



Legislative Assembly of Alberta

The 27th Legislature
First Session

Standing Committee
on
Public Accounts

Culture and Community Spirit
Tourism, Parks and Recreation

Wednesday, November 5, 2008
8:30 a.m.

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**Legislative Assembly of Alberta
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First Session**

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

MacDonald, Hugh, Edmonton-Gold Bar (L), Chair
Griffiths, Doug, Battle River-Wainwright (PC), Deputy Chair

Benito, Carl, Edmonton-Mill Woods (PC)
Bhardwaj, Naresh, Edmonton-Ellerslie (PC)
Chase, Harry B., Calgary-Varsity (L)
Dallas, Cal, Red Deer-South (PC)
Denis, Jonathan, Calgary-Egmont (PC)
Drysdale, Wayne, Grande Prairie-Wapiti (PC)
Fawcett, Kyle, Calgary-North Hill (PC)
Jacobs, Brodyce, Cardston-Taber-Warner (PC)
Johnson, Jeff, Athabasca-Redwater (PC)
Kang, Darshan S., Calgary-McCall (L)
Mason, Brian, Edmonton-Highlands-Norwood (NDP)
Quest, Dave, Strathcona (PC)
Sandhu, Peter, Edmonton-Manning (PC)
Vandermeer, Tony, Edmonton-Beverly-Clareview (PC)
Woo-Paw, Teresa, Calgary-Mackay (PC)

Also in Attendance

Pastoor, Bridget Brennan, Lethbridge-East (L)

Department of Culture and Community Spirit Participants

Pam Arnston	Senior Financial Officer
Sue Bohaichuk	Assistant Deputy Minister, Culture
Lois Hawkins	Deputy Minister
Carl Royan	Director, Lottery Funding Programs

Department of Tourism, Parks and Recreation Participants

Bill Werry	Deputy Minister
Lloyd Bentz	Director, Sport and Recreation
Jay Nagendran	Assistant Deputy Minister, Parks
Bob Scott	Assistant Deputy Minister, Tourism

Auditor General's Office Participants

Fred Dunn	Auditor General
Graeme Arklie	Principal
Ronda White	Assistant Auditor General

Standing Committee on Public Accounts

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Micheline S. Gravel	Clerk of <i>Journals</i> /Table Research
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Rachel Stein	Research Officer
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Wednesday, November 5, 2008

[Mr. MacDonald in the chair]

The Chair: Good morning, everyone. I would like to now call the Standing Committee on Public Accounts to order. I would like to welcome on behalf of all members of the committee everyone in attendance this morning. I would like to advise also that you do not need to touch the microphones. This is taken care of by our able *Hansard* staff behind you. This meeting is recorded, of course, by *Hansard*, and it's also audiostreamed live on the Internet.

If we could quickly go around, starting with the vice-chair, please, and introduce ourselves.

Mr. Griffiths: Good morning. Doug Griffiths, MLA for Battle River-Wainwright. With the indulgence of the chair if I could also introduce Brody Ackerblade. He's my best friend's son, and he's following me for career day.

Dr. Massolin: Good morning. I'm Philip Massolin. I'm the committee research co-ordinator with the Legislative Assembly Office.

Ms Pastoor: Good morning. Bridget Pastoor, Lethbridge-East.

Mr. Chase: Good morning. Harry Chase, Calgary-Varsity, taking up space in Laurie Blakeman's wonderful downtown Edmonton-Centre constituency.

Mr. Benito: Good morning. Carl Benito, Edmonton-Mill Woods.

Ms Bohaichuk: Sue Bohaichuk, Culture and Community Spirit.

Ms Arnston: Pam Arnston, senior financial officer for Culture and Community Spirit.

Ms Hawkins: Lois Hawkins, Deputy Minister of Culture and Community Spirit.

Mr. Werry: Bill Werry, Deputy Minister of Tourism, Parks and Recreation.

Mr. Nagendran: Jay Nagendran, assistant deputy minister, parks division.

Mr. Scott: Good morning. Bob Scott, ADM, tourism.

Mr. Arklie: Graeme Arklie with the Auditor General's office.

Ms White: Good morning. Ronda White with the Auditor General's office.

Mr. Dunn: Fred Dunn, Auditor General.

Mr. Sandhu: Good morning. Peter Sandhu, Edmonton-Manning.

Ms Woo-Paw: Good morning. Teresa Woo-Paw, Calgary-Mackay.

Mr. Dallas: Good morning, everyone. Cal Dallas, Red Deer-South.

Mr. Johnson: Jeff Johnson, Athabasca-Redwater.

Ms Rempel: Jody Rempel, committee clerk, Legislative Assembly Office.

The Chair: Hugh MacDonald, Edmonton-Gold Bar.

The second item on our agenda this morning is approval of the agenda. Moved by Mr. Griffiths that the agenda for our meeting of November 5 be approved as distributed. All in favour? Seeing none opposed, thank you.

Item 3, approval of the minutes of the October 29 meeting as circulated. Moved by Ms Woo-Paw that the minutes of the October 29, 2008, meeting of the Standing Committee on Public Accounts be approved as distributed. All in favour? Seeing none opposed, thank you.

This brings us to our meeting with the officials – and this is unique but not unusual – of Tourism, Parks and Recreation and Culture and Community Spirit. I would remind all hon. members that we're dealing with the annual report for the year 2007-08, the consolidated financial statements of the government of Alberta from 2007-08, the Measuring Up progress report, and also the Auditor General's reports from April and October of 2008.

Having both departments here is the result of the new cabinet structure that followed the provincial election last March.

I don't know who would like to go first. Ms Lois Hawkins, please, or would you like to have Mr. Bill Werry proceed?

Ms Hawkins: If that would be okay, we'd like to do it afterwards.

The Chair: Certainly.

Mr. Werry: Well, good morning, everyone. First of all, on behalf of the ministers of Culture and Community Spirit and Tourism, Parks and Recreation Lois and I would like to thank you for giving us time to share some of our achievements, the financial results, and our response to the Auditor General's report on the former ministry of tourism, parks, recreation, and culture.

TPRC was mandated to promote, develop, and preserve Alberta's culture, tourism, and heritage in support of vibrant and active and inclusive communities. There are also a number of entities that reported to then minister Hector Goudreau, including the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation.

I want to move fairly quickly through the annual report in terms of the core business areas that are now housed within Tourism, Parks and Recreation. The first core business is to manage Alberta's provincial parks and protected areas and promote recreational and sport opportunities. The ministry provided \$57.6 million for parks infrastructure and maintenance, and that included upgrades to our water and sewer systems throughout the parks system and at a number of key parks. Writing-on-Stone provincial park received a number of upgrades as well as a new visitor centre, and enhancements were made to Alberta parks websites in order to improve our information to the public. We were also successful in completing a number of management plans across the system and, in addition, celebrated the 75th anniversary of Alberta's parks system.

The ministry also supported recreational and sports opportunities for Albertans. Over \$1.6 million was provided to 17 active living agencies through the foundation. Tourism development and recreation and sport worked with SRD and key stakeholders on developing a detailed map of trail systems throughout northeastern Alberta, and that has assisted in promoting recreational activities and tourism. In addition, sport groups were given \$8.5 million in grants to support their activities across the province. The province also signed an accord with the Vancouver organizing committee to position us to benefit from the upcoming 2010 Olympics. In addition, we were able to provide \$40 million for upgrades at Canada Olympic Park and to the Calgary Olympic Development Association's new centre for sport excellence.

