MEDICINE HAT'S

VitalSigns®

our community report card

COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta

2008

A. Cramer

K. Boreson

MEDICINE HAT'S

VitalSigns®

Welcome to the Community Foundation of Medicine Hat & Southeastern Alberta's annual Vital Signs quality of life report card. Medicine Hat's Vital Signs® provides factual information in 12 different categories which have been graded by hundreds of Hatters, providing a clear snapshot of their view on our city's wellness and viability.

The purpose of Vital Signs is to inform the work of the Community Foundation. Since its inception in 1992 the Foundation has developed a deep understanding of the many issues facing our community through strong relationships with donors, fund holders, grant recipients and committee volunteers who help guide our work. Vital Signs will assist the Foundation in gaining an even clearer sense of the needs and priorities of our region. We now understand how the Foundation can have an even greater impact as a funder, convenor, partner and leader using Vital Signs to inform our decisions.

We are also aware that others have used Vital Signs to stimulate dialogue, learn about our community and plan for the future. We hope the 2008 report will build on this and continue to be a primary tool in making decisions and taking action to improve the quality of life for all our residents.

Our sincere thanks to the many people and organizations who gave their time to this project by participating in our community workshops, sharing information, acting as a grader or offering advice on key issues. We would also like to thank our media partner, The Medicine Hat News.

You may agree or disagree with some of the perceptions of the graders, but we hope you use Medicine Hat's Vital Signs® to promote dialogue and learning, around policy and strategic planning tables, at work, at school and at home. Copies of the report are available by contacting the Foundation or online at: www.medicinehatvitalsigns.ca.

Asking questions and taking a vital look at ourselves can only create an even healthier community. Let us know what you think. Share your opinions and how you will use Vital Signs. Give us feedback on how you will use this year's report by contacting the Foundation Office at 403 527 9038 or sending a message to info@mhcf.ca. We look forward to hearing from you.

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A. Cramer

methodology

Medicine Hat's Vital Signs

Medicine Hat's Vital Signs is an annual community check-up conducted by the Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta that measures the vitality of our community, identifies significant trends, and assigns grades in 12 areas critical to the quality of life in Medicine Hat. Vital Signs is based on a project of the Toronto Community Foundation and is coordinated nationally by Community Foundations of Canada.

This report and an expanded version and links to the original data sources are available online at www.medicinehatvitalsigns.ca.

Why We Did It

The role of the Community Foundation is to provide donor services, fund worthwhile causes and projects and work with a wide range of community groups to improve the quality of life for our area. Vital Signs helps us to better understand the issues and critical areas affecting our community. The information gathered through Vital Signs will help the Foundation increase the effectiveness of our grant making, better inform our donors about issues and opportunities in the community and assist us in making connections between individuals and groups to address those issues.

G. Wright

Grading
With the help of community graders, we have assigned each indicator in the report a grade. An online survey was conducted and graders were asked to express their feelings about the indicator where one is low and five is high. Grade one was described as "Needs immediate attention" and grade five as "We're the tops! Awesome!". The grades in this report are indicted by suns as follows:

1
2
3
4
5

You can use this report by reading the indicators and finding something that moves you – do any of the indicators shock or surprise you? Find a way to make a difference. Some ideas are presented in the Vital Activities section - make a change in your community.

How We Did It
Indicators are used to compare the health and vitality of one community with other communities, provincial averages, national averages or simply comparing it with the past. These trends help us identify the areas of strength and the areas that need to be addressed within our community. The Community Foundation of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta utilized the knowledge, expertise and experience from a wide range of national, provincial and local sources to select and monitor indicators in 12 key areas critical to the quality of life in Medicine Hat.

The data for the indicators reported were collected from a number of reliable sources. Community Consultations were conducted where members of the public, civic, non-profit and business leaders were invited to share their thoughts on the community – both positive and negative. In addition a number of community leaders and stake holders were also consulted to establish a list of priorities for indicator research and selection.

Primary research was conducted, which means the statistics collected are provided from the source, in this case the organization in Medicine Hat providing the service or working in the area. National data sources also assisted in obtaining vital information. The Community Foundation's own Vital Signs Steering Committee members made the final selection of indicators for publication and inclusion in the expanded online version.

