



WEST AT A GLANCE

JANUARY 2017



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PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENTS – DECEMBER

British Columbia

- BC responds to federal Cannabis Legalization Task Force report** – BC Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General, Mike Morris, issued a [statement](#) in response to the recent report from the federal Cannabis Legalization Task Force. Minister Morris said, “[i]t’s clear, and encouraging, that the task force considered BC’s concerns as it developed a foundation for a new system of regulatory safeguards.” The [task force’s report](#) focused on: minimizing harms of use; establishing a safe and responsible supply chain; enforcing public safety and protection; medical access; and implementation considerations such as capacity, oversight, coordination, and communications. Minister Morris went on to say, “[t]he illegal market for cannabis that exists today has abetted criminal organizations while also saddling many young Canadians with the stigma and ramifications of a criminal record for possession. This report suggests that an opportunity is at hand to address these historical downsides while advancing public health and safety.”
- BC reinvigorates Premier’s Technology Council with new mandate and new membership** – The BC Premier’s Technology Council (PTC) has been given a [revitalized mandate](#) aiming to make the province one of the world’s top technology centres. The PTC provides advice to the Premier and her ministers on technology-related opportunities for the province. Council objectives include: wider use of medical data analysis in support of personalized medicine; increased availability and retention of skilled workers; an environment that helps companies grow to become large employers; improved high-speed Internet reaching 100 per cent of BC’s citizens; and initiatives that lead to a low-carbon future and that leverage BC’s clean tech ecosystem. The PTC consists of 15 members, nine of whom are newly appointed in conjunction with the reinvigorated mandate. Premier Clark said, “[t]his is the most diverse council yet—with eight women and seven men—and diversity across age, ethnicity, and background. The new PTC represents a spectrum of talent from across the tech sector to drive tech growth throughout BC.”
- BC outlines plan to electrify oil and gas fields** – In an effort to curb carbon emissions, BC Minister of Energy and Mines Bill Bennett has outlined [provincial plans](#) to encourage oil and gas producers to switch to electricity to power their operations, rather than the current practice of burning natural gas. Under the new policy, BC Hydro will offer incentives for oil and gas producers to connect to the electricity grid. Producers in the South Peace region already have access to the grid by the Dawson Creek and Chetwynd Area Transmission Line. BC Hydro is looking at building two or more additional lines into more remote production areas, and the province is seeking federal funding to assist with that. The oil and gas industry produces around 18 per cent of BC’s greenhouse gas emissions.



PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENTS – DECEMBER (CONTINUED)

Alberta

- **Alberta signs Memorandum of Understanding to reinstate research ranches** – Alberta Environment and Parks along with the University of Alberta have [signed](#) a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) which will enable the Onefour and Stavely research ranches to provide opportunities for agricultural research. The two ranches were established in 1927 and 1947, respectively, and were dedicated to ranch and livestock fieldwork before they were closed in 2013. Through the MOU, they will become centres focused on improving rangeland management, promoting long-term economic and environmental sustainability, and conserving biodiversity.
- **Government of Alberta provides funding for a new training partnership in Fort McMurray** – The Government of Alberta will [partner](#) with four Alberta colleges to provide extended apprenticeship training in the Wood Buffalo region. The partnership will bring in a mobile training lab from Northern Lakes College, allowing Keyano College to co-ordinate a temporary plumbing technical training program. The provincial government is providing up to \$1 million for the partnership, while Grande Prairie Regional College will contribute instructional expertise, and the Southern Alberta Institute of Technology will provide access to its curriculum. The program is expected to start in the spring of 2017.
- **Awarding of credits under Alberta's Petrochemical Diversification Program** – The Government of Alberta has [chosen](#) two projects to receive royalty credits under the Petrochemical Diversification Program, which was established to encourage construction of new petrochemical facilities in the province. The first project, a joint venture between the Pembina Pipeline Corporation and Petrochemical Industries Company, will receive up to \$300 million in royalty credits and is expected to begin construction in 2019. The second project, led by Inter Pipeline, will receive up to \$200 million in royalty credits and is expected to begin construction in 2017. These projects are expected to generate over 4,000 jobs during construction and nearly 250 full-time jobs during operations.
- **Alberta completes trade mission to China and Japan** – Minister of Economic Development and Trade Deron Bilous [travelled](#) to China and Japan from November 15 to 27 with a delegation of 86 Alberta businesses and organizations. Key highlights include a partnership between InnoTech Alberta, Alberta Innovates, and Hokuetsu Kishu Paper to research cellulose nanocrystals as well as a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) between the provincial government and the Guangdong Province Department of Science and Technology. The MOU will help the governments of Alberta and Guangdong share economic and trade expertise and technologies and promote commercial development.

