

**Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA)  
President's Summit on Energy  
Mel Benson Speech**

**Time/Location/Logistics:**

8:50 a.m. – 9:45 a.m., Wednesday, May 11  
Ballroom, Sawridge Inn, Fort McMurray

(NOTE: 7:30 a.m. Breakfast in Balsam Room at Sawridge for official opening, if Mel is interested, opening speech by President Darren Aldous at 8:30 a.m.)

**Speech Theme:**

Responsible Development and Thriving Municipalities: Do they go together?

**Format:**

Conference Exploring 4 dimensions around energy:  
Panel of 3 on each, which includes provocative comments, followed by workshop

Economy (Ruth Kelly, Alberta Venture, Mel, then Charles Eagleson, Alberta Construction Association, Fort McMurray Chapter)

Culture/Society

Environment

Governance

Meant to be a broad discussion on energy – not necessarily only on oil sands.

10 minutes each to open comments, followed by Q&A. No powerpoint. No media in attendance. Panelists at table, then speak at podium and speakers.

**MC:** Board member (TBD) to introduce and moderate session.

**Running time:** 10.5 minutes

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**Event Brochure:** [http://www.auma.ca/live/digitalAssets/49/49251\\_PS\\_Brochure\\_0408.pdf](http://www.auma.ca/live/digitalAssets/49/49251_PS_Brochure_0408.pdf)

Thanks Darren

It's a pleasure to be here and to welcome you to Fort McMurray, and the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. As you know, this is the heart of the oil sands, and I think it's great that you're having your President's Summit here.

I'm sure that the next two days here will be thought-provoking and will help create a better understanding of the environmental, social and economic challenges and opportunities associated with energy development. I might be kind of biased, but I can think of no better place to have this kind of a discussion!

While you're here, I hope you will get a chance to enjoy all that this area has to offer. We're very proud of this community and invite you to take some time to get to know it better.

You might be interested to know that:

- This is one of the largest municipalities in North America, attracting people from all corners of the world.
- It's also home to a whole range of community facilities.
- This community of over 72,000 is young, with an average age of 31 years. Average family income here is approximately \$48,000 - -- higher than that of Toronto,
- And you can't forget about the beautiful natural surroundings.

There are as many outdoor recreation opportunities here as a person can imagine.

This tremendous community is one which has been blessed. Wood Buffalo sits by one of the largest oil reserves in the world – one which is becoming increasingly important as global demand for energy continues to rise.

It's also a community which has seen - and dealt with - the growth pressures associated with its development. And I think that given its experience, it can serve as a model for other communities across this country.

It's in this context that I thought I would frame my brief remarks today.

Let me start by giving you a few quick facts about the oil sands:

- First and foremost, at 173 billion barrels, they are the second largest oil reserves in the world, and have the potential to provide enough energy for a century and beyond.
- Oil sands investment is estimated to generate \$1.7 trillion in economic activity over the next 25 years.
- For every dollar generated by the oil sands, approximately 54 cents is paid to governments in taxes and royalties. That's

expected to translate into at least \$306 billion in new government revenues over the next 25 years.

- The oil sands industry accounts for 144,000 jobs across Canada. Those jobs are not just in Northern Alberta. They're in fabrication shops in Ontario, engineering offices in Quebec, and all variety of businesses right across the country. And the 144,000 jobs today is expected to grow to nearly 600,000 jobs over the next 25 years.
- This all comes at a time when demand for energy continues to rise. According to the International Energy Agency, hydrocarbons provide almost 85% of the world's primary energy demand. By 2050, they will still represent 75% of this demand. Oil demand is expected to grow from 85 million barrels per day to over 100 million barrels per day by 2030, driven by growth in China and India.
- This has – no surprise – caused international interest in the oil sands, with a strong focus on growth. Production is forecast to more than double from 1.2 million barrels per day in 2007 to close to 3 million barrels per day by 2020.

With the attention that's been placed on the oil sands, further development is very likely around the corner.

It's been easy to talk in this community about the difficulties that came with growth. I'm sure many of you have heard the stories – labour shortages, traffic congestion, housing concerns, lagging infrastructure development – all of these seemed to be part of our vocabulary here in the past few years.