In terms of our second core business to facilitate tourism development, marketing and film investment, we were able to collaborate with Canadian Badlands Ltd., which is a not-for-profit company formed to promote tourism in southeastern Alberta. It has expanded now to include 50 municipalities. We were also able to assist tourism operators with international-standard signage through our tourism highway signage program.

We now have sustainable and predictable funding through the 4 per cent tourism levy, and this is used to promote tourism throughout Alberta, in particular, our major marketing initiatives. All of the marketing activities that are provided through Travel Alberta are based on our three-year strategic tourism marketing plan, which is prepared in conjunction with the Strategic Tourism Marketing Council, which has broad representation from industry and individual tourism providers.

We were able to generate \$82 million worth of media coverage for Alberta tourism through Travel Alberta's regional and international marketing efforts. We've been successful in increasing flights to Alberta from New York, London, Frankfurt, and, interestingly enough, Mexico City. Over the last number of months you've heard advertisements through our Stay campaign, which was developed in 2007-2008, that encourage Albertans and nearby neighbours to holiday here in Alberta. In addition, people have online access to a wide range of tourism opportunities through travelalberta.com.

The Alberta Film Commission has continued its work to promote our province as an attractive location for film and television production. Of note, the CBC series *Heartland* and Paul Gross' war epic *Passchendaele* were filmed in our province. The department also moved to increase our attractiveness to series productions with a successful series produced by NBC called *Fear Itself*. The new film website at www.albertafilmm.ca was launched and includes a database of more than 14,000 locations and specific Alberta images.

With that, I'll turn it over to my colleague Lois Hawkins who'll speak to further achievements.

Ms Hawkins: The ministry's third core business is to promote Alberta's rich culture, including its arts and heritage. Our first cultural policy, the Spirit of Alberta, was launched and will provide a framework for the support, growth, and development of culture and cultural facilities in the province. The ministry also announced the community spirit program, with a goal of increasing private donations to support Alberta's nonprofit and voluntary sector. The second year of a three-year evaluation of the Alberta Foundation for the Arts was completed.

8:40

The major community facilities program was launched in April 2007 to help municipalities and nonprofit organizations build, repair, or upgrade major community-use facilities. These are, though, more than just grants. These are investments in our communities that help to create recreational and cultural experiences for young families and, obviously, all individuals in the province. These grants have funded projects, including \$2 million to such groups as Calgary Meals on Wheels and \$3 million to develop the Cold Lake energy centre.

The ministry of the day met with leaders from the francophone community to determine expectations for a potential French-language policy. The department worked with the Department of Education to increase the accessibility of cultural activities for francophone education students, and more than \$400,000 was also provided to support the 2008 Canadian Francophone Games in Edmonton.

Alberta's network of museums and historic sites are the gateway to our past and, obviously, invaluable education tools. Work on the

enhancement of the Royal Alberta Museum continued in 2007-08 and still continues today. A huge step to ensuring Albertans have access to provincial historic records was taken with the update of the Provincial Archives of Alberta. Through the heritage resource management information system 6,000 linear metres of archival records, 9,000 photos, and 2,000 library resources are now available online to the public.

The ministry also made improvements and enhancements to heritage exhibits and programs at the Royal Tyrrell Museum, including 21,000 square feet of new exhibits. Also at the Tyrrell is the delivery of Alberta's first for-credit paleontological high school course.

I'd like to speak now to core business 4. This core business focuses on protecting human rights; promoting diversity, fairness, and access; and support for inclusion of all Albertans. Forty grants totalling over \$1.3 million were awarded through the human rights, citizenship, and multiculturalism education fund to help build welcoming and inclusive communities, improve workplaces, and reduce racism and discrimination. Support through the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission was offered in the development of the Coalition of Municipalities against Racism and Discrimination in Alberta. Last year 680 human rights complaints were opened; 733 were closed. The commission also launched a new website, which also offers improved access to information for Albertans.

Mr. Werry: I'd now like to speak briefly to the performance measures in the annual report. There are 16 performance measures that we used as a department. Ten of the 16 were met or exceeded. In particular, we exceeded the performance measure on total tourism expenditures, travel inquiries to Travel Alberta, and various client service measures regarding visitor information centres, our contact centre, and other aspects of our business.

In addition, the measure of the level of community volunteerism by Albertans was exceeded, and the percentage of CIP and CFEP grant recipients who indicated that funding benefited their community also exceeded the target.

Value-added economic impact of provincial historic sites, museums, and interpretive centres was also exceeded and taxation revenue from provincial historic sites, museums, and interpretive centres.

In addition, the percentage of adult Albertans who believe human rights are well protected in Alberta exceeded its target.

Results fell below the target for six performance measures, but only two of them did not meet the target by more than 3 per cent. The percentage of adult Albertans who participated in sport and recreation activities was 2.7 per cent lower than the previous year and fell below the ministry's target by 4 per cent. Increasing results will be a challenge, given Albertans' busy lifestyles and the impact of people's time spent in front of various screens, or screen time. The ministry will continue to emphasize active living strategies and research in hopes of increasing participation in sport and recreation in the next few years.

In addition, the percentage of web visitors satisfied with their experience on travelalberta.com was below the expected target of 85 per cent and can be attributed to changes in the website that were intended to benefit us over the longer term. A new website will in fact be launched this year.

Results from the other four performance measures fell within 3 per cent of the target, in particular measures like visitor satisfaction at provincial parks, which was over 89 per cent but below the 92 per cent target. We are of course continuing to commit to trying to improve our visitor services in parks.

Participation in arts activities or events by adult Albertans fell below the expected target by only 1.6 per cent, and these results, again, were consistent with previous years, approaching 93 per cent. Our visitor satisfaction measure with experiences in provincial historic sites and museums was just slightly under the target, but it remains very high at 98 per cent.

In addition to our performance measures, page 54 of the report lists a number of achievements where Albertans were recognized through national and international means. Alberta was second overall at the Western Canada Summer Games, and we had 150 high school grads in 2007 receive the Premier's citizenship award. Eight of those students were awarded the Queen's golden jubilee citizenship medal, and Travel Alberta was recognized for the best online tourism marketing campaign in Canada at the inaugural e-Connect awards. In addition, the Tyrrell museum was presented with a 2007 Alberta tourism industry award for marketing excellence.

I'll turn it back to my colleague Lois Hawkins.

Ms Hawkins: In terms of financial results for 2007-08 ministry revenues total \$583.8 million, an increase of \$278.6 million from the previous year. The primary source of revenue consisted of \$548.9 million in internal government transfers from the Alberta lottery fund. Operating expenses were \$745.4 million. The largest operating expense came once again from our grants, accounting for 74 per cent of the budget, or \$550.4 million. Capital investments worth \$53.9 million were made primarily to maintenance and renewal of parks infrastructure and heritage exhibits. Overall, our operating and capital expenses were \$799.3 million, \$35.6 million less than the authorized budget.

Finally, we'd like to address the Auditor General's report on the ministry of TPRC. Only one recommendation came from the Auditor General: to develop an IT control framework. The ministry was identified as one where improved information and IT security is needed. There is a recommendation made to a number of other ministries and entities, and we are currently working together on a solution.

The Auditor General also followed up on an outstanding recommendation, which, I'm happy to report, was completed or that we made progress on. The department improved the Wild Rose Foundation's grant systems for the international development program, and we're working on continually improving the grants management system to address backlogs and to ensure Albertans have access to all the information about the grants programs that they require.

This is an overview of tourism, parks, recreation, and culture for the 2007-08 year. With this ministry now becoming two entities, we feel that certainly our current ministers, Minister Blackett and Minister Ady, will be better positioned to carry out the Premier's mandate for our ministries.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dunn, do you have anything to add?

Mr. Dunn: Ronda White will briefly read some comments.