Saskatchewan

- **Joint provincial-federal funding for affordable housing project in Regina** – The governments of Canada and Saskatchewan, along with the City of Regina and Halifax Holdings West, have [begun construction](#) on a jointly-funded 45-unit affordable rental housing project for individuals with complex needs. The federal and provincial governments are jointly contributing approximately \$2 million toward 20 of the 45 units under the Canada-Saskatchewan Investment in Affordable Housing 2014-2019 Agreement. Approximately \$3.5 million in funding will be provided by Halifax Holdings West, and the City of Regina is also contributing \$705,000.
- **Canada and Saskatchewan provide joint funding for water and wastewater upgrades** – The Government of Saskatchewan is accepting applications for [infrastructure](#) projects under the Clean Water and Wastewater Fund and the Provincial Territorial Infrastructure Component (PTIC). Saskatchewan will receive funding of \$89.3 million from the Government of Canada during Phase One, while the province committed to provide \$44.2 million. PTIC, announced in 2014, will receive \$240.2 million in federal funding for eligible projects. These projects are funded one-third each by the federal government, provincial government, and recipients. Investments in infrastructure projects are essential to long-term growth as well improving the quality of life of Saskatchewan's citizens and helping to keep the province strong.

Manitoba

- **Premier's Enterprise Team announced** – Premier Brian Pallister announced his [appointments](#) to the Premier's Enterprise Team (PET) during his annual State of the Province Address to the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce. The PET will be an independent advisory panel of entrepreneurs that will provide advice and recommendations for job creation and economic development across Manitoba.



PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT DEVELOPMENTS – DECEMBER (CONTINUED)

- **New funding for Centre for Environmental and Economic Resilience** – Education and Training Minister Ian Wishart [announced](#) more than \$1.1 million in federal and provincial funding to create a Centre for Environmental and Economic Resilience at the Canadian Mennonite University. The Centre will be an academic hub allowing partnering organizations to collaborate on research, host conferences, and provide co-op employment opportunities for students.
- **Land transferred to First Nation** – The Manitoba government [transferred](#) ownership of land and buildings in the Big Eddy settlement to the Opaskwayak Cree Nation (OCN). The transfer, which was identified by OCN as part of a treaty entitlement agreement, includes 11 houses, three duplexes, and 14 vacant lots. Current residents will be allowed to remain with OCN as their landlord.








