

MEDIA RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 29th, 2019

Lacombe, Alberta



The Lacombe & District Historical Society is entering into a time of uncertainty. On October 24th, 2019, Finance Minister Travis Toews presented the Government of Alberta’s Budget 2019-20, *A Plan for Jobs and the Economy*. The recently released Budget has long reaching implications for each and every Albertan, business and non-profit organization, as such non-profits have been left without a clear path forward.

As feared, the Lacombe & District Historical Society is one of many non-profit organizations that will be affected by cuts to long standing programs and revenue streams that have supported community groups in each and every Alberta town and city for many years. While the full impact of this budget has not yet been determined, for the Lacombe & District Historical Society the announcement of the Provincial Budget means the potential loss of a combined \$40,000-\$70,000 received annually. A break down is seen below:

1. \$25,000 from the Alberta Museums Association annually;
2. \$10,000 from the Alberta Casino annually;
3. \$5,000-\$8,000 from the Alberta Volunteer SCiP incentive annually;
4. \$12,500 from the Alberta Museums Association additionally for 2020 year;
5. \$5,000-\$8,000 from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation for 2020 year;
6. \$5,000-\$8,000 from the Summer Temporary Employment Program for 2020 year.

Lacombe residents can expect impacted areas to include hours of operations at both of the Lacombe museums – the Michener House Museum and the Lacombe Blacksmith Shop Museum; this will include the ability to produce and facilitate exhibits or provide free and accessible tours and programing to visitors of the museums; the hiring of post-secondary students for meaningful employment and internships; and in retaining professionally trained museum staff members.

“The Society needs the support of the community now more than ever and urges residents to reflect upon the value of work all non-profit organizations give to your local communities.” – Melissa Blunden, Executive Director, the Lacombe & District Historical Society.

For the Lacombe & District Historical Society, Budget 2019-20 has had two major impacts. First, the dissolution of the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, an organization created in 1973 now means all oversight of the Alberta’s heritage will fall directly to the Department and all funding for Provincial Heritage Organizations will be reduced by 8% for 2019-20. Adding to this is the projection that funding for Heritage as a whole will be reduced again in this spring’s Budget 2020-21 by 12%. These decreases will have an impact on our operations as well as on our ability to provide programs and services to the community.

Lacombe & District Historical Society

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“In light of recent budget announcements, the Lacombe & District Historical Society has reached out to the various heritage groups in the City of Lacombe and Lacombe County in an attempt to foster partnerships to avoid the loss of any of our regional community heritage resources. What future partnerships may look like is unknown at this time, we are however dedicated to maintaining our shared history.” – Melissa Blunden, Executive Director, the Lacombe & District Historical Society.

Second, the Budget included reductions to the funding of several programs frequently used by heritage organizations across the province. The reductions include the Community Initiatives Program, by 8% for 2019-20, and the Community Facility Enhancement Program, by 34% for 2019-20, both programs that Lacombe & District Historical Society had planned to utilize in attaining a new building for our collections and community archives. The Budget also eliminated the Heritage Markers Program, integral for the Society’s 50th anniversary plans for 2021, and the Summer Temporary Employment Program (STEP). The elimination of STEP will have direct implications for museums across the province, including the Lacombe & District Historical Society, who rely on this program for staffing – limiting our capacity to participate in seasonal tourism, be open to visitors, and deliver programming.

Cuts to the heritage program within the ministry which oversees Alberta’s creative and cultural industries, artists and arts community, recreation and sport, and the non-profit and voluntary sectors will directly result in decreased grant funding for the conservation of heritage buildings. Without such funds the original preservation of both Lacombe’s Michener House and Blacksmith Shop, and the recent 2019 restoration to the Blacksmith Shop would not have been possible.

“The history of our communities and the preservation of their built heritage are monuments that speak of the journey Canadians and Albertans have taken. They remind us of the hard work and perseverance that have created our vibrant communities.” – Debbie Gillard, Vice-President, the Lacombe & District Historical Society.

Please feel free to contact the Lacombe & District Historical Society for more information on how you can help. The Society can be reached at the Michener House Museum, by phone at 403-782-3933, or by email at info@lacombemuseum.com.

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Additional Information

2019 – 2020 BUDGET			
<i>(thousands of dollars)</i>	2018 – 2019 Budget	2019 – 2020 Budget	% Change
Community and Voluntary Support Services			
Community Facility Enhancement Program	\$38,000	\$25,000	-34%
Community Initiatives Program	\$25,700	\$23,565	-8%
Heritage			
Royal Alberta Museum	\$16,585	\$16,770	1%
Royal Tyrrell Museum	\$8,145	\$6,350	-22%
Historic Sites and Other Museums	\$11,599	\$11,395	-2%
Provincial Archives	\$3,635	\$3,310	-9%
Support to Glenbow Museum	\$3,588	\$3,588	0%
Heritage Preservation Partnership Programs	\$1,773	\$1,630	-8%
Support for Provincial Heritage Organizations	\$2,080	\$1,915	-8%
Heritage Markers Program	\$104	\$0	-100%
Arts			
Assistance to the Alberta Foundation for the Arts	\$29,844	28,355	-5%