

Final Report

Mission to United Kingdom and Germany

July 14-22, 2007

Overview:

The Alberta Foreign Offices Review Committee, chaired by Pearl Calahasen, MLA for Lesser Slave Lake is reviewing Alberta's 10 international offices to see if current services and resources are allocated to best meet Alberta's public and private sector goals. As part of the review, Ms. Calahasen traveled to London, England and to Munich and Berlin, Germany, to meet with office staff, Canadian Embassy officials, and British and German stakeholders.

Mission Objectives:

- To provide Ms. Calahasen with feedback from Albertan, Canadian and international stakeholders about the effectiveness of Alberta's international offices, ultimately assisting the committee in preparing its final report and recommendations.
- To provide information to Albertan, Canadian and international stakeholders about the purpose and mandate of the Alberta Foreign Offices Review Committee.

Results:

Ms. Calahasen gained insight and important feedback from international stakeholders on the Alberta offices in Munich and London. Throughout each meeting, common themes were observed:

- the offices are a crucial conduit to connect Alberta to the international marketplace
- the need for the offices to facilitate immigration
- the professionalism of staff from each office and the proactive approach to client relations and service was exemplary

The following is a detailed meeting-by-meeting summary of Ms. Calahasen's trip.

London Meetings, July 15 – 17, 2007

July 15

Meeting #1

Informal debriefing with Managing Director, Alberta United Kingdom Office

Ms. Calahasen received copies of latest activity reports, operating plans, information on London financial and investment markets, an immigration background paper, bios of Alberta United Kingdom Office staff, and an updated mission program and briefing notes.

July 16

Meeting #2

Breakfast meeting with Managing Director, Alberta United Kingdom Office, tour of the Alberta United Kingdom Office and introduction to staff

Ms. Calahasen was introduced to two new staff members and received a detailed briefing on the continuing growth in Office activities, current priorities, and perspectives on the co-located office model and the success enjoyed to date in London.

Meeting #3

Meeting with the Canadian High Commissioner in London

Ms. Calahasen outlined the purpose of the mission and invited feedback from High Commissioner, James Wright.

High Commissioner Wright praised Alberta for carrying out the political review, and complemented Alberta and the Alberta United Kingdom Office on its current operations and relationship with the High Commission. Referring to it as a model for best practices in co-located offices, the High Commissioner offered his personal support and federal Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade contacts wherever he could to provide additional background or information from London that might be useful for other locations. He also outlined some of the joint initiatives recently undertaken in which he had participated.

High Commissioner Wright also invited Ms. Calahasen to meet with him the next day.

Meeting #4

Meeting with representatives from the Administration Section of the Canadian High Commission

In attendance: Mario Bot, Minister – Counsellor, and David Knockaert, Counsellor.

MLA Calahasen outlined the purpose of the mission and invited feedback. Mr. Bot explained his commitment to work with the Alberta United Kingdom Office to help streamline processes wherever appropriate. Mr. Bot also briefed Ms. Calahasen on the cooperative administrative atmosphere between the High Commission and the Alberta

United Kingdom Office, which resulted in a successful recent office move that improved the physical space and reduced rent. The need for equity and fairness between High Commission and Alberta United Kingdom Office operations was also discussed and recognized.

Meeting #5

Tour of Canada House

Jennifer Barbarie, Head, Public Advocacy & Outreach, and Gavin Jones, Information Officer, provided MLA Calahasen with a tour of the Canada House facilities, which are often used by the Alberta United Kingdom Office for seminars, meetings, and larger receptions.

Ms. Calahasen was impressed with the amenities of the facility and commented on the significant advantage that having access brings to the Alberta United Kingdom Office.

Meeting #6

Meeting with Quebec Agent-General at Quebec House

George R. MacLaren, Quebec Agent General, gave Ms. Calahasen a tour of Quebec House, with introductions to key Quebec officials and staff.

Over a working lunch, hosted by the Quebec Office, MacLaren provided his perspective on the standalone model, successfully used by Quebec in London. He also praised the work done by the Alberta United Kingdom Office since its re-inception, and the close working relationship enjoyed between the two provinces.

Meeting #7

Meeting with Glen Purves, Economic & Finance Section, Canadian High Commission

Glen Purves, Counsellor (Finance) explained his role on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, working closely to monitor United Kingdom financial markets and policies. Often together with the Alberta United Kingdom Office, Mr. Purves keeps in close touch with major Alberta companies, particularly the energy firms involved in the North Sea. He outlined the growing importance of London within the European Union and as a global financial centre, second only perhaps to New York.