NEWS AND OPINION HIGHLIGHTS – DECEMBER

- **Cavendish Farms to build new Lethbridge potato processing facility** – Cavendish Farms has [announced](#) that it will invest \$350 million towards the construction of a new frozen-potato processing facility at the Sherring Industrial Park in Lethbridge, Alberta. The City of Lethbridge [voted](#) to sell over 116 hectares of land to the company and will provide \$41.5 million towards infrastructure and irrigation in the industrial park. Approximately \$15 million of this total will be borrowed from the Government of Alberta. Mayor of Lethbridge Chris Spearman has stated that this will be the largest investment in the city's history. Construction of the facility is expected to begin in the spring of 2017 and be completed by summer 2019; the project will double Cavendish Farms' annual production capacity.
- **Conference Board of Canada ranks Saskatoon as Canada's healthiest city** – A new study by the Conference Board of Canada [City Health Monitor](#) ranked Saskatoon as the healthiest of 10 major Canadian cities. The study compared 24 indicators, including population health, life satisfaction, and access to health care. Saskatoon, Calgary, and Winnipeg each earned an "A" grade, with Saskatoon garnering the top overall spot due to its ranking on life satisfaction.
- **New aircraft could create 100 new maintenance jobs** – A workforce of [up to 100 people](#) may be required for the heavy maintenance of the 16 new Airbus C-295 search and rescue aircrafts [announced](#) by Defence Minister Harjit Sajjan. Airbus Defence and Space and its Canadian partner, PAL Aerospace, are contracted to complete the maintenance on the aircraft for the first five years with an option for an additional 15 years. PAL is headquartered in Newfoundland but [intends](#) to have the heavy maintenance work done in Winnipeg. PAL has also indicated it will [construct](#) a training centre and simulator in Comox, BC that is expected to employ about 30 people.
- **Husky Energy to invest \$1 billion in Saskatchewan** – Husky Energy, one of the largest energy companies in Canada, says it plans to [spend](#) more than \$1 billion on three new steam-assisted heavy oil extraction plants in West Central Saskatchewan as part of its ongoing transition to "low sustaining capital" operations. Construction of a fourth plant is also underway with production slated to begin in 2019. The investment is positive news for communities that were affected by job loss due to falling oil prices. The investment in new plants is forecasted to create almost 100 new full-time jobs.
- **Construction of new medical cannabis facility begins in Leduc** – Aurora Cannabis Enterprises, a licensed producer of medical cannabis, has begun [construction](#) of a new 74,000 square-metre production facility in Leduc, Alberta. The facility, known as "Aurora Sky," is expected to be the largest and most advanced cannabis production facility in the world, producing in excess of 100,000 kilograms of cannabis per year. The company currently operates a 5,100 square-metre facility in Mountain View County, Alberta.
- **Labour demand in oil sands expected to increase modestly by 2020** – The latest labour demand [outlook](#) for oil sands construction, maintenance, and operations from PetroLMI, a division of Calgary-based Enform, projects a modest recovery of 1,605 net jobs over the next three years. This represents a three per cent growth in employment, from 48,145 jobs in 2016 to 49,750 jobs in 2020. Both operations and maintenance jobs are expected to increase, by 3,615 jobs and 6,345 jobs, respectively. However, an acceleration in the completion of construction projects due to lower construction costs will lead to a reduction in the oil sands construction workforce from 7,700 workers in 2016 to 2,165 in 2020. Total job estimates for both 2016 and 2020 have been revised downward since the previous outlook in February 2016.
- **Boston Scientific acquires Neovasc's tissue processing technology** – Global medical technology company Boston Scientific has [acquired](#) Richmond-based Neovasc's tissue processing technology and facility for approximately \$90 million. In addition, Boston Scientific will invest an additional \$9.5 million in Neovasc for a 15 per cent equity interest in the company. The investment will allow Neovasc to further develop its lead products. The transaction is expected to have closed by the end of 2016.
- **Chinese company buys BC retirement home provider** – Beijing-based Anbang Insurance Group is [buying](#) a majority stake in Vancouver's Retirement Concepts, one of the largest providers of assisted living and long-term care in BC. In the 2015-16 fiscal year, the province paid Retirement Concepts \$85.6 million, more than any other similar providers. The deal is believed to be worth \$1 billion, exceeding the foreign investment threshold and triggering a review by the federal government's Investment Review Division. This review will look at whether the foreign investment provides a net benefit to Canada and the impact it will have on Canadian participation in the business.