Finally, we invited Community Foundation partners, community business and non-profit leaders, as well as the general public to assist us in grading each indicator in the 12 key areas.

The sources for the indicators reported in Medicine Hat's Vital Signs 2008 are available on www.medicinehatvitalsigns.ca.

The sunny City of Medicine Hat is located in the Southeast corner of Alberta and surrounds the beautiful South Saskatchewan River. The 2008 Municipal Census reported that the city's population was 4,378 greater than in 2005. This marks the first year the population was over 60,000, to a total 60,426, which is a 7.8% increase over the 3 year period. The age distribution of the population has stayed relatively stable between 2005 and 2008. In 2005, 24% of Medicine Hat's population was under the age of 20, this decreased 1% in 2008. Both the average age of females and males increased slightly, females from 39.6 in 2005 to 39.7 in 2008 and males from 37.3 years of age in 2005 to 37.6 years of age in 2008.

Age	2005	%	2008	%
0-5	3,701	6%	4,249	6%
6-9	2,670	5%	2,864	5%
10-14	3,445	6%	3,577	6%
15-19	3,775	7%	3,843	6%
20-29	8,309	15%	9,054	15%
30-39	7,312	13%	8,244	14%
40-49	8,803	16%	8,711	14%
50-59	6,691	12%	7,878	13%
60-69	4,570	8%	5,186	9%
70-79	4,046	7%	3,999	7%
80 & over	2,524	5%	2,821	5%
Not Provided	202		0	
Total	56,048	100%	60,426	100%

The 2006 Canadian Census reported that 7.6% of the population was foreign born and in 2001 and 2006 Statistics Canada reported the same 3.0% visible minority population.

Interestingly, the 2008 Municipal Census reported that the number of households that had Internet equalled 63%, up from 48% in 2005.

Medicine Hat is the sunniest city with over 2,500 hours of sunshine annually. This makes for a beautiful climate for growing crops and for outdoor recreation. Medicine Hat is also home to accomplished athletes and musicians, top business leaders and citizens with solid values and morals that develop our community into a diverse, caring, thriving, healthy environment. It recently hosted many sporting events including the 2008 Alberta Summer Games, Canada Cup Baseball 2008, Curling Continental Cup 2007.

S. Mclaughlin

our community

G. Wright

Average Income of Economic Families in Alberta Vital Signs Communities in Constant 2005 Dollars

	2000	2005	% Change, 2000 – 2005
Canada	$76,569	$82,325	7.5
Alberta	$82,430	$98,240	19.2
Calgary	$95,166	$116,013	21.9
Medicine Hat	**$69,749**	**$80,882**	**16.0**
Lethbridge	$69,463	$75,419	8.6
Red Deer	$77,553	$90,333	16.5
British Columbia	$75,831	$80,511	6.2
Vancouver	$83,504	$87,788	5.1
Victoria	$76,342	$84,583	10.8

Note: Economic family refers to a group of two or more persons who live in the same dwelling and are related to each other by blood, marriage, common-law or adoption.

In 2005, average real income of economic families in Medicine Hat was $80,882, 16.0% higher than what it was in 2000 ($69,749). Average income was 17.7% below the provincial average of $98,240 and 1.8% below the national average of $82,325.

Population density is an important measure for community development. The less people per square kilometre the more space the population is taking up. This means that there are more expenses such as road maintenance, waste removal, power lines and so on. Below is a comparison to other Alberta mid-sized cities.

Population Density per Square Kilometre 2006 census

City	Density	City	Density
Medicine Hat	508.9	Grande Prairie	770.7
St. Albert	1647.4	Lethbridge	611.9
Red Deer	1195.6		

Did you know?

- In both Edmonton and Grande Prairie a Tim Horton's Extra Large Coffee and Muffin cost $3.21 while in Medicine Hat it is only $2.99.
- If you go to a movie in Medicine Hat an adult ticket (between the ages of 14 and 65) costs $9.00, in Calgary an adult ticket (between 14 and 65 years of age) is $12.50.

Vital Activity

Vital Activity - “So What?”

This Vital Signs report provides a comprehensive range of indicators that gives a snapshot of the quality of life in Medicine Hat. This year the Community Foundation is pleased to introduce an additional element - Vital Activity.