Mr. Purves stressed his role is also to support Alberta and other provinces as appropriate, and Alberta connections are critically important at this juncture.

Meeting #8

Meeting with representatives from the Canada – UK Chamber of Commerce in London

Victor Dahdaleh, President, and Nigel Bacon, Executive Director, met with Ms. Calahasen and provided an overview of the Chamber's recent activities, particularly those related to Alberta.

Mr. Dahdaleh stressed the Chamber's appreciation for the Alberta United Kingdom Office's increasing leadership in the Chamber, such as the unique Charter membership arrangement that includes advertising and promotional packages for Alberta.

Mr. Dahdaleh and Mr. Bacon both mentioned the recent successful keynote speaker event with Employment, Immigration and Industry Minister Iris Evans, UKTI/Shell Canada with Clive Mather, and Edmonton Mayor Stephen Mandel's program earlier this year.

Meeting #9

Meeting at the Ontario International Marketing Centre

Cheryl Donais, Business Development Officer, provided Ms. Calahasen with a tour of the Ontario offices and discussed issues from the first year of Ontario's London office operations.

Ms. Donais expressed her thanks for all the assistance received from the Alberta United Kingdom Office during the Ontario start-up. She also described the Ontario business model, which is a two person co-located trade office at all international locations, and noted the significant expansion in the number of offices over past two years.

July 17

Meeting #10

Meeting with representatives from the Commercial and Economic Division (CED) of the Canadian High Commission

In Attendance: Judith St. George, Minister – Counsellor, CED; Graham Baker, Trade Commissioner, Science and Technology; Doug Bieber, Trade Commissioner, Agriculture; George Edwards, Trade Commissioner, Information Technology; Duncan DeLugt, Trade Commissioner, Energy; and Louise Rousseau, Trade Commissioner, Energy.

Ms. St. George led a discussion and briefing on of her division, including the opportunities and challenges of operating in the London and United Kingdom markets.

The other members of the CED team outlined current joint programs and initiatives with the Alberta United Kingdom Office. Key trade sectors included energy, ITC, aerospace

and agriculture. Also highlighted were the finance and investment initiatives with Glen Purves. The various presenters all reinforced the importance and effectiveness of Alberta representation within the co-located model, and the critical role London serves within the EU and internationally.

Meeting #11

Meeting with Travel Alberta overseas (in-market) representative

Ms. Calahasen met with Amanda Newby De Saulles, Travel Alberta International Foreign Representative – United Kingdom, and Tanya Hillman, KBC Public Relations and Marketing Ltd. to receive an introduction and briefing on current Travel Alberta activities in the United Kingdom, including joint initiatives with the Alberta United Kingdom Office.

Ms. Newby De Saulles and Ms. Hillman also discussed previous projects they worked on alone and with the help of the Alberta United Kingdom Office, and advised Ms. Calahasen of their excellent relationship with the Office. Ms. Newby De Saulles commented that the current model and relationship is much more effective than under the previous standalone Alberta House model.

Meeting #12

Roundtable luncheon with United Kingdom stakeholders

In attendance: Alan Bates, General Manager Good International / Bridgehead Project; Alan Dolan, President & CEO, Clarity Capital Group; Tanya Hillman, KBC Public Relations and Marketing Ltd.; Andre Juneau, Executive Director for Canada and Morocco, European Bank for Reconstruction and Development; Derek Linfield, Managing Partner, Stikeman Elliott; James Masey, Founder, JMAS, attending for Merlin Integrated Solutions Ltd.; Robert Mason Lee, Consultant (various companies including Petro-Canada Ltd.); Amanda Newby De Saulles, United Kingdom Representative, Travel Alberta; Phil Parker, Founder, International TradeNet / Director, Bridgehead Project; Joanne Rogers, Managing Director, Prowse and Company Limited.

Ms. Calahasen chaired this roundtable lunch to gather the opinions of the guests on their relationship with the Alberta United Kingdom Office, listen to the pros and cons to having a co-location versus a standalone office, and garner any suggestions as to how Alberta can do a better job in the marketplace.

There was unanimous consensus on the importance of London as an EU and world gateway and on the merit of the co-located office model. Alberta's importance within Canada was also consistently mentioned for the energy sector and also for emerging biotechnology, nanotechnology and Unmanned Vehicle Systems opportunities.

