

# PARLIAMENTARY CHRONICLE

**Brian Storseth, M.P.**

**Westlock--St. Paul**



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# Agriculture Consultations

On January 11<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 I traveled the expanse of our riding hosting Agriculture Consultations.

Consultations took place at Flat Lake Hall (in between St. Paul and Bonnyville), the Smoky Lake National Hall, and the Westlock Legion. With well over 200 producers in attendance, these unprecedented consultations were well received, as I was the first Albertan MP to host such consultations.

The focus of the consultations was to outline the new Growing Forward Program introduced by Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Ministers on June 29, 2007 and to get direct feedback from producers on how these improved programs must respond to



Meeting in Smoky Lake discussing how we can work together to ensure that Alberta's farmers can continue to earn a living as farmers.

the needs of farmers. In addition, I also took the time to answer any questions that those producers in attendance had on issues ranging from Agriculture to Foreign Affairs.

Representing a rural constituency, and as a member of the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, I recognize the important role I play as a leader on agricultural issues. In fact, on Tuesday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, 2008 I submitted a motion to committee requesting that the Own Use Import program continue in its existing form; so as to keep the Agri sector competitive nationally and internationally and to reduce import costs on our farmers.

**This motion states the following:** *That in light of the testimony from Pest Management Regulatory Agency (PMRA) as well as industry and farm organizations, that the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-food recommend that the Own Use Import Program continue in its existing form indefinitely so as to ensure that farmers have the opportunity to access these products in a price competitive manner in order to continue to enhance competitiveness in the Agri Sector.*

For more information on agriculture in Alberta, the New Growing Forward Program, my work on the Agriculture and Agri-Food Committee, or any work that I am doing in Ottawa or here at home, please visit [www.brianstorseth.ca](http://www.brianstorseth.ca) or call me toll free at 1-800-667-8450.

## Growing Forward: Toward a New Agriculture Policy Network

### The New Business Risk Management Suite

Ministers have agreed to an open and seamless evolution to the new business risk management suite. The new suite replaces the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization program with new programs that are more responsive, predictable and bankable for farmers. Governments are securing final authorities and enrolment notices for 2007 AgriStability will be mailed to producers. The new suite also includes:

- **AgriInvest** is a savings account for producers, supported by governments, which provides coverage for small income declines and allows for investments that help mitigate risks or improve market income.
- **AgriStability** provides support when a producer experiences larger farm income losses. The program covers declines of more than 15% in a producer's average income from previous years.
- **AgriRecovery** is a disaster relief framework which provides a coordinated process for federal, provincial and territorial governments to respond rapidly when disasters strike, filling gaps not covered by existing programs.
- **AgriInsurance** is an existing program which includes insurance against production losses for specified perils (weather, pests, disease) and is being expanded to include more commodities.



At Flat Lake Hall, over 75 producers had the chance to get together and not only to express their desire for more responsive programs, but they were able to have their ideas heard as well.



There was no escaping the tough questions in Westlock. But rest assured, agriculture is and will remain a top priority for me and our Conservative Government. (In Photo: Brian with local producer Garry Gill)

# Our Two Year Anniversary:



Let me first start out by thanking you once again Westlock—St. Paul, for giving me the esteemed opportunity to serve your interests in Ottawa as your Member of Parliament. I have been blessed and can offer simply my humble promise to continue working as hard as I can to ensure that our vibrant riding and bountiful Province remain the greatest place in Canada to live, work, and raise a family.

With that I would like to share with you some of the tangible accomplishments that our Government and I have been a part of during the last 2 years in office.

## Improving Westlock—St. Paul

I believe that it is extremely important for all levels of Government to work together to improve our riding, so I was very pleased to be able to announce a number of approved funding projects through the Canada-Alberta Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (CAMRIF) Projects since 2006:

**Town of Bonnyville** - Combined Federal/Provincial investment of \$4,276,962 for the completion of the Centennial Centre project.



**City of Cold Lake** - Combined Federal/Provincial investment of \$2,449,000 for the 43 Ave Storm Sewer Trunk Extension and \$1,775,480 to upgrade English Bay Road.

