

Canada - United States
Inter-Parliamentary Group
Canadian Section



Groupe interparlementaire
Canada - États-Unis
Section canadienne

**REPORT OF THE
CANADIAN PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION OF THE
CANADA-UNITED STATES INTER-PARLIAMENTARY GROUP
TO THE
2006 ANNUAL MEETING OF THE COUNCIL OF
STATE GOVERNMENTS – WEST: ALLIANCE WITH AN
ALTITUDE!
Breckenridge, Colorado
August 10-13, 2006**

From 10-13 August 2006, members of the Canadian Section of the Canada-United States Inter-Parliamentary Group participated in the annual meeting of the Council of State Governments – WEST in Breckenridge, Colorado. This report summarizes the presentations that were made at some of the plenary and concurrent sessions at the meeting, which had the theme “Alliance with an Altitude!”

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WELCOMING AND LUNCH PLENARY SESSIONS: BREAKTHROUGH LEADERSHIP – CREATING A VISION

Brian Biro, Author of “Beyond Success”

- any great leader, great day or great life needs inspiration in order to move from “good” to “great”
- we can break through invisible barriers between people, regions or states with laughter and talking; you should look for connections and things to bring you together
- breakthroughs, which are not only possible but plannable, occur with three tools:
 - vision
 - personal responsibility
 - the power of teams
- you can reset your visual destination by changing yourself, and you can change your visual destination from where you are to where you could be
- what you focus on is what you create, not what you get; if you focus on coalition and cooperation, you get coalition and cooperation
- we must fight the inertia that leads us to remain where we have been rather than moving us forward
- we need to look at each other, at places, at events, etc. differently and with fresh eyes and a fresh vision
- “as soon as” is a direct path to never

- great questions ignite energy in others; there are two types of questions: enabling and disabling
- whenever we feel pushed, we have an automatic reaction to push back; we push back by telling rather than asking
- we should end every interaction on a good note each day, since it will be the springboard to the interaction the next day
- key questions are:
 - what are you looking forward to tomorrow?
 - what did you do to help someone today?

CANADA AND U.S. ENERGY SECURITY

Murray Smith, Government of Alberta

- North America's greatest issues are energy security and balancing the energy equation
- while the West has solutions, it is also part of the problem because it is growing so rapidly
- energy security has become synonymous with national security
- the emergence of a middle-class in China and India, and growth in those countries, has resulted in a significant demand for petroleum; as well, the Chinese are beginning to use more automobiles and fewer bicycles as their form of transportation
- North American energy security can lead to increased prosperity, and the bilateral energy relationship will be increasingly important to U.S. growth
- Canada has become an energy superpower, and is the largest supplier of various forms of energy to the United States; Canada is a safe, secure, politically stable supplier
- delays in pipeline construction will result in higher costs for consumers, reduced economic development, brownouts and blackouts
- one of the greatest energy suppliers – Canada – is located next to one of the largest energy demanders/users – the United States
- the energy industry is a sunrise, rather than a sunset, industry
- regarding energy supply, there are a number of factors to consider:
 - increased access to public lands

- northern pipelines deliver into the United States
- oil sands and oil shales
- biodiesel
- research and development
- regarding energy demand, considerations include:
 - hybrid cars and fuel-efficient vehicles
 - international demand
- regarding energy challenges and problems, issues include:
 - supply disruptions
 - depletion rates
 - environmental concerns

WHAT'S NEW IN ENERGY RESEARCH AND CONSERVATION

Roya Stanley, National Renewable Energy Laboratory

- the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is dedicated to renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development
- at the NREL, research ranges from fundamental science to technology solutions, and collaboration with industry and university occurs as research programs are linked to market opportunities
- some states are using policies to drive energy efficiency and renewable energy; 19 states have instituted renewable portfolio standards ranging from 1% to 30% of total power supply, 16 states have established renewable energy funds and 41 states have established net metering programs
- resource research interests at the NREL include:
 - wind
 - solar
 - biomass
 - geothermal
 - hydrogen
 - distributed generation

