

# Final Report

## Minister Renner's Mission to Japan

### June 29-July 7, 2005



#### **Mission Overview and Objectives**

The Honourable Rob Renner, Minister of Municipal Affairs, represented the Government of Alberta at events marking two significant milestones in Alberta-Japan relations: the 25th anniversary of Alberta's twinning with Hokkaido Prefecture, and the 35th anniversary of Alberta's Japan office.

During the mission to Japan, Mr. Renner renewed the Alberta-Hokkaido Volunteerism Exchange Agreement, promoted Alberta beef at a Canada food fair in Sapporo, represented Alberta at the Canada Day reception at the World Exposition in Aichi and explored best practices in Japan's municipal governance model and emergency preparedness measures. The mission demonstrated to Mr. Renner that the twinning relationship has been very worthwhile and beneficial to both Alberta and Hokkaido.

A 22-member group representing Stony Plain, Wetaskiwin, Barrhead and Bon Accord joined Mr. Renner's delegation. These towns and cities are twinned with Shikaoi, Ashoro, Tokoro and Kamitakara in Japan respectively.

Alberta-Hokkaido relations started in 1972 with an Alberta government economic mission to Japan. The two regions formally became sister provinces in 1980. Alberta and Hokkaido share similarities, including a strong agriculture sector, northern climate, mountainous topography and pioneer spirit.

Over the last 25 years, Alberta and Hokkaido have established a solid relationship based on mutually beneficial people-to-people exchanges in such areas as student and teacher training, sports and agriculture. Eighteen Alberta municipalities are twinned with Japanese towns and cities. Annual Alberta exports to Hokkaido are estimated at C\$60 million.

This milestone in Alberta's twinning with Hokkaido sets the agenda for future cooperation and strengthens both jurisdictions' commitment to closer ties. Commitments were made for continued cooperation in volunteerism, sports and museums. Both sides jointly encouraged municipal twinings and their associated activities.

Mr. Renner's visit will be reciprocated by a Hokkaido delegation in October 2005, capping off the 25th anniversary of the Alberta-Hokkaido twinning. The Hokkaido delegation is expected to be led by its Vice-Governor, accompanied by representatives of Hokkaido municipalities.

**Program and Results**

<b>Date</b>	<b>Program, Results</b>
Wed, June 29	Departed Edmonton for Nagoya (arrived Thu, June 30)
Fri, July 1	<b>Aichi World Exposition, Nagoya</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Visited Canadian and other pavilions</li> <li>▪ Delivered speech at Canada Day reception at Canadian pavilion hosted by Commissioner-General</li> </ul>
Sat, July 2	Departed Nagoya for Sapporo <b>Ainu Cultural Village, Shiraoui Town</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Gained understanding of history of Hokkaido's aboriginal population</li> </ul>
Sun, July 3	<b>Canada Food Fair, Sapporo</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Officially opened and spoke at fair showcasing Albertan and Canadian food products</li> <li>▪ Attracted local media attention</li> <li>▪ Opportunity to highlight quality of Alberta food producers</li> </ul>
Mon, July 4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Met with representatives of Alberta's twinned towns</li> <li>▪ Received update about, and discussed, Hokkaido government reforms</li> </ul> <b>Alberta-Hokkaido Twinning's 25th Anniversary</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Officially opened commemorative Alberta-Hokkaido display</li> <li>▪ Signed volunteerism agreement</li> <li>▪ Delivered speech on state of Alberta-Hokkaido relations</li> <li>▪ Met with Hokkaido Governor Harumi Takahashi, extended Premier Klein's invitation to Centennial celebrations and discussed future of Alberta-Hokkaido cooperation</li> </ul>
Tue, July 5	Departed Sapporo for Tokyo
Wed, July 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Met with Alberta Japan Office staff</li> <li>▪ Met with Canadian Ambassador to Japan Robert Wright to discuss Canada/Alberta-Japan relations, including progress on reopening Japanese border to beef trade</li> <li>▪ Met with Tokyo Metropolitan Government officials to review their emergency preparedness measures and effect of Japanese local government reforms</li> <li>▪ Hosted Alberta Japan Office's 35th anniversary reception and met key clients and contacts for Alberta in Japan</li> </ul>
Thu, July 7	Departed Tokyo for Alberta

**Official Delegation**

- Honourable Rob Renner, Minister of Municipal Affairs
- Richard Westlund, Executive Assistant to the Minister