



## EEDC Moving Forward on Economic Priorities

RON GILBERTSON, PRESIDENT AND CEO, EEDC

**E**EDC continued to focus on five key areas of economic development for the second quarter of 2007.

### Engaging the Business Community

I've now met with over 100 of Edmonton's key leaders, gathering their input on the issues that we need to address as a community to plan Edmonton's economic future. These meetings with business and community leaders will continue on an ongoing basis as part of EEDC's engagement strategy.

### Edmonton's Image

Marketing the region's image is a top priority for many of Edmonton's leaders. EEDC, in partnership with the City of Edmonton, continues to develop a long-term marketing program. Target markets have now been identified and research has begun to survey these highly-specific audiences about what

media and messages will be the most effective in motivating them to better understand and appreciate what Edmonton has to offer.

### Industry and Cluster Development

EEDC's Economic Development division supports 10 industry clusters as a means of growing our regional advantages. We supported two major events this quarter to help Edmonton businesses improve productivity and regain a competitive edge by developing high-performance employees and eliminating non-value-added activities in everything from design and production to supply-chain management.

### Labour Attraction

Edmonton Workforce Connection continues to introduce valuable employer resource tools that focus on immigration and under-employed groups as potential solutions to our region's

workforce development challenges. The latest initiatives include an online toolkit to help develop and retain Aboriginal employees, and an employer forum that demonstrated the untapped potential of trade apprentices.

### Edmonton Research Park

As Edmonton Research Park's site manager, EEDC has guided the Advanced Technology Centre business incubator to full capacity. Construction is now moving ahead on-time and on-budget for ERP's newest multi-tenant research facility – the Biotechnology Business Development Centre opening in fall 2007.

Providing facilities and commercialization support for young, growing biotech companies is a vital component of developing a critical mass of knowledge-based industry that will ultimately help diversify and strengthen Greater Edmonton's economy. ■

### ECONOMIC INDICATORS: June 2007

Canadian unemployment dropped to 6.0% in the second quarter, the lowest rate since 1974. Alberta had a rate of 3.3% with an estimated workforce increase of 14,000 in July. For the Edmonton area, unemployment inched up a bit to 4.1%, but the participation rate increased just over 1% to 72.7%. The value of building permits in Edmonton set a new monthly record in June of nearly \$403 million, bringing the year-to-date value of Greater Edmonton building permits to just over \$2 billion.

	Canada	Alberta	Calgary	Edmonton 2007	Edmonton 2006
GDP (% Growth) <sup>1</sup>	2.7%	4.7%	4.2%	5.9%	4.7%
Population <sup>2</sup>	32,786,132	3,347,090	1,142,154	1,075,009	1,050,046
Employment <sup>3</sup>	17,923,800	1,955,300	693,500	603,900	571,600
Participation Rate <sup>3</sup>	67.7%	74.2%	77.7%	72.7%	71.1%
Unemployment Rate <sup>3</sup>	6.0%	3.3%	3.3%	4.1%	3.9%
Inflation Rate <sup>4</sup>	2.2%	6.3%	6.2%	6.3%	3.2%
Housing Starts <sup>5</sup> (March YTD)	40,716	13,228	6,837	7,541	7,346
Home Price <sup>6</sup> (Average)	\$283,655	\$364,072	\$427,205	\$350,357	\$254,240
Value of Building Permits (March YTD in millions) <sup>3</sup>	\$36,619.8	\$7,979.3	\$3,511.50	\$2,039.1	\$1,570.4

<sup>1</sup> Annual estimates; CBOC Spring 2007

<sup>3</sup> Statistics Canada, Labour Force Survey, 3 month moving avg. (July)

<sup>5</sup> CMHC, Canada Mortgage and Housing Corp. (June)

<sup>2</sup> Annual estimates of population, CBOC, Spring 2007

<sup>4</sup> Inflation rate, June 2007 over June 2006, Statistics Canada

<sup>6</sup> CMHC, average of all housing types (June)

### the Centre of ATTENTION SHAW) Conference Centre

As forecast last year, the second quarter of 2007 saw a decline in the number of conventions visiting Edmonton. However, total convention attendees and room nights occupied showed little change from last year's totals so local hotel occupancy rates have been well-supported. SCC's improved financial results reflect these strong business volumes through the first half of 2007.

City funding was approved in the second quarter for the replacement of the main high-voltage switchgear. This critical maintenance project involved a four-day shut down of the entire building from Aug. 31 - Sept. 3. Projections for the remainder of 2007 indicate a better-than-budget result by year's end. ■

# Economic Development

## Industry and Cluster Development

- Regional productivity was the focus of Industry & Cluster Development in June. Two major events — the 2007 Lean Conference and an Employee Engagement and Productivity Forum — helped regional businesses gain a competitive edge by maximizing employee productivity and eliminating non-value-added activities.
- A study co-commissioned by EEDC forecasts over \$100 billion in long-range business opportunities related to upcoming upgrader developments. The 'Bitumen Upgrader Supply Chain' study is an invaluable planning tool for manufacturers and suppliers.
- EEDC's Market Access Program, which promotes value-added food products in the Pacific Northwest, has created new markets for four local agrifood companies since being implemented as a pilot project two years ago.