- efficient-use research interests at the NREL include:
 - vehicle technologies
 - building technologies
 - facility energy management
 - advanced industrial technologies
- energy-delivery research interests at the NREL include:
 - electricity transmission, distribution and storage
 - alternative fuels delivery
 - hydrogen delivery and storage
- with increased turbine size, advances in research and development, and improvements in manufacturing, the cost of wind energy has declined from 40 cents per kilowatt hour in 1979 to 4-6 cents in 2000 to 3-5 cents in 2004
- key deployment issues for wind power include:
 - permitting and siting
 - transmission
 - power variability
 - evolving competitive markets
 - green power markets
 - the policy environment
- photovoltaics can recharge electric- or hybrid-vehicle batteries while providing shade and shelter; emerging technologies make it possible to integrate photovoltaics into buildings, on the roof and in the building envelope
- natural gas and renewable sources of energy can complement each other, and hybrid systems can combine the advantages of both sources of energy; in particular:
 - natural gas can compensate for the intermittency of renewables
 - renewables can provide risk mitigation against natural gas price volatility
 - renewables can reduce peak loads that may drive the need for new generation

- biomass feedstocks include:
 - wood residues, including sawdust, wood chips and such wood waste as pallets, crate discards and wood yard trimmings
 - agricultural residues, including corn stover, rice hulls, sugarcane bagasse and animal biosolids
 - energy crops, including hybrid poplar
 - switchgrass
 - willow
- biomass can be “refined” into:
 - bioproducts, such as plastics, chemicals and hydrogen
 - biofuels, such as ethanol and biodiesel
 - biopower
- the West has a predominance of geothermal resources
- hydrogen is the most plentiful element in the universe, is high in energy, is easily transported to where it is needed, and can be stored; engines that use hydrogen produce virtually no pollution
- fuel cells combine hydrogen and oxygen to produce electricity, heat and water; they will produce electricity as long as hydrogen is supplied, never losing their charge
- there are a variety of elements that make a home energy-efficient, including:
 - proper design and installation of heating, ventilation and air conditioning systems
 - reduced air leakage
 - proper installation of insulation
 - water conservation
 - efficient windows
 - efficient lighting
 - efficient appliances

- simple energy-efficiency improvements can reduce energy costs by more than 40% in most affordable housing, with the additional benefits of increased comfort, reduced noise, greater fire safety and improved building durability
- power outages and power quality disturbances cost the U.S. economy more than \$119 billion annually
- after Canada, the U.S. economy is the most energy-dependent in the advanced industrialized world, requiring twice as much energy as Germany and three times as much as Japan to produce the same amount of Gross Domestic Product
- in terms of energy conservation, every watt that is not used is a watt that does not have to be produced, processed or stored; 1 barrel of oil saved = 1.4 barrels earned

ELECTRICITY: RISING COSTS AND WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Roger Kranenburg, Edison Electric Institute

- energy and energy pricing are now seen as the most important issues facing the United States
- perceived causes of rising electricity costs include: fuel cost increases; greed; rising demand; and higher generation costs
- electricity is the lifeblood of the U.S. economy, and electricity intensity in the United States economy is significantly related to the general level of economic activity
- technological advances and increased efficiency are reducing energy use at the same time as electrical power demand continues to rise
- the national average price for electricity today is less than what it was in 1980 on an inflation-adjusted basis
- electric utilities use a diverse fuel mix to generate electricity, and there are regional variations in these fuel mixes
- new electricity generating capacity is needed to meet rising demand; as well, current infrastructure is ageing
- a variety of energy efficiency and conservation programs exist, including those related to: appliances; buildings; and hybrid cars
- challenges include:
 - natural gas supply
 - fuel diversity

- environmental policy
- coal transportation
- the increasing costs of doing business
- the need for increased levels of investment in infrastructure

RURAL AND URBAN INTERSECTIONS IN THE WEST: LOOKING AT THE DATA AND LISTENING TO THE GROUND

Priscilla Salant, University of Idaho

- everyone has a different definition of “rural” and “urban”
- most Westerners are urban, and rural areas are growing more slowly than urban areas
- most jobs are in urban areas, and job growth is slower in rural areas
- wages are higher in urban areas, and wage growth is slower in rural areas
- the gap between “urban” and “rural” is widening
- traditional land uses are under pressure, and the tide is running against rural landscape and livelihoods
- moving forward, there should be support for working landscapes, and stakeholders should be brought to the table rather than to court

RENEWABLE ENERGY USE – OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Roya Stanley, National Renewable Energy Laboratory