KEY ECONOMIC INDICATORS – DECEMBER

| |  British Columbia |  Alberta |  Saskatchewan |  Manitoba |  Canada | Last Update |
|---|--|---|--|--|--|-------------|
| Gross Domestic Product | | | | | | |
| Real GDP¹ (2007 \$billions, forecast) | \$214 | \$292 | \$58 | \$55 | \$1,673 | 2016 (f) |
| % ch. from year earlier | 3.0% | -2.0% | 0.2% | 2.1% | 1.5% | |
| Labour Market | | | | | | |
| Employment (SA, thousands) | 2,408 | 2,267 | 568 | 633 | 18,225 | Dec-16 |
| Change from previous month | 17 | 6.9 | -1.1 | 1.2 | 53.7 | |
| % ch. from previous month | 0.7% | 0.3% | -0.2% | 0.2% | 0.3% | |
| % ch. from year earlier | 3.1% | -0.8% | -1.2% | -0.2% | 1.2% | |
| Unemployment Rate (SA,%) | 5.8% | 8.5% | 6.5% | 6.3% | 6.9% | Dec-16 |
| percentage points from previous month | -0.3 | -0.5 | -0.3 | 0.1 | 0.1 | |
| percentage points from year earlier | -0.9 | 1.5 | 1 | 0.4 | -0.2 | |
| Regular EI beneficiaries (SA) | 56,100 | 93,180 | 21,150 | 15,440 | 575,240 | Oct-16 |
| Change from previous month | 1160 | 2,700 | 1190 | 30 | 2,730 | |
| % ch. from previous month | 2.1% | 3.0% | 6.0% | 0.2% | 0.5% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 2.0% | 55.3% | 47.4% | 4.3% | 6.0% | |
| Average weekly earnings | \$917.99 | \$1,106.29 | \$994.94 | \$888.50 | \$953.88 | Oct-16 |
| Change from previous year | \$4.90 | -\$29.07 | \$4.34 | \$0.81 | \$0.16 | |
| Prices | | | | | | |
| CPI (y/y) | 1.6% | 0.2% | 0.0% | 0.2% | 1.2% | Nov-16 |
| CPI (y/y) previous month | 2.1% | 0.5% | 0.8% | 1.1% | 1.5% | Oct-16 |
| Consumers and Business | | | | | | |
| Retail Sales (SA, \$millions) | \$6,448 | \$6,181 | \$1,535 | \$1,589 | \$45,047 | Oct-16 |
| % ch. from previous month | 1.8% | 0.8% | -0.1% | 0.0% | 1.1% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 8.4% | -0.7% | 0.1% | 2.3% | 3.8% | |
| Manufacturing Sales (SA, \$millions) | \$3,909 | \$5,172 | \$1,205 | \$1,468 | \$50,995 | Oct-16 |
| % ch. from previous month | -0.5% | -2.0% | -1.1% | 2.1% | -0.8% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 8.6% | -4.4% | 5.9% | 4.5% | 1.1% | |
| Building Permits (SA, \$millions) | \$1,284 | \$1,149 | \$157 | \$188 | \$7,765 | Nov-16 |
| % ch. from previous month | 14.7% | -36.9% | -8.2% | -5.9% | -0.1% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 9.5% | 3.0% | -15.8% | 16.1% | 18.3% | |
| Housing Starts (SAAR, thousands) | 42 | 27 | 5 | 4 | 207 | Dec-16 |
| % ch. from previous month | -9.4% | 6.4% | 30.6% | -36.7% | 10.6% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 18.8% | 3.5% | 5.0% | -12.9% | 19.9% | |
| International Trade | | | | | | |
| Merchandise Exports (\$millions) | \$3,711 | \$7,648 | \$2,678 | \$1,193 | \$42,406 | Nov-16 |
| % ch. from previous month | 6.5% | 9.4% | 5.2% | 10.8% | 4.8% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 25.9% | 13.1% | 1.4% | 4.2% | 8.4% | |
| Merchandise Imports (\$millions) | \$3,957 | \$1,950 | \$644 | \$1,618 | \$44,599 | Nov-16 |
| % ch. from previous month | -4.7% | -8.1% | -11.1% | -4.5% | -0.9% | |
| % ch. from previous year | 4.3% | -28.6% | -12.2% | 2.1% | 0.5% | |
| Demographics | | | | | | |
| Population (estimate) | 4,773,345 | 4,268,929 | 1,155,393 | 1,323,958 | 36,443,632 | Q4 2016 |
| % ch. from previous year | 1.3% | 1.6% | 1.6% | 1.7% | 1.3% | |
| Largest Cities (CMAs) | Vancouver (2,504,340) | Calgary (1,439,756) | Saskatoon (304,975) | Winnipeg* (793,428) | | 2015 |
| | Victoria* (365,291) | Edmonton* (1,363,277) | Regina* (241,422) | | | |