**Village of Thorhild** - Combined Federal/Provincial investment of \$83,332 to upgrade and retrofit the Village's 39 year-old Swimming Pool.



**County of Thorhild** - Combined Federal/Provincial investment of \$42,800 to upgrade the Aspen Siding Railway Crossing.



**Town of Morinville** - Combined Federal/Provincial investment of \$2,211,779 to upgrade and improve 100 Street South.

## Making Housing Affordable in Alberta

You have no doubt experienced the rising cost of living in Alberta. That is why it is very important to work to ensure Affordable Housing is available for those Albertans who need it. This is why I was very happy our riding received approval for a number of grants to fund affordable housing projects.

**City of Cold Lake** - The CLAHS Mixed Affordable Rental Housing Complex received \$3,587,017 towards 32 units for transition housing for women and their children.

**Town of St. Paul** - The White Pebble Project in St. Paul received \$615,000 towards more units for low-income seniors and those with special needs.

**Town of Westlock** - The Westlock Affordable Housing Project received \$991,203 for more units for Low-income families and individuals.

**Town of Villeneuve** - I was proud to represent the Federal Government at the Grand Opening of the West Sturgeon Seniors Affordable Housing Residence.

## Gas Tax Transfers

For far too long the Federal Liberal Governments insisted on taking more tax money from our communities than was ever necessary.



One of our highest priorities from day one has been to return your tax dollars back to you and your communities.

To date through Gas Tax Transfers, communities in Westlock—St. Paul have had more than \$1.5 million of their tax revenue returned.

This has meant an average return of nearly \$51,000 per eligible community.

Presenting a cheque to Lokken Career Training in Westlock for \$153,835 to help At-risk Youth find gainful employment.



## Making a Better, Safer, Stronger Canada

The Conservative Party has, in just two short years ushered in a new era of Government. We have listened to what Canadians want and have delivered, despite a dithering opposition and a spiteful, stifling Liberal-based Senate. We have had an unbelievable focus and drive to get the job done for Canadians. We brought Accountability back to Government with the Accountability Act.

Since taking office, the Conservative Government has kept its word and is giving Canadians the tax relief they deserve: tax cuts that reward hard work, tax cuts that strengthen our economy, tax cuts that give people more choices in their lives.

Thanks to strong Conservative leadership, Tax Freedom Day now comes earlier. Real disposable income – the after-inflation, after-tax income - of real families is on the rise. And the Conservative Government has cut the GST from 7% to 6% and, now, to 5%.

All told, the Government's tax relief package will bring the total tax burden of Canadians to the lowest level in nearly 50 years.

We have introduced the Tackling Crime Act, Worked to Reform the Senate, Created the Universal Child Care Benefit and Supported Our Troops.

We have made the most of the opportunity you gave us 2 years ago, and as your Conservative Government we will continue to make this a better Canada for all of us.

# Are You Paying Too Much Tax?

## With Conservatives, you are paying less tax.

We have:

- Cut the GST to 5%.
- Lowered income tax, retroactive this year.
- Delivered targeted tax cuts to students, families, and seniors.

Yet believe it or not, many Canadians still do not claim all they are entitled to.

Are you paying more than you need to?

Make sure you get back all you're entitled to by reading this page and checking out more tax saving tips at [www.brianstorseth.ca](http://www.brianstorseth.ca)

### Goods & Services Tax (GST) Credit

The GST credit is a tax-free quarterly payment that helps individuals and families with low and modest incomes offset all or part of the GST that they pay.

To receive the GST credit **you have to apply for it**, even if you received it last year. On page 1 of your return, check the "Yes" box in the GST/HST credit application area and enter your marital status in the identification area. If you did not apply for it in the previous year, complete and send Form T1-ADJ, T1 Adjustment Request, or write a letter to your tax centre stating you would like to apply for the GST credit. Include your SIN and, if applicable, your spouse or common-law partner's SIN and net income.

If you have a spouse or common-law partner, be sure to complete the information in the identification area on page 1 of your return. Include his or her net income, **even if it is zero**. Enter his or her SIN if it is not on your personal label or if you are not attaching a label. Without this information, your application may be delayed. Only one of you can apply for the credit. **No matter which one of you applies, the credit will be the same. You must file your tax return every year to remain eligible.**

## Child Care Expenses

Child care expenses are amounts you or another person paid to have someone look after an eligible child so that you or the other person could: earn income from employment; carry on a business either alone or as an active partner; or attend school.

