



MEDIA RELEASE

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Alberta Government announces funding for two large Chinook's Edge school projects

For Immediate Release, May 26, 2011: The Government of Alberta has announced funding for two construction projects in Chinook's Edge.

The announcement was made by Education Minister Dave Hancock and Alberta Infrastructure Minister Ray Danyluk at a press conference in Red Deer this afternoon, as part of a large construction and modernization initiative that impacts schools in seven school divisions in Central Alberta. The Chinook's Edge projects include the construction of a new school in Penhold and a modernization project which affects three schools in Innisfail.

"We have worked through a collaborative process with multiple partners for both of these projects, and everyone is pleased we are able to get underway," said Kurt Sacher, Superintendent of Schools. "These were two of our key priorities in Chinook's Edge and we have been waiting for this announcement with great anticipation. There have already been thorough studies conducted on both of these projects and, now that funding is in place, we are excited to be moving forward with them."

The need for a new school in Sector 2, which encompasses communities south of Red Deer, has been identified as a priority by both the provincial government and Chinook's Edge. Last fall, the Chinook's Edge Board of Education passed a motion to formally accept a consultant's recommendation that the school be built in the Town of Penhold once government funding was in place. The study involved a thorough review of three sites to determine suitable development options, and a location next to the new Multiplex in Penhold was selected. The site is ready for development with utilities, roads and site grading, as well as a high degree of community support to allow for rapid development. Two thriving Chinook's Edge schools are already serving the community and the new school will serve the older grades for the area's growing population. Construction on this project is expected to take three years.

The modernization project in Innisfail is a collaboration of Red Deer Catholic and Chinook's Edge school divisions. It will see the construction of a new gymnasium at Innisfail High School. Community support for the state-of-the-art gym, including strong involvement from the Town of Innisfail and the County of Red Deer, will allow for the construction of a three station gymnasium to provide space for community as well as high school use. As well, a new link will be constructed between École John Wilson Elementary School and Innisfail Middle School, and long-awaited renovations and modernization of classroom space at Innisfail Jr Sr High School.

"We are at the very early stages of planning for next steps, so we have quite a bit of work to do," said Colleen Butler, Chinook's Edge Board Chair. "But the Board is very happy to be moving forward with these projects, which have been a priority for our division for several years."

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