* Provincial Capital

¹ Real GDP at basic prices, forecast (Conference Board of Canada Provincial Outlook Spring 2016)

SA - Seasonally adjusted

SAAR - Seasonally adjusted at annual rates

Sources: Statistics Canada and Conference Board of Canada



UPCOMING EVENTS

| Event | Description | Location | Date |
|--|---|---------------|---|
| British Columbia | | | |
| The Future of Vancouver International Airport | The Vancouver Board of Trade will host Craig Richmond, President and CEO of the Vancouver Airport Authority, for a keynote address. | Vancouver, BC | January 18, 2017 |
| Vancouver Resource & Investment Conference 2017 | Cambridge House International and Katusa Research will co-present the world's largest investment conference dedicated to resource exploration. | Vancouver, BC | January 22-23, 2017 |
| AME Roundup 2017 | The Association for Mineral Exploration (AME) will hold its annual conference covering all aspects of mineral exploration. | Vancouver, BC | January 23-26, 2017 |
| The Global Imbalance of Power | The Vancouver Board of Trade will host Jessica McDonald, President and CEO of BC Hydro, to discuss the global future of electricity and how BC fits into the picture. | Vancouver, BC | January 24, 2017 |
| Western Business Outlook: Vancouver | The Conference Board of Canada will partner with the Vancouver Board of Trade to deliver its annual business outlook. | Vancouver, BC | January 27, 2017 |
| Canadian Finance Forum 2017 | The event will provide industry insights and a look at up-and-coming high-tech companies. | Vancouver, BC | February 8-9, 2017 |
| UBC President's inaugural address | The Vancouver Board of Trade will host the new President and Vice-Chancellor of the University of British Columbia (UBC), Prof. Santa Ono, for his inaugural address. | Vancouver, BC | March 28, 2017 |
| Alberta | | | |
| 2017 Impact Luncheon | A lunch hosted by Edmonton Economic Development to celebrate the city's successes over the last year and discuss how a global mindset translates into a resilient economy. | Edmonton, AB | January 10, 2017 |
| Energy Efficiency in Alberta Conference | The Alberta Energy Efficiency Alliance hosts this event, timed to coincide with the creation of Alberta's new energy efficiency agency. | Edmonton, AB | January 17, 2017 |
| Industry Roadmap: The Future of Canada's Oil and Gas Industry 2017 | A conference hosted by Milestone GRP, an international communications company, focused on key issues affecting the future of Canada's oil and gas industry. | Calgary, AB | January 17, 2017 |
| Western Canada Anti-Corruption Conference | Transparency International Canada's conference focused on anti-corruption compliance in a low oil price environment and the role of financial institutions in the fight against corruption. | Calgary, AB | January 18, 2017 |
| Tech Entrepreneur Space Launch Event | An event to celebrate the opening of a new downtown workspace for Edmonton's technology entrepreneurs. | Edmonton, AB | January 19, 2017 |
| ConvergX – A Global Defence and Energy Conference | A global aerospace, defence, security, and energy conference that aims to create investment and growth opportunities between sectors. | Calgary, AB | February 7-9, 2017 |
| Big Data, Internet of Things and Machine Learning in Oil and Gas Conference | This conference will bring together more than 140 Canadian energy technology leaders to discuss the challenges of remaining profitable in the low oil price environment. | Calgary, AB | February 14-15, 2017 |
| Western Aboriginal Consultation and Engagement | This event brings together participants from industry, Indigenous communities, and government for practical guidance to develop long-term partnerships. | Edmonton, AB | February 28-March 1, 2017 |



