



## Strategic Communication Plan

The driving purpose of the Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership (SAAEP) is to facilitate the development of alternative energy systems and business opportunities in southern Alberta. Partners forming the SAAEP include Economic Development Lethbridge, SouthGrow Regional Initiative and Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance. In sum, 37 southern Alberta municipalities are represented, sharing a common goal to develop opportunities in alternative energy, specifically solar/geothermal; wind and bio-energy (including bio-fuels, bio-mass and waste to energy.)

The overarching purpose of this strategic communications plan is to assist the SAAEP in building stakeholder awareness and enhancing the reputation of the southern Alberta region as a destination for alternative energy development. This plan will serve to:

- Assist in continually refining SAAEP strategies and ensure relevance and effectiveness;
- Provide access to more complete and accurate information;
- Generate fresh and innovative ideas;
- Create economies of scale in terms of people and financial resources;
- Provide a platform for generating awareness of the SAAEP and its work;
- Facilitate collaboration among and between stakeholders and the SAAEP.

Aligned with this purpose and the overall SAAEP strategy, themes of the four key communications goals guiding this plan encompass: relationship building; reputation management; knowledge and learning and leadership.

On the whole, the communication environment is very positive both internally and externally and is highlighted by considerable interest in alternative energy development by key stakeholders and ample opportunity to capitalize on support. Numerous options for stakeholder communication and liaison and finite resources (people and time) could present some challenges to fully realizing defined goals.

The region offers a robust number of competitive advantages as a platform for communication, including abundant natural resources to support alternative energy development, excellent transportation access and an overall attractive cost of living.

Critical success factors in communication encompass a need to: Capitalize on keen stakeholder interest in timely fashion; set priorities to optimize resources and impact; hone relationships and networks that support long-term goals; and continue to build the reputation of the region as an attractive business destination for alternative energy development.

A positioning statement to anchor communication planning is presented as: “Southern Alberta is a global leader in alternative energy production and manufacturing” and gives way to key strategic directions in communication that follow:

- Profile the SAAEP leadership role in facilitating regional industry development;
- Focus on opportunities to communicate with prioritized stakeholder groups and add optimally targeted value to industry development;
- Enhance scope of reputation by facilitating a network of strong relationships that are regional, national and international in scope.

The focus of stakeholder communication planning includes nine target groups

- Mayors, Reeves and Chief Administrative Officers in SAAEP municipalities;
- The Government of Alberta;
- The Government of Canada;
- Participants of the Green Growth Consultation Process;
- Provincial and National Alternative Energy Associations;
- Regionally-Based Community Stakeholders;
- Local Alternative Energy Industry Leaders;
- International Industry Leaders;
- Media (local, national and international.)

Aligned with the key strategic directions, the plan provides significant detail in suggesting key messages to stakeholders as well as offering overall communication and reputation building tactics for consideration. Stakeholder profiles and audience-specific messages and tactics are included for each of the defined stakeholder groups.

A framework for creating an integrated tactics overview along with considerations in measuring and evaluating selected tactics is also provided.