Some suggested the Middle East, India and Russia as priority areas that Alberta might consider for further international office expansion. All attendees offered to provide further input if deemed appropriate by the Committee.

Meeting #13

Meeting with representatives from the Immigration Section of the Canadian High Commission

Robert Orr, Minister, and Oscar Jacobs, First Secretary provided an overview of the current initiatives and activities of the immigration division. Mr. Orr commented on the recent successful joint promotional initiatives with Alberta, including the briefings and meetings held with the Honourable Iris Evans. He expressed appreciation for the Alberta United Kingdom Office sharing its relevant business plans, and commented on the need to maintain close communications between the offices.

Meeting #14

Debrief with the Canadian High Commissioner in London

Ms. Calahasen shared with the High Commissioner some of the messages she received over the last two days; for example, the importance of the Alberta United Kingdom Office and co-location, the strong working relationships, and the need for consistency and equity between provincial and federal offices within the High Commission. The High Commissioner reiterated his commitment to share best practices with other missions. He also enquired about timing for the committee's report and availability. Ms. Calahasen confirmed that the report would be shared as soon as it becomes public.

Meeting #15

Canada – U.K. Chamber of Commerce reception at Canada House

Keynote speakers included Judith St. George, Victor Dahdaleh, and the Chair of the British Conservative Party. The event was of similar scale to some Alberta events held at the same venue, attracting approximately 175 attendees.

Berlin Meetings, July 19, 2007

Meeting #1

Canadian Embassy Berlin – Embassy Officials

In Attendance: Hilary Childs-Adams, Minister, Deputy Head of Mission;
Yvonne Zadra, Second Secretary, Trade Commissioner, Investment Promotion/Strategic

Alliances; Howard Spunt, Counsellor Immigration; Angelica Liao, Political Section; Helen Rodney, Public Affairs and Cultural Section.

Ms. Calahasen explained the mandate of the Alberta Foreign Office Review Committee and was given a presentation on overall German–Canadian relations with a special focus on Alberta–Germany relations.

Ms. Childs-Adams led a discussion on how the Canadian government has cooperated with the Alberta Germany Office on several successful initiatives from promoting Alberta’s film industry to attracting skilled workers and promoting trade. Ms. Childs-Adams stressed the Embassy’s satisfaction with the working relationship the federal government has with Alberta and the benefits of the Alberta Germany Office being co-located in the Canadian Consulate in Munich.

If Alberta was considering a planned expansion of the office, Ms. Childs-Adams stated the Canadian Embassy would do every thing possible to assist and facilitate the plan. The Embassy was in support of an expansion, given the increased interest in attracting skilled workers from Germany.

Meeting #2

Commercial Section, Canadian Embassy

In Attendance: Yvonne Zadra, Second Secretary, Trade Commissioner, Investment Promotion/Strategic Alliances; Claudia Seeber, Trade Commissioner, Arts and Cultural Industries; Thorsten Henke, Trade Commissioner, Advanced Manufacturing Technologies; Arndt Ulland, Trade Commissioner Environmental Industries.

Ms. Zadra led the discussion on how the International Business Development (IBD) section of the Canadian Embassy cooperates with the Alberta Germany Office and its work with other Alberta government departments. Alberta continues to be one of the most active Canadian provinces in Germany, largely due to access to information from the Canadian Embassy and the opportunity to partner in events and leverage resources and facilities from different sources. Although Alberta’s physical presence in Germany is not large, the IBD section values the ability to access information regarding Alberta through one window, saving a great deal of time and providing a higher quality of material. The Canadian Embassy in Berlin is a first class facility and its conference rooms and other facilities have been offered to the Alberta government to meet its marketing needs.

Ms. Calahasen mentioned the possibility of using Aboriginal culture to help market Alberta goods and services in the German market, an idea that was well received.

Meeting #3

Meeting with Immigration Section, Canadian Embassy

Howard Spunt, Counsellor, outlined Canada's immigration program in Germany. He emphasized that Alberta is definitely the choice destination for Germans immigrating to Canada. He commented on potential German immigrants' overall awareness of Alberta's strong economy and the opportunity to capitalize on it.

