

About the region and the residents

- Located in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo, Fort McMurray is the largest urban community serving the Athabasca oil sands region of northeastern Alberta.
- Fort McMurray is a thriving and vibrant community nestled in the boreal forest at the confluence of the Clearwater and Athabasca rivers.
- The Wood Buffalo area is rich in outdoor adventure opportunities and is a world-renowned location to enjoy the Northern Lights (*Aurora Borealis*).
- The 2010 municipal census reports:
 - The population of the regional municipality is approximately 104,338.
 - This represents a 1% population growth between 2008 and 2010 – an additional 1,004 residents.
 - The Urban Service Area (Fort McMurray) experienced 6.1% population growth, increasing from 72,363 to 76,797 people between 2008 and 2010.
 - It is a young community with approximately 98% of residents being 64 years of age or younger; the largest census age group is 25 to 44 (41.8%). The majority of households (66.7%) are owner-occupied.
- The 2006 federal census reports that:
 - it is an educated community – 64% of residents 25 or older have a post-secondary certificate, degree or diploma.
 - it is also an affluent community – the median income is \$130,000.

Strong sense of community

- In November 2010, the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo (RMWB) received its third re-designation as a Safe Community by the World Health Organization (WHO). In 1995, as a result of this regional commitment to a safe and healthy community, the RMWB was the first North American community to receive WHO designation.
- The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo is home to the more than 44,000-square kilometre Wood Buffalo National Park, a UNESCO site.
- More than 1,500 people volunteer in about 30 community organizations, clubs and religious groups, contributing approximately 80,000 hours of unpaid service.
- Fort McMurray residents have access to seven public indoor sports and fitness facilities, 21 outdoor sports fields, three golf courses, a skateboard park, five water parks, 19 playgrounds and several tennis courts. In the immediate area, there are four vehicle-accessible campgrounds (one a provincial park and three provincial recreation areas), 11 wildland provincial parks and four fly-in fishing lodges.
- Keyano College in Fort McMurray is a post-secondary institution offering 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. The college offers customized credit and non-credit programming to meet labour market needs of the oil sands and construction industries.

- Fort McMurray is home to MacDonald Island, Alberta's largest multi-use recreational facility.
- There are about 180 Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) members in the Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo. The RCMP act as a municipal and provincial police service in the municipality.
- Ten Traffic Sheriffs patrol the highways around Fort McMurray and another six Sheriffs are stationed in Boyle. These 16 Sheriffs, along with RCMP, do traffic enforcement on Highway 63.

Infrastructure

- There have been significant growth pressures on infrastructure and services in the Wood Buffalo area. The province is working with communities and industry to ensure future development occurs in a managed and responsible way.
- The province is developing new affordable housing in Fort McMurray, complete with new homes and community facilities, complemented by schools, health clinics, recreational facilities and parks.
 - \$241 million was provided for off-site infrastructure to support growth on Southlands (formally known as the Saline Creek Plateau) for residential and commercial spaces as well as onsite development for Parsons Creek.
 - The Alberta government is investing \$166 million to develop the first phase of Parsons Creek. Proceeds from the land sales will be re-invested in the community by the Alberta government as schools, roads and other infrastructure are developed.
 - When fully developed, Parsons Creek will include residential, commercial, community and health services, schools and recreation facilities and will provide housing for approximately 24,000 residents, including affordable housing. Phase One will create more than 2,000 homes for 6,500 residents. Parsons Creek will include single family and multi-family homes, schools, health clinics, recreational facilities, parks, emergency services, shopping and general business activities.
 - The first five parcels of land in what will become Parsons Creek community were released for sale to developers in January 2011, a full year ahead of schedule. Development in the parcels is expected to be completed in about two years. These first 135 acres are expected to provide an estimated 1,000 homes for approximately 3,000 residents.
- The Government of Alberta has invested more than \$650 million in various construction projects including twinning, paving and widening on Highway 63, the highway between Edmonton and Fort McMurray. Overall, the cost of twinning the 240-kilometres of Highway 63 is approximately \$1 billion.
 - Work also continues on two other critical transportation projects: a new five-lane bridge across the Athabasca River, as well as two new interchanges in Fort McMurray.
 - The Government of Alberta recently provided \$103 million to support a new wastewater treatment plant and to upgrade the existing water treatment plant in Fort McMurray.
- The province is developing a Comprehensive Regional Infrastructure Sustainability Plan for the Athabasca Oil Sands Area.
 - These plans are a new long-term and collaborative approach to planning infrastructure in Alberta's three oil sands areas.
 - Each plan will establish a long-term blueprint for future infrastructure development based on possible future oil sands production rates and associated population growth, and will enhance the way provincial and municipal governments work and plan together.
 - The draft plan for the Athabasca Oil Sands area will be completed by the end of June.

Community and environmental health

- The Government of Alberta is increasing access to health care through:
 - plans to build a new community health clinic;
 - expanding emergency and ambulatory care departments at the Northern Lights Regional Health Centre;
 - developing a 16-bed residential treatment facility for addictions services; and
 - developing a new 100-bed continuing care facility.
- Air quality is monitored 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Monitoring since 1995 shows improved or no change in long-term air quality for carbon monoxide, ozone, fine particulate matter and sulphur dioxide. Nitrogen dioxide, however, shows an increasing trend.

For more information, visit www.oilsands.alberta.ca

February 2011