The child must have lived with you or the other person when the expense was incurred for the expense to qualify. Usually, you can only deduct payments for services provided in Canada by a Canadian resident. The parent with the **lower net income** must claim the child care expense.

Child care expenses can only be claimed for an eligible child, which is defined as your or your spouse or common-law partner's child; or a child who was dependent on you or your spouse or common-law partner, and whose net income in 2007 was \$9,600 or less.

The child must have been **under 16** years of age at some time in the year. However, the age limit does not apply if the child was dependent on you or your spouse or common-law partner and was mentally or physically infirm.

To deduct child care expenses, please see:  
**Form T778, Child Care Expenses Deduction for 2007**

## Claiming Medical Expenses

You can claim eligible medical expenses paid for by you, or your spouse, or common-law partner for medical expenses incurred by:

- Yourself;
- Your spouse or common-law partner; or
- Your, or your spouse, or common-law partner's children born in 1990 or later and who depended on you for support.

You can claim medical expenses paid in any 12-month period ending in 2007 and not claimed in 2006. Generally, you can claim all amounts paid, even if they were not paid in Canada. If you are filing a return for a person who passed away in the tax year, these amounts can be claimed for any **24-month** period prior to the date of death, if they were not claimed for any other year.

Need help? Please call 1-800-959-8281, or go to [www.cra.gc.ca](http://www.cra.gc.ca)

**With Conservatives you pay less tax**

### Children's Fitness Tax Credit

Starting in 2007, a non-refundable tax credit will be available on eligible amounts of up to \$500 paid by parents to register a child under 16 years of age (on January 1, 2007) in an eligible program of physical activity. As with most other non-refundable tax credits, the credit is calculated by multiplying the eligible amount by the lowest marginal tax rate (15% in 2007).

In order to qualify for the tax credit, a program must be:

- Ongoing (either a minimum of eight weeks duration with a minimum of one session per week or, in the case of children's camps, five consecutive days);
- Supervised;
- Suitable for children; and
- Substantially all of the activities must include a significant amount of physical activity that contributes to cardio-respiratory endurance, plus one or more of muscular strength, muscular endurance, flexibility, or balance.

You can only claim fees that are related to the cost of registering a child in an eligible program of physical activity. You can claim the tax credit for each child who was under 16 at any time during the year, provided that another person has not already claimed the same fees and that the total claimed does not exceed the maximum amount that would be allowed if only one of you were claiming the tax credit. The year in which the tax credit can be claimed is determined by the date when the fees are paid, not when the activity takes place.

**Don't forget to ask for a receipt**

You should request a receipt from organizations providing eligible programs of physical activity in which your child is enrolled. The organizations will determine the part of the fee that qualifies for the tax credit.

Need help? Please call 1-800-959-8281

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## Pension Income Splitting for Seniors

**How will pension income splitting work?**

Both the individual receiving the eligible pension income and his or her spouse or common-law partner must agree to the allocation in their tax returns for the year in question. The pension income splitting allocation will be available for the 2007 and subsequent tax years and must be made one year at a time.

**How much pension income can an individual split?**

Up to 50 per cent of eligible pension income.

**What income qualifies?**

- Income in the form of a pension from a registered pension plan (RPP), regardless of the recipient's age (i.e. a pension from an employer-sponsored defined benefit plan or defined contribution plan); and
- Income from a registered retirement savings plan (RRSP) annuity, a registered retirement income fund (RRIF), a LIF (a locked-in RRIF), or a deferred profit sharing plan (DPSP) annuity, if the recipient is 65 years of age or older.
- While CPP income does not qualify as eligible pension income for the pension income credit, existing rules already permit CPP pensioners to split their CPP retirement benefit.
- Spouses or common-law partners who are both at least 60 years of age can share up to 50 per cent of their CPP retirement benefit, with the split between the partners determined by the number of years they lived together during the period they were required to contribute to the plan.

Need help? Please call 1-800-959-8281

**BIG SAVINGS FOR SENIORS**