Ms White: The results of our audit of the ministry start on page 369 of our October 2008 public report. As Ms Hawkins referred to, we made one recommendation to the ministry: to develop an information technology control framework. A framework will help management implement cost-effective IT controls to mitigate its risks. Both new ministries will need to implement the recommendation.

Also, I'd like to draw your attention to page 388 of our report. We note that one recommendation from our October 2007 report is

outstanding. This recommendation related to improving the ministry's information technology service agreement with Service Alberta, which we understand has been done, and obtaining assurance that the controls operated by Service Alberta are working effectively.

Thank you, Mr. Chairman. We'd be pleased to answer any questions you or the committee may have.

The Chair: Thank you.

Before we get to questions, the chair would like to recognize and welcome Mr. Quest to the meeting this morning.

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Chair.

The Chair: Now we'll proceed to questions, please. First will be Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Dallas.

8:50

Mr. Chase: Thank you. The guidelines for the community initiatives grant program, section 3.0, state that "funding may not be used to supplement operating costs." Can the ministry describe what would be considered an operating cost that wouldn't qualify for funding?

Ms Hawkins: In terms of that particular question I'm going to call upon Carl Royan, who is our director of the community investment programs.

The Chair: You're welcome to use that microphone. Thank you.

Mr. Royan: Hi. It would be primarily operating grants that are annual operating costs of community organizations so that they don't develop a dependence on the granting system.

Mr. Chase: If I could get you to stay there because the next question, I think, will be directed to you as well. Is debt reduction considered an operation cost?

Mr. Royan: Debt reduction is a legitimate cost for the program.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dallas, please, followed by Ms Pastoor.

Mr. Dallas: Thank you very much, and thanks for joining us this morning. I'm looking at page 16 of the tourism, parks, recreation, and culture annual report. There's a discussion about infrastructure renewal. In the second paragraph there I see what I believe is about \$120 million of capital grants that are provided to a number of largely public-use facilities. The reason I raise this is that with the changes in our world environment, the impacts on tourism are yet to be fully realized, but no doubt the nature of the business is changing. Perhaps the discussion would be around what types of renewal need to take place with respect to our existing products but also what new product development needs to take place. The question I have is: was there but not visibly here in the report a series of capital investments made in terms of developing new tourism product to reflect changes in the tourism market?

Mr. Werry: Keeping in mind that we're in reference to 2007-08, the tourism levy was just coming into play, so we haven't made any specific capital investments in tourism product development.

Ms Hawkins: If I could also comment as well. Our heritage and our cultural facilities are certainly destination points under our tourism strategies, so the investments that we make, whether it's in a heritage provincial archive or a cultural facility, become an opportunity, obviously, to market that as an activity under tourism. So those investments can obviously complement the tourism strategy.

Mr. Dallas: All right. Then I'll change my supplemental and ask the question: in terms of those particular investments that were made, do we have measurement instruments in place to determine how those act as an attractor to potential tourism visitors from out of our province or out of the country? Are they, in fact, a driver bringing people to our province?

Mr. Werry: There is some evidence that the investments that have been made in 2007-08 around the Calgary exhibition and Edmonton Northlands – both of those agencies report regularly on the tourism impact of the programs that they offer. There's strong evidence that both Northlands and Stampede are significant tourist attractions for us here in Alberta and do drive a good portion of the tourism industry.

Mr. Dallas: Just on the point, then. Those measurement instruments are not the ministry's instruments. They are provided third party to us for review. Is that the idea?

Mr. Werry: We rely heavily on information we receive from Statistics Canada on the overall tourism expenditures, and then we do get information from specific attractions on what's happening with their numbers and the revenue that they're generating.

Mr. Dallas: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Pastoor, please, followed by Mr. Johnson.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. The annual report for '07-08 indicates in strategy 3.2 that the ministry will investigate opportunities for private-sector tourism business development in conjunction with the provincial parks and recreational areas and the historical sites that are compatible with the size and management intent of that particular site or facility. Can you tell us what progress has been made on the strategy for private-sector tourism business opportunities?

Mr. Scott: A good example is that last year we led a trade mission to London, England, to showcase a number of municipally ready products where there was land assembled. We also had three major investors that were seeking capital for their programs. We estimate the result of that three-day mission to London probably acquired in excess of \$300 million in additional investment in tourism opportunities in Alberta.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. Just a supplemental. Can you tell us what's being done to combat the decline in tourism – I think that probably Mr. Werry had sort of gone around this in a way, but I'll ask it again anyway – in Alberta that's caused by the uncertain economic times by diversifying our product and increasing marketing to increase tourism?

Mr. Werry: Well, I'll speak directly to the Stay campaign. Clearly, we made an effort in 2007-2008 to build the Stay campaign, trying to concentrate a little bit on that effort. It has resulted in more Albertans travelling in Alberta. We have some anecdotal evidence

from operators that it's helped to replace the decline in international visitors. So our marketing efforts there, we believe, have had a positive impact.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Johnson, please, followed by Mr. Chase.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you, Chair. Welcome and thank you for making the time. We've got quite a crew here today. It's a real pleasure to have you.

My question is for Ms Hawkins. We recently have had the pleasure of chairing a review of libraries across the province and been really impacted by the incredible amount of culture, heritage that's being delivered and even government services in general, virtually touching every ministry. It's being delivered through libraries. They're virtually a gateway or a window into government and, specifically, our culture. I'm wondering what in the past year we did in terms of this department in terms of investing in libraries or trying to connect programs that we're trying to deliver, like this great Arts Day, things like that, to have them implemented through libraries, to have libraries as a window to be an effective tool for our communities into culture and heritage.

I can give you a few examples. As we travelled, we saw them using video conferencing to tie rural communities into arts performances in major centres. We saw travelling arts shows from the Art Gallery of Alberta and some of these libraries, but I'm not sure what we actually invest in as a culture piece or how we might have included them in our three-year business plans or strategic plans to implement those things.

Ms Hawkins: Well, in general – and then I will ask some of our staff to speak to some of the specifics – libraries, as you mentioned, are a real focal point in communities for all types of cultural experiences, whether it's access to the literary arts or whether it is, as you mentioned, a touch point for use of technology to increase access to our cultural assets. There have been a number of things, for instance, that the Royal Tyrrell has done in partnering across the province to provide educational services to students and also to ensure that the kind of experiences that children in major centres might have are extended to students who are in more rural and remote areas.

In terms of a focal point libraries play a very important part. There are partnerships that are happening all the time, whether it might be through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts and having writers in residence in libraries or whether it might be, again, working with libraries as actually a facility to do presentations.

I'll call upon Sue Bohaichuk to speak a bit to some of those partnerships.

Ms Bohaichuk: Good morning. As our deputy has mentioned, libraries are very much viewed as an important community facility in communities across Alberta, whether they're urban or rural. The libraries were really a great partner for us as we were launching our cultural policy, our community spirit program, and certainly Alberta's first-ever Arts Day.

9:00

In terms of Arts Day a number of community events across the province were focused or promoted through the libraries, whether it was putting up posters in the libraries or giving out pamphlets on upcoming events. A number of libraries actually hosted events physically in their space. On an ongoing basis throughout the year

through the Alberta Foundation for the Arts we do provide grants that enable travelling artists as well as literary professionals to go out to communities, and a number of those events are often held in libraries.

Carl, I don't know if we want to talk about funding for infrastructure at all.

Mr. Royan: Through CFEP and CIP we provide a significant amount of funding to assist with infrastructure in libraries. Also, through the community initiatives program we provide funding for things like resources, technology, and also infrastructure such as shelving and that type of thing.

