

Friends and colleagues, on behalf of City Council, and the people of Calgary, welcome to our city and welcome to the 2007 AUMA Conference. We are very proud to be your host for this week's meetings.

On a personal note, this is my 7<sup>th</sup> year at the AUMA's conference as Calgary's Mayor, but this year has a very special significance.

We are living in a new era.

In the 1990s, our province was in dire fiscal straights. Massive cuts were not only accepted by municipalities, they were encouraged and supported. Alberta's municipalities shouldered much of the burden when it came to getting our province's books in order. We curtailed our spending, and we put off infrastructure to a day when we could afford it.

But these investments cannot be delayed forever.

As the province's financial health improved, our discussions turned to the need for long-term sustainable funding.

Municipalities across the province, small and large, pressed for infrastructure dollars. We told the Province that municipalities are the pillars which support the Alberta Advantage. We told them we needed sustainability. And we told them that with new dollars we would help build the Alberta of the future.

On September 14<sup>th</sup>, our world changed.

Premier Stelmach delivered on his promise and he gave all of our municipalities what we asked for. 11.3 Billion dollars over 10 years. That is the most significant municipal investment in Alberta's history. It is the largest investment in municipalities in Canadian history.

The Premier and his government deserve our thanks and our support. And by support, I don't mean lip-service. I mean action.

In delivering on his promise, the Premier has placed his trust in all of us. The Municipal Sustainability Initiative carries with it an enormous responsibility. It's now up to us to Build Alberta as we committed - to invest these dollars wisely and strategically.

That is an imperative.

Today, our province enjoys the 3<sup>rd</sup> strongest economy in the world. To sustain that prosperity, we must have communities where people want to live and work. We need to invest in transit and transportation, protective services, water and sewer treatment, housing, recreation and the arts. We must build complete and competitive communities.

That is the purpose of MSI.

But it is also a test of our resolve and credibility. And it is an opportunity. If we are ever to achieve permanent revenue sharing in the future, we must deliver on our promises of today.

We need to demonstrate to senior orders of government that sharing resources with municipalities provides an excellent return on investment.

We need to show the Province that they were right to make this investment.

We must show them that “taking off the strings” and committing to a 10-year program was the right decision.

We must now demonstrate that their trust in us was not misplaced.

Colleagues, it’s up to us. This is no time to be timid. Now is the time to deliver. Now is the time for us, together, to Build Alberta for the future.

Thank you.