
News Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
March 5, 2007

New aquatic centre and improved driver safety for the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County

Whitecourt, Alberta – Residents of the Town of Whitecourt and Woodlands County will benefit from two municipal infrastructure projects that will offer increased recreational opportunities and improved road safety.

A combined federal/provincial investment of \$2.1 million towards a new aquatic centre as part of the Whitecourt Woodlands Multi-Use Facility will offer increased recreational opportunities to families and other users. The new aquatic facility will replace the existing pool, which was constructed in 1975, and will be fully accessible to individuals with disabilities.

A combined federal/provincial investment of \$2.2 million towards upgrading the Old Blue Ridge Highway in Woodlands County will improve driver safety and reduce maintenance costs. The upgraded highway is also expected to reduce travel distance by ensuring a direct transportation link between Whitecourt and the oil and gas industry.

Through the Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CAMRIF), the federal and provincial governments will each contribute a total of more than \$2 million to the two projects.

Rob Merrifield, Member of Parliament for Yellowhead, on behalf of the Honourable Rona Ambrose, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Minister of Western Economic Diversification, and George VanderBurg, MLA for Whitecourt–Ste. Anne, on behalf of the Honourable Luke Ouellette, Minister of Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, made the joint announcement today.

“Canada’s New Government is getting things done for the people of Whitecourt and Woodlands County,” said MP Merrifield. “Today’s investment of \$4.3 million will improve the quality of life for residents by providing better, more accessible recreational opportunities and improved driving conditions.”

“A new aquatic centre will have a positive impact on Whitecourt’s quality of life, and upgrading the Old Blue Ridge Highway will help manage growth pressures by improving access to areas where resource extraction is taking place,” said MLA VanderBurg. “Managing growth pressures and improving Albertans’ quality of life are two of the five government priorities identified by Premier Stelmach.”

The Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund is a joint initiative between the Governments of Canada and Alberta that enables communities to address local infrastructure needs. Over the course of CAMRIF, the federal and provincial governments will each contribute \$88 million in funding for municipal infrastructure renewal.

A minimum of 55 per cent of funding under CAMRIF targets green infrastructure projects that contribute to community economic development and environmental quality of life. These include water, wastewater, solid waste, environmental energy improvements and public transit. The fund also invests in recreational infrastructure, tourism and cultural projects, local roads and broadband connectivity. Projects are selected on a competitive basis from applications received from Alberta communities.

-30-

Contacts:

Donna Kinley
Communications Manager
Western Economic Diversification
Canada
Edmonton, Alberta
Tel: (708) 495-6892

Jerry Bellikka
Communications Director
Alberta Infrastructure and
Transportation
Edmonton, Alberta
Tel: (780) 415-1841

Backgrounder

Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CAMRIF)

The following projects are receiving funding under the Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CAMRIF).

Town of Whitecourt

Whitecourt Woodlands Multi-Use Facility (Construction of a new aquatic centre)

Combined federal/provincial investment: \$2,101,839 (pending environmental assessment)

This project will provide the residents of Whitecourt and Woodlands County with an aquatic centre as part of the Whitecourt Woodlands multi-use facility. The aquatic centre will be housed in a 32,000 sq. foot pre-engineered building and will feature a 25-metre six-lane pool, and other amenities. The centre is expected to open in March 2008.

Woodlands County

Old Blue Ridge Highway Upgrade (or TWP RD 594) – Phase One

Combined federal/provincial investment: \$2,200,000 (pending environmental assessment)

This project will upgrade the roadway in order to improve the overall safety for drivers and reduce the constant maintenance required by the gravel surface. The Old Blue Ridge Highway is the most heavily used highway in the County with the highest annual maintenance cost.

Fact Sheet

Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CAMRIF)

Partnership Program

- The Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CAMRIF) is designed to address local infrastructure needs in rural and urban Alberta. It ensures all Albertans, whether they live in large, small or remote communities, share in the benefits of infrastructure investments.
- Through the fund, the Governments of Canada and Alberta invest in local infrastructure projects. These projects are vital to sustaining strong economic growth and quality of life in Canadian communities.
- The federal-provincial CAMRIF Agreement provides \$88 million each in federal and provincial funding for municipal infrastructure renewal, reflecting shared federal and provincial priorities. With matching one-third contributions from municipalities, total program funding will be at least \$264 million.
- CAMRIF is implemented by Western Economic Diversification Canada and Alberta Infrastructure and Transportation, and is administered by a joint secretariat.

Program Priorities

- A minimum of 55 per cent of funding under CAMRIF targets green infrastructure projects that contribute to community economic development and environmental quality of life. These include water, wastewater, solid waste, environmental energy improvements and public transit. The fund also invests in recreational infrastructure, tourism and cultural projects, local roads and broadband connectivity.
- At least 80 per cent of CAMRIF funding is dedicated to rural municipalities with a population of less than 250,000. The remaining 20 per cent is available to urban municipalities with a population greater than 250,000.
- A total of \$1,760,000 is also available to municipalities for Municipal Capacity Building (MCB) projects. Projects may include, but is not limited to, the acquisition of infrastructure planning software, training to use that software, planning studies to determine the inventory and condition of infrastructure assets in the municipality or the development of a demand asset management system.

Local input and collaboration

- CAMRIF is managed by a six member Management Committee consisting of two federal representatives, two provincial representatives, and two members representing Alberta's municipal associations—the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association and the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties. The Management Committee develops the Management Committee guidelines and oversees the project review and selection process. Projects are selected on a competitive basis from applications received from Alberta communities. The deadline to submit applications for the first intake was July 31, 2006.
- Applications for the second intake will be accepted in Spring 2007.

Environmental Assessment

- CAMRIF projects are required to successfully complete applicable environmental assessment processes, and funding is conditional on compliance with all applicable federal and provincial requirements.

How to apply

- For more information, contact the Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund Joint Secretariat by phone (toll free) at 1-800-396-0214, by e-mail at camrif@gov.ab.ca or visit the website www.camrif.ca.
- Information about Government of Canada and Alberta's infrastructure programs is available at www.infrastructure.gc.ca and www.infratrans.gov.ab.ca.