Vital Activity is the ‘So What’ of Vital Signs. Vital Activity will allow us to answer some of the questions that arise with the results we find.

It will help us to answer questions like:

“So what next?”
“What’s my community doing about this?”
“What can I do to make a difference?”
“How can the Community Foundation contribute?”

Vital Activity will not be exclusive to our Vital Signs report; look for Vital Activity in our newsletters, annual report and other publications. Vital Activity will be easy to find - it will always be the puzzle piece. We like to think of our community as one big puzzle with many pieces, the Community Foundation being one of them. Each piece is integral to putting the ‘whole picture’ together. The organizations we work with, the donors we engage, the community we support, the volunteers we rely on, the events we attend, the activities we undertake - all pieces of the puzzle.

Vital Activity will highlight snapshots of the day to day activities, programs and events we can take part in, or become part of, that can change our community, our lives and the lives of those around us.

Vital Activity

A. Cramer

economy

Medicine Hat was rated one of the best communities for business in Alberta in 2008.

fact or fiction?

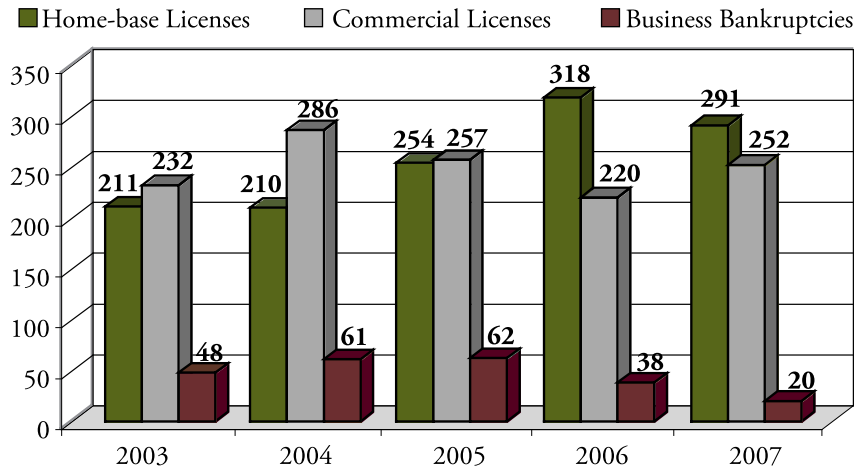
Business Start Ups and Bankruptcies

From 2003 to 2007 there has been a 37.9% increase in home-based business licenses. The number of commercial business licenses saw a slight increase in 2004 but stayed relatively consistent up to 2007.

The number of bankruptcies in relation to the total number of home-based and commercial business licenses has decreased over the last 5 years – a rate of 6.3% in 2003 and with some fluctuation has decreased to 3.7% in 2007.

Therefore, while there has been an overall increase in business licenses there has been a reduction in bankruptcy filings.

Business License Compared to Commercial Bankruptcies



Street Lighting

The number of electric street lights in Medicine Hat has increased from 7,419 in 2004 to 7,802 in 2007, which is a 5.2%. The annual consumption charge for these lights has increased over the same time period by 60.5% to $907,000.

The annual consumption charge for the 249 downtown gas lamps increased from $35,000 in 2004 to $97,000 in 2007, which was an increase of 177% over four years.

Retail Sales vs. Population

Retail sales in Medicine Hat was $844 million in 2001 and $1,289 million in 2006 (in current dollars), which was a 52.7% increase. When compared to the population of Medicine Hat the increase between 2001 and 2006 was 11.2%. The increase in retail sales in Canada over the same period was 29.6% and in Alberta was 61.9%.

	2001	2006	Percent Change
Medicine Hat Population	51,249	56,997	11.2%
Alberta Population	2,974,807	3,290,350	10.6%
Canada Population	30,007,094	31,612,897	5.4%
Medicine Hat Retail Sales	$884M	$1,289M	52.7%
Alberta Retail Sales	$34,560M	$55,942M	68.2%
Canada Retail Sales	$300,488M	$389,485M	29.6%

Cost of Living

In 2007 the Alberta Government published the 2007 Alberta Spatial Price Survey an update to their 2005 publication. This compares the cost of living in Alberta's cities. Cost of living expenses include: food, shelter, utilities, household goods, clothing, transportation, health and recreation. The value of the index was generally established at 100. An index with a value greater than 100 indicates prices higher than the base price, or vice versa.

