

**Report to CHBA Board of Directors  
Sandra Young, President, CHBA - Alberta  
October 2011**

The Progressive Conservative Association of Alberta chose a new leader on October 1, meaning that Alberta has a new Premier. Alison Redford of Calgary was elected on the second ballot after she passed frontrunner Gary Mar with help from third place candidate Doug Horner. CHBA – Alberta Board members met with Ms. Redford in Calgary on August 9. During this meeting, Ms. Redford responded to questions and concerns regarding communicating with government. She mentioned that she would like to see a new ministerial structure for government that is designed primarily to eliminate the issue of individual departments not working closely together. She proposed that several senior policy ministries would be formed, with smaller and more focused ministries under their supervision. She explained how these changes would impact not only the general functioning of government, but also the approach to approvals of new projects and large-scale initiatives, such as the Land Use Framework. Ms. Redford also exchanged ideas on seniors housing with Board members, and that has come to be reflected in her platform as she intends to place an emphasis on providing incentives for homebuilders to increase housing and expand choice in the marketplace. She was one of two candidates that took the time during the campaign to reply to our communication on this issue as well. Ms. Redford showed a keen interest to hear some specifics regarding Residential Construction from the Board members and noted that her approach to consultation would ideally see more input from industry stakeholders such as our Association due to the specific knowledge they possess. Since winning the leadership, Ms. Redford has moved swiftly to identify the government key priorities: health, education, re-examining the plan for Alberta's electricity transmission lines, and the Land Use Framework. A new cabinet will be named shortly, and the fall sitting of the legislature will go ahead. The next election is currently forecast for June 2012.

The coming government and election cycle will present many opportunities to continue building relationships with decision-makers and political leaders throughout Alberta. Though some of our key issues may be shelved or put on the back burner, CHBA – Alberta will remain focused on the principled approach to issues we have always taken. Many new Ministers and departmental officials are likely to be appointed as Redford seems keen to give government a new face at all levels.

## **Issues**

### *Mandatory Warranty and Condominium Property Act*

Members and staff continue to engage with the government relating to changes to the Condominium Property Act, some of which are tied in with ongoing discussions on the implementation of mandatory new home warranty province-wide. The government has been keen to hear input, involving CHBA - Alberta in many discussions.

### *Seniors Housing*

CHBA – Alberta recently sent a letter to key decision-makers, including newly-minted Premier-Designate Alison Redford, outlining a proposed new classification for seniors housing in Alberta. We have received several favourable responses (including from Ms. Redford as noted above) to this document and discussions will continue with an emphasis on inclusive communities, affordability and choice.

### *Building Codes*

The Association and members are participating actively in the building codes cycle that is currently taking place. CHBA – Alberta has identified that it is a priority to maintain to the greatest extent possible a focus

on the intent of these codes, which is to address basic health and safety issues. We've also focused on identifying proposed code changes that will impact affordability and choice negatively, and then looked to propose constructive solutions to the issue. This work is intended to proactively prevent issues such as those that took place surrounding changes related to high-intensity residential fires that have had a substantive negative impact on the industry. We are also working to identify and address issues within the codes process that leave little room for recourse once a change is implemented.

#### *Slave Lake Recovery*

The recovery effort is a logistical challenge for everyone involved. A situation like this has not occurred in Alberta and requires continued coordination between many different organizations. For the past few months, CHBA – Alberta and its members have been active participants in the organization of the rebuild, but our future involvement will be minimal. We have registered a number of concerns related to creating certainty in the business environment enabling a quick rebuild, but we have not made progress.

#### *Labour*

CHBA – Alberta has been working to assess and confront our industry's challenges with regard to labour and this will continue. Recent activity has included the circulation of a survey of current and future labour needs, as well as discussions with provincial officials and stakeholder groups. Moving forward we are looking to work with both the federal and provincial government to ensure that Alberta is able to access workers in a timely and cost competitive manner, to ensure that sustainable growth can take place.

#### **CHBA – Alberta Conference**

The 2011 BUILD Conference was held at the Fairmont Jasper Park Lodge, September 15-18. This year's conference saw nearly 500 registered delegates and a record number of awards submissions. You can view this year's award winners at <http://www.chbaalberta.ca/alberta-awards-of-excellence-winners>. The highlights of the Conference are available at <http://www.chbaalberta.ca/build-2011-farewell-video-and-photos>