Mr. Johnson: Just on that point. Is it possible to get any kind of record of what kind of money went through those programs into libraries last year?

Ms Hawkins: Absolutely. We can look at all of the community investment programs as well as the AFA. I'm not sure whether the Wild Rose Foundation may have extended any money as well, but we can provide that through the chair to the committee.

Mr. Johnson: That would be very helpful.

The Chair: Yes. Ms Hawkins, please, through the clerk to all members in writing within a reasonable amount of time. We are experiencing difficulty with other agencies and departments writing back to us in a timely fashion. So if you could do it within a reasonable time, like a month, we would be grateful.

Ms Hawkins: Absolutely.

Mr. Johnson: Our report on libraries will be done very shortly for the minister, so that might be something we'd like to include if it could be provided.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Johnson: Again to Ms Hawkins. With regard to the grant process, of course CIP and CFEP and now the major one, obviously, my communities are pretty happy about the grants. It's a great program. We're supporting the communities in incredibly positive ways. But with the feedback I got over the last year in terms of how the CIP program in particular works and the long period of time it takes to get through the process for relatively very small numbers of dollars, do we look at the effectiveness or the efficiency of that program in terms of what it is costing us to process those grant applications and how much money we're sending out?

For example, if we spend six or 12 months to process a \$3,500 grant, I would argue that it's probably costing us \$5,000, \$10,000, \$20,000 to process that \$3,500 grant. Do we keep an eye on that, an oversight on that, keep benchmarking that, and do we change the process accordingly?

Ms Hawkins: Absolutely. Beginning in 2007-08, there was an identification that there were a number of business processes that perhaps needed to be reviewed, information systems that perhaps needed to be updated or changed, and processes that needed to be streamlined. So beginning in the fiscal year, there was a plan put in place, and subsequent to that, in this new fiscal year we are involved with the business process re-engineering project, and we're hoping by April 1 of this fiscal year to have that completed. It was certainly noticed, and the first steps of arranging that plan and implementation were started in 2007-08.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, please, followed by Ms Woo-Paw.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I have a double-barrelled first question and then a single-shot second. Can the ministry explain the justification for providing \$430,000 to the Central Alberta Raceways expansion given that the government's own news release indicated that the raceway only attracted 15,000 visitors a year? The second barrel is: having done the math, I wonder if each visitor received a \$30 commemorative cushion.

Ms Hawkins: We'll get back to you with a written response.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

My second question, which you may need to get back to the group with, is: what was the total economic benefit from this investment, and does the ministry feel that the return was worth the almost half a million dollars invested?

Ms Hawkins: Again, we'll get back with a written response.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Woo-Paw, followed by Ms Pastoor.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at goal 5 in the annual report, and this is in regard to the Wild Rose Foundation and volunteerism. I guess what I'm seeing in your report is that the focus seems to be on, I think, the performance measure. The only performance measure is on volunteerism, which is very important in terms of building our social capital in our province. There was one mention of the voluntary sector, and it's more focused on recognizing and promoting the sector.

I also would like to take the opportunity to recognize that we have some great champions within our government within your ministry or the previous ministry – we've gone through so many changes – that have done really, really good work in terms of building relationships between the government and the voluntary sector, which is facing some really critical issues such as staff turnover, you know, skyrocketing operating costs such as rent, and volunteer burnout as well as chronic underfunding. Then I'm really pleased to also recognize Ms Hawkins' role on the Alberta nonprofit, voluntary sector initiative.

I guess my question is: given the really good involvement, whether it was this ministry or the municipalities, now back to your area, would we be seeing more meaningful performance measures to really look at some of the critical issues facing the voluntary sector in the future?

Ms Hawkins: Thank you for the question. As you mentioned, the Alberta nonprofit, voluntary sector initiative was housed in Municipal Affairs and as of, I guess, March 13 was then moved to Culture and Community Spirit. In those last two weeks of that fiscal year, as you indicated, one of the first steps we took was to certainly elevate the government representation to the deputy minister level, so I stepped into that role.

For 2007-08 what we did as a first step was to establish the stature of the involvement. Subsequent to that, we have now ramped up in terms of starting to specify outcomes and had a first meeting with the minister. As we move now into this new fiscal year of '08-09,

we will be formalizing those outcomes and bringing that discussion of additional performance measures for consideration.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you.

The Chair: That's it for now? Thank you.

Ms Pastoor, please, followed by Mr. Benito.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Can the minister explain what qualified the Resorts of the Canadian Rockies, as listed on page 989 of the blue book, to receive almost \$3 million in grants?

Mr. Werry: We'll have to get back to you in writing on that.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. And it may be the same answer to this question. As this organization lists several high-ranking partners on its website such as Husky Energy, Telus, and Starbucks, does the minister feel that this amount of funding should instead have been given to one or even several smaller organizations that don't have such powerful partnerships?

Mr. Werry: We'll have to get back to you.

The Chair: Thank you. Again, that's in the blue book, the public accounts document, page 989, for the record: Resorts of the Canadian Rockies, \$2.9 million under Supplies and Services, Capital Assets and Other. We'd appreciate the details on that.

Mr. Benito, please, followed by Mr. Chase.

Mr. Benito: Good morning. The community spirit program was announced in February 2008 with a goal of increasing private charitable donations to eligible nonprofit and charitable organizations. What are the components of the program, and how did you involve Albertans in creating the program?

9:10

Ms Hawkins: Thank you for the question. There are two components of the community spirit program, as you mentioned. One was actually announced in 2007 as an enhanced charitable tax credit. The second component was the donation-grant program, which allows eligible organizations to apply for a proportional grant based on the amount of individual donations they receive. Both of them are donor driven, so Albertans decide, first, by their donations those organizations that they wish to support, and government dollars follow those donations. Alberta has one of the highest charitable tax credits in the country. We're hoping that that, obviously, will encourage the generosity of Albertans to support the nonprofit, voluntary sector.

[Mr. Griffiths in the chair]

In terms of the other part of your question, about the consultation with Albertans, there was work and research of an MLA committee. They conducted a public consultation, which was completed in July of 2007, and that helped shape the parameters of the community spirit program.

Mr. Benito: My supplementary question is on the level of community volunteerism by adult Albertans. It did not meet its target. Why?

Ms Hawkins: Well, you know, there are so many reasons why people might not be able to participate. We all know that the

economy has been an issue. And not just because of people working long hours, but they may have to work one or more jobs, so just the time available can be an issue. Another may be that organizations may not be able to communicate to everyone the types of opportunities they have. Certainly, working through the group that was referenced before, the Alberta nonprofit, voluntary sector initiative, we'll be able to all work together to help better communicate about those kinds of opportunities and help Albertans to see that there is a whole variety of ways that they may participate and assist.

The other thing is that the percentage of adult Albertans who reported that they volunteered fell below the intended target by less than 1 per cent, so despite the fact that it is not at the target that we would wish it to be, it remains high. We certainly want to keep that 69 per cent target as a stretch target. That's where we'd like, certainly, to encourage. We think that by working with the sector itself, we can find ways to encourage Albertans to participate.

Mr. Benito: Thank you very much, Ms Hawkins.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, followed by me.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. As *Insight into Government* has reported that an organization would have to raise \$3 million a year in donations to qualify for the full \$25,000 matching grant, what steps has the ministry taken to amend the community spirit program to be more inclusive of smaller organizations who need the funding but do not have the capacity to raise \$3 million themselves?

Ms Hawkins: A very important question. Much of what we have done has been subsequent to the 2007-08 fiscal year because of the fact that we've only just kick-started the program. We certainly have been looking at a couple of different things. One – again, this is actually subsequent to '07-'08 – is that we have extended the deadline from October 1 to December 31, recognizing that some small organizations have very few resources to commit to doing proposals and pulling together the information. Certainly, subsequent to the fiscal year we have done that work.