- the National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) is the only national laboratory dedicated to renewable energy and energy efficiency research and development
- renewable energy costs are decreasing
- “homegrown” energy supports rural economies, leading to economic viability and competitiveness; it provides security and environmental benefits
- rural economic challenges include:
 - low commodity prices
 - fuel price uncertainty
 - high fertilizer prices

- migration to cities
- eroding local tax bases
- water shortages
- ethanol plants affect both urban and rural economics, with corn purchases for ethanol production, direct and indirect spending on ethanol production, and direct and indirect job creation
- keys to a robust energy infrastructure include:
 - decrease domestic energy use
 - reduce dependence on imported fuels
 - maintain and protect existing infrastructure
 - employ smart, resilient systems
 - diversify generation options
 - increase use of distributed generation
 - reduces stress on an overtaxed infrastructure

RURAL/URBAN INTERDEPENDENCE AND LEADERSHIP

Jim Brown, Retired Oregon Natural Resources Director

- 46% of Oregon is forested
- citizens want a high quality of life, including: jobs; education; public safety; human resource services; and a quality environment
- the character of Oregon hinges on rural communities; the “feel” of the state is provided by working landscapes and associated small communities
- rural communities “hinge” on working landscapes, and rural residents have the knowledge and skills to manage these landscapes
- rural communities provide an alternative to urban communities
- compared to forest management and environmental issues, other issues are more – or at least as – important to Oregonians, including:
 - education quality and funding
 - the economy
 - energy costs

- concerns about being personally secure at home and at work
- public opinion is in direct conflict with public behaviour; while public opinion indicates the desire for a high quality of life in terms of education, public safety, human resource services, “family wage” jobs and the environment, public behaviour is characterized by larger house size, increase paper consumption, higher SUV use, etc.
- biodiversity is a key issue for landowners
- policy dilemmas exist: how should rural needs be connected with urban wants? why should we invest in rural America, and how?
- sustainability is a unifying theme that resonates with the public
- forests are diverse, and will be managed for many different purposes
- sustainable forestry is broad, and sustainable forest management sustains forests first, then varies by forest type, goals/roles, ownership and location
- Karl Stauber’s proposed vision for rural lands includes:
 - protect and restore the environment
 - high-quality, de-commodified food and fibre
 - laboratory of social innovation
 - produce healthy, well-educated future citizens
 - maintain population distribution and prevent urban crowding
- “added vision” thoughts include:
 - preserve open space through working landscapes
 - preserve small communities and the “feel” of the state
 - preserve the infrastructure needed to manage the landscape required by rural citizens and desired by the urban public
- a “real estate transfer tax” or an “excise tax” might be levied in order to finance mitigation of land changing from a working landscape to another use; similar to the idea of wetland mitigation banks
- rural and urban areas are interdependent for their respective quality of life
- a bipartisan leadership commitment over the long term is needed to develop a politically viable vision and strategies

WESTERN INTERSTATE COMMISSION FOR HIGHER EDUCATION

David Longanecker, Western Interstate Commission for Higher Education

- education is an important public good
- higher education must remain on the leading edge of technology
- the share of family income required to pay for higher education has been rising
- tuition fee increases and increases in available financing must be considered together
- technology enables students to learn more and at lower cost
- the United States does well in terms of the quality of education delivered, but does not perform well in terms of the number of students who complete their education
- a change in attitude is needed, since the status quo is inadequate in a global economy; it should be an expectation that people will have a higher education, and then it must be possible for them to get that education
- in determining whether educational outcomes are improving, it is important not to confuse: data with information; reporting with performance; process with outcomes
- outcomes-based accountability is needed
- everyone must be given the opportunity to access higher education, including those who are traditionally under-represented

GETTING THE STATEHOUSE STORY OUT: “NEW” VERUS “OLD” MEDIA

Amy Mitchell, The Project for Excellence in Journalism

- there is a seismic transformation in how people learn about what is going on in the world around them
- journalists are losing their role as gatekeepers of information as citizens increasingly access information on their own
- people are “news grazers,” with 36% regularly using four or more kinds of news outlets
- newspaper circulation is declining, although losses are not even across the country; big city metros have been the hardest hit
- local television news is the most regularly watched news outlet, and nearly everyone uses local radio at some time

- older Americans are starting to go online
- increased broadband penetration could increase online access to news

