

ONWARD & UPWARD!



Centennarian Marguerite Steele with:

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May was certainly an exciting month in our riding and our province! Highlights included:

- Awarding centennial medallions and scrolls to Marguerite Steele (pictured above) and Jessica Robertshaw (the World's best impromptu speaker) *
- Hosting Town Hall Meetings on both the north and south sides of Fish Creek (during which constituents shared both appreciations and concerns)
- Meeting with individual residents and community presidents on a wide range of issues
- Bringing greetings from the province and climbing the Calgary Tower (twice) for the Alberta Wilderness Association
- Presenting a live video-conference entitled "the Everest of Politics" to junior high students
- Addressing the students at EP Scarlett during "Festival of Words" week
- Attending the Alberta's International Health Symposium, during which professionals from around the world suggested:

-There is no single solution to health care, and improvements (which focus on the patient and evidence-based outcomes) must evolve over time—and must meet the expectations and values of Albertans

-Openness to ideas is necessary for the best possibilities and options; and quality care is best achieved when health professionals learn together, collaborate, and act accordingly

- Change must be focused on what will work, and what will make a positive difference to the health of the population

As the Symposium closed, I had the pleasure of announcing a brand new \$400,000 partnership with Calgary's Salvation Army Drug Treatment Program. Other AADAC Chair activities included meetings in Stettler and sharing a member's statement in the Legislature about the miracles that AADAC's colleagues and clients perform daily!

In addition, May saw the approval of the provincial budget, which featured:

- ***The Best Place to Live, Work, Visit, and Live***

-Health and Wellness budget up 8.6% to nearly \$9 billion, including an 11.3% increase in health authority base operating grants

-\$80 million boost for AISH this year/\$198 million over 3 years

-10% increase for policing and justice system

-Funding enhances seniors' dental and optical assistance, and protects senior homeowners from school property tax increases

- ***Fiscal and economic***

-Alberta's 12th consecutive balanced budget, and the first with the elimination of the accumulated debt (!)

-Deficits remain against the law, and there is no new debt to increase operating spending

-The Heritage Fund is to be inflation-proofed, with \$667 million over three years

-Economic growth in 2005 is forecast at 3.7 per cent, and job growth is projected at 33,400

- ***Unleashing Innovation and Competing in the Global Marketplace***

- \$9.2 billion Capital Plan commits unmatched support for infrastructure; municipalities get \$3.1 billion over three years

- \$250 million provided through endowment funds for medical, science, and engineering research over the next three years

- \$200 million over 5 years will encourage the development of technology to enhance oil and gas recovery

- \$5.5 billion will be available for reallocation from the Sustainability Fund

- Alberta is Canada's low-tax province: AB Family Employment Tax Credit enhanced, school property tax mill rates cut 5%

- ***Leading in Learning***

- Advanced education funding increased 13.4% (strengthening access and affordability)

- \$3 billion endowment in the Heritage Fund (\$250 million initial allocation)

- 7.1 per cent increase in education, and class size reductions continue

At this wonderful time of the year, I congratulate all of you who will be graduating from any level of education. I wish you the best in your future endeavors, whether they be further steps on your scholastic journey, or getting your feet wet in the working world!

But first, as we begin to take holidays (and the days finally get longer and warmer!), I hope you will take time to enjoy the company of family, friends, and fellow Albertans...as we celebrate our province's centennial! For information on upcoming events, please contact our office or visit www.albertacentennial.ca. <And if you are looking for further information on the legislature and/or government, please check out www.assembly.ab.ca and www.gov.ab.ca (or call 310-0000) for a wealth of information.>

Finally, my wife Jennifer and I wish you a safe, happy summer; and don't forget: you can pick up Travel Alberta Campground Guides, Vacation Guides, and Centennial pins at our office!

****PS: If you know anyone who is celebrating an achievement and/or milestone occasion, please contact us: we may be able to provide scrolls and/or medallions to help celebrate your good news!***