The other is that we are looking at ways to guarantee at least a fair minimum percentage for those small and medium-sized organizations, so it will be perhaps a higher percentage or somehow compensate for their small size. That will be something, though, that will be concluded in this fiscal year rather than in the one that is being discussed in Public Accounts.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I appreciate the future forecast.

My follow-up question. *Insight into Government* also stated that only 10 per cent of all charities in Canada are able to raise more than \$1 million a year. Can the ministry explain what reports, reviews, et cetera, were used when setting up the qualification requirements for the community spirit program and, if you can, give a forecast how this discrepancy between capability and matching can be improved?

Ms Hawkins: In terms of the research that was used by the MLA committee, I'd have to get back to you with a written response to that.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Deputy Chair: Thank you very much.

From the 2007-2008 annual report, tourism, parks, rec, and culture, on pages 60 and 62. First, I have to admit that I was quite

impressed with how the numbers, the budget, worked out. It's hard to do financial statements when you split up into two departments, but on page 62 – I was curious – the changes in valuation adjustments, \$489,000 in 2007 grew to over \$1 million in valuation adjustments. What were the valuation adjustments on?

Mr. Dunn: Maybe we'll just help out here for a minute, Mr. Chairman. Page 60 has the valuation adjustments down below. Page 60 gives you the components for environmental obligations, doubtful accounts, and primarily vacation pay and banked overtime. If you look at those amounts compared to where you were at, the other statement, there's the aggregation of those three amounts there. Does your \$1,061,000 compare to \$489,000 the previous year? I'm sure Pam will supplement that.

Ms Arnston: That's correct. With respect to the provision for environmental obligations we had to increase the previous liability that was set up because better information came in with respect to the outstanding obligation for environmental obligations with respect to some park sites and some historic sites.

[Mr. MacDonald in the chair]

Then with respect to vacation pay, that provision goes up and down based on the number of outstanding vacation days someone might have at the end of the year. We determine that liability at one point in time, and then the next year we determine it again. The provision goes up and down depending on if the liability has gone up or down.

With respect to doubtful accounts, that again is just a provision for writeoffs of accounts receivable.

Mr. Griffiths: Okay. Thank you.

My second question. On page 60, the community lottery grants, the budget was \$381 million; the actual was \$372 million. Now, I'm always happy when a department spends less money than what they're given, but in your department circumstance a lot of those community grants are critical to help communities grow, so I'm wondering why there was about \$9 million less spent than what was budgeted.

Ms Arnston: With respect to community lottery grants, within that program is the horse racing and breeding renewal program. With respect to the budget and the actuals that came in, the actuals were less by \$20 million. The same with bingo associations. The actuals compared to the projected budget were \$3 million less, whereas the First Nations development fund had an overexpenditure of \$16 million, which is the net result of all of those programs. Horse racing and bingo associations are projected based on revenue coming in to AGLC, and then we expend the grant with respect to the revenue. Projections were higher than the actuals that were spent. With respect to horse racing there was a facility that didn't come online yet. That's why the projections were higher than the actuals.

Mr. Griffiths: Okay. Thank you very much.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Pastoor, please, followed by Mr. Dallas.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Referencing page 386 of the blue book again, why did the Whitecourt Golf and Country Club receive a grant of \$1.3 million?

Ms Hawkins: I'm assuming that that would be a course that is run by either a municipality or by a nonprofit society and that they had applied for one of the community investment programs. I would have to get back to you with a written confirmation of that, but that's what I suspect.

9:20

Ms Pastoor: Do MLAs have any input into the awarding of grants to organizations within their constituencies?

Ms Hawkins: As part of the process for determining the approval of grants, obviously, there are criteria identified in the program guidelines that must be met. Because they are community investment programs, we do look for information from communities in terms of support. One of the ways is in terms of the matching dollars as well as the kind of partnerships that a community has brought together to bring forward the proposal because these grants are matching. The MLA's role is to provide information on the community and to give a sense of the support for this investment in the community, so it's part of the information that we use for making decisions.

Ms Pastoor: Okay.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Dallas, followed by Mr. Chase, please.

Mr. Dallas: Thanks very much. I'm looking in the annual report, beginning on page 19, the core business 1. I guess, a first observation. Perhaps there has been some realignment of this, but a number of the core businesses seem to contain two components which are not necessarily compatible components. I'm looking at the investments that were made in terms of provincial parks and protected areas and wondering if you could speak a little bit to some of the investments that we're making around promoting recreational and sport opportunities. I'm getting a sense that the priority or level of investment that's occurring there is not necessarily similar, nor maybe should it be, to what we're doing with provincial parks. Specifically, for projects like the Alberta sport development centres what type of investment are we making there, and how do we prioritize those investments versus other general recreational participation-type investments?

Mr. Werry: Well, first of all, in terms of the Centre of Sport Excellence in Calgary we made a \$69 million commitment to CODA, of which we still have \$9 million left to pay out to CODA in the year ahead. That is doing general upgrades to the legacy facilities at Canada Olympic Park and also their new centre for excellence, so that commitment has been made over a three-year period.

As to the question of general recreational activity, clearly the Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation and the funding that flows through the foundation is intended to support that broader set of participation activities across the province. That's spoken about in a separate portion of the statements and so on, so we do have a method of ensuring that general participation in sport and recreation is considered on its own merit through the foundation and not necessarily going head to head with some of the other priorities within the department. So I think we do have a balance in terms of how the resources are allocated.

Mr. Dallas: Okay. That's it.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Johnson.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Can the ministry tell us what plans are in place to expand the network of provincial parks and protected areas and what specific areas are being considered for designation as provincial parks? I throw out my first choice, and that's the Andy Russell I'tai Sah Kòp wilderness park in the Castle-Crown area.

Mr. Werry: Just in recognition of what took place in 2007-2008 we were able to designate Eagle Point provincial park and Blue Rapids provincial recreation area in the Drayton Valley area as new parks in our system. Those parks came into being through a broad community coalition and co-operation with the department and other departments in government. We think that it's a very successful model and something that we hope to look at in the years ahead.

Right now within our system, you know, there are 504 designated areas within the provincial parks system. It does involve over 6 million acres of land. We are certainly always looking for opportunities to add to that system but in a way that reflects community support.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. I'm well aware that that 504 number represents just 4 per cent of Alberta's total space.

My follow-up question is: can the ministry tell us what is being done to ensure that parks and protected areas have fenced-in borders or at least buffer zones to prevent free-grazing cattle from entering these areas? This is a problem I had at Etherington and Cataract Creek. Fences weren't maintained; cattle guards weren't cleared out.

Mr. Werry: Well, on an ongoing basis as part of our operation we obviously are paying attention to those kinds of issues, and we do have within our operating policies a bit of a buffer zone of 400 metres from park boundaries to try and make sure that there are no conflicting land uses within that 400-metre buffer. Again, that's an operational policy, so we're monitoring those situations on an ongoing basis.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Barbed wire would help with the monitoring.

The Chair: Mr. Johnson, followed, please, by Ms Pastoor.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you. For Mr. Werry. I'm wondering about the sourcing out or the farming out of our parks to third parties. We contract a lot of that out. Can you give me a sense of: is it all our provincial parks that we farm out to contractors? Because we have several different designations of parks, I'm not sure if it's all our provincial parks or some of them. What's the process for that, and how do we pick those people? How many are we farming out?

