

September 15, 2005

## **New road will link northern Saskatchewan to Athabasca Oil Sands**

Joint centennial project will help economies in Alberta and Saskatchewan

Lloydminster... A new all-weather road between La Loche, Saskatchewan and Fort McMurray, Alberta will create new economic opportunities on both sides of the border, improve access to services and schools, and create new recreational opportunities for people living in both provinces.

Alberta Premier Ralph Klein and Saskatchewan Premier Lorne Calvert announced construction of the \$45-million La Loche Road as a joint project to celebrate both provinces' centennials.

"The La Loche Road will give employers in the Athabasca oil sands access to a valuable new resource - the labour pool in northern Saskatchewan," said Premier Klein. "In return, skilled workers in northern Saskatchewan will have lucrative new employment opportunities."

"Transportation is the key to realizing the vast potential of both the people and resources of northern Saskatchewan," said Lorne Calvert, Premier of Saskatchewan. "In this the centennial year for both Saskatchewan and Alberta, the time is right for our northern residents to take their rightful place in the economic and social mainstream of the province."

Alberta will complete the 65-kilometre gravel road from Highway 881, just south of Anzac, to the Saskatchewan border, including a major bridge crossing at the Christina River. The estimated cost of this leg is \$40 million. Saskatchewan will upgrade the existing road (Highway 956) from the border to the junction of Highway 155, south of La Loche, at a cost of approximately \$5 million.

The road is expected to take three years to complete, with construction beginning as early as 2006.

The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo currently operates the Alberta leg of the road as a winter road. Once work is completed, motorists will be able to use the road year-round.

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**Attachments:** Map attached

**Media enquiries may be directed to:**

Bart Johnson  
Communications  
Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation  
(780) 415-1841  
To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

Jamie Shanks  
Communications  
Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation  
(306) 787-4805

**Backgrounder**

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**Proposed route for road from La Loche to Highway 881**



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