



September 4, 2008

Sask. and Alberta seeking ways to work together

By THE CANADIAN PRESS

SASKATOON -- Western Canada's two energy provinces will meet next week to discuss how they can work together to further their economies.

The first joint Alberta-Saskatchewan cabinet meeting is set for Tuesday in Lloydminster, the city that sits on the boundary separating the two provinces.

Top items on the agenda include internal trade issues and First Nations employment and education, Saskatchewan Premier Brad Wall said yesterday.

"I think Saskatchewan families expect their politicians to work together at all levels where it's possible, and across jurisdictional lines," he said.

"The objective is to provide better service and perhaps to save taxpayers money."

Wall suggested the two provinces could also work together to provide better health care by jointly purchasing pharmaceuticals and providing seamless patient referrals.

Co-operation could also improve delivery of agricultural programs and streamline transportation rules for trucks crossing the boundary, he said.

While leader of the opposition, Wall often called on the previous NDP government to hold talks with Alberta, which began holding joint cabinet meetings with British Columbia a few years ago.

B.C.'s Liberal government and the Conservatives in Alberta have moved beyond party politics to sign 24 agreements intended to increase their provinces' clout and purchasing power, Wall pointed out.

Alberta Premier Ed Stelmach said next week's meeting will be a chance for his province to explore energy and environmental co-operation with Saskatchewan.

Stelmach and Wall previously announced they will lead a national carbon capture storage initiative to tackle greenhouse gas emissions.

"Saskatchewan and Alberta are Canada's energy provinces, but with that status comes a profound responsibility to be leaders at addressing climate change," said Stelmach.

"I am confident that by unleashing the power of technology and sharing best practices, Alberta and Saskatchewan will continue to fuel Canada's energy needs in an environmentally responsible way."

Wall said the two provinces can share research dollars on the project.

"It wouldn't make much sense for us to test the same technologies," Wall said.