

Managing growth pressures

June 19, 2007

Work starts on the twinning of Highway 63

Fort McMurray... Construction has begun on twinning the first section of Highway 63 south of Fort McMurray from Highway 69 to south of Highway 881. This is the first section of the 240-kilometre twinning project to begin between Fort McMurray and the junction of Highway 55 near Grassland.

"This is the first leg of an immense 240-kilometre twinning project that will increase safety for motorists and improve access to the oilsands," said Luke Ouellette, Minister of Infrastructure and Transportation. "This section of road has traffic volumes almost double the rest of the highway and is our top priority for twinning."

Minister Ouellette was joined by Guy Boutilier, Minister of International, Intergovernmental and Aboriginal Relations and MLA for Fort McMurray-Wood Buffalo to officially mark the start of construction by climbing onto construction equipment on the future northbound lanes of Highway 63. Twinning of the first section of highway will cost \$53 million and is scheduled to be completed and open to traffic by fall 2008.

"Residents of Fort McMurray have waited for this day with great anticipation," said Boutilier. "As a long-time supporter of twinning Highway 63, I'm pleased construction is underway. The twinned highway will improve safety for motorists and support the industrial development in the oilsands."

Construction will begin on the remaining 224 kilometres of twinning south of Highway 881 as designs are completed and federal environmental permits are obtained. The total cost of twinning the 240-kilometres of highway is estimated to be more than \$940 million. The province will contribute more than \$790 million toward the twinning project and up to \$150 million will come from the federal government under the Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund.

This project is one of several underway this year to improve safety and expand the capacity of the provincial highway network in the Wood Buffalo region.

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

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Backgrounder: List of road construction projects for 2007 in the Fort McMurray area

Media enquiries may be directed to:

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Backgrounder

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Fort McMurray Highway Construction - Summer 2007

The following highway construction projects have begun or will be started during the 2007 construction season:

- Highway 63 from south of Highway 69 to south of Highway 881 - twinning Highway 63 south of Fort McMurray.
- Highway 63 from south of Beacon Hill to north of Confederation Way - completion of last year's paving/bypass/intersection improvement project. Work will include completing erosion control, paving, and remaining illumination work.
- Highway 63 from Highway 69 to north of Confederation Way - installation of durable line painting.
- Highway 63 from north of Fort McMurray to south of the Suncor Access, north of the King Street interchange to the Athabasca River bridge, and at the Confederation Way intersection - work will include asphalt concrete paving and associated work.
- Highway 63 from south of the Suncor Access to north of Mildred Lake - base/paving of new twinning.
- Highway 881 from Gregoire Lake to east of Highway 63 - widening nine kilometers of Highway 881.
- Athabasca River Bridge fills - work will include site preparation on the bridge approaches for the new Athabasca River Bridge.

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