

MEDIA RELEASE

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New Business Council Aims to Build a More Prosperous Alberta

ALBERTA – Today Alberta’s top business leaders are launching a new non-partisan, non-profit organization – the **Business Council of Alberta** – to boldly meet the challenges facing our province and build a better Alberta within a more dynamic Canada.

“Leaders from across the province have come together, determined to make life better for the people of Alberta,” says **Hal Kvisle**, chairman of Finning International and ARC Resources, and founding chair of the Business Council of Alberta. “Alberta has many strengths – people, resources, infrastructure and environment – and through thoughtful action we can create a future with long-term economic and social prosperity for all Albertans.”

The Council’s work will be initiatives, research and collaborative work focused on the long-term prosperity and attractiveness of Alberta. Topics include skills training, education, environmental protection, resource development, trade, innovation and Canada’s overall investment climate.

AlbertaBETTER

“Business isn’t the only driver of prosperity, but business does have a responsibility and a significant role to play, both economically and socially,” says **Dawn Farrell**, president and chief executive officer TransAlta Corporation, and a founder of the Business Council of Alberta. “That means being a part of building better lives, environment, health, education and better opportunities for everyone. It means building businesses that contribute to the world’s greatest needs, and creating jobs that enable every Albertan to live the life that they aspire to.”

Alberta has been hit hard in the past several years. In recent a poll conducted by Janet Brown Opinion Research, only 17% of people in Alberta feel their household is better off than a year before. According to the 2019 Edelman Trust Barometer, 76% of Canadians want to see businesses take specific actions that improve economic and social conditions in the communities in which they operate, a greater percentage (79%) expect CEOs to take the lead. The Council is launching in response to these urgencies.

The first output of the Council is **AlbertaBETTER**, a vision framework for generating sustainable shared prosperity. The paper is meant to guide the early work of the Council and is based upon input from stakeholders and members. It has three themes:

- **Doing what’s right:** Alberta business is focused on the right things, with a strong commitment to environment, society and good governance (ESG) innovation and leadership, as a means of achieving shared prosperity
- **A model business climate:** Alberta is the place that enables opportunity and innovation, creates jobs, and attracts people and investment
- **The future, on purpose:** An Alberta economy that is adaptive, resilient and thriving, enabling better lives for current and future generations

“We are a world leader in environmental protection and safety. We rank at the highest level for human rights, and among the least corrupt countries in the world,” says **Mac Van Wielingen**,

president and founder of Viewpoint Group and a founder of the Business Council of Alberta. “However, often the opposite impression plays out, which drives away investment. Generating greater prosperity will involve businesses working together to both improve our ESG performance and to verify and communicate related progress.”

AlbertaBETTER is intended as a starting point for further engagement, discussion and collaboration with others as we develop a vision for a better Alberta.

Formative Stage

“The Business Council of Alberta is intentionally launching at a formative stage. We’re looking to begin work across sectors and across traditional boundaries, to forge solutions that will create a strong Alberta for the future,” says **Nancy Southern**, chair and chief executive officer ATCO Group, and a founder of the Business Council of Alberta. “We want to bring all stakeholders to the table – business, government, Indigenous, labour, academic, environment and more – to find areas of commonality that we can pursue together.”

The Council believes these groups and organizations have the same end goal: a good life today and into the future, for the people of Alberta and Canada.

“I’m thrilled to see the Business Council of Alberta’s important vision of business as a force for good. To advance social and economic prosperity in Alberta, we need civil society organizations like ours, government and business to work together,” says **Jeff Loomis**, executive director of Momentum, a community economic development organization. “For example, our training programs work with people to build their skills to achieve a better life – it takes partnerships with Alberta businesses that provide work experience and the jobs to develop and use those skills productively.”

The Council plans to grow membership to include the top ten companies in each of the top ten industries in Alberta, and with representation of business leaders across the province, all committed to working together to help make life better for all Albertans.

“The voice of all types of Alberta business needs to be heard in the complex, fast changing world of today. The voice of business has been absent for many reasons,” says **Ron Mannix**, chairman emeritus of Coril Holdings Ltd. and a founder of the Business Council of Alberta. “That is why the Business Council of Alberta is being built. We must restore the trust and confidence of people in business to help solve the world’s problems. And both government and business must learn to work much better together.”

First Projects

What matters to people is a good job and their own wellbeing, and that’s squarely where the Council’s initial work will be focused. Two of the Council’s first projects will be the establishment of a **Task Force on Skills and Training** and the creation of a new **Prosperity Index**.

The Task Force on Skills and Training is meant to play a coordinating role in helping business, government and education providers to work better together in delivering training needed to ensure all Albertans are able to contribute to their fullest potential – now and into the economy of the future – so they can build a good life for themselves.

The Prosperity Index will measure how well Alberta society is doing at delivering a good life for the greatest number of people. It will take into account social, environmental and economic prosperity factors.

Founders

A group of over 40 chief executives from across Alberta have come together to form the initial Council, inspired by five founders:

- Hal Kvisle, chairman, Finning International; chairman, ARC Resources; corporate director, Cenovus Energy.
- Mac Van Wielingen, founder, ARC Financial; president and founder, Viewpoint Group.
- Ron Mannix, chairman emeritus, Coril Holdings Ltd.
- Nancy Southern, chair and chief executive officer, ATCO Group.
- Dawn Farrell, president and chief executive officer, TransAlta Corporation.

Adam Legge is the founding president of the Business Council of Alberta.

About the Business Council of Alberta

The Business Council of Alberta is a non-partisan, non-profit organization dedicated to building a better Alberta within a more dynamic Canada. Composed of the chief executives and leading entrepreneurs of the province's largest enterprises, Council members are proud to represent the majority of Alberta's private sector investment, job creation, exports and research and development. The Council is committed to working with leaders and stakeholders across Alberta in proposing bold and innovative public policy solutions and initiatives that will make life better for Albertans.

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Attachments:

1. AlbertaBETTER – Vision Paper
2. Janet Brown Research Polling Deck - June 2019

For more information or to schedule an interview, please contact Scott Crockatt, VP Communications and External Relations at 403-681-5529 or scrockatt@businsscouncilab.com

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