Mr. Werry: Well, of the parks where we offer services – we want to make a distinction between provincial parks, where people have access to specific recreation activities; our provincial recreation areas, which also have campgrounds and opportunities for people to participate in recreation; other classes of land which are more intended to be preserved for on-foot access and individual access, things like wildland parks and natural areas. We don't offer services in all of our parks, just to be clear.

Of the parks where we offer services, in 68 per cent of our parks we do have contract operators. Again, to be clear, the province still maintains responsibility for those sites, but we provide a given set of

services through contract operators on the basis of a cost-benefit analysis. We look at what it would cost us to service that site, what's the potential revenue, is it viable for someone to offer those services in a manner that meets our standards and in a way that allows them to retain a reasonable rate of return for their investment that they make of their time and equipment, and so on. Right now 68 per cent of our sites are serviced by contract operators, and our staff, obviously, monitor those contracts. We're very sensitive, again, to how the public responds to the level of service being provided by our contract operators.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you. Just a follow-up on that, specifically with regard to risk management in those parks, whether it be injuries to customers or whatnot. Can you tell me what kind of risk management strategies we have with regard to that, what kind of quality assurance, what kind of ongoing oversight to make sure that these things are being managed properly and that there is not a risk to our customers and liability to ourselves?

Mr. Werry: Well, we have a staff of full-time conservation officers who have as part of their function that 80 per cent of their job is actually spent in monitoring contract compliance. So they're spending time in our parks observing how the operators are maintaining those sites, whether or not there are any safety concerns. That's part and parcel of their day-to-day job, so they're in those sites on a regular basis to monitor the contractors and ensure that they're adhering to the provisions within the contracts.

All of our contracts contain measures with respect to safety. Obviously, public safety is of paramount concern. We understand that Albertans want to spend time in the outdoors, but they want that time to be safe time. They want to understand that they're safe in those environments. So that's part of the job that our conservation officers do every day.

Mr. Johnson: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Pastoor, followed by Mr. Quest.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What is the status of the plans for the Royal Alberta Museum of nature and to upgrade the current museum?

Ms Hawkins: Again, if we're referencing '07-08, there have been discussions under way with Infrastructure on the changes that can be made to, obviously, enhance the museum experience. Increasingly we are using technology and specifically video conferencing opportunities to extend that experience. The government has committed, obviously, to looking at ensuring that this is one of our primary legacy heritage pieces in our province, so the government right now is looking at options for how we proceed with that. It's in the process now of going through A and P discussions and CPC discussions and eventually Treasury Board discussions so that once the recommendation has been fully reviewed, then there will be an announcement and the next steps.

9:30

Ms Pastoor: Kind of a couple of things: is there any time frame on that, and what are the current projected costs for the project?

Ms Hawkins: As I mentioned, options right now are being examined, so I don't have any figures to share with you. In terms of timelines, it will take the time that it takes to get through, again, the government processes that are in place to review such decisions.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Quest, followed by Mr. Chase.

Mr. Quest: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Just looking at page 20 on infrastructure upgrades, there's \$57.6 million spent on all kinds of infrastructure upgrades, a long list of parks and facilities that that funding went to. That being done, how would you describe the overall state of our parks today?

Mr. Werry: Thank you for the question. We've been monitoring the condition of the parks over the last number of years as we've reinvested. I'm going to suggest that I think we're at about 68 per cent in good condition at this point. We still have a ways to go in terms of getting to a number that would be higher than that. We'd like to be higher than that, but right now we believe that about 68 per cent of our parks are in good condition.

Mr. Quest: How do you decide which ones to prioritize, which projects to fund?

Mr. Werry: We do have a process within the department where our field staff do a regular overview of all of the parks in their area. We have a committee within the department that looks at the overall condition across the province, looks at the usage in those areas, and prioritizes accordingly. We do prioritize issues of public safety first, so a good chunk of the money that was spent in 2007-2008 was to upgrade water and sewer systems to ensure we had healthy, safe water for people to consume in parks.

Mr. Quest: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Sandhu.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Three quick comments and then the question. You can't clear-cut and camp in the same area, in the same space, at the same time, as was the case in Cataract Creek. Logging trucks and recreational vehicles shouldn't be jousting on forestry roads during the camping season. There aren't nearly enough full-time conservation officers to protect the 504 parks and protected areas, which leads to the question. What specific type of collaboration has the ministry had with their colleagues in Sustainable Resource Development in the implementation of the land-use strategy to ensure an increase in parks and protected areas?

Mr. Werry: Thank you, again, for that question. We've been working, obviously, very closely with our colleagues at Sustainable Resource Development. Just to make an observation, we were able to increase the number of our full-time conservation officers by 20 per cent, so we went from 60 to 72 full-time conservation officers to assist with enforcement in 2007-2008.

With respect to the land-use framework, clearly, we've worked with SRD in the consideration. Obviously, parks are a form of land use, and we fully expect to be part of all aspects of the land-use framework as it moves forward. We are working together on issues of enforcement not only with our colleagues in SRD but also with our colleagues at Solicitor General. I think we all know that the May long weekend can be a challenging weekend for all of us as Albertans who want to see responsible use of the outdoors, so we're working collaboratively as three departments to try to ensure a co-ordinated approach to enforcement.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Hopefully, you're co-ordinating your activities with Justice as well. I appreciate that 20 per cent increase

in conservation officers but, you know, 500 divided by 60: it's a large space to cover.

How much funding was directed towards initiatives within the land-use strategy, and do you need more funding in order to co-ordinate your various interministerial oversight stewardship?

Mr. Werry: Well, again, focusing on 2007-2008, there was adequate funding in departmental resources to participate in the activities that took place in that year. As we look ahead, obviously, the funding requirements for future years will be considered as part of the implementation.

Mr. Chase: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Sandhu, followed by Ms Pastoor, please.

Mr. Sandhu: Thank you, Chair. My question is international travellers. If you look at 2005, 2006 is slightly lower than 2005. I see the revenue side, you know, \$1.42 billion, and I tried to look for the expense side. What is Alberta Tourism going to do to increase international travellers?

Mr. Werry: Thank you for the question. We do have some information pertaining to the year we're in, where the numbers from the United States are down. We have had good success in other markets around the world. I think that in 2007-08 we actually were up overall, and this year we'll probably be close to even, even with U.S. visitors down. We do maintain agreements with general sales agents in other countries to assist us with marketing Alberta in those countries through Travel Alberta.

Mr. Sandhu: Second question. I've talked to a lot of people in my riding. They have expressed an interest that their loved ones or their friends want to visit. Especially I'm talking about India or Pakistan. When they go to immigration in their country, they cannot get a visa from there to visit. Is there any mechanism between the provincial government or the federal government to promote Alberta with any bond system? If they are threats – they're going to run away or whatever – is there any bond we can propose to the people and say, you know: "This much money. You put a bond here. We'll let you go to see beautiful Canada or Alberta."? Is there anything we could do? Like, we're spending money, and when it comes to getting the visitor permit, they cannot get it. On one side we're spending money, on another side we can't get the visa. So what's the purpose of doing all this?

Mr. Werry: I appreciate the question. In terms of the work of the department we are participating with the Canadian Tourism Commission on issues of international access, and we certainly will continue to work through the CTC because, as you know, the matter really rests with the federal government in terms of issuing visas to enter the country. But we are working through the Canadian Tourism Commission to get those issues on the table with the federal government.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Sandhu: You know, how long is this going to take? Now we've got a new minister, Ms Ablonczy from Alberta. She knows that people like to visit Alberta. How long is it going to take to get this resolved? Like, are we talking about five years, four years, six years, or 10 years? What's the plan?