For all commodities Medicine Hat received a rate of 93.3 in 2007, which is down from the 2005 rate of 97.7. When considering all food indices in 2007 Medicine Hat scored 100.7, the 2005 index equalled 98.5. The increase in food indices appears to come from Frozen and Packaged Food which rose 6.5 points and Restaurant Meals which rose 5.9 points.

Personal Care Products also increased from 95.9 in 2005 to 100.8 in 2007. The cost of clothing saw the largest decrease of 7.6, from 100 to 92.4.

This year we have chosen not to report on utilities as totals are recorded different for each community.

Vital Activity

- Contact Community Futures Entre Corp to find out how you can start your own business. They offer an 8 week Self Employment training program.

P. Paton

K. Boreson

environment

The waste generated from the construction of 30 homes could be re-used to build one new house.

fact or fiction?

Air Quality
Between 2001 and 2006 there was an average of one day per year that measured above the Ozone threshold level. Medicine Hat ranked fourth best of the 15 Vital Signs communities.

Between 2004 and 2006 the number of days with PM 2.5 concentrations above threshold levels averaged zero. In this measurement Medicine Hat received the best ranking amongst the Vital Signs communities.

Recycling
REDI Recycling has programs with schools and businesses to increase the amount of material diverted. They also maintain 4 public depot bins in and around Medicine Hat where tin, plastic, glass, cardboard, mixed paper and newspaper can be deposited. Between 2002 and 2007 the total amount of paper recycled, through the REDI program, increased from 3,926.8 metric tonne to 5,420.9 metric tonne and the increase in plastic went from 158.8 metric tonne to 307.8 metric tonne. In addition, all materials collected at the depot bins saw an increase of over 34% from 2002 to 2007.

Waste Diversion
The amount of total waste generated per capita in Medicine Hat increased from 2000 to 2007. In 2000 the tonnage per capita was 1,358kg and in 2007 was 1,662kg, which was a 22.4% increase.

Waste Disposal
Between 2006 and 2007 there was a 27.4% increase in residential waste, 28.5% increase in commercial waste and 111.5% increase in construction and demolition waste.

Vital Activity

- Building a house? Encourage your builder to recycle.
- Try xeriscaping. See the exhibit at the Medicine Hat College.

Criminal Code Traffic Crime
At 601 per 100,000 persons in 2007, the traffic crime rate in Medicine Hat was 50% above the national average (400 per 100,000) and 4% above the provincial average (580 per 100,000). The rate increased 47% in 2007 from 409 per 100,000 in 2006; this was the highest point on record.

Police Officers per 100,000
At 174 police officers per 100,000 in Medicine Hat in 2007, the number of police officers was 10.8% lower than the national average (195) and 5.5% higher than the provincial average (165). This number was up from 171 in 2006.

As of August 21, 2008, 51 of the 107 officers in the Medicine Hat Police Service had less than 5 years experience, this was 47.7% of the officers.

Drug Offences & Impaired Driving
The Medicine Hat Police Service restructured its resources and priorities in order to focus on drug charges. The total charges for cannabis increased by 54.4% between 2006 and 2007. In the same time period offences for the possession and trafficking of cocaine increased 42.3%.

The Medicine Hat Police Service also increased focus on impaired driving. There were 188 charges for impaired operation of a motor vehicle or over 80mg in 2006 and 287 charges in 2007, which was a 52.7% increase.

The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society
The Medicine Hat Women's Shelter Society has a number of functions including emergency and second stage shelters, 24 Hour Crisis Line, support groups and outreach programs. In the 2007-2008 fiscal year the number of women and children turned away decreased by over 55% from the 2006-2007 year due to an increase in the number of beds from the previous year (11 to 18).

Women's Shelter Crisis Line
The 24-Hour Crisis Line saw a 25.0% increase from 2005-2006 to 2006-2007. There was then another increase in 2007-2008 of 21.8%.

Vital Activity

- Make sure you talk to your kids about drugs and find out if their school offers the D.A.R.E. program.
- "Dogs for Drug Free Schools" is helping to keep drugs out of our schools and as of August 2008 there were 3 active dogs.

safety

In Medicine Hat in 2007 there was an average of over 8 motor vehicle collisions per day.

fact or fiction?

