

August 25, 2005

Minister Oberg leads research mission to Israel

Exchange of knowledge, best practices will enhance water infrastructure in Alberta

Edmonton... Infrastructure and Transportation Minister Dr. Lyle Oberg will lead an Alberta delegation to Israel to undertake irrigation research-the learnings of which will be used to enhance Alberta's water/wastewater infrastructure.

The delegation will begin its week-long fact-finding mission into Israel's impressive irrigation and water infrastructure operations on September 1. The results of the research will help define the projects to be carried out under a research agreement signed earlier this year between the province and the Jewish National Fund of Canada. Both partners have committed to contribute \$1 million each towards research projects that will see Alberta and Israel share best practices and exchange information to enhance water conservation and irrigation and support Alberta's Water for Life Strategy.

"This fact-finding trip will prove invaluable in terms of experiencing the successful practices of Israel, a nation recognized as the world's foremost authority on irrigation techniques," said Oberg. "The knowledge we gain will support the government's commitment to sustaining a water supply for the future."

During the mission, Oberg will tour numerous water infrastructure sites and meet Israel Prime Minister Ariel Sharon and other government officials. He will also attend the inauguration ceremony of the Baron's Garden in Rosh Pina, established in honour of the late Lois Hole.

Leonard Mitzel, MLA for Cypress-Medicine Hat, will join the Israel mission, representing Guy Boutilier, Minister of Environment. The delegation will also include Dennis Fitzpatrick, Vice President, Research, from the University of Lethbridge, which is a partner in the Israel research project, David Hill, Executive Director of the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association, and representatives from Alberta's business community and the Jewish National Fund of Canada.

Prior to the Israel mission, Oberg will travel to Ukraine on August 30 and meet with that country's Minister of Transportation and other Ukrainian government and business officials on August 31. He will present to the Ukrainian government a Letter of Intent to foster cooperation related to researching and sharing information on highway design, construction and rehabilitation.

More information on the research agreement between Alberta and Israel is available at:

<http://www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200505/180214A482757-FCE2-4AA2-AC4FF957D252E2A6.html>

The estimated cost of the trip for Oberg, Mitzel and Oberg's executive assistant is \$19,500.

Media inquiries may be directed to:

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To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

Backgrounder

August 25, 2005

Mission to Israel and Ukraine

General Itinerary

Sunday, August 28

- Depart Edmonton

Monday, August 29

- Arrive Tel Aviv, Israel

Tuesday, August 30

- Depart for Kiev, Ukraine
- Meet with Ukraine's Minister of Transport and Communication and signs a Letter of Intent to foster economic cooperation
- Official dinner to celebrate Alberta's Centennial with the Ukrainian government and business officials

Wednesday, August 31

- Depart Ukraine for Tel Aviv

Thursday, September 1

- Meet with Israeli Minister of Infrastructure, Benjamin Ben Elizer
- Meet with Israeli business people
- Visit Israeli Foreign Ministry in Jerusalem, meet with Deputy Director General for North America, Mr. Ben Ze'ev
- Visit Intel Company in Kiriat Gat, briefing and visit to the technology company's factory
- Meet with Dr. Mickey Haran, Director General with Israeli Ministry of Environment

Friday, September 2

- Meet with Gideon Meir, Deputy Director General for Public Affairs, Israeli Foreign Ministry
- Depart for Jerusalem
- Plant a tree at the Jewish National Fund Plant-A-Tree Centre with Mr. Menachem Leibovitz, Deputy Director of the Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund
- Visit the newly opened Holocaust Museum at Yad Vashem
- Wreath laying ceremony in memory of Holocaust victims (Dr. Oberg on behalf of the Province of Alberta)

Saturday, September 3

- Gala dinner with Keren Kayemeth LeIsrael-Jewish National Fund with Mr. Shimon Peres Deputy Prime Minister of Israel and other guests from Israeli public, business and media communities, in honour of Alberta Centennial

Sunday, September 4

- Inauguration ceremony of the Baron's Garden in Rosh Pina established at the Negev dinner in honour of the late Lois Hole
- Visit Sapir Station where the National Carrier begins transferring water from the Sea of Galilee in the north to the Negev in the south
- Visit the Beit Shean Valley and learn about the reservoir system established and the management of the Water Resources of the Jordan River Drainage Basin
- Tour the Jezreal Valley and learn about current methods developed to return salinated soil to agricultural usage

Monday, September 5

- Visit the Shafdan Water Treatment Centre for the Dan (Tel Aviv) region and meet with the Water Commissioner of Israel
- Visit Besor research station, which deals with the practical application of recycled and saline water for agriculture
- Tour Besor River Water Reservoir Complex to see how the storage of both recycled water and capture of flood waters are managed

Tuesday, September 6

- Visit Midreshet Boker, the Desert Research Institute for presentation of local research projects
- Tour Arad Water Recycling Complex on the Arad "Prairie"
- Meet with Israeli Minister of Agriculture
- Visit Yair Forest to learn about desert reforestation and the cooperative programs with Jordan through the Middle East Research Cooperation project

Wednesday, September 7

- Visit water desalinization plant
- Visit the Technion-Israel Institute of Technology
- Return to Tel Aviv via Nahal Alexander River Rehabilitation project
- Depart for Canada

*Itinerary subject to change:

- 30 -

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