

# Alberta: Setting a New Path to Regain Our Competitive Advantage

October 4, 2018 . 8:00 am to 11:30 am

Sutton Place Hotel—10235 101 Street, Edmonton, AB  
(Ballroom—2nd floor)

## Overview

In years gone by there was a common catch phrase that most Albertans will remember. It was called the “Alberta Advantage” and Canadians from provinces all across the country were either indirectly benefiting or moving to Alberta to reap some of those benefits first hand. Those glory days included a provincial economy with low unemployment, higher than the national average disposable incomes and lower taxes. But fast forwarding to today, the “Advantage” is no longer a fair descriptor in this province and the Boom/Bust cycle of past eras has forever changed. Charting a new path will require a re-positioning of our economy and restructuring of our workforce. In this session come and hear as our panel of experts share their views on the current gaps in the system and examine alternative government policy options that could help to diversify our economy and reposition Albertans on a new path to prosperity.



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## Agenda

Time	Activity
08:00–08:35	FMI Welcome—Chapter President, Peter Neuschaefer
08:35–08:45	Welcome Message—Moderator, Bob Ascah
08:45–09:00	<b>Graham Thomson</b> , Political Affairs Columnist, Edmonton Journal
09:02–09:18	<b>Eric Denhoff</b> —Deputy Minister from the Government of Alberta Climate Change Office
09:20–09:35	<b>Laurie Adkin</b> , University of Alberta—Political Science Professor
09:37–9:52	<b>John Donner</b> —Assistant Deputy Minister of Indigenous Climate Leadership with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations
9:52–10:15	Coffee Break
10:17–10:27	<b>Mel McMillan</b> , University of Alberta—Professor Emeritus from the Department of Economics and Fellow with the Institute of Public Economics
10:30–10:45	Q & A Panel Discussion
10:45–10:50	Chapter President closing comments and prize draws
10:50	Session ends

## Speaker Biographies

# Graham Thomson

**Political Affairs Columnist, Edmonton Journal**



Graham began his journalism career as a reporter with CBC Radio in 1984 before switching to CBC Television in 1989. After 14 years with the CBC, Graham took an unusual step for a broadcast journalist by jumping to print journalism. In the past 20 years he has covered stories across Canada and written investigative pieces from the United States, Mexico and Russia -- and spent two 'tours' with Canadian troops in Afghanistan. In 2013, he travelled to the Middle East to report on the Syrian refugee crisis. Among his awards are a National Newspaper Award for his reporting and a nomination for his columns. In 2010, he received a Citation from the Canadian Meteorological and Oceanographic Society for his environmental writing. Graham spent eight months at the University of Toronto after being awarded a Canadian Journalism Foundation fellowship in 2008-09 where he studied environmental law and climate change.

# Eric Denhoff

**Deputy Minister from the Government of Alberta Climate Change Office**



Eric Denhoff was appointed Deputy Minister of Environment & Parks, and the Alberta Climate on March 20, 2018. He was previously involved in leading mediation for the Government of Alberta on land use issues. Mr. Denhoff is the former President and CEO of the Canadian Hydrogen and Fuel Cell Association, a national clean energy association. He has served as Chief Negotiator on Aboriginal negotiations for LNG pipelines for TransCanada Pipelines, as Chief Negotiator for BC Hydro, as Chief Federal Treaty Negotiator for the Government of Canada and served as a Deputy Minister in several portfolios in the Government of British Columbia. He was born and raised in Saskatchewan and worked for nearly a decade in Alberta. He has significant public and private sector experience in negotiation, financial and human resource management, international trade, natural resources and Aboriginal relations.

## Speaker Biographies

# Laurie Adkin

### University of Alberta—Political Science Professor



Laurie Adkin is a professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of Alberta, where she teaches in the fields of comparative politics, environmental studies, and gender studies.

As a political economist and political sociologist, she has studied environmental policy-making and environmental movements since the 1980s. Her 1998 book, *Politics of Sustainable Development: Citizens, Unions, and the Corporations*, studied the struggles to shape the regulation of toxic chemicals affecting the Great Lakes Basin and the content of Canadian environmental law. The contributions to her 2009 book, *Environmental Conflict and Democracy in Canada*, revealed the ways in which democracy must be extended to achieve a socially just, ecologically sustainable society.

Since 2002, Adkin has studied the political-economy of climate change policy in Alberta and Canada, as well as the role of provincial consultation processes in informing and legitimating Alberta's policy directions. Recent publications include: *First World Petro-Politics: The Political Ecology and Governance of Alberta*, and "Crossroads in Alberta: Climate Capitalism or Ecological Democracy?"

Adkin recently completed a multi-year study of government innovation policy and funding to Alberta universities and the implications of these funding priorities for societal transition to a post-carbon future.

For more details, visit her homepage at: <https://www.ualberta.ca/arts/about/people-collection/laurie-adkin>

# John Donner

### Assistant Deputy Minister of Indigenous Climate Leadership with the Ministry of Indigenous Relations



John Donner is Assistant Deputy Minister, Indigenous Climate Leadership and Corporate Services. Before joining the department of Indigenous Relations in 2015, he worked in the ministries of Energy, Environment, Agriculture and Executive Council.

## Speaker Biographies

# Melville McMillan

**University of Alberta—Professor Emeritus from the Department of Economics and Fellow with the Institute of Public Economics**



Melville McMillan is Professor Emeritus in the Department of Economics and a Fellow of the Institute of Public Economics at the University of Alberta. His BA and MSc are from the University of Alberta and his PhD is from Cornell University. After a brief stint at the University of Wisconsin (Madison), he joined the University of Alberta in 1975. McMillan's research and teaching interests are in public economics and, in particular, public finance, fiscal federalism, urban and local economics, and the demand for and supply of public goods and services. He has published in these areas and has also advised governments and organizations nationally and internationally (e.g., the World Bank). Although "retired", Melville McMillan remains engaged in academic and policy matters.

# Bob Ascah

**Moderator, Principal, ALPolEcon.ca**



Robert Ascah holds degrees in Commerce and Public Administration (M.A) from Carleton University and completed his doctorate in political science at the University of Alberta in 1984. Before his appointment as Director of the Institute for Public Economics in 2009, he worked for the Alberta public service and in 1996, he joined Alberta Treasury Branches. He was a Fellow at the Institute and is a frequent commentator on Alberta politics and economics. He lives in Edmonton with his wife Linda and two cats Koko and Rajah.