Richard Davis, Brigham Young University

- the world of media is more complicated today; new technologies include web sites, e-mail, podcasts and blogs while older technologies include talk radio and television talk
- there are three important questions:
 - do new media matter?
 - can new media substitute for traditional media?
 - as a legislator, what should I do?
- there is a growing audience for new media
- 40% of adults listen to talk radio at least some of the time
- the audience for talk radio is mainly male, middle-aged, conservative, Republican and well-educated
- more people regularly go online for news
- 37% of internet users read blogs
- 22 million adults own an iPod or an mp3 player, and 6 million have listened to a podcast from the internet
- talk radio is potentially powerful as a medium
- traditional media are using new media to gain information, public reaction, etc.
- 51% of journalists regularly read blogs and 53% use them for story ideas
- at this point in time, new media are a complement to, rather than a substitute for, traditional media
- new media lack the resources to perform such traditional media functions as surveillance and gate-keeping
- 55% of bloggers say they sometimes post news they heard or read in traditional media, and this percentage is much higher for political bloggers
- legislators should become new media savvy, and use the opportunities it presents

- new media forums reach opinion leaders
- while new media forums are interested in politics, the traditional media are covering government less
- new media offer opportunities for unfiltered message dissemination
- the limits of new media must be recognized in terms of the nature of the audience, which is more limited and more polarized, and the nature of the medium, which is less structured and gives the illusion of informality
- the rules of new media must be understood with respect to: the illusion of informality; anonymity and the accompanying lack of responsibility; superficiality; the fact that bloggers are not journalists and do not hold themselves to the same standards
- regarding talk radio, legislators should ensure that what they say is newsworthy and interesting, and they should expect bias
- regarding blogs, legislators should realize that they require constant involvement, and legislators should both facilitate and expect comment

Phil Noble, PoliticsOnline

- while legislators cannot control their 30-second sound bite on the evening news, they can control the 3,000 email addresses to which they have access
- legislators should become computer literate and steal good ideas ruthlessly
- legislators should learn the tools first and the politics second
- legislators should collect email addresses, build a list, and then trade the list with others
- legislators should remember that it is not about them, but instead about the constituents; legislators should tell constituents what they have done, and will do, to make their lives better
- legislators should not communicate using bureaucratic language; instead, legislators should communicate with constituents in the language, manner and timing that constituents prefer
- legislators should give constituents something they can do
- legislators should tell constituents what they want them to do, and then thank them and tell them the results
- legislators should use lots of different media, and should be new, interesting and entertaining

Adam Schrager, Denver NBC Affiliate KUSA-TV

- politics is about power; policy is about people
- at this point, the message can be disseminated more efficiently with traditional media than with new media
- ten media tips for legislators are:
 - keep the message simple, do not use professional lingo, and “speak” the same language as constituents
 - be current, since something needs to be “new” in order to be in the news
 - take nothing for granted, and be proactive rather than reactive
 - understand your job, and know your issues inside and out
 - do not say “no comment;” instead, ask the journalist if you can get back to him or her after you have researched the issue, or suggest other people who might be better able to speak on that topic
 - focus, and talk out an issue with someone who does not know the issue, before you do an interview
 - tape record interviews in order to increase the accountability of the journalist, to ensure that you are quoted accurately and to determine that your responses make sense
 - use the phrase “off the record” at your peril, and determine how the reporter defines the term before you agree to go “off the record”
 - getting multiple sides to a story is not a negative story, and recognize that journalists will not always write positive stories
 - always tell the truth

INTERNET POLITICS IN THE 21ST CENTURY: A BRAND NEW WORLD

Phil Noble, PoliticsOnline

- the internet is about communications, not computers
- a whole generation wants to participate in the political process online
- innovate or die

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE, UNDERSTANDING THE PAST: THE USES OF HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES IN AN INTERDEPENDENT AND GLOBALIZING WEST

Kevin Starr, University of Southern California (Los Angeles)

- information, history and culture are important
- past actions and solutions inform current actions and solutions; however, while history establishes the patterns, it does not necessarily provide the solutions
- part of the maturity of culture is recognition of the contributions made by all regions
- the West was “made to happen” through private enterprise and public legislation
- colonies and groups of individuals coming to the West had shared values and expectations

Steve Pon Tell, La Jolla Institute

- we should always consider the historical context of how we got to where we are
- the assimilation of waves of immigrants entering the West has resulted in communities that have unique character
- important priorities include:
 - workforce development and education
 - resource sustainability
 - infrastructure
 - land use
 - determining how priorities should be funded