## Business Attraction and Marketing

- Promoting business opportunities in the US and Europe was a focus for Edmonton's manufacturing, energy and life sciences sectors this spring. Presentations were made in Pittsburgh in April; the UK, Netherlands, Germany and Austria in May; and California in June.
- Based on a detailed submission by EEDC, Edmonton was recognized as having the best economic potential of any city of its size in North America and ranked in the top-five "North American Cities of the Future" by *Foreign Direct Investment* magazine (April/May, 2007).
- The updated Greater Edmonton Economic Outlook released in June provided Edmonton companies valuable market intelligence.

## Labour Strategy

- EEDC's Edmonton Workforce Connection (EWC) program showed 100 local businesses in April, May and June how they can access over 3,000 local international post-secondary students as potential employees.
- The second of five employer forums was held in May to encourage the local hiring of more first- and second-year apprentices.

## Edmonton Research Park (ERP)

- A company recognition program was initiated at ERP in April to recognize and profile tenant companies succeeding in the high-tech sector.

# Edmonton Tourism



## Industry and Visitor Services

- Edmonton's two Visitor Information Centres (Gateway Boulevard and downtown) serviced 16,156 visitors at the end of the second quarter (up 6.7 per cent from 2006).

## Short-Haul Marketing

- Edmonton Tourism launched its 2007 summer campaign in May in partnership with Destination Marketing Hotels and the Edmonton & Area Tourism Destination Region (TDR). Phase 1 of *Edmonton. It's Cooler Here* was aimed at increasing Greater Edmonton's share of leisure visitors from Alberta, Saskatchewan, Northern B.C., Yukon and the Northwest Territories. Phase 2 targeted key North American tourism markets with in-flight magazine ads, promotional videos and web-based advertisements.
- In partnership with the Destination Marketing Hotels and the TDR, Edmonton Tourism promoted the region at spring consumer shows in four short-haul markets: Prince George (April), Ft. McMurray (April), Whitehorse (May) and Yellowknife (May).

## Travel Media

- Edmonton Tourism welcomed 11 travel media visits to the region comprising 21 media outlets from the leisure travel markets in the Americas, Europe and Asia/Pacific.
- Edmonton Tourism attended the Canada Media Marketplace in New York City (April) and participated in 17 pre-scheduled media appointments.

## Leisure Travel Sales

- Edmonton Tourism finalized the details for the 2007 summer Mexican charter flights to Edmonton and confirmed the promotion of Edmonton-Aurora tour packages in Mexico for 2007-2008.
- Edmonton Tourism participated in RendezVous Canada (April 28–May 2), in Quebec City, Canada's largest tourism trade show.
- In partnership with Tourism Calgary and Banff/Lake Louise Tourism, Edmonton Tourism participated in a Japan/Korea sales mission (June) to expand student study missions to Western Canada. The sales mission also supported 28 Korean charters to Alberta in September (11 of the 17 itineraries included overnight stays in Edmonton).
- Participation in a London, UK sales mission (June) was a combined industry / consumer awareness initiative promoting the Air Canada non-stop daily service between London and Edmonton. Appointments were scheduled with five tour operators considering 'new' Edmonton itineraries for 2008.

## Meetings, Business Travel and Event Sales

- Canadian Sport Tourism Alliance Congress in Ottawa (April): 30 contacts and six leads.
- National Association of Sport Commissions Conference in Dallas (April): 10 contacts and four leads.
- Meeting Professionals International Awards Gala in Ottawa (May): 20 contacts and two leads.
- Canadian Tourism Commission Showcase in Seattle: 120-plus contacts and one lead.
- Greater Washington and American Society of Association Executives Springtime in the Park tradeshow in Washington (June): 37 contacts and two leads.
- Super Summer Solstice site visit to Edmonton (June 20-23): 10 new contacts in the Canadian association and corporate market.
- A total of 34 event bids valued at \$18.2 million were submitted in the 2nd quarter of 2007. A total of 17,184 room nights have been contracted from Jan. 1 – June 30, 2007.

## Edmonton Film Office

- The film *Christmas in Wonderland* wrapped up in June; premiere is expected in late November 2007.
- Pre-production began for six episodes of *Mixed Blessings*, a pilot for Aboriginal People's Television Network.

EEDC is a not-for-profit company owned by the City of Edmonton that is responsible for regional economic development, regional tourism marketing, the Shaw Conference Centre and Edmonton Research Park. This report is produced quarterly to update the regional business community on EEDC's key initiatives.

**Edmonton Economic Development Corp.**  
World Trade Centre Edmonton  
3rd Floor, 9990 Jasper Avenue  
Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5J 1P1

(780) 424-9191 or 1-800-661-6965  
info@edmonton.com  
[www.edmonton.com/eedc](http://www.edmonton.com/eedc)

