

CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY
Speaking Notes

Jeff Parr
Deputy Minister of Labour

AUMA Mayors' Caucus

March 10, 2016
10:30 am

Matrix Hotel
10640 - 100 Avenue NW, Edmonton

Presentation and Q&A

Check against delivery

**Jeff Parr, Deputy Minister of Labour
Speaking Engagement Summary/Checklist**

DATE:	March 10, 2016
START TIME:	10:30 am
NAME OF FUNCTION:	AUMA Mayors' Caucus
LOCATION/ADDRESS OF FUNCTION:	Matrix Hotel 10640 – 100 Avenue NW, Edmonton
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION:	AUMA
EVENT CONTACT: including cell number	
SPONSORING ORGANIZATION'S TWITTER HANDLE/HASHTAG AND SUGGESTED TWEETS	https://twitter.com/TheAUMA Looking forward to speaking @TheAUMA Mayors Caucus March 9-10 #ableg
EXPECTED NUMBER OF ATTENDEES:	
DESCRIPTION OF AUDIENCE	The AUMA was founded in 1905 to represent Alberta's urban municipalities. The Association represents urban municipalities including: cities, towns, villages, summer villages and specialized municipalities.
REQUESTED SPEECH TOPIC & TIME ALLOTTED:	Ministries have been invited to make presentations about issues that concern the Association and its members.
APPROPRIATE DRESS:	Business Formal
WHO AND WHERE WILL MINISTER BE MET?	
PARKING ARRANGEMENTS:	
WHO WILL INTRODUCE THE MINISTER?	

<p>WHAT TIME WILL THE MINISTER BE INTRODUCED TO SPEAK?</p>	
<p>NAMES AND TITLES OF OTHER SPEAKERS AND GUESTS:</p>	
<p>ARE THERE SPECIAL ACHIEVEMENTS OF YOUR GROUP, OR GROUP MEMBERS THAT THE MINISTER SHOULD ACKNOWLEDGE?</p>	<p>No.</p>
<p>WILL THERE BE PRESENTATIONS THAT THE MINISTER WILL BE ASKED TO MAKE?</p>	<p>No.</p>

Please attach an agenda to this checklist

Speech Bullets

- It's a pleasure to join you today to tell you about the important work the Ministry of Labour has been doing over the past year.
- The department is working on implementing new public sector legislation to align with the Supreme Court of Canada ruling making the right to strike fundamental for meaningful collective bargaining process.
- We'll continue to work with small businesses in an effort to address their concerns regarding minimum wage.
- We'll also continue to work with the agricultural sector to ensure we strike the right balance, and respect the unique qualities of farms and ranches in Alberta.
- With the downturn in the economy, the department is providing help for businesses in their efforts to grow and create good jobs that support families.
- Labour is leading a cross-ministry committee coordinating the Syrian refugee response effort, working closely with federal, provincial, municipal and community partners.

Full Speaking Notes

[Introductory remarks]

- Good morning – It's my pleasure to be here on behalf of Minister Christina Gray and talk about work that has been done and what's on the horizon.

- In the past 10 months:
 - The Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) was reinstated;

 - Minimum wage was increased;

- the government introduced and passed Bill 6, the *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act*, and
- The province began to welcome Syrian refugees to Alberta and help them integrate successfully into our communities.
- The department will continue to focus on these initiatives as well as several other key priorities.

[Essential Services]

- The first order of business is to implement new essential services legislation to align with a Supreme Court decision made last year.
- The department held extensive consultation with stakeholders this past fall and outlined options for essential service legislation, including a recommended model and the bargaining relationships it should be applied to.
- As was referenced in the Throne Speech earlier this week, this legislation will be introduced this spring.

[Minimum Wage]

- Last year government increased Alberta's minimum wage to \$11.20 per hour.
- Small businesses have been very clear about their concerns and we will continue to work with them as we go forward.

[Farm and Ranch]

- On January 1st, Bill 6 - the *Enhanced Protection for Farm and Ranch Workers Act* came into effect.

- Waged, non-family farm and ranch workers now receive the same basic workplace rights as many other workers in Alberta, as well as waged farm and ranch workers in other jurisdictions.
- With the basic safety standards in place, consultations to develop and finalize the technical rules for farms and ranches will get underway.
- Those consultations will be led by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

- Future changes to the *Employment Standards Code* and *Labour Relations Code* will be developed after these consultations are complete in the coming months.

[Job Incentives]

- It seems we're hearing on a daily basis about increased unemployment and the layoffs our province is facing.
- These are not just numbers, but hard-working Albertans and their families who are being affected.

- The department is providing the leadership and tools businesses need to grow and create good jobs to support families including:
 - the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP) which provides students with work experience, builds transferable skills, provides career awareness and supports Alberta employers;

- the Canada-Alberta Job Grant , an employer-driven training program which encourages employers to train current or potential employees so individuals are equipped with the skills they need to participate and contribute to the workforce;
- In addition, Workforce Consultants are located at Alberta Works offices throughout the province to help employers and business associations connect with the local workforce.

[Refugees]

- In 2015, the federal government committed to bringing 25,000 Syrian refugees to our country by the end of that year.
- Alberta Labour supports this initiative and is committed to the well-being and success of all Albertans, including those who come to the province as refugees.
- Between December of last year and the end of February, Alberta has welcomed more than 2,500 Syrian refugees.

- The department continues to lead a cross-ministry committee coordinating the refugee response effort.

- We're working closely with municipalities, settlement agencies and community partners to address refugee resettlement issues such as:
 - availability of English classes;

 - the lack of affordable housing;

 - overcoming cultural barriers; and

- the development of programs to ensure refugees transition as smoothly as possible into our communities and workplaces.
- A continued collaborative approach with all of our partners will help ensure refugees in Alberta flourish in our communities and workplaces over the long-term.
- We're also supporting refugees by providing funding to immigrant serving agencies for settlement and language services to newcomers.

- An additional \$1 million for the Alberta Refugee Resettlement Grant Initiative is delegated for the immediate and long-term resettlement of Syrian refugees in our province for which we have received 60 applicants.
- Successful applicants were notified in February.

[Conclusion]

- The Department of Labour has accomplished a great deal in the past year and we know there's still lots of work to do.

- Again, on behalf of Labour Minister, Christina Gray, it was a pleasure to be here this morning.
- Thank you.

-30-