic development. ... Alberta's communities need qualified workers and professionals to drive their local ...

[Fundingportal - Government Grants, Tax Credits, and Private Financing](#)

Canada's bilingual one-window gateway to improve access to 7000+ sources of government funding and private financing for business, hospitals, universities, ...

[Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency](#)

Community Toolkit for Economic Recovery and Resiliency (2017 Canadian Version) In June 2014, the International Economic Development Council (IEDC) ...

[Alberta Community Health Dashboard | Healthier Together](#)

The Alberta Community Health Dashboard from Alberta Health Services makes it easier for you to find and apply comprehensive, interactive data.

Questions? Suggestions? Have something you would like us to share? *Contact the SouthGrow team!*

info@southgrow.com | (403) 394-0615

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