



## AB Today – Daily Report August 12, 2019

### Quotation of the day

“We were doing a lot of demolition. We thought we might find that old time capsule but we never did so, rumour is, it's still here.”

*Consultant **Rob Pacholok**, who is working on restorations to Alberta’s legislature building, on rumours a time capsule was hidden on site by vaudeville actors who came to Edmonton for construction jobs ([via CBC](#)).*

### Today in AB

#### On the schedule

The House is adjourned for the summer recess.

#### Premier Watch

Premier **Jason Kenney** joined UCP MLA **Jackie Armstrong-Homeniuk** (Fort Saskatchewan—Vegreville), federal Conservative MP **Garnett Genuis** (Sherwood Park—Fort Saskatchewan), and Lieutenant Governor **Lois Mitchell** for the [RCMP Musical Ride](#) in Fort Saskatchewan on Thursday.

On Friday, Kenney, Mitchell and Indigenous Relations Minister **Rick Wilson** [shook hands](#) with RCMP cadets at the RCMP “K” Division headquarters in Edmonton during its second annual Soaring Eagles Indigenous Youth Camp.

On Saturday, the premier [celebrated](#) Pioneer Days on Pioneer Acres near Irricana with Speaker **Nathan Cooper**, the UCP MLA for Olds—Didsbury—Three Hills.

He also [spoke at a prayer service](#) for Conservative MP **Deepak Obhrai** in Calgary on Saturday. Obhrai died on August 2 from liver cancer.

On Sunday, Kenney [offered up wishes](#) for Eid al Adha at the Akram Jomaa Masjid in Calgary.

## Today's events

### August 12 at 2 p.m. – *Banff*

Parliamentary secretary responsible for Alberta's Francophonie **Laila Goodridge** will speak to the National Federation of Francophone Superintendents — which represents the 28 French-language school boards in Canada outside the province of Quebec — at Rimrock Resort.

## Alberta loses 14,000 jobs in July; employment stagnant year-over-year

After an employment bump in June, Alberta lost 14,000 jobs in July, according to Statistics Canada.

Unemployment in the province increased to seven per cent, from 6.6 per cent. The total number of Albertans looking for work is now 177,600.

The number of full-time jobs dropped by 1.5 per cent from June to July, while the number of part-time positions rose by 3.9 per cent.

Compared to July 2018, the province's job market grew by just 0.8 per cent, resulting in 9,700 more new job seekers than there are new positions. The employment rate is unchanged from last year at 61 per cent.

In contrast, StatsCan's July numbers show British Columbia's job market grew by 3.8 per cent year-over-year.

Edmonton was among the hardest hit by the downturn, with 5,400 part-time jobs lost in the metro region. "The numbers for July were disappointing, no question," City of Edmonton chief economist **John Rose** [told](#) Global News.

Rose said that the accommodation, food services and natural resources sectors were the most affected. "Most disturbingly, the educational services was also down, which is not a great sign because health care, education and public administration have been three key contributors to the recovery of employment in the Edmonton region since 2016, so I was a little unnerved by that education number," he added.

Edmonton's unemployment rate grew a half percentage point to 7.5 per cent. Meanwhile, the unemployment rate in Calgary went down slightly, to 6.9 per cent in July from seven per cent one month earlier.

The NDP slammed the UCP government for failing to deliver on its campaign promise to bring more jobs to the province — despite cutting taxes for corporations.

“A \$4.5 billion giveaway isn’t helping Alberta families. We had a real, concrete plan to bring in 70,000 jobs in refining and upgrading — if the government is serious about protecting and creating jobs for Albertans, they wouldn't be cancelling job-creating programs like the Alberta Investor Tax Credit, and energy efficiency programs,” said **Deron Bilous**, NDP critic for Economic Development and Trade.

Bilous also shone a light on the estimated 7,200 fewer people employed in the province’s forestry, fishing, mining, quarrying and oil and gas extraction sectors than during the month prior.

“Nobody wants to see numbers like this for Alberta, and it is concerning we aren’t seeing any tangible plans from this government to deal with these losses,” said Bilous.

Nationwide, the unemployment rate rose from 5.5 per cent to 5.7 per cent.

## Topics of conversation

- Former UCP candidate **Cyndy Morin** won a defamation case against the provincial NDP, after the party accused her of accepting an illegal corporate donation last year.
  - Morin, who was running for the UCP in Calgary—Fish Creek, received an [apology](#) from the NDP. She also asked for \$650,000 in damages, but due to the terms of the settlement, financials were not disclosed.
  - The lawsuit stems from an August 2018 news release in which the NDP contended that Morin’s law firm Resolve Legal Group had assisted her nomination campaign by providing promotional material and hosting events.
  - The Elections Commissioner cleared Morin of wrongdoing last October, but by that time she had already dropped out of the race to deal with the allegations and subsequent investigation.
  - Morin said she will run again in the next provincial election.
- Agriculture and Forestry Minister **Devin Dreeshen** is calling on Ottawa to allow ranchers in Lac Ste. Anne County to defer tax payments for herds they are forced to sell off because of the wet summer.
  - Dreeshen travelled to the county — which recently declared an agricultural state of emergency — last Tuesday to visit farmers and ranchers.

