

# Final Report

Minister Gary Mar's Mission to Washington, D.C.

June 25-July 9, 2006

## Overview:

In the summer of 2006, for the first time in its 40-year history, the prestigious Smithsonian Folklife Festival featured a Canadian jurisdiction – Alberta. The Folklife Festival is an annual event that attracts one million visitors to the National Mall in the heart of Washington. It covers a ten square block area between the Capitol Building and the Washington Monument, just blocks from the White House. From June 30 to July 11, more than 150 participants from across Alberta demonstrated our province's performing arts, cuisine, aboriginal culture, and technology at the festival.

Leading up to the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, Gary Mar, Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations, participated in a delegation of Alberta Cabinet Ministers, led by Premier Ralph Klein, on a mission to Washington for *Alberta Week in Washington*. Building upon Alberta's \$71 billion per year trading relationship with the United States and the Alberta focus of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, the goal of *Alberta Week in Washington* was to provide U.S. policy-makers with an understanding of Alberta's perspective on important issues in areas such as energy and agriculture, and to help Albertans expand their network of contacts in the U.S. capital. Highlights included meetings and events with key Congressional and Administration officials and economic forums that provided an opportunity to showcase Alberta's energy, information communications technology, and agriculture industries, and Canada-U.S. relations. About 650 guests, including U.S. elected officials and Capitol Hill staffers, also attended an Alberta Gala at the National Building Museum that honoured the Smithsonian Board of Regents.

The mission was successful in meeting its objectives as outlined below.

## Mission Objectives:

- 1) Support and enhance the profile of *Alberta Week in Washington* (June 26-July 1) and the Alberta exhibit at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival (June 30-July 11).
- 2) Use the profile Alberta will have in Washington to reinforce our key messages in the U.S.
- 3) Take advantage of Alberta's presence in Washington, D.C. to expand the number and quality of contacts with key U.S. decision-makers.
- 4) Promote a well-rounded view of Alberta, one that accurately portrays the richness and diversity of our geography, culture and economy.

## **Results:**

### **June 25**

Following his arrival in Washington, D.C., Minister Mar attended a kick-off reception at the residence of Murray Smith, Alberta's Representative in Washington. In attendance were Smithsonian representatives, and Alberta and Canadian Embassy officials who would be working together on *Alberta Week in Washington* initiatives.

### **June 26**

Minister Mar met with Michael Wilson, Canada's Ambassador to the United States to review the upcoming *Alberta Week in Washington* and *Alberta at the Smithsonian* activities. They also reviewed other Canada-U.S. issues of importance to Alberta, including:

- ongoing softwood lumber negotiations;
- the role of the Alberta Office in Washington in the Canadian Embassy;
- planned advocacy initiatives by Canada and Alberta; and
- activities and plans regarding the U.S. Western Hemisphere Travel Initiative.

Later, the Minister attended the official opening of the *All About Alberta* craft exhibition in the Canadian Embassy Gallery and the City of Edmonton's *A Gathering of Energy* reception, the opening events of *Alberta Week in Washington*.

Minister Mar was hosted at a dinner meeting by Colin Robertson, Minister (Advocacy) and Head of the Washington Secretariat at the Canadian Embassy. They discussed the work undertaken by the Alberta Office and how it has been integrated to enhance the Embassy's advocacy efforts. Former Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan was also in attendance.

### **June 27**

Minister Mar met with Alberta's legal counsel in Washington to review developments surrounding Canada-U.S. softwood lumber negotiations and agriculture issues.

Minister Mar then participated in the *New Leadership in U.S.-Canada Relations: Leveraging Federalism to Manage North American Integration* conference. The Minister spoke as a part of a panel on *The Growing Role of States and Provinces in U.S.-Canada Relations*, along with two former U.S. Ambassadors to Canada and the Washington-based former Canadian deputy Prime Minister, Anne McLellan. The conference was organized by the Center for Strategic and International Studies and the University of Alberta.

Minister Mar participated in Premier Klein's meeting with Senator Pete Domenici (R-NM), Chair of the Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee. Discussions centered on Alberta's oil sands and the province's growing role as a safe and secure supplier of energy to the United States.

Following the meeting, Minister Mar joined Premier Klein at a Congressional reception for Alberta sponsored by 49 members of Congress who served as honorary co-hosts. More than 350 guests, including key business leaders in the energy sector, Alberta partners and sponsors, Congressional staffers, and members of the Canadian-American Business Council attended. The reception was an excellent opportunity to network and introduce *Alberta Week in Washington* to a distinguished group of U.S. Congressional and business leaders.

