

May 11, 2006

New standard for new provincial buildings will reduce energy costs

Edmonton... Alberta has joined an elite group of Canadian jurisdictions in adopting a world-recognized environmentally friendly standard for designing new government buildings.

Adopting the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) Silver standard in the design of new government-funded buildings will reduce the new buildings' impact on the environment, conserve energy and save taxpayers money.

"Once again, Alberta is proving itself a leader in taking concrete action to protect the environment," said Ty Lund, Minister of Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation. "This is something that will cost us more in the short term, but will pay off in the longer term in more ways than one."

"The decision to adopt the LEED Silver standard for new government buildings is a natural step, since existing government buildings already use green power," said Guy Boutilier, Minister of Environment. "These initiatives will help protect our environment for our children, their children and generations to come."

LEED is a voluntary, points-based environmental rating system administered in Canada by the Canadian Green Building Council. There are four certification levels: LEED Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum. LEED covers six topic areas: site development, water efficiency, energy efficiency, material selection (e.g. re-use), indoor environmental quality, and design innovation. LEED Silver-rated buildings can cost up to five per cent more to build than traditional buildings, but cost less to operate and maintain because they consume 40-45 per cent less energy than other buildings. Any additional construction costs are recovered through lower operating costs in about seven years.

"We're very pleased the Government of Alberta has stepped up to play a leadership role," said Thomas Mueller, President of the Canadian Green Building Council. "By adopting LEED Silver as its standard for all new government buildings, Alberta is encouraging other jurisdictions to do the same, setting an example for the private sector, and helping the green building industry grow in capacity and expertise."

Five Alberta government buildings currently under construction have been designed to meet the LEED Silver standard. These include the Calgary Courts Centre and four provincial park buildings:

- Park office/visitor centre-Writing-on-Stone Provincial Park
- Expansion to Tyrell Field Station-Dinosaur Provincial Park
- Interpretive Centre-Cypress Hills Interprovincial Park
- Boreal Centre for Bird Conservation-Lesser Slave Lake Provincial Park

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Backgrounder attached

Media enquiries may be directed to:

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Background

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Adopting the LEED Silver standard

- LEED Gold buildings cost about 10 per cent more than conventional buildings. These buildings typically consume 50-55 per cent less energy than traditional buildings.
- The Alberta government is adopting the LEED Silver standard for new government-owned and supported buildings, rather than the Gold standard, in an effort to strike a balance between environmental considerations and the need to construct affordable buildings.
- LEED Silver buildings may include: recycled, renewable or recyclable materials, water conservation, daylight harvesting, natural ventilation, high performance building envelope, low-emission carpeting, paint and sealants; improved indoor environment, etc. To learn more about LEED and the Canadian Green Building Council, visit <http://www.cagbc.org>
- The City of Calgary has adopted LEED Silver, the City of Vancouver has adopted LEED Gold, and the federal government requires LEED Gold for projects over \$10 million. Richmond, B.C. has adopted Gold for new construction and Silver for retrofit. Most provinces are considering a sustainable design requirement.

Other ways government is leading by example on climate change:

- In March 2006, The Alberta government adopted the BOMA Go Green certification program for provincial facilities. The Go Green program, operated by the Building Owners and Managers Association (BOMA), emphasizes ecologically sound building *operations* by establishing performance standards in such areas as energy use, water use and indoor air quality. LEED emphasizes green building *design*. For more information, visit <http://www.bomagogreen.com>.
- Since January 1, 2005, over 90 per cent of the electricity consumed by government-owned facilities has come from green power sources. That is more than any other jurisdiction in Canada.
- Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation's Energy Retrofit Program implemented energy improvements to over 200 major government facilities between 1995 and 2005. The department is now working on retrofitting the final 19 facilities to be completed in 2006. The Energy Retrofit Program has resulted in savings of \$6 million annually from reduced utilities costs.
- The Alberta government was the first province in Canada to register an action plan with the National Registry on Climate Change, Voluntary Challenge and Registry Program. The Alberta government has received three Voluntary Challenge and Registry Awards for its leadership and success with the Alberta action plan on climate change.

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