But I'd argue there were positives, and that through some hard work, collaboration, and yes, all of us learning from mistakes, I think this community is stronger than it's ever been before.

And I believe Wood Buffalo has and can continue to serve as a model for communities to thrive and grow in the face of ongoing energy development.

Clearly, what happened here was a result of the community and industry working together. Whether it was through ongoing meetings and direct engagement or industry/municipality partnerships, jointly tackling issues certainly made a difference.

A good example is in the industry staff secondments to the health authority, and municipal and provincial governments.

We're now seeing greater collaboration on issues and a willingness to work through any differences of opinion, rather than simply pointing out problems that we felt others should solve.

The people in the community have certainly been key. The populations of Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo are made up of bright, dedicated and energetic people. And many of them come from industry, placing a tremendous value on volunteerism and supporting families, neighbours and friends.

At Suncor, for example, we have people in leadership and other positions in the United Way, the Chamber of Commerce, the Keyano Foundation, the Hospital Foundation, and the Leisure Centre. Their passion for their community is second to none, and the results show.

Fort McMurray's United Way campaign is - for the fifth consecutive year - the most generous per capita of any United Way campaign in Canada. With a \$2 million Suncor campaign that feeds into it, we're very proud to be part of that success.

We all know that the sustainability of any community depends heavily on a balance of social, environmental and economic considerations. Ensuring a healthy environment, facilitating social programs, and creating jobs have to go hand in hand.

As a responsible developer, we at Suncor recognize our role in community development, along with the region's leadership and stakeholders. We take this responsibility seriously. Taking this further, as a society, it's important to constantly evaluate how we spend the wealth generated by the oil sands business to ensure we are contributing to the long term health of the community, the energy industry, and beyond.

Just as critical, we at Suncor recognize the importance of engaging with Aboriginal and Metis communities. Whether it's through ongoing dialogue about projects, supporting capacity building or telehealth programs, we know it makes a difference. We're particularly proud of a new initiative - the Fort McKay Business Incubator - which will help further local entrepreneurial skills in the community.

Likewise, we're thrilled to have recently surpassed a \$1 billion spending milestone with local Aboriginal businesses, including \$277 million in 2010. We'll continue to look for more strong partnerships to address regional issues, employment and economic benefits.

Community investment throughout Wood Buffalo has been critical as this region continued to grapple with growth. At our company, we've provided financial support to help address quality of life issues.

Our involvement has included:

- the RedPoll Centre, a shared not-for-profit space for community groups, and
- the Suncor Performing Arts Centre at Holy Trinity School – a partnership we've formed with the Catholic School Board, and the municipality. This Performing Arts Centre illustrates how three partners can come together to provide a community facility that can be used by students and the community alike, and
- the Suncor Leisure Centre – not only was it the site of the Northern Classic outdoor hockey game, it will also play host to

the band, KISS, this summer! We'll look forward to seeing you all here for that!

Like KISS, Suncor is around for the long haul, so it makes sense that our community commitment will continue. We're in the final stages of revising our community investment program and expect to announce more details later this year. Let me say, though, that this community will continue to figure prominently in that strategy.

An exciting example of how this community can serve as a model for others, is found in a partnership we've formed with Wood Buffalo and the University of Waterloo.

Through the Suncor Energy Foundation, we've created a new initiative focused on community building through the active engagement of the non-profit sector. Community leaders from Fort McMurray and Waterloo will connect and collaborate on an action-based research project.

Their focus will be to build leadership capacity and to identify the best means of addressing growth opportunities and challenges in Fort McMurray.

And we hope that the insights gained from this project will serve as a model, helping other resource-based communities in Canada that are experiencing rapid growth.

When I began my remarks, I talked about the incredible resource that is the oil sands. They will, no doubt, play a critical role in meeting our energy needs going forward.

And, the economic spin-offs at the local, regional, provincial, and national levels could be significant.

Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo have shown how they can rise to the challenge and seize the opportunities presented by this resource.

This President's Summit is all about energy and how by working together we can achieve a positive future. I'm confident that -- together -- we'll be successful, and that the best years are still to come.

Thank you for your time today, and all the best to you during your visit to Fort McMurray and Wood Buffalo.