

# Saxony – Alberta Relations

International, Intergovernmental  
and Aboriginal Relations

Alberta



## PROFILE

**Capital:** Dresden

**Major Centres:** Dresden, Leipzig, Chemnitz

**Population:** 4.27 million (2005)

**Language:** German

**Government:** Elected Landtag

**Head of Government:** The Honourable Prof. Dr. Georg Milbradt, Minister-President of the Free State of Saxony

**Currency:** Euro (€),  
\$1CDN = € 0.69 (May 2007)

**GDP:** US\$107.25 billion (€85.8 billion)  
(2005)

**GDP per Capita:** US\$20,033 (€17,774)  
(2005)

**GDP Growth:** 4% (2006)

**Unemployment:** 18.9% (2006)

**Key Industry Sectors:** engineering, high technology, publishing and porcelain factories

**Twinning Relationships:** Saxony is twinned with Wojewodschaft Lower Silesia (Poland), Brittany (France), the Czech Republic and Slovakia.

## MAJOR CENTRES

### Dresden

- Dresden (pop. 495,300) is a major centre for high tech manufacturing, transportation, and culture.
- Dresden is a major port on the river Elbe.

### Leipzig

- Leipzig (pop. 502,300) is noted for its bi-annual trade fairs that bring thousands of visitors into the city.
- Manufacturing industries around Leipzig include printing equipment, precision instruments, textiles, beer and musical instruments.

### Chemnitz

- Chemnitz (pop. 246,300) is a transportation hub and an expanding industrial centre.
- Major industries around Chemnitz include light and heavy engineering, textiles and chemicals.

## DID YOU KNOW?

- Saxony is the most densely populated region in Eastern Germany with 232 inhabitants per square kilometre.
- As a result of its traditional trade relations with Eastern Europe, Saxony is a hub for trade between Eastern Europe and the European Union.
- Saxony has the highest concentration of research institutes in Germany (particularly Fraunhofer, Max Planck and Leibnitz) with strong ties to industry.

## RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Alberta signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the state of Saxony in February 2002. The agreement was renewed for a further 3 years in 2005.
- In late 2004, Edmonton and Leipzig signed a "Trade Cities" agreement to promote increased economic linkages and investment between the two municipalities.
- In April 2005, the City and County of Leduc twinned with the town of Grimma, Saxony.
- The [German-Canadian Business & Professional Association of Alberta](#) is working with Saxony Economic Development to make Saxon high-technology in the areas of medicine and mechanical engineering available to Canadian companies.
- Alberta has focused on Saxony to attract skilled workers and entrepreneurs interested in working in Alberta through the Provincial Nominee Program (PNP).
- In 2002, Alberta's Wild Rose Foundation provided \$25,000 to the German-Canadian Business & Professional Association of Alberta as emergency disaster relief funding to assist victims of the severe flooding that devastated parts of Saxony.

## Science and Technology

- Saxony and the National Institute of Nanotechnology (NINT), based at the U of A, are exploring ways the two regions could collaborate in research areas such as nanolayers, nanomaterials and nanobiotechnology.
- Research institutes in Dresden and the NINT will look to facilitate an exchange of researchers and students.
- Cooperation is being explored between BioSaxony and the Visual Genomic Centre at the University of Calgary.
- Saxony and Alberta are working together in areas such as sharing expertise in animal testing, including BSE.
- Alberta Research Council President visited Saxony in May 2003 to explore cooperation in clean coal technology and research.

## ENERGY

- Saxony boasts the world's most advanced lignite (brown coal) power stations.
- The first German power exchange, Leipzig Power Exchange (LPX) opened in 2000, and has since become the largest in Europe.

## EDUCATION AND CULTURE

- German is an important language in Alberta schools, with classes taught from the kindergarten to university levels.
- Ten Alberta principals and teachers were involved in the Saxony/Alberta Job-Shadow Exchange, in Saxony in April 2005. Educators from Saxony were in Alberta schools for three weeks in October 2004.
- In February 2004, Alberta Education and the Saxon Ministry of Education signed an agreement to facilitate teacher exchanges, school partnerships, and language assistant programs.
- In 2004, the University of Calgary and the Technical Universities in Dresden, Chemnitz, and Freiberg, signed cooperation agreements in the field of engineering.
- In May 2003, the University of Alberta and the University of Calgary's Executive MBA stopped in Dresden as part of their European Study Tour.

- The University of Alberta has agreements with the top two universities in Saxony. An agreement was signed with the Technical University of Dresden in 2002 for an exchange in the field of dentistry. In June 2005 a comprehensive agreement was signed with the University of Leipzig aimed at increasing research collaboration and student exchange opportunities.

## ECONOMY

- Saxony has a long industrial tradition. The most important industrial sectors include: automotive; food and drink; metal production and processing and metal products; mechanical engineering; electrical engineering; precision mechanics and optics.
- International companies such as AMD, Infineon, Siltronic and Applied Materials have settled in Saxony which has become a leading centre for microelectronics. The semiconductor industry, with around 200 companies and more than 20,000 workers, has become an important pillar of the Saxon economy.
- In 2000, the Saxon government implemented a Biotechnology offensive, since which this sector – primarily red biotechnology (biotechnology applied to medical processes) – has experienced and continues to experience very dynamic growth. Saxony is also a leading European centre for nanotechnology, especially nanoelectronics, nanomaterials/surfaces and nanobiotechnology.
- Areas in the service sector such as banking, insurance and the hotel/catering industry are growing in importance. 70% of the workforce is employed in the service sector.
- Around 56% of the total state territory is used for agricultural purposes, with dairy farming providing the largest source of income for farmers in the region.

## RECENT VISITS

- April 2007: Minister of Employment, Immigration and Industry met with Saxony officials while in Germany.
- March 2006: a delegation of firms from Alberta and other regions of Canada held a job fair in Leipzig to meet with skilled workers who were seeking international experience in their fields of expertise.

- November / December 2005: The Nanotechnology Mission to Dresden, Berlin and Munich consisted of 14 participants from seven companies and institutions (representatives from NINT, U of A, Alberta Innovation and Science, the City of Edmonton, AED and several firms) to facilitate high level discussions with nanotechnology experts at research facilities and companies in Dresden and to participate in the NanoFair, Dresden, which had 250 registered delegates. The Alberta delegation was the largest individual delegation at the conference.
- September 2005: Leduc County led a mission to its sister-city of Grimma.
- September 2005: Dr. Horst Metz, Saxon Minister of Finance visited Alberta in honour of our Centennial.
- April 2005: Mayor of Grimma visited Alberta to sign a partnership agreement with the City and County of Leduc.
- February 2004: Visit to Alberta of the Hon. Prof. Dr. Karl Mannsfeld, Deputy Minister-President of Saxony and Minister of Education to sign education agreement.
- Since February 2002, when Premier Klein and Economic Development Minister Norris met with Saxon Minister-President Biedenkopf to sign the Alberta-Saxony MOU, Alberta has had a number of high level visits to Saxony to discuss areas of mutual interest:
  - January 2005 - Minister of Economic Development, Clint Dunford.
  - May 2004 - Learning Deputy Minister, Maria David-Evans.
  - July 2003 - Alberta Speaker of the House, the Honourable Ken Kowalski.
  - July 2003 - Economic Development Assistant Deputy Minister, Rory Campbell.
  - June 2003 - Alberta International & Intergovernmental Relations Minister, Halvar Jonson.
  - November 2002 - Alberta Learning Deputy Minister, Maria David-Evans.
- September 2002: Mr. Bill Smith, Mayor of Edmonton visited Saxony during his Mission to Germany as part of the city's Project Germany.