

HEILONGJIANG - ALBERTA RELATIONS



PROFILE

Capital: Harbin

Population: 37 million (3% of China's total population)

Major Cities: Harbin (9,630,000), Qiqihar (5,537,000), Suihua (5,368,000), Mudanjiang (2,675,000), and Daqing (2,458,000).

Language: Mandarin

Government: Communist Party

Head of Government: Governor ZHANG Zuoji (appointed in 2003). Governor ZHANG represents the executive branch of government and is responsible to the Heilongjiang Provincial People's Congress.

Currency: \$1 CDN = 6.54 Yuan Renminbi (May 2005)

Key Industry Sectors: Petroleum, agriculture, and heavy industry.

DID YOU KNOW?

- The 20th Anniversary of the Heilongjiang-Alberta twinning was commemorated in September 2001 in Edmonton.
- Heilongjiang is also twinned with Hokkaido, Alberta's sister province in Japan. This allows for three-way cooperation between Alberta, Heilongjiang, and Hokkaido.

RELATIONSHIP OVERVIEW

- Following the recommendation of China's Ambassador to Canada, a protocol of understanding and friendship between Alberta and Heilongjiang was signed in 1981.
- Similarities between Alberta and Heilongjiang include climate, topography, energy resources, and agricultural production.
- Mutual areas of interest and exchange include: agriculture, energy, forestry, science and technology, medicine, culture, education, sports, and environmental protection.
- In 1998, Heilongjiang suffered its worst flooding in decades. Albertans responded to this disaster by raising over \$200,000 CDN in private donations. The Alberta government made an additional \$100,000 CDN contribution to flood relief efforts and extended a special scholarship to Heilongjiang for skill development directly related to flood management.

TRADE AND INVESTMENT

- From 2000 to 2004, China was Alberta's third largest trading partner and an important market for an increasingly diverse range of products and services. Alberta's longstanding relationship with Heilongjiang has proved valuable for a broad range of joint activities and continuing growth of business opportunities in other areas of China.

Agriculture

- A number of agricultural cooperation agreements have been signed between Heilongjiang and Alberta, focusing on livestock improvement, pasture management, and beef and dairy cattle genetics technology.
- From 1994 to 2003, Alberta maintained an office in Harbin, which promoted exports of Alberta products, such as forage, livestock and management services.
- In 1998, Alberta Agriculture Food and Rural Development partnered with Agriteam to manage a World Bank project worth US \$120 million. The project assisted with agricultural development in 33 counties of western Heilongjiang.
- China's accession to the WTO presents significant challenges to Heilongjiang's agrifood sector. This may provide opportunities for additional cooperation between Alberta and Heilongjiang.

Energy

- Heilongjiang is China's principle oil-producing province.
- Alberta companies have been successful in supplying energy equipment and services to Heilongjiang. In 1998, Sunwing Energy Ltd. of Calgary became the first foreign company to produce oil in China.

EMERGING OPPORTUNITIES

- Commercial activities have expanded beyond the petroleum sector and include coal gasification, petrochemical production and manufacturing, breeding cattle, forage seed, hides, and malting barley.
- Significant opportunity exists in water quality monitoring (consulting and technology) within China.

EDUCATION

- In June 2004, Premier Klein signed an MOU between the Department of Learning and the Government of Heilongjiang to establish an English International Studies program based on the Alberta curriculum.
- In January 2002, Alberta, Heilongjiang, and the University of Alberta signed an MOU on the Development of a Heilongjiang Executive Training Program. The program is designed to train Heilongjiang public servants and entrepreneurs and began in June 2002.
- There are 40 linkages and agreements between post-secondary institutions in Alberta and China, including Heilongjiang. Areas of cooperation include education, distance learning, engineering, agriculture, management, medicine, and Chinese language studies.
- In October 1986, the University of Calgary signed a MOU with Harbin Normal University resulting in student and professor exchanges.

- Since 1983, Alberta teachers have provided English language instruction to petroleum industry personnel in Daqing. To date, over 50 Alberta teachers have participated in the project.
- Each spring and summer, students from the Universities of Alberta and Calgary study Chinese in Heilongjiang.

CULTURE

- The Provincial Museum of Alberta has developed strong links with Chinese cultural institutions bringing unique aspects of Chinese culture to Alberta. Examples are: the "Black Dragon Rising" exhibit from the Jurchen Jin Dynasty of China, and the Qing Dynasty exhibit from Heilongjiang.
- Cooperation has occurred between Heilongjiang and Alberta in the area of paleontological research.

SISTER CITIES

- In 1985 Edmonton twinned with Heilongjiang's capital, Harbin, and Calgary entered into a sister city relationship with Daqing.

RECENT VISITS

- June 2004: Premier Klein led a delegation to Heilongjiang. Two MOUs were signed to encourage closer ties in the areas of education, and science and technology.
- March 2004: Assistant Deputy Minister of Alberta Innovation & Science led a delegation to Heilongjiang to explore opportunities in the science and technology sector.
- January 2004: Heilongjiang's Vice Minister Cheng Youdong led an education delegation to Alberta for discussions on education cooperation.
- October 2002: Alberta's Minister of Learning led a mission to China and Heilongjiang.
- July 2002: 30 Heilongjiang officials arrived in Alberta for a 6-month Executive Training Program. This program also included a one-month practicum component in Alberta ministries and surrounding municipalities.
- January 2002: Heilongjiang officials visited Alberta to sign an MOU on executive training.
- September 2001: Heilongjiang's Governor Song Fatang and a 70-member delegation visited Alberta in September to commemorate the 20th Anniversary of the Alberta-Heilongjiang twinning.
- September 2000: Heilongjiang's Vice Governor visited Edmonton and Calgary to explore research and academic exchange opportunities.
- June 2000: Alberta's Minister of International and Intergovernmental Relations led a mission to Harbin.
- April 2000: Heilongjiang's Party Secretary Xu Youfang visited Alberta.
- September 1999: Premier Klein's visited Heilongjiang in conjunction with Heilongjiang-Alberta-Canada business outreach.