LEGISLATORS AT THE CROSSROADS: NEW POWERS FOR LEGISLATORS IN CONTENTIOUS TIMES

Jim Geringer, Former Governor of Wyoming

- collaboration is a powerful tool that can be used to combat polarization in America
- we need to use technology more to our advantage and to increase productivity
- while, historically, governments held power because they held information, this reality no longer exists; constituents have greater access to information and are demanding more accountability from their legislators

- data must be turned into knowledge in order to make better decisions
- legislators must be convenors and directors of discussion, building a consensus from the inside out as they discover where common ground and a shared mission exist

DISASTER AND CRISIS MANAGEMENT: WHAT EVERY LAWMAKER NEEDS TO KNOW FOR EFFECTIVE LEADERSHIP

Richard Andrews, California Office of Emergency Services

- emergency management has almost no natural constituency base until an emergency or disaster occurs
- emergency management agencies are generally under-funded for planning, training and exercises
- the impact of the U.S. Department of Homeland Security on Emergency Management has been:
 - unprecedented funding
 - funding formulas driven by political pressures at the national, state and municipal levels
 - while there has been a sense of urgency about enhancing the nation's detection and prevention capabilities against terrorist events, it has been largely assumed that natural disasters were under control and little more than lip service was paid to a multi-hazards approach to preparedness
- reliance of federal funding essentially means giving in to federal priorities
- risk assessments must truly consider all hazards
- incentives that allow local and state governments to make poor choices regarding land-use planning, weak building codes and inadequate enforcement must end
- interaction between the public sector and the private sector in mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery activities must be strengthened
- state and local governments must commit to funding emergency management, and must not depend solely on the federal government

James Mullen, Washington State Emergency Management Division

- emergency management functions include:

- mitigation – activities designed to reduce or eliminate risks to persons or property, or to lessen the actual or potential effects or consequences of an incident
- preparedness – the range of deliberate, critical tasks and activities needed to build, sustain and improve the operational capability to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from domestic incidents
- response – activities that address the short-term direct effects of an incident, including immediate actions to save lives, protect property and meet basic human needs, as well as the execution of emergency operations plans
- recovery – the development, coordination and execution of service - and site-restoration plans for affected communities and the reconstitution of government operations and services through individual, private-sector, non-governmental and public assistance programs that identify needs and define resources
- most disasters occur at the local level
- citizens must be prepared to take care of themselves for a certain period of time until emergency services arrive
- most emergency managers at the local level know what to do, but may not have adequate resources or capacity to accomplish it
- local emergency management needs support from all levels

Ken Murphy, Oregon Office of Emergency Management

- you should concentrate the most on those things that you can control
- protecting the local community is primarily the responsibility of the local community
- in advance of a disaster, you should know what is available, how to access it and who are the key players
- the Emergency Management Assistance Compact is a national, interstate mutual aid compact that addresses liability, workers compensation and reimbursement; all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Puerto Rico and the U.S. Virgin Islands are members of the compact
- during the response to Hurricanes Katrina and Rita, the Emergency Management Assistance Compact deployed almost 66,000 personnel and incurred an estimated cost of almost \$830 million
- average per capita spending on emergency management in the United States is \$0.66 annually

Respectfully submitted,

Hon. Jerahmiel Grafstein, Senator
Co-Chair, Canadian Section
Canada-United States Inter-
Parliamentary Group

Rob Merrifield, M.P.
Co-Chair, Canadian Section
Canada-United States Inter-
Parliamentary Group

TRAVEL COSTS

ASSOCIATION	Canada United-States Inter-Parliamentary Group
ACTIVITY	2006 Annual Meeting of the Council of State Governments – West: Alliance with an Altitude!
DESTINATION	Breckenridge, CO
DATES	August 10-13, 2006
SENATORS	
MEMBERS	Mr. Rob Merrifield, MP Hon. Wayne Easter, PC, MP Mr. Marcel Lussier, MP
STAFF	Ms. June Dewetering, Advisor Mr. Daniel Charbonneau, Executive Secretary
TRANSPORTATION	\$ 3,776.70
ACCOMMODATION	\$ 2,902.97
HOSPITALITY	\$ 0
PER DIEMS	\$ 1,530.14
OFFICIAL GIFTS	\$ 0
MISCELLANEOUS/REGISTRATION FEES	\$ 1,985.55
TOTAL	\$ 10,195.36