UPCOMING EVENTS (CONTINUED)

| Event | Description | Location | Date |
|---|--|---------------|-------------------------------------|
| Propel Energy Tech Forum | An annual forum for energy technology companies that focuses on technology developments in energy efficiency, oil and gas extraction, pipeline operations, and environmental monitoring. | Calgary, AB | March 1-2, 2017 |
| CERI 2017 Oil and Gas Symposium: Where do we go from here? | Symposium hosted by the Canadian Energy Research Institute (CERI) to discuss the current oil and gas extraction environment such as pipeline approvals, LNG plants, market prices, and First Nations engagement. | Calgary, AB | March 6-7, 2017 |
| Western Business Outlook: Edmonton | The Conference Board of Canada's outlook for Edmonton in 2017. | Edmonton, AB | March 8, 2017 |
| Western Business Outlook: Calgary | The Conference Board of Canada's outlook for Calgary in 2017. | Calgary, AB | March 10, 2017 |
| EDA 2017 Annual Professional Conference & AGM | Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) will host its annual conference with the theme of "Embracing Change. Creating Opportunity." | Banff, AB | March 22-24, 2017 |
| Saskatchewan | | | |
| Western Canadian Crop Production Show | The Western Canadian Crop Production Show has become Western Canada's premier grain industry showcase by presenting information to producers on the latest technology, services, and products. | Saskatoon, SK | January 9-12, 2017 |
| CropShere 2017 | Held in conjunction with the Western Canadian Crop Production Show, CropSphere 2017 will host sessions on market outlook, research, and agronomy. | Saskatoon, SK | January 10-11, 2017 |
| Mayor of Saskatoon Luncheon | Mayor of Saskatoon, Charlie Clark, will be addressing the North Saskatoon Business Association (NSBA) membership as part of the NSBA's Luncheon Series. | Saskatoon, SK | January 11, 2017 |
| State of the University Address | Event organized by the Regina Chamber of Commerce as part of its 2017 Luncheon Series. The President of the University of Regina, Dr. Vianne Timmons, will deliver the address. | Regina, SK | January 26, 2017 |
| Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) Convention 2017 | The SUMA annual convention tradeshow has become the largest annual trade show of its kind in North America. This year's event is titled "Shaping Saskatchewan." | Saskatoon, SK | February 5-8, 2017 |
| 2017 SABEX Awards | The Gala event honours Saskatoon region's finest businesses with awards in sustainability, community involvement, growth and expansion, and marketing. | Saskatoon, SK | February 9, 2017 |
| Saskatoon Region Economic Outlook Forum 2017 hosted by the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority (SREDA) | SREDA's annual Saskatoon Region Economic Outlook Forum provides a detailed and insightful look at the year ahead. It discusses the projected outlook for the local economy, the new economic growth drivers, and SREDA's 2017 priorities to strengthen and grow the economy. | Saskatoon, SK | February 28, 2017 |
| SUSTAINTECH 2017 | The third annual SustainTech conference is an innovative event featuring technologies and practices that promote and bring together industry, academia, and regulators to share new ideas and technologies. | Saskatoon, SK | March 16, 2017 |



UPCOMING EVENTS (CONTINUED)

| Event | Description | Location | Date |
|--------------------------------|--|--------------|--------------------------------------|
| Manitoba | | | |
| Manitoba AgDays | An annual exhibition of agricultural production expertise, technology, and equipment for farmers and businesses from across Canada and the North-Central US. | Brandon, MB | January 17-19, 2017 |
| Driving Innovation | A Manitoba conference focused on helping small and medium-sized businesses to keep abreast new technologies, reach new markets, and enhance productivity. | Winnipeg, MB | January 25-26, 2017 |
| Crop Connect | This crop production and farm management conference includes a tradeshow and guest speakers on topics ranging from agronomy to finance. | Winnipeg, MB | February 15-16, 2017 |
| Rotary Career Symposium | Manitoba's largest career symposium with over 185 exhibit booths with post-secondary and employment options for students and job seekers. | Winnipeg, MB | March 14-16, 2017 |

Western Economic Diversification Canada

The role of Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) is to improve the long-term economic competitiveness of Western Canada by supporting programs and services that enhance innovation, business development, and community economic development. In addition, the department undertakes policy, advocacy, and coordination activities in order to advance the interests of Western Canada in national economic decision-making.