Mr. Werry: I think the federal government has to answer that question, but we are working with them to help them to move in that direction.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Pastoor, please, followed by Mr. Griffiths.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. Part of this question, I think, has been asked before, but I'll go at it again from a different department. Can the minister explain why the applicants to the community facility enhancement program, which we all know as CFEP, do not receive written notice of the receipt of their applications or receive notice on the status or additional requirements for their application?

Ms Hawkins: One of the things I had mentioned before is that in terms of backlogs, in terms of efficiencies, certainly, it began in the last fiscal year, '07-08, the recognition of this challenge. What is under way in 2008-09 is a process by which we can have more online access to information, and we'll be able to better communicate with applicants and improve the service that they require to know what the status is of their applications.

9:40

Ms Pastoor: Thank you. That is good to hear on that part.

How many CFEP grants were delayed in the last fiscal year due to the lack of receipts or, you know, any of the problems that may have arisen? Do you have the numbers?

Ms Hawkins: I'd like to get back to you with a written response to that.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Mr. Griffiths, please, followed by Harry Chase.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you very much. I always ask every department that comes a similar question about the quality of performance measures. There are always satisfaction surveys, which are still useful, but they're opinions. Then there are output measures, which are a little more meaningful to see how the department is doing in its job, and then there are outcome measures to see the actual value of where we're putting money.

Now, most of the performance measures from Tourism, Parks and Recreation are all satisfaction surveys. I'm wondering why you don't have measures for maintaining the quality of historic buildings or how they're being preserved or for our parks instead of just whether people who use the parks are satisfied. Why not measure – or is there something I've missed? – the quality of the parks and how they're being improved or some sort of measure that is in the report?

Mr Werry: Well, thank you for the question. I'll start, and then my colleague Lois Hawkins will respond as well.

First of all, the process for developing performance measures is an iterative process. We work with the Treasury Board in ensuring that we have measures that are continuously evolving as challenges arise, so there is a fairly structured process to establish performance measures in the first place. As much as possible we try and use measures that have solid science behind them. We are considering within my portion of TPRC, now TPR, an additional measure in sport and recreation, for example, to measure activity levels for children. Right now all we have is a measure of activity participa-

tion for adults. Clearly, we understand the emerging issue of the well-being of our children and the need to address that issue. We need a solid measure. Well, as it turns out, we've been able to identify a measure being developed nationally that is updated every year that is valid, so we can begin to use those as measures.

The other thing that I think it's important to note is that we do look at a range of other indicators to determine whether or not we're achieving the outcomes we're trying to achieve as a department. They're not formalized performance measures in this process that are laid out in the annual report, but we are looking at other indicators. I mentioned in response to an earlier question the condition of the parks. We do have some numbers that we use to assess where we are with respect to the physical plant in parks, but those numbers, again, need to be tried and tested and validated in order to be included as a formal performance measure.

In both the case of parks and in sport and recreation we will be looking at new performance measures in the year ahead that are more outcome focused.

Mr. Griffiths: Okay. I do understand that you have to collect data over several years, and they do take time to evolve because you need to establish a baseline and how you're going to measure it. Do you have a timeline on when you're going to reach a point where those nonformalized indicators are made public performance measures so that we can evaluate the quality of our parks?

Mr. Werry: Well, in the case of parks, this year we have done some specific research as we've worked towards the longer term plan for parks. We think some of the measures that we've gotten through that study that we had undertaken this past summer will provide us with better indicators, but we need to validate those. We may have a bit of a baseline evolving this year. Whether they can become formal performance measures within the next two years or not, we'll continue to work with them to make sure they're solid measures.

Mr. Griffiths: Thank you.

Ms Hawkins: I did want to comment that, certainly, in the culture and heritage and arts area there are some actual, I guess, hard statistical performance measures such as the level of community volunteerism, the level of participation in arts activities, the economic impact of our provincial historic sites, museums, and interpretive centres. Plus, we have added a new one as well, and that is the economic activity of the film industry. So we have been working toward those.

One of the I think interesting aspects, though, of this sector – and we certainly will continue to look at those kind of hard statistical performance indicators – is measuring the intrinsic value of this area as well. We know that people who are volunteering, participating are probably people who are engaged with their community, and that means it's a stronger community. Probably, then, people know each other, and they help each other. Perhaps it's even a safer community. One of the things that we really want to do is work together with our colleagues across government to measure how these investments also make us stronger and more resilient as individuals, as families, as communities, and as a province.

Mr. Griffiths: Excellent. Thank you.

The Chair: Mr. Chase, followed by Ms Woo-Paw.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. As a Statistics Canada report released this summer indicated that Albertans are among the most obese people

in Canada, can the ministry explain why only \$1.6 million in funding was provided to support 17 active living agencies, which could coordinate provincial delivery of programs and services?

Mr. Werry: Thank you for that question. Obviously, a very important issue. I would point out that we are not the only ministry that provides support to active living initiatives. Our colleagues in the department of health, through programs like Choosewell Challenge, provide support. In addition, our colleagues in the Department of Education, through daily physical activity funding, provide support. Alberta does have a very vibrant active living community. The Alberta Centre for Active Living is actually referred to as Canada's centre for active living. We have some of the best researchers in the country on this issue, and we have some of the most innovative programming going on. Not all of it is funded through our ministry.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Just a brief comment with regard to educational daily funding based on my 34 years of teaching school: the program was mandated; unfortunately, the funding didn't follow.

The follow-up question. Leading research by the Fitness Industry Council of Canada indicates that the cost of inactivity to the health system could reach over \$1 billion by 2015. Given that sedentary lifestyles increase costs to the health system, what collaboration has taken place with the ministry of health to support active living? You've touched on it. Are there any other cross-ministerial programs that you participate in with the health ministry?

Mr. Werry: I've already mentioned the Choosewell Challenge. We are also working with them around some of our initiatives around SummerActive and WinterActive. We have the Healthy U campaign, which involves public awareness materials being developed by the department of health that we're assisting them with in distribution. So we are working together with them.

Mr. Chase: I'm pleased to hear about the collaboration.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Woo-Paw, please, followed by Ms Pastoor.

Ms Woo-Paw: Thank you. My question is in reference to page 28 of the annual report. There was an \$8.9 million increase in tourism marketing. I would like to know: how was this money used, and when can we see the results of this investment?

Mr. Werry: In terms of the increase in enhanced tourism marketing we have already seen some of the results: the marketing that was done in U.S. markets with respect to increasing our flights from New York and also flights from London, Frankfurt, and Mexico City. Those kinds of results come about as a result of our marketing efforts and making those connections in those countries, which, again, increases our traffic from those areas.

Ms Woo-Paw: A major population growth in Alberta from newcomers to the province was new immigrants, and a lot of these immigrant communities as well as the community-based media are growing quite substantially in our major cities. My second question. I see those as opportunities for marketing. These are people who might still be going through an adaptation or tourist mentality as newcomers. I'd like to know whether the ministry has integrated this into your marketing strategy, whether you have multilingual materials and your utilization of community-based media as a way to market tourism in Alberta.

9:50

Mr. Scott: What normally happens is that the Travel Alberta folks look at a media buy within the budgets that we have, targeting certain markets, and we look at the cost of delivery and whatever the publications are. There's no question that there's a lot of new, alternative media that comes out that will target different audiences, and we're very aware of that. We're also aware that the use of that – for example, multilingual capabilities on the Internet – is also very important. For example, if you were to go to the travelalberta.com site in Japan, automatically the text comes up in Japanese. That is available to other ethnic communities around the world. So we know that it's very important, and we do our media buy based on reach and value for the dollar.

Ms Woo-Paw: So does that mean that you don't have multilingual material?

