

LIFESTYLE

Alberta has a diverse arts and culture community, and numerous organizations provide festivals, events and attractions for Albertans and out-of-province visitors.

Alberta's major cities, Calgary and Edmonton, have vigorous live theatre and visual arts scenes, as well as symphony, opera and ballet.

Throughout the province community-led festivals bring music, dance, film, literature, theatre and the visual arts to Albertans of all ages. In 2006, Arts and culture organizations held over 23,500 events and shows across the province, with total attendance reaching 10.7 million spectators. These events and shows included 59 major festivals, which entertained 2.2 million attendees. A number of these festivals, such as Edmonton's annual Heritage Days, celebrate Alberta's culturally diverse population.

Alberta is home to five of Canada's 13 United Nations World Heritage Sites, areas designated by UNESCO as offering exceptional universal value to humanity.

- They are:
- Dinosaur Provincial Park (fossil beds),
 - Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump (aboriginal culture),
 - Wood Buffalo National Park (wildlife),
 - The Canadian Rocky Mountain Parks (natural splendour), and
 - Waterton Glacier International Peace Park (natural and cultural significance).

There are over 530 parks and protected areas in the province that provide a broad range of recreation and tourism opportunities, from highly developed campgrounds and beach areas to remote backcountry areas. Each year, over eight million visitors experience Alberta's provincial parks and recreation areas.

With 600 lakes, 245 rivers and over 2,300 hours of sunshine, Alberta is the ultimate year-round playground. Enjoy more than 275 golf courses in the summer or, in winter, hit the slopes at the six mountain ski resorts or 66 regional ski hills.

COMPETITIVE BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

The Alberta government's low-tax and fiscal responsibility policies create long-term economic benefits for Albertans. Alberta's international competitiveness and fiscal stewardship form a solid foundation upon which the Government of Alberta's value-added strategy will accelerate the on-going diversification of the province's economy.

With recent tax changes, Alberta has one of the most competitive business tax environments in North America. The Government of Alberta reduced its general corporate income tax rate to 10% in 2006. Effective January 1, 2008, the combined federal/provincial income tax rate will be 29.5%. The Government of Canada is also planning a further phased reduction in the general corporate income tax rate from 19.5% in 2008 to 15% in 2012. The new income tax rates combined with the fact that Alberta has no provincial capital taxes, no payroll taxes, no sales tax, and has a publicly funded health care insurance system makes Alberta's tax environment very competitive.

"For the past five years, Alberta has been the 'engine' of the Canadian economy, driven by investment and output in the energy sector. This trend appears to have at least another five years to run." – **Global Insight, 'The "Alberta Driven" Canadian Economy: The Challenges and Opportunities, September 2007**

"Explosive. Record breaking. Frenzied. Blistering. These are only a sample of words that have been used to describe Alberta's recent economic performance." - **Canada West Foundation, A Little Breathing Room - Alberta Economic Profile and Forecast, June 2007**

"Alberta has had the highest standard of living of any province every year since the early 1980s, and there is no letup in sight. Moreover, its GDP growth has outpaced Canada's overall growth almost every year since 1990, and this strong performance is expected to continue over the medium term." - **Global Insight, Canada: From "Three" Have Provinces to Just One and a Half, August 2007**



Alberta Economic Quick Facts

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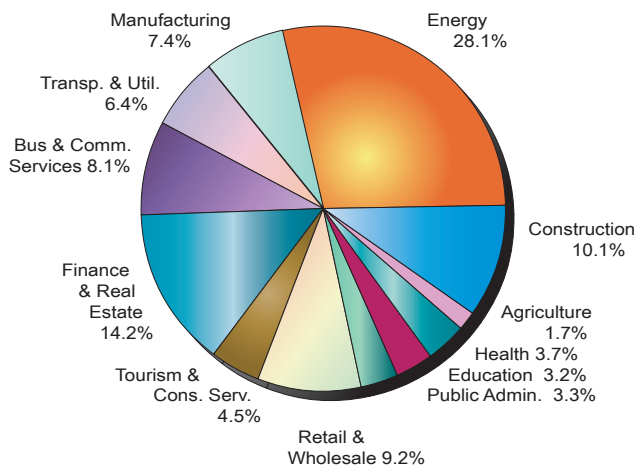


THE ALBERTA ADVANTAGE

Alberta is blessed with an abundance of natural advantages that form the foundation of its thriving economy. The Alberta government has built on this foundation by fostering a positive business climate based on low taxation that attracts investment, creates diversity, and encourages Alberta businesses to compete successfully around the globe. This foundation includes:

- a strong and diversified economy,
- a globally competitive business tax environment,
- an efficient and modern infrastructure,
- strategic access to the North American free trade market and to North Asian markets,
- political stability and low taxes,
- a young, skilled and productive workforce,
- the lowest overall personal taxes in Canada,
- a fiscally responsible government with no net debt,
- a government that understands and works closely with business, and
- safe communities with a superior quality of life and diverse cultures.

