



MEDIA RELEASE

February 16, 2012 Northeast Alberta Information HUB.....



Medicine Hat will host the Ports-to-Plains Alliance Annual Conference October 2 – 4, 2012. The Lubbock, Texas-based organization is grassroots coalition of communities and businesses led by mayors, councilpersons and economic development officials from a ten-state, 2,300-plus mile transportation and economic development corridor between Mexico and Alberta, Canada. Members come from 10 U.S. states, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Mexico. Ports-to-Plains primary focus is advocating for infrastructure improvements needed to grow the agriculture and energy based economy along the corridor. Alberta is a member of the [Ports to Plains Alliance](#) and is represented on its Board by Len Mitzel, MLA for Cypress Medicine Hat.

We are very excited to come to Medicine Hat and showcase the province, with a special focus on the Eastern Alberta Corridor, for our members,” said **Ports-to-Plains President Michael Reeves**. “Alberta is the northern anchor of our coalition and has played an important role in our success. It’s great for all of our members to see the province first hand and learn about the opportunities for trade and economic growth.”

The Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor (EATC) is an initiative which is striving to put another economic corridor in the minds of businesses seeking to take advantage of more than \$125 billion of planned investment in Eastern Alberta much of it in oil sands development.



Len Mitzel, MLA for Cypress Medicine Hat stated that “he is very pleased that the Board of the Ports to Plains Trade Corridor Alliance has agreed to have Alberta host their 2012 AGM in Medicine Hat. The relationship we have built over the last 4 years has been a great benefit to both the province of Alberta and the 9 member States ranging from Mexico to Canada. With the combined advocacy, we are making great inroads into streamlining trade both ways across our common border. I look forward to showing the delegates that we really have a lot to offer.” Reeves credits Mitzel for bringing the AGM to Medicine Hat.

“Len Mitzel has been a tremendous champion for Alberta and especially the Eastern Alberta Corridor, and it is only appropriate to hold our AGM in his constituency. Because of his tenacious work our members as far away as Texas are great advocates for a 24-hour port of entry at Wild Horse, and improvements to Highways 36 and 41, because they know these issues impact the businesses in their communities,” said **Reeves**.

It is critical given our shared regional challenges and interests that we harness our energies to improve the economies of eastern Alberta municipalities and I am truly pleased for Alberta HUB to be involved in this economic prospect for our membership. The Ports to Plains Alliance is a great example of how major corridors like the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor can foster economic opportunities for local businesses in the international market place” said **Soren Odegard, Chair, Alberta HUB**.



"Cypress County is very pleased that this international conference will be held in Alberta. As Reeve, I learned a great deal when I attended the conference in Texas by seeing firsthand how the local issues impact the big picture," said **Cypress County Reeve Darcy Geigle**. "Having our international counterpart's visit south-eastern Alberta will help strengthen the importance and benefits of an eastern Alberta trade corridor. It will be very clear to conference attendees that Alberta is willing and able to drive this engine of economic prosperity."

“It is with great pleasure that I welcome the Ports to Plains Conference to our City in October 2012,” said **Medicine Hat Mayor Norm Boucher**. “Everyone in this city is excited about the possibility of a trade corridor and its economic development potential. It makes sense for Canada, Alberta and our partners in the U.S.A. Now, all efforts should be in making it happen!”

“This is fantastic news,” said **Alan Hyland, Chair of Palliser Economic Partnership**. “An event of this nature brings attention to the Palliser, BRAED and HUB regions and Eastern Alberta as a location for business. The conference has traditionally focused on transportation and energy, which are important issues to municipalities in Eastern Alberta. EATC partners are working collaboratively in promoting Eastern Alberta as the northern leg of the Ports to Plains Corridor as an alternative route to move goods between Alberta, the United States and Mexico”.

"The Battle River Alliance for Economic Development is very proud to have played a part in attracting the Ports to Plains Annual Conference to Alberta- the first time it will be held outside of the U.S.," said **BRAED Chair Bud James**. "This conference will provide significant opportunities for businesses, communities from BRAED, and all of the Eastern Alberta Trade Corridor to promote trade and investment with their counterparts from the U.S. and Mexico."

Reeves said that in spite of the great geographical diversity of the Ports-to-Plains Alliance, the members are strikingly similar.

"Ports-to-Plains members are rural communities that rely on energy and agriculture, and understand that transportation is the backbone of our economy, and connectivity is just as important as congestion mitigation. Our communities face very similar challenges and recognize that by working together we are much stronger and more effective," said Reeves.

The Ports-to-Plains staff is working with local supporters to plan the conference and develop the agenda. Organizers expect about 150 – 200 people to attend.

Alberta HUB (www.albertahub.com) is a partnership of 29 communities and the Lakeland College in Northeastern Alberta promoting investment opportunities and the quality of life.

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