Mr. Scott: We have multilingual material as well. We have multilingual both on the web and targeting – for example, we work through the IIR's trade offices in many markets. We also have supplemented some of those markets with general sales agents, for example, in Korea and Taiwan and around the world.

Ms Woo-Paw: For your foreign markets. Okay. Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.

Ms Pastoor, please, followed by Mr. Dallas.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. How much funding was provided for aboriginal tourism opportunities, and can the minister provide details on where the funding went? I'm going to just try to roll the whole thing into one big question if you don't mind. How much of that would be working with natives on reserves, and if so, do you work with the feds in that program, and how much of it would be in, you know, nonreserve aboriginal communities?

Mr. Scott: We have two different approaches on the aboriginal tourism. We have an Aboriginal Tourism Advisory Council, which meets on a regular basis to give the department advice on where we should be going in marketing. One of the thrusts this particular year was to work with that council to identify aboriginal product that could be available for sale or product that could be available for visitation.

On the other side, on the Travel Alberta side we do a lot of work with the federal government on the promotion of the aboriginal tourism product that we have; for example, Métis Crossing, the new Blackfoot Crossing, which is on reserve near Calgary and is probably one of the world-class interpretive centres for aboriginal product. Of course, within the ministry we have Head-Smashed-In Buffalo Jump, which underwent some recent renovations. That is one of the key attractors of international guests because of the use of tourism products. So it's very important for us, and we continue to focus on that because it's a niche that Alberta has that's somewhat different from other parts of the country.

Ms Pastoor: I will ask a supplement. What would be the percentage of off reserve or on reserve? My ignorance is going to show here. I'm not sure, with some of the casinos, even, that tend to be destination points, if that's considered federal reserve land or not. Like, Blackfoot Crossing: I think that is on a reserve, is it not?

Mr. Scott: Yes, it is.

Ms Pastoor: I'm not sure of that. So what would the percentage be?

Mr. Scott: I don't know the exact percentage. Most of the attractions don't necessarily have a geographic location like Blackfoot. They may be interpretive programs. For example, in this fiscal year we had some major television productions from Australia here in Alberta. We ensured, even though they were shooting most of their shows from Lake Louise, that we brought in aboriginal tourism product to those particular shows to showcase that because it does have an international significance. So we don't just focus always on whether it's on reserve or off reserve. We focus more on what is interesting aboriginal product that we know has either a national or international draw.

Ms Pastoor: Okay. Thanks.

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Dallas, please.

Mr. Dallas: Thanks very much, Mr. Chair. I'm looking at page 154 of the financial statements specifically for the Sport, Recreation, Parks & Wildlife Foundation. On the expense side about two-thirds of the way down the column I'm looking at the Percy Page Centre. If I'm reading this correctly, an expenditure of \$475,000. Note 8 on page 161 indicates that there are not-for-profit organizations in that facility and that there's a recovery of some direct office expenses as a result of that. My question is: are those expenditures all for the maintenance and provision of office space, and do the organizations that are housed inside that facility all fit inside the mandate of the ministry?

Ms Arnston: Well, with respect to the expenditures, it's not for office space. It's for printing and photocopying and faxing, those kinds of things. Office space is actually provided by the Ministry of Infrastructure.

With respect to the organizations that are housed in Percy Page, I'd have to refer that to Lloyd Bentz.

Mr. Bentz: Yes, all the not-for-profit organizations that are part of Percy Page Centre are within the provincial mandate of either, at that time certainly the department of tourism, parks, recreation and culture. With the split of the two departments it's the same thing. It's the same provision of services, but they all do fit in the mandate of the original department.

Mr. Dallas: Thank you. Just a point to clarify my understanding of this and the expenditures that are listed in the financial statement: those are net expenses, then, after the provision for recovery of directs that are mentioned in note 8, or in fact is there zero cost? Does that same \$475,000 appear on the revenue line in another category?

Ms Arnston: That's correct. Those are the gross expenses, and then the revenue that's collected is reported in revenue.

Mr. Dallas: And offsets the entire budget expenditure?

Ms Arnston: If you look at it, we have a slight loss. It's not exactly direct cost recovery.

Mr. Dallas: "Slight" meaning 10 per cent?

Ms Arnston: We'd have to get back to you with the specifics.

Mr. Dallas: Thank you. If you would.

Mr. Bentz: I can actually answer that. Yes, it would be less than 10 per cent. We try and use it as close as we can to break even on those services. Of course, it depends on terms of volumes, but, yes, any kind of loss would be less than 10 per cent for sure.

The Chair: Thank you.

We still have members with questions on the list, so we will have them read into the record. If you could add these to your written responses from earlier in the meeting, we would be very grateful.

We'll start with Mr. Chase, followed by Mr. Sandhu.

Mr. Chase: Thank you. Of the 504 Alberta parks and protected areas the Canadian Parks and Wilderness Society, CPAWS, reported that there were only 45 management plans. The ministry has initiated many draft management plans, such as Bragg Creek, Saskatoon Island, and Williamson provincial parks as well as the initiation of a management plan for 51 recreational areas in Kananaskis Country. When can we expect to see finalized and – the key word here – implemented management plans for these areas based upon protection of environmental quality and recreational enjoyment of our parks and protected areas?

The follow-up: can you provide detailed timelines for the completion and implementation of these management plans?

The Chair: Thank you.
Mr. Sandhu.

Mr. Sandhu: Yes, sir. My question is on the Wild Rose Foundation international development program. I'd just like to know how many countries so far used that program for the \$25,000 grant we have.

The board of the Wild Rose Foundation was established in 1984. What is a board member's mandate? How many years? Is it the same board that's running the show since 1984, or were there any changes? Are we expecting any changes in the future? Thank you.

The Chair: Thank you.
Ms Pastoor.

Ms Pastoor: Thank you, Mr. Chair. What specific type of collaboration has the minister had with her colleague in Sustainable Resource Development in the implementation of the land-use strategy to ensure an increase in parks and, specifically, protected areas? How much funding was directed toward the initiatives within the land-use strategy?

The Chair: Thank you.

I have a question. I'm curious, and I would like a response, as well, please. On page 19 of your annual report you indicate that there was one-time assistance of \$50 million for capital upgrades to Rexall Place, Pengrowth Saddledome, Commonwealth Stadium, and McMahon Stadium. I see in the public accounts that the Edmonton Eskimo Football Club got a \$15 million grant and the Saddledome Foundation got a \$10 million grant. Are these grants associated with this one-time assistance program? That would be my first question.

The second question would be: could you provide, please, a breakdown of what capital upgrades will be done to those four facilities with that \$50 million.

Thank you.

10:00

Any other questions?

I don't want to leave anyone out, but, Mr. Werry and Ms Hawkins, on behalf of the committee to your staff we would like to express our gratitude for your time and attention this morning. We

would really appreciate receiving written responses. I don't think a month is an unreasonable amount of time. Some committee members have expressed to the chair that we are not receiving written responses in a timely fashion. So if you could provide us with answers within four weeks, I think that's reasonable. Again, thank you very much. We wish you and your staff the very best as you manage and run your department in the next fiscal year.

Thank you.

Mr. Werry: Thank you very much.

Ms Hawkins: Thank you very much.

The Chair: Item 5, Other Business. Any committee members with other business?

I would like to remind you that there is no meeting scheduled for next week due to constituency week. Our next meeting will be with the Ministry of Children and Youth Services on Wednesday, November 19, at 8:30 in the morning. Fair enough?

Item 7, Adjournment. Moved by Mr. Dallas that the meeting be adjourned. All in favour? None opposed.

Thank you, and have a good week.

[The committee adjourned at 10:02 a.m.]

