

Final Report

Mission to Washington, D.C.

**Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA Vermilion-Lloydminster, Chair of the
Standing Policy Committee on Agriculture and Municipal Affairs
July 3-10, 2006**

**Janis Tarchuk, MLA Banff-Cochrane, Chair of the Standing Policy Committee on
Economic Development and Finance
July 3-10, 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, Alberta Premier Ralph Klein led a delegation of Alberta Cabinet Ministers to Washington for *Alberta Week in Washington*. Another group of elected officials, including MLAs Lloyd Snelgrove and Janis Tarchuk, arrived thereafter to represent Alberta at Smithsonian Folklife Festival events.

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, 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 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:

July 4

MLAs Snelgrove and Tarchuk were part of the Alberta delegation that attended an evening reception celebrating U.S. Independence Day, sponsored by Enbridge at the Canadian Embassy. More than 300 people were present including Canadian Ambassador Michael Wilson, Embassy officials, key Washington officials, and industry representatives. The reception also featured Alberta Folklife Festival performers and a “Best of Alberta” buffet meal.

July 5

MLAs Snelgrove and Tarchuk attended the Alberta exhibits on the National Mall in Washington and participated in a Smithsonian Associates lecture on the Royal Canadian Mounted Police.

July 6

The MLAs met with Canadian Embassy officials and reviewed Canada-U.S. agricultural trade issues. MLA Snelgrove later met with officials from the U.S. Department of Agriculture to discuss bio-diesel and rural development issues.

MLAs Tarchuk and Snelgrove met with Murray Smith, Alberta’s Representative in Washington, to discuss Alberta-U.S. relations.

July 7

MLAs Snelgrove and Tarchuk met with representatives from the National Conference of State Legislators (NCSL). The NCSL is a bipartisan organization that serves the legislators and staffs of the 50 U.S. states, its commonwealths and territories. It provides research, technical assistance and opportunities for policymakers to exchange ideas on state issues, and is an advocate for the interests of state governments before Congress and federal agencies.

July 8

MLA Tarchuk participated in a live Supernet exchange between visitors to the Folklife Festival on the National Mall in Washington and students at the Banff Centre in Alberta. The Supernet exhibit on the Mall was an extremely popular, high-tech way for Albertans and visitors to the Folklife Festival to get to know each other better.

Later, both MLAs represented Alberta at the Travel Alberta *From Our Family to Yours* tourism promotion and reception at Washington D.C.’s Union Station and on the National Mall festival site. About 100 U.S. east coast professional organizers from the Meetings, Conferences and Incentive Travel Association, travel writers, and their families were hosted to an afternoon of family activities, including a tour of the Alberta exhibits at the Smithsonian Folklife Festival.

July 9

MLAs Snelgrove and Tarchuk represented Alberta at the evening concert performance on the National Mall by Alberta singer-songwriter Ian Tyson.

Delegation:

Lloyd Snelgrove, MLA Vermilion-Lloydminster
Janis Tarchuk, MLA Cochrane-Banff

Attachment:

Full report on Alberta Week in Washington activities.