

OIL SANDS

# Living in the Region



## our challenge

Rapid expansion of Alberta's oil sands industry has created growth pressures on infrastructure, services and housing in the local communities.

## our actions \*

The provincial and local governments are ensuring future community development occurs in a managed and responsible way. The Alberta government is directing significant funding towards infrastructure so residents can continue to be proud to live, work and raise a family in the region.

## fast facts

- > The majority of Alberta's oil sands deposits are found in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, which is the largest regional municipality in Canada covering more than 68,000 km<sup>2</sup>; about 20 per cent larger than the province of Nova Scotia.
- > Wood Buffalo's population is 104,300; 76,800 live in the region's largest community – Fort McMurray.
- > Fort McMurray is:
  - young – 98 per cent of residents are 64 or younger
  - educated – 64 per cent of residents 25+ have a post-secondary certificate, degree or diploma
  - affluent – median income is \$130,000, the highest of any Canadian city; 67 per cent of households are owner-occupied
- > An estimated 23,000 Aboriginal people live in the oil sands region, with 18 First Nations and 6 Métis Settlements located in these regions.



FAMILIES HAVE ACCESS TO MANY AMENITIES IN FORT MCMURRAY, INCLUDING WESTERN CANADA'S LARGEST MULTI-PURPOSE CENTRE – WHICH INCLUDES AN AQUATICS CENTRE, SKATING ARENAS, CURLING SHEETS, FIELD HOUSES, FITNESS CENTRE, PUBLIC LIBRARY, GOLF COURSE AND MEETING SPACES.

## the community

- > The World Health Organization has designated Wood Buffalo as a safe community.
  - Only six communities in Canada have achieved this international recognition.
- > Fort McMurray alone has nine elementary/junior high schools and three high schools. Among those are a Francophone school and an Islamic school.
- > Keyano College offers a wide range of programming, including university studies and degree completion, business administration, information technology, health, apprenticeship trades and technology, and visual and performing arts.
- > More than 1,500 people volunteer in about 30 community organizations, clubs and religious groups, contributing approximately 80,000 hours of unpaid service.
- > The Wood Buffalo United Way raised more than \$4.4 million in 2009, the highest per capita contributions in Canada for the third year in a row.
- > There are about 180 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members in Wood Buffalo.
- > Air quality in the region is among the most closely monitored anywhere in North America. Air is rated good 99 per cent of the time in Fort McMurray, which is more often than the average Canadian city.
- > Drinking water in all the region's communities consistently meets the Guidelines for Canadian Drinking Water Quality.
- > interPLAY, an annual visual and performing arts festival, attracts more than 20,000 visitors each year with plays, street performers, music, comedy and visual art.
- > Keyano Theatre, a vibrant part of Fort McMurray's arts scene for 30 years, features acclaimed national and international performers.



FORT MCMURRAY SITS AT THE CONFLUENCE OF THE ATHABASCA AND CLEARWATER RIVERS.



WITH THE HELP OF ALBERTA GOVERNMENT FUNDING, NEW NEIGHBOURHOODS ARE CURRENTLY BEING BUILT IN FORT MCMURRAY TO EASE GROWTH PRESSURES.

## infrastructure

- > The Alberta government has recently committed about \$1.6 billion into infrastructure projects in the region. Major projects include:
  - \$650 million in various road construction projects, including twinning Highway 63 – the 240 km long highway leading to Fort McMurray, and a new five-lane bridge and two interchanges in Fort McMurray.
  - \$241 million to develop new neighbourhoods in Fort McMurray, which will include single family and multi-family homes, schools, health clinics, recreational facilities, parks, emergency services and commercial areas.
  - \$103 million for a new wastewater treatment plant and to upgrade the existing water treatment plant in Fort McMurray.

## planning for the future

- > The province's 20-year strategic plan for the oil sands, *Responsible Actions*, was released in 2009. It outlines an integrated approach for all levels of government, for industry and for communities to address the economic, social and environmental challenges and opportunities in the oil sands region.
- > Comprehensive Regional Infrastructure Sustainability Plans (CRISP) address long-term and collaborative infrastructure planning in the oil sands regions based on possible future oil sands production rates and population growth.
- > Developing a CRISP for the Athabasca Oil Sands area is underway; CRISPs for two other areas are planned.