Minister Mar later provided welcoming remarks on behalf of the Government of Alberta to delegates from the U.S., Mexico and Canada at a welcoming reception for the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

### **June 28**

Focusing on Alberta's commitment to the environment, Minister Mar provided remarks at the opening of the 13<sup>th</sup> Regular Session of the NAFTA Commission for Environmental Cooperation.

Minister Mar attended the energy forum at the Canadian Embassy – *North American Energy Security Public Sector-Private Sector Dialogue*. More than 160 invited participants took in the forum, which included a CEO-level roundtable discussion. The 24 senior U.S. and Canadian policy makers and business leaders around the table reviewed North America's energy situation as it relates to national security and a secure and reliable supply. The roundtable demonstrated to U.S. policy makers that Alberta will play a key strategic role in North American energy security. The discussion also generated suggestions to U.S. policy makers, including two Senators and a U.S. Congresswoman, on measures they can undertake to allow Alberta to play an even larger role in North American energy security.

Minister Mar was part of the Alberta delegation, led by Premier Klein, at a State Department luncheon, in the prestigious Benjamin Franklin room, hosted by the U.S. Assistant Secretary of State. Premier Klein delivered remarks reinforcing Alberta's role in North American energy security.

Minister Mar participated with Premier Klein in a courtesy call on U.S. Vice President Dick Cheney. The Vice President was updated on Alberta's energy situation and invited to visit Alberta to see the resources first hand.

That evening, Minister Mar participated, as part of the Alberta delegation led by Premier Klein, in a reception for senior U.S. officials, and Alberta's sponsors and partners in *Alberta Week in Washington*. The Minister then delivered grace at the Alberta Gala that honoured the Smithsonian Board of Regents, which was attended by 650 guests.

## **June 29**

Minister Mar represented Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations at the luncheon following the *Forum on North American Agricultural Interdependence* at the Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars. Keynote speakers included Premier Klein and Bob Goodlatte, Chair of the House Committee on Agriculture.

Thereafter, Minister Mar met with Doug Horner, Alberta Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, to brief him on trade policy developments prior to Minister Horner's departure for World Trade Organization meetings in Geneva.

That evening, Minister Mar participated, as part of the Alberta delegation led by Premier Klein, in the *Partnerships Across Borders* event at the Kennedy Center hosted by Alberta Universities. Premier Klein announced a \$300,000 internship program for 50 Alberta students at Smithsonian institutions.

Minister Mar also attended the City of Calgary's premiere event in Washington – the *Yes, It's Calgary* reception held at the Canadian Embassy. The reception built upon relationships with senior officials from U.S. national organizations headquartered in Washington and promoted Calgary's convention facilities to meeting planners.

## **June 30**

As part of the official Alberta delegation led by Premier Klein, Minister Mar attended the opening ceremonies for the Smithsonian Folklife Festival. He then emceed the Alberta luncheon hosted by the Deputy Premier at the Canadian Embassy. The event was sponsored by Encana and included the Alberta sponsors, ministers and officials who had contributed to the success of *Alberta Week in Washington*. The Deputy Premier noted that the week had gone extremely well and exceeded her expectations of the impact Alberta could make in Washington.

Minister Mar then attended an Alberta Foundation for the Arts networking event, broadening Alberta's contacts among the Washington, DC arts community.

## **July 1**

On Canada Day, Minister Mar co-hosted, along with the Canadian Ambassador to the U.S. and the Mayor of Calgary, a Stampede breakfast on the grounds of the Canadian Embassy. The event, the most successful Canada Day celebrations ever at the Canadian Embassy, attracted about 4000 expatriate Canadians and American friends of Canada.

Minister Mar participated in a panel at the Folklife Festival on urban Alberta and later attended Alberta's Canada Day concert on the National Mall.

## **July 2**

Minister Mar was the featured chef in a cooking demonstration as part of the foodways exhibit at the Folklife Festival. The Minister also toured the site and talked with the curator of the Alberta portion of the festival and met with Alberta participants.

**July 4**

Minister Mar co-hosted, with Ambassador Wilson and Enbridge, a reception on the rooftop of the Canadian Embassy celebrating Independence Day. Numerous influential American and Canadian guests, including the Chair of the U.S. Federal Energy Regulatory Commission, attended the event. It featured Alberta food and Alberta entertainment.

**July 7 and 8**

Minister Mar represented Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations on the grounds of the Smithsonian Folklife Festival and talked with festival participants and attendees about their insights into the overall success of Alberta's participation. He conducted a number of media interviews promoting Alberta's participation in the Smithsonian Folklife Festival, and participated in the preparation of a video documenting Alberta's participation.

**Delegation:**

Gary Mar, Minister of Alberta International and Intergovernmental Relations  
Douglas Mills, Executive Assistant to the Minister

*Attachment:*

*Full report on Alberta Week in Washington activities.*