Economic Diversity: 2006 Percentage Distribution of GDP

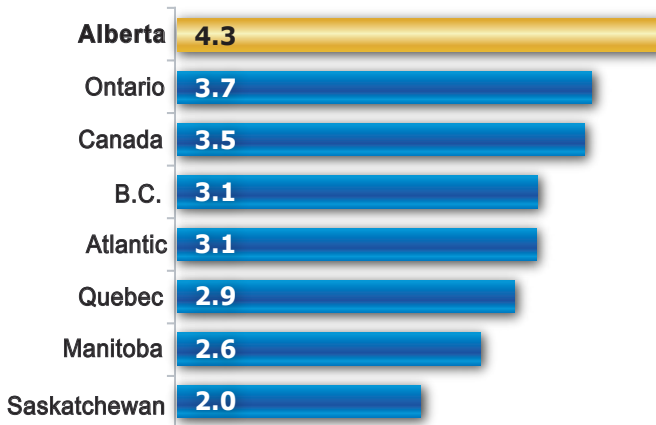


ECONOMIC OVERVIEW

Over the past decade, Alberta has had the highest rate of economic growth at 4.3%. According to Statistics Canada, Alberta's economy grew by a nation leading rate of 6.8% in 2006.

Real Economic Growth 1996 - 2006

Average Annual Growth in GDP (per cent)



Source: Statistics Canada

Economic Indicators

	2005	2006
Investment (million)	\$65,034	\$75,266
Investment per Capita		
Alberta	\$19,842	\$22,296
Canada	\$8,459	\$9,113
Manufacturing Shipments (million)	\$61,955	\$66,358
International Goods Exports (million)	\$80,181	\$82,022
Unemployment Rate		
Alberta	3.9%	3.4%
Canada	6.8%	6.3%
Change in Employment	26,900	86,300
Retail Sales (million)	\$48,493	\$56,047
Consumer Price Index (% change)	2.1%	3.9%
Housing Starts	40,847	48,962

KEY ECONOMIC SECTORS

Alberta's economy continues to thrive on its expanding technology, manufacturing and services sectors. In fact, these activities account for two-thirds of the province's total economic output.

Information, Communications and Technology (ICT) Industries

- Revenues for Alberta's ICT industries totaled approximately \$9.4 billion in 2006.
- The high-speed Alberta SuperNet provides broadband internet access to 429 communities. The SuperNet has the capacity to bring high-speed Internet access to more than 86% of Alberta's population.

Industrial and Consumer Products

- The value of industrial and consumer products manufactured in 2006 totaled \$15.9 billion, more than doubling in the past 10 years.
- The electronics, furniture, plastics, machinery, construction materials and fabricated metals industries continue to diversify Alberta's economy.

Agri-foods

- Manufacturing shipments from the food and beverage industry were valued at \$9.6 billion in 2006.

Energy

- Alberta produces about 81% of Canada's natural gas and 68% of its crude oil.
- Manufacturing shipments of energy-related products (petrochemicals and refined petroleum products) reached \$28.4 billion in 2006.

Forest Products

- Alberta produces \$5.1 billion in forest products.
- With over 300 large and small mills in operation, the industry manufactures products such as lumber, pulp, newsprint, panelboard and secondary wood products.

Tourism

- Alberta offers internationally-recognized destinations, natural scenic beauty and world-renowned national parks.
- The tourism industry generated an estimated \$5.1 billion in revenues in 2005.



ALBERTA, CANADA

Population: 3,473,984 (2007)

Area: 661,000 km²

Edmonton population: 1,050,046 (2006)

Calgary population: 1,107,242 (2006)

Population

Alberta's population grew by 3.1% in 2007, more than tripling the national growth rate of 1.0%. Between July 1, 2006 and July 1, 2007, Alberta's population grew by 103,384 with migration accounting for more than three quarters of this increase.

Cultural Diversity

(various languages spoken in Alberta - 2001 Census)

English	2,907,800	Tagalog	26,310
French	204,800	Polish	24,605
German	100,830	Dutch	23,760
Chinese	94,335	Vietnamese	23,700
Ukrainian	45,410	Cree	22,975
Spanish	44,340	Arabic	22,625
Punjabi	28,465	Hindi	21,495

*These numbers add up to more than the population due to multiple responses.

Strategic Location

Alberta is a part of a western Canadian market of more than 10 million people.

Alberta's proximity to the western United States provides easy access to an overall market topping 60 million people. This includes the ten states westbound from Colorado to the Pacific Coast.

