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Yes The World Does Need More Edmonton

The message delivered by Don Iveson at the Mayor's State of the City address was abundantly clear. Our hometown is a city full of greatness and the world needs more of it. It is innovative and entrepreneurial, a city defining itself as an attractive place for worldwide investment and home to local successful start-ups and global businesses.

We are faced with a choice between very different visions for Edmonton – and for Alberta. Thoughtful decisions – decisions with foresight – need to be made in order to maintain Edmonton's growing advantage.

Edmonton is a product of hard working community champions who have developed the city's cultural diversity, arts scene and renowned festivals. We've been home to successful business start-ups such as Bioware, Cold FX, Poppy Barley and Upside Software but also construction giants like PCL, Ledcor, and Clark Builders whose cranes are reshaping the downtown. But Edmonton is not an island. Our success is directly associated with of the success of the resource economy in Alberta.

The resource sector – including pipelines – is the engine that powers this community and northern Alberta. It has contributed tens of billions of dollars in royalties and tax revenue to pay for the services and community supports we value. It pays for LRT and libraries, overpasses and recreation centres. We have a strong public service, health care system and quality education because our economy is strong enough to pay for them.

Over the last six months, our friends to the north and south have seen significant layoffs and job losses. Edmonton is just beginning to feel the impact – and it is real. We must do everything we can to support jobs and a strong economy across all sectors – and must avoid creating barriers to investment.

The Edmonton we know is a product of a strong and diverse economy. This success has not come easily. We have languished through periods when head offices left here – and deep cuts to our public services hurt our city more than others.

We must keep in mind that success – attained through the efforts of so many hard working citizens over decades – can too easily be lost.

We must think carefully before we choose a government that will cut to the bone – as we experienced in the 1980's – or a government that will spend more than we can afford.

What attracts jobs and investment? Stability and leadership.

We need a government that will work with all of us on realistic solutions to complex challenges; that will defend our resource sector and seek access to key markets for our products; and that will create an environment that attracts and retains investment and the benefits that come with it.

The collapse of oil prices is a serious challenge for this province. It has left a \$7 billion gap in our revenues. This is not the time to invite instability and uncertainty.

The government we elect next week will have a significant impact on our city – on our economy, jobs, and on all we are building here.

There is a great deal at stake. Every vote matters – and we ask everyone to consider the importance of a strong and secure economy for Edmonton at this time.

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