Mr. Spunt explained Alberta's participation in the annual German Job Fairs program. The Alberta Germany Office took the lead on behalf of the Canadian organizations involved in the program; more than 2,500 interviews took place for positions in Canada and one third of those candidates expressed an interest in Alberta. Mr. Spunt and his team of immigration specialists are partners in the Job Fairs program.

He thanked Alberta for the support that we provided for the immigration program and stressed that without Alberta's support the program would not be as effective.

Meeting #4

German Chamber of Commerce

In Attendance: Barbara Konner, Director Americas, International Economic Affairs, German Chamber of Commerce; Yvonne Zadra, Second Secretary, Trade Commissioner, Investment Promotion/Strategic Alliances.

Ms. Konner has the overall responsibility for coordinating the German Chamber's activities in the Americas. The discussion focused on the German Chamber's activities in international markets, how it operates its offices in these jurisdictions and where it can add value in member services (it is a requirement for all German companies to belong to the Chamber).

Ms. Konner explained the Chamber generally hires locally engaged staff to manage its foreign offices and these offices are generally stand-alone. Although the Chamber maintains a close relationship with the German government lobbying efforts are arms length. The German Chamber employs one consultant in Edmonton.

The Chamber sees great value in having industry represented in key markets and Ms. Konner believed that Alberta was making the right choice by having representation in Germany. One of the key activities that the German Chamber offers the Alberta government is electronic access to membership. Ms. Konner offered to ensure that information regarding Alberta-related events would be forwarded to the appropriate members in the Chamber.

Meeting #5

Roundtable Luncheon with German stakeholders

In Attendance: Danielle Sabourin, Vice-Consul, Canadian Consulate Munich; Hendrik Taulin, Investment Promotion/Strategic Alliances, Berlin; Terri Romano, Consul Economic Affairs, Ontario; Dr. Peter Frier, Delegeue General de Quebec; Kathrin Maier, Deputy Head of Department, Bavarian Ministry of Economic Affairs; Martina Schafer, Marketing Representative, Travel Alberta.

Ms. Calahasen chaired this roundtable lunch to gather the opinions of the guests on their relationship with the Alberta Germany Office and garner any suggestions as to how Alberta can improve its visibility in the German marketplace.

The overall impression was that all of the attendees have had or currently enjoy a positive working relationship with the Alberta Germany Office. The ability to access information through one office was greatly appreciated. There was also consensus that by having Alberta as a partner in Germany, marketing programs were significantly strengthened. Most attendees agreed that the ideal situation is to be co-located, which allows for a free and easy exchange of information between government officials. This in turn makes decision making much faster and more informed. Also, the ability to leverage resources was once again mentioned as a positive reflection on co-location.

Closer relationships with the German and Bavarian governments were also mentioned as a positive reflection on the Alberta Germany Office. The recent 32-member Bavarian delegation to Alberta is a direct result of the efforts of the Alberta Germany Office. Finally, the ability to have an Alberta official at key events was seen as critically important in raising the profile of the province.

Meeting #6

Canadian Consulate Munich

In Attendance: Dr. Vera Christoph, C-Train Consulting; Svenja Chenikel, Commercial Officer Ontario Office.

The purpose of the meeting was to get first-hand details of Alberta's participation in the "Job Fairs" program from the consultant who organized the event.

Ms. Christoph gave a good overview of the Job Fairs held in Essen and Berlin. These events attracted 2,700 visitors, and the feedback from the employers was very positive. Within the two days of the Job Fair, 25 per cent of the vacant positions were filled. To quote Ms. Christoph,

“The one thing, which might not appear in any report, but which I would like to emphasize specifically, is that without the Alberta Germany Office, the event would not have taken place.”

Ms. Christoph also noted the staff in the immigration section were extremely helpful and professional and stated,

“I think, a German would never expect to meet an immigration officer in person. Again, I think, it was a large surprise to any German applicant to hear, that usually within 4 - 6 weeks he/she would have all the necessary papers.”

Another direct result of the Job Fairs was the incredible national publicity Alberta received. Two weeks ago, the TV station Kabel 1 screened a show entitled “Your New Life” portraying two families who had found jobs at the job fairs in February and are now living in Edmonton.

Planning for the next Job Fair is just beginning and it has been suggested that Alberta take the lead once again.

Meeting # 7

Tour of the Alberta Germany Office

Ms. Calahasen ended her official program with a tour of the Alberta Germany Office, which is located in the Canadian Consulate in Munich, adjacent to the representatives in the Ontario office in Germany.