

January 4, 2010

Alberta Innovates is new hub for innovating, investing, collaborating

Realigned innovation structure makes a great system even better

Edmonton... As a new year begins, five new Alberta Innovates agencies start their work to strengthen the province's role as a world leader in using science to seek solutions to challenges like climate change, water conservation and health conditions.

"Future generations will look back on 2010 as the year that Alberta's next generation economy took a leap forward with the creation of Alberta Innovates," said Premier Ed Stelmach. "This updated system will be a catalyst in building a prosperous future for our province. A stronger, more coordinated system will bring new opportunities to Alberta researchers and entrepreneurs."

The new system features an international advisory board, the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority, and four agencies under the Alberta Innovates banner that focus on bio solutions, energy and environment solutions, health solutions, and technology commercialization.

"Not only will we be more aligned, but we're launching a new Connector Service to give researchers and entrepreneurs guidance to help them make the connections they need to succeed, right here in Alberta," said Doug Horner, Minister of Advanced Education and Technology. "The Connector will be an Alberta trademark and selling point both at home and around the world. Our resources, our clients, and our businesses are really an extension of one single effort to create a culture of innovation at all levels."

Alberta Innovates officially came into being on January 1, when the *Alberta Research and Innovation Act* and regulation came into force. The new organizations have realigned 10 provincially funded research and innovation organizations. In March 2008, Premier Stelmach mandated Minister Horner to develop and implement a framework that defined the roles and mandates for Alberta's provincially funded research and innovation organizations.

Alberta Innovates contributes to *The Way Forward*, the Government of Alberta's plan for a strong economic recovery, which includes ensuring that our province's industries are competitive and continue to attract investment to provide jobs and prosperity.

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Backgrounder: Overview of Alberta Innovates attached

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Alberta Innovates

Edmonton... Alberta is positioning itself to foster a culture of innovation that will create and support innovators, entrepreneurs and technology based industries as well as motivate, educate and train a 21st Century workforce to meet Alberta's needs.

Why has Alberta taken this new approach?

- The Alberta government wants to make it easier for researchers and innovators to work together to use science to find solutions to the challenges facing our province and the world - and to commercialize discoveries and ideas that will improve Albertans quality of life and the provincial economy.
- With the system working more closely together as Alberta Innovates, our province will present a stronger, more cohesive presence on the global stage, helping to open up new markets for made-in-Alberta products, processes and services.
- Collaborative relationships and programs will speed up the process of translating research to results, attracting innovators, scientists and researchers from around the world who are looking for supportive, outcomes-oriented working environments.
- Encouraging commercialization of breakthrough technologies and innovations will attract angel investors, professional venture capitalists, foundations, corporations and others who are using private capital to promote the transition to a sustainable future.
- Reduced complexity and duplication together with the new Connector service will enable the system to be more efficient and responsive.

Why is the realignment of the province's research and innovation important to Albertans?

- In a global economy where knowledge has become the new wealth, research and innovation will play an important role in Alberta's next generation economy.
- As well as improving the quality of our life, health and environment, a knowledge based future will create new jobs at all levels, from highly qualified scientists and talented technologists to professional services such as administrative, accounting, legal and marketing services, office supply and cleaning businesses.
- A strong and successful research and innovation system will result in revenues for businesses, opportunities in our post-secondary system, a broader and more diverse tax base to fund priority programs and a strong economy to benefit all Albertans.
- Intellectual property will be more effectively managed to create long-term economic growth for Alberta because Alberta Innovates will streamline, coordinate and facilitate technology transfer, clinical trials, communications, local and international business outreach, provision of contract research services, and training activities.

What is the Alberta Innovates Connector service?

- The Alberta Innovates Connector is a helping hand to guide people through Alberta's research and innovation system in their efforts to turn advanced technology ideas into commercial products or services.
- It is a personalized, value-added service that helps businesses, innovators, researchers, and investors connect to the information, advice, resources and key people they need to access to commercialize a product, invest in a new technology or innovation or collaborate

on research.

Which former organizations have been realigned under Alberta Innovates?

- The *Alberta Research and Innovation Act* and regulation were proclaimed into effect on January 1, 2010. Under the legislation, the Government of Alberta is creating new board-governed provincial corporations:
- **Alberta Innovates - Bio Solutions** includes staff from the former Alberta Agricultural Research Institute, Alberta Forestry Research Institute, Alberta Life Sciences Institute, as well as the Alberta Prion Research Institute. The board chair is Art Froehlich, Partner and Strategic Advisor, AdFarm.
- **Alberta Innovates - Energy and Environment Solutions** includes staff from the former Alberta Energy Research Institute, as well as the Alberta Water Research Institute. The board chair is Eric Newell, Chancellor Emeritus, University of Alberta.
- **Alberta Innovates - Health Solutions** includes staff from the former Alberta Heritage Foundation for Medical Research. The board chair is Robert A. Seidel, Q.C., National Managing Partner, Davis LLP.
- **Alberta Innovates - Technology Futures** includes staff from the former Alberta Ingenuity, Alberta Research Council, iCORE, nanoAlberta, as well as the programs related to the Bringing Technology to Market action plan under Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. The board chair is Ron Triffo, Chair, Stantec Inc.
- **Alberta Research and Innovation Authority** transforms the former Alberta Science and Research Authority. The Chair of the Alberta Research and Innovation Authority is Dr. Marvin Fritzler of the Faculty of Medicine at the University of Calgary.

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