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***Providing safe and secure communities***

*October 10, 2007*

**New Aldersyde interchange greatly improves intersection safety**

***Interchanges are the safest way to enter or exit a highway***

***Aldersyde...***

Alberta's newest interchange replaces one of the province's most collision-prone highway intersections.

The new \$30-million interchange at Highways 2, 7, and 547 near Aldersyde eliminates potentially risky manoeuvres such as crossing or turning left across multiple lanes of highway-speed traffic and larger vehicles jutting out onto Highway 2 from median crossovers.

"This interchange will make this route safer for the thousands of drivers who use these roads everyday," said Luke Ouellette, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "It's part of the government's ongoing investment in our highway network to make our roads as safe as possible."

On average, interchanges reduce overall collisions by 45 per cent and eliminate t-bone and head-on collisions at highway speeds, which frequently result in serious injuries or fatalities. The improved intersection and service roads also allow government to remove four less-safe accesses and four median crossovers in the interchange's vicinity.

"The new interchange enhances safety and supports the incredible growth our community is experiencing," said George Groeneveld, Minister of Agriculture and Food and MLA for Highwood. "I am very pleased that this important project is now completed."

In addition to interchange and service road construction, the project included: upgrading the CP Rail crossing on Highway 7; building a mobile inspection station; paving five kilometres of Highway 7 from east of Okotoks to the interchange; paving 3.5 kilometres of Highway 2A through High River; and installing traffic signals at the intersection of Highways 7 and 2A. Construction started in the fall of 2005.

Approximately 19,000 vehicles per day use Highway 2 in the area, while 6,300 vehicles use Highway 7.

Improving the safety of Alberta's highways is one of the actions under Premier Ed Stelmach's plan to provide safe and secure communities. Other priorities for the government are to govern with integrity and transparency, manage growth pressures, build a stronger Alberta, and improve Albertans' quality of life.

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