



Bright ideas lure the best

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Unlike the ancient Israelites who fled Egypt and immigrated to a land flowing with milk and honey, modern Alberta beckons as a province gushing with oil, natural gas, and money.

While Moses painted visions of delectable feasts and lush vegetation to an enslaved people, our leaders etch-a-sketch their election promises of new infrastructure, transit funding, and call for an abrupt halt to petroleum exploration in the Rockies.

Most campaigning politicians are ignoring the labour shortage that continues unabated as Calgary and Alberta's biggest challenge. Yet our future economic success is directly tied to Alberta's ability to attract and retain exciting new jobs and workers who are hard-wired into the knowledge-based economy.

The young, creative and mobile talent this province needs to succeed - the best and brightest in the world - create Facebook utopias of great places to live, work, and raise their families.

These paradises embrace arts, culture, and technology. They cherish innovation and entrepreneurship in schools, workplaces, and coffee shops. They celebrate extraordinary areas to snowboard, backpack, and mountain bike. They value communities of interesting, multi-ethnic, and multi-generational folks. And they want competitive personal income tax regimes.

During the past few decades, business has lured many of the technical experts needed to unlock Alberta's oil and gas wealth and the financial community provide capital to fund the production projects. These specialists will leave if moratoriums are imposed. That is too bad as they migrated from London, Paris, New York, the Middle East, Beijing, Cape Town, and Mumbai.

They like our safe neighbourhoods, good schools, strong infrastructure, and accessible recreational and natural attractions. They brought skills in teamwork and team building, problem solving, and cross-cultural communication.

The best and brightest young talent, the born-and-bred Albertans, and our global citizens currently residing in this province all want politicians to help them create an artistic, social, scientific, and political thought renaissance. To achieve this, the Calgary Chamber of Commerce urges policy-makers to:

- Monitor the number of arts seats/1,000 citizens, total attendance and participation in cultural events, the percentage of corporate community investment budgets devoted to arts and cultural programs, and the economic output of arts organizations.
- Support sports for all ages to encourage physical fitness and build community-minded volunteers and athletes.
- Create the right conditions to attract the writers, painters, architects, philosophers, and sculptors who will weave our social fabric into an enlightened society.
- Encourage the spread of new ideas that promote intellectual inquiry and freedom while replacing the sterile quarrels of scholastics with scientific advances and knowledge.



- Invest in medical research to continue to achieve break-through advances in cancer, heart therapies, diabetes, and a host of other diseases and ailments.
- Introduce a more competitive personal tax regime to be competitive so single-income earners would pay the lowest personal taxes in Canada and by lowering the current flat tax rate, improve the accrual to middle and higher income earners.
- Endow a fund to investigate and create the next-generation of renewable energy sources and make them commercially viable.

After all, if we want a city and province that will be remembered long after all of us are gone, we must create a vibrant society that uses its creativity to spur economic growth and new job opportunities. Arts, culture, technology, sports, research, and great government will be the genesis of Albertans revitalization of its communities and neighbourhoods.

The renaissance of twenty-first century Alberta will make it a very exciting place. It'll thrive because it has attracted the best and brightest to this Canadian Promised Land.