

*(CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY)*  
**SPEECH**

**HONOURABLE HECTOR GOUDREAU**  
**TOURISM, PARKS, RECREATION AND CULTURE**

**CULTURAL POLICY LAUNCH**

**10:30 A.M.**

**JANUARY 25, 2008**

**NORTHERN ALBERTA JUBILEE AUDITORIUM**

- Thank you Premier.
- Around the Cabinet table, we've all been inspired by Premier Stelmach and his commitment to culture.
- Upon assuming the office of Premier in 2006, he flagged the importance of culture.
- He put the word “culture” back in government...
- ...by creating the Ministry of Tourism, Parks, Recreation and **Culture**.

- And...he identified the need for a cultural policy.
- He assigned me the job in a mandate letter.
- To me, my colleagues in government, and all Albertans, this sent a clear message: culture is not a frill.

*(pause)*

- Significant research and consultations have gone into the development of this policy.

- In fact, this policy is a direct response to Albertans' expressed desire to see government take a leadership role in supporting culture.
- We held focus groups...consulted with cultural organizations and foundations, other government ministries, Aboriginal groups, and most importantly...with everyday Albertans.
- What we learned is that Albertans value culture a great deal.

- Almost all Albertans actively participate in and use cultural events and facilities.
- Albertans also clearly told us that they see culture in the broad sense – more than just the formal arts.
- They see culture as heritage, history, the natural environment...sport and recreation, spirituality and innovation in business and the arts.

*(pause)*

- To accomplish the four priorities outlined in the policy, we have developed a number of strategies.
  
- The 30 per cent increase in funding that the Alberta Foundation for the Arts is receiving will help provide more access to cultural activities for all Albertans.
  
- Support will be provided for:
  - arts creation and production
  - participation in the arts
  - promoting the arts
  - acquiring and displaying new Alberta artworks

- Both small and large arts organizations will benefit from this policy, and the new funding.
- We will also be providing increased funding for heritage conservation and diversity awareness.
- Ensuring communities have the facilities and resources to support culture is also something we're very serious about.

- So in addition to our Charitable Tax Credit Program and the Community Spirit Program...we will continue to provide funding for building and upgrading cultural and recreational facilities...
- ...like we've done with the Art Gallery of Alberta and the Historic Clay District in Medicine Hat.

(pause)

- We also have strategies to help our cultural industries grow and prosper.

- We will be looking at alternative funding models for Alberta's film and television industry...and considering options for a cultural industries development program.

(pause)

- We have the same vision of excellence for our artists and arts organizations.
- The additional funding provided through this policy will go a long way, but there is so much more that we can do **together** to help support our creative community in achieving their goals.

- A thriving cultural community can only be achieved through solid partnerships and a sharing of responsibility.
- Many of you in this room already contribute significantly to promoting and presenting our culture to Albertans...and to the world.
- By pooling our talent, our energy and our resources we will be able to accomplish more than any of us individually can imagine.

*(pause)*

- In addition to collaborating with all of you...we'll also be looking at innovative ways government departments can be working together to support culture ...
- ...such as integrating culture in other areas of public policy like education, health and wellness.
- To help accomplish this...I have asked my Deputy Minister... Fay Orr...to set up a coordinating team...

- ...to ensure that the objectives of this policy are achieved throughout the province.

*(pause)*

- We're on the cusp of something very exciting.
- Outside of the obvious benefits to artists and cultural organizations...this policy will also help achieve an increased sense of belonging, and pride in being Albertan.

- Our young people may perhaps realize the greatest benefits ...when they have more opportunities to be involved in creative and worthwhile activities in their spare time.
- Ultimately, Alberta will be perceived as good place to live, and to visit...
- ...making it easier to attract and retain skilled workers and their families...as well as new visitors.

*(pause)*

- Ladies and gentlemen, our vision is an Alberta where all citizens feel a sense of belonging and pride...
- ...an Alberta where all citizens have opportunities to participate in cultural and recreational activities that reflect their diverse heritage...and enrich their lives.
- With your help we can achieve this vision.
- We can build a civilized society that aspires to excellence and beauty...and feeds the highest needs of the human soul.
- Thank you.