

**SPEAKING NOTES — MAYOR STEPHEN MANDEL**  
**AUMA ANNUAL CONVENTION – OPENING CEREMONIES**  
**WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 4, 2006 AT 6:30PM**  
**SHAW CONVENTION CENTRE**  
CHECK AGAINST DELIVERY

- Good evening everyone
- On behalf of my Council Colleagues and all the citizens of Edmonton, I am so pleased to welcome AUMA delegates to Edmonton for this most important convention.
- I want to say a special thanks to Councillor Ed Gibbons. As Vice President of AUMA, Ed has been a large force in bringing this convention and its issues forward. Ed and Councillor Dave Thiele are Edmonton’s AUMA representatives and they are both tireless advocates for this organization.
- The theme for this conference puts an appropriate focus on the challenge before us all – *“sustaining and surviving prosperity.”*
- And I’m pleased to offer some of my City’s perspective on this theme tonight – because I know that we share so many issues with our AUMA colleagues, and because frankly, as urban municipalities, I don’t think we have ever been at a more important crossroads.
- So much of the challenge ahead of us is related to growth and must be understood in the context of the boom that is upon our province.
- Now, I’m a big supporter of growth – and I honestly don’t know of any place has ever been handed a more fortunate set of circumstances than we have today in our province.
- But like all “lucky” people, it’s how we act....or don’t act, that will truly define our fortune.
- We have a once-in-a-lifetime situation before us in Alberta, and I know that we all understand just how important it is that we get it right.
- We all want to achieve the maximum benefit from the development opportunities before us and to a value-added foundation that can position us as the world’s leading energy development and manufacturing province.
- In Edmonton and in our region, we see ourselves as a big part of this vision.

- But hand in hand with our desire to succeed economically, we have to maintain a full understanding of the role we, as municipalities, play in attracting and sustaining growth.
- As exciting as all the opportunity is, it is equally daunting. Because there is so much we need to do to really turn ambition into reality.
- And a big part of this task is owned by the municipalities.
- We provide so much of the basic framework that makes growth possible – the roads, the land servicing, the people and housing.
- And we know how much is at stake in getting our part right, like so many of our municipal partners across Alberta, we are coming to grips with the strains and stresses that come with aggressive growth.
- And we are seeing too many examples of our municipal partners who are struggling to keep pace.
- We're feeling it in Edmonton and region; I'm sure you're feeling it too.
- All the symptoms of growth are in place -- and they are growing..... inflation, rising house prices, low vacancy rates, traffic congestion and labour shortages, homeless and working poor – these are challenges we must all deal with together ... across the province, if we are to be full partners in sustaining the boom.
- And the challenge is only starting to fully come into view.
- 200,000 people are expected to come to this region in the next 10 years – if we can attract all these people (and I know this is increasingly our biggest challenge) they will serve much needed workforce needs, but they bring need with them...for schools, for health care, for roads and parks and community recreation assets.
- More people will be coming to your municipality too. The same opportunities – the same challenges.
- We need to provide the assets that make a city, town, village or community so much more than a place to work – the quality of life foundation that will attract the workforce we so urgently need all across Alberta.
- And we need to do these things during a time when there is a great deal of strain from growth – not the least of which is the effect of inflation that is making it more challenging to even keep pace with the basics.