- “Because of the county’s recent declaration, I have asked that the Agricultural Financial Services Corporation provide additional supports to local farmers for things like advance payments for crop insurance and AgriStability and adding staff to ensure claims can be dealt with as fast as possible,” Dreeshen said in a statement to *AB Today*.
- In addition to this, Dreeshen said his ministry has made Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada aware of conditions in Lac Ste. Anne County and asked the federal department to consider allowing ranchers to apply for the Livestock Tax Deferral Provision and to consider whether they should qualify for AgriRecovery assistance.
- A three-year restoration project on the Alberta legislature has begun on the southwest corner of the building, the CBC [reports](#).
  - Contractors will work to repair the building's 18,000 deficiencies, which include stone that is falling, chipping and cracking.
  - Scorpio Masonry won the \$20.5-million contract to fix up the sandstone cladding and windows. The contractor is now on the hunt for Paskapoo sandstone; the original rock was mined from a quarry that closed in 1912.
- The NDP and UCP are pointing fingers at each other over free speech issues, as the government prepares to impose the so-called Chicago principles on post-secondary institutions.
  - The principles were adopted by the University of Chicago in 2014, after it commissioned a [report](#) on freedom of expression, and advocate for the protection of controversial views on campuses, as well as for the rights of protestors. They have been committed to or adopted by other major U.S. schools, including Princeton and Purdue.
  - The NDP warned Albertans that Advanced Education Minister **Demetrios Nicolaidis** has cited former University of Lethbridge professor **Anthony Hall's** 2016 suspension as one of the reasons the government wants to bring in the Chicago Principles, signalling Hall's punishment would have never happened under UCP rule.
  - Hall was suspended without pay for promoting anti-Semitism, making Holocaust denial videos and penning an article claiming “Israel First neoconservatives” masterminded the 9/11 attacks in order to demonize Muslims. The professor also claimed the soldier killed in the 2014 Parliament Hill attacks was part of a plot to keep Prime Minister **Stephen Harper** in power and that the 2012 Sandy Hook massacre of 20 children and six adults was staged in order to push the gun control agenda.
  - Hall argued former Ku Klux Klan grand wizard **David Duke** had a “very astute” analysis and said B'nai Brith, an international Jewish organization, has seized control of the University of Lethbridge.

- The UCP shot back by pointing out B'nai Brith [blamed](#) the former NDP government for passing legislation that strengthened Hall's faculty association's position, allowing him to be reinstated.
- An Alberta judge is calling for the province to adopt a new model for police record checks similar to Ontario. The call for change comes after an Edmonton man lost his job when police told his employer about a sex offence charge he received as a youth, the *Globe and Mail* [reports](#).
  - The man was fired after an Edmonton Police Service detective told his employer, a youth centre where he worked for 11 years, that he was a "sex offender" and encouraged the employer to conduct further record checks on him.
  - Currently, Ontario is the only province with laws on the books to restrict the type of information police can disclose from record checks.
  - Alberta's privacy commissioner is waiting to see whether the Edmonton Police Service appeals the decision before it writes a letter to Alberta Justice asking for reform.
- The issue of politicians [blocking](#) constituents on Twitter re-surfaced in a Reddit thread after one social media user claimed he was blocked by Premier **Jason Kenney**.
  - While a court ruled U.S. President **Donald Trump** cannot block his fellow Americans, Canada's court challenges have not gone far enough to make a ruling.
  - Last year, after being sued for blocking constituents, Ottawa Mayor **Jim Watson** [went on an unblocking spree](#).
  - Last month, the *Calgary Star* [reported](#) that several Albertans were blocked by UCP MLAs. The party told the *Star* it has no specific policy for blocking, but said politicians tend to hit block when "users' behaviour causes the level of discourse to deteriorate beyond what is reasonably acceptable."
- Ex-Enbridge executive **Linda Coady** has been [tasked](#) by federal Finance Minister **Bill Morneau** to lead a group of experts to consult with Indigenous communities that are seeking a financial stake in the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project.
  - Discussions between the federal government and interested Indigenous stakeholders will take place this month in Ottawa, Victoria, Vancouver, Kamloops and Edmonton.
  - Morneau said he sent letters to 129 affected Indigenous communities that might have an interest in an economic partnership in the project.
- The United Conservative Party and the Conservative Party of Canada are on the same team. At least in Calgary's Dragon Boat festival.
  - Calgary—Nose Hill Conservative MP **Michelle Rempel** took a photo of the Tory team on Sunday — the roster included provincial Mental Health and Addictions Associate Minister **Jason Luan**, Children's Services Minister **Rebecca Schulz**,

Deputy Speaker **Angela Pitt**, Calgary city councillor **Sean Chu**, and Calgary—Confederation MP **Len Webber**.

## **News briefs — Governmental**

### **Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women**

As part of its red tape reduction push, the government has set up an e-transfer system so non-profit organizations can receive grant funding faster. Under the new system, organizations will receive grant cash within a week, compared to the average wait time of 100 days for paper cheques.

“Getting grant funding into the hands of our community organizations in a timely, efficient manner will help them hit the ground running in planning and carrying out projects that improve the lives of all Albertans,” said Culture, Multiculturalism and Status of Women Minister **Leela Aheer**.

According to the province, there are more than 26,200 non-profit organizations in Alberta that contribute \$21.7 billion in GDP.