- We need to work with regional, provincial and industry partners to plan and coordinate access to infrastructure, utilities and services – the things that make Alberta a desirable place to invest and a major contributor to our success.
- This need for a more cooperative approach is the major reason you are hearing me talk so much about the need for the Edmonton region to get its act together and to plan together for our mutual success and benefit.
- I know that it is a message that the AUMA and its members understand very well.
- It is the reason that AUMA has so correctly zeroed-in on this convention topic - because current structures do not adequately compel cooperation. It's more obvious every day with the escalating relationship challenges among municipalities.
- And again, I can point out how our region is a case in point.
- To deal with growth in across Alberta, we have to consider how we are going to move people and products across our entire region, in a 24/7 business environment where the industrial base of the region could potentially double over the next 10 to 15 years.
- Decisions have to be made across boundaries, not just within each municipal jurisdiction.
- And talking about working across boundaries does not in any way, take away local autonomy. It is equally important that we respect local communities and the needs of local communities to determine their own course.
- But, irrespective of this, more and more issues reach across municipal lines and we need to plan together to make the most sound decisions possible about where new businesses, communities and services will be situated – again, we have to be able to virtually erase boundaries to make the best decisions.
- So instead of having individual communities work out one-offs with industry on a project-by-project basis, we are pushing our regional partners to think much more broadly – about the total impact we can secure from this growth, and the total requirement to support growth across all our communities. This should be done throughout the province.
- Because the status quo is no longer good enough. We must make changes to accommodate the scale of growth.
- If we don't deliver, we can expect more headlines like the one on the front page of last week's *Edmonton Journal* business section that said, "Heavy Oil Chicago Bound," or worse, more calls from our own citizens to limit growth.

- Don't forget, we're competing against the best in the world – which means it is even more important than ever that we don't use all our energy competing amongst ourselves.
- And instead of competing with each other, perhaps we could concentrate more on how effective we can be by working together – all across the province – and in particular within our own regions.
- And you only need to look at a basic work-list to understand how important it is that we do better. Your list, where ever you are in the province, will be similar I'm sure.
- In the capital region, our list includes:
  - Providing infrastructure and services to accommodate new development.
  - Balancing costs and benefits of growth among neighbouring municipalities.
  - Working effectively with the Province and industry on the environmental affect of growth
  - Being leaders in:
    - finding ways to capture carbon dioxide for re-use in secondary extraction of conventional resources, and
    - mitigating our impact on the environmental.
  - Being more careful stewards of our water resources – especially with the escalating industry requirements, through innovative strategies like using greywater for industrial purposes.
  - Enhancing and maintaining the transportation infrastructure in and amongst our communities.
  - And we can – we must - move aggressively with industry and the province on the significant opportunities offered by downstream value-added activities made possible by our current boom.
- We can be an upgrading and refining centre of excellence – taking our place among leading energy centres around the world.
- But we won't achieve this vision if the foundation of our communities – our city structure – is not up to the task.
- Right now, we have our challenges. In our region, we have so little cooperation that we're in danger of limiting our ability to make the most of the opportunities we have been given.

- We are so caught up in getting something for each of our own communities, that we don't have any broader regional vision.
- In so many ways, this competitive atmosphere is lessening incentives for cooperation, not building them.
- That attitude has an impact all across the province.
- It's clear that we need to head in another direction – to establish a new and fair playing field across Alberta in terms of who benefits from and who pays for growth.
- It's also clear we need regional planning and cooperation, again not just in this region, but across Alberta.
- We need the *province* to be leaders in that...to foster cooperation among municipalities and regions – not conflict.
- There is so much growth on our horizon, but only “one-off” plans to manage its impact.
- Where's the thought-out, integrated approach?
- Who's going to deliver integrated infrastructure for new development? What about water, wastewater and other environmental issues that will impact the entire region? How will workers for these massive projects be housed, and what roads will they travel on to get to and from their worksites?
- Without getting ahead of these issues, we can turn a boom into a barrier. The costs will be too high, and then we'll pay an even bigger cost – loss of opportunity.
- Let me assure you, the City of Edmonton is not looking to slow down growth. Far from it.
- Edmonton wants to be a partner with its neighbours and with the Province in sustaining the boom, but we'll only be able to accomplish this through a regional approach . . .
- . . . an approach based in action instead of words . . .
- . . . an approach that promotes working together proactively for the good of us all.
- As we work over the next few days on these important issues, I hope that we will begin to find new partnerships and strategies that give Alberta's municipalities the power to play the role we all must play in shaping and enabling the boom, and our communities.

- Thank you all for being here today. I hope that you all are able to gain from the shared ideas, and enthusiasm of your peers.
- Again, welcome to Edmonton. I hope you all enjoy this year's conference.

Thank You.