In 2007 there were how many hate related crimes committed in Medicine Hat?
a) 6 b) 0 c) 19 d) 12

A. Cramer

work

In 2007 the manufacturing industry employed the greatest share of workers aged 45 and over than any other industry.

fact or fiction?

Employment Growth
Employment growth refers to the creation of new jobs in the economy.

Between 2005 and 2007 the number of people employed in Medicine Hat decreased 8.9%. During the same period Alberta saw an increase of 9.8% and the national increase was 4.3%.

Unemployment Rate
In 2007 the unemployment rate in the Medicine Hat Census Area was 4.9%. This was well below the national level (6.0%) and above the Alberta provincial level (3.5%). Since 2000 the unemployment rate has decreased 2.0%.

Average and Median Earnings
In 2005 real average annual earnings for full-time, full-year working persons in Medicine Hat were $47,885, up 11.3% from 2000. The 2005 average was 17.4% lower than the provincial average and 6.5% lower than the national average.

Average Hourly Wage
The average hourly wage in the Medicine Hat economic region in 2005 was $18.78, in 2007 it was reported as $22.20 – an 18.2% increase. Alberta's average wage rate in 2007 was $23.90, $1.70 higher than the Medicine Hat economic region.

Vital Activity

- Maintain a work life balance.
- Check out Medicine Hat College for courses each Fall and Winter session.

Use of Public Transportation

In 2006, 1.9% of workers used public transportation to get to work in Medicine Hat. The proportion of workers using public transportation decreased 0.1 percentage points from 2.0% in 2001.

Local Highway Traffic

There has been an increase in traffic on Highway #1 both west and east of Dunmore Road. West of Dunmore Road there was an increase of 25% in traffic between 2001 and 2007. East of Dunmore on Highway #1 traffic has increased over 42% between 2001 and 2007.

Number of Motorized Vehicles per Household

In Medicine Hat in 2001 there were 2.03 motor vehicles per household and in Alberta there were 2.01. The rate had a slight increase in 2006 when Medicine Hat's rate was 2.09 and Alberta's rate was 2.06 in Alberta.

	2001		2006	
	Total Motor Vehicles	Rate per Household	Total Motor Vehicles	Rate per Household
Medicine Hat	42,073	2.03	49,411	2.09
Alberta	2,219,569	2.01	2,589,973	2.06

A. Cramer

getting around

Vital Activity

- St. Patrick's School encourages their students to participate in a 'walking school bus' at specific times of the year. Parents volunteer to 'walk' their kids and others to and from school, providing a safe, healthy and emission free way of getting kids to school. Take a look at organizing a walking school bus with your kids.

Idling your vehicle for 10 seconds uses more fuel than turning off your car and restarting it.

fact or fiction?

A. Cramer

learning

46% of students attending Medicine Hat College are from the Medicine Hat area.

fact or fiction?

What is the average age of students attending Medicine Hat College
a) 21 b) 29 c) 32

High School Completion
In 2007, 27.9% of people aged 15 and over in the Medicine Hat economic region had not graduated from high school. This was down 2.7 percentage points from 2000. The Medicine Hat rate in 2007 was 8.3 percentage points above the rate for Alberta and 5.7 percentage points above the Canada-wide rate.

Population with Secondary Education
In Medicine Hat 43.1% of the population (15 years and over) in 2006 had completed postsecondary education (university degree, post-secondary certificate or diploma), up 5.3 percentage points from 37.8% in 2001. The rate was 15.0% lower than the national average (50.7%) and 14.5% lower than the provincial average (50.4%).

Composite Learning Index
The Canadian Council on Learning reports that nearly half of all Canadian adults (48%) have low literacy skills.

According to the 2008 Composite Learning Index (CLI) – a measurement tool that looks at the necessity of learning throughout a person's life – the overall index score for Medicine Hat was 77. The 2008 score was equal to the national score (77) and 9.4% lower than the Alberta score (85).

Medicine Hat College
In 2007-2008 there were 527 Apprentices training at the college in the seven trades offered. This was a 175% increase from 2004-2005 when there were 302 apprentices enrolled in the five trades offered.

Vital Activity

- Sign up for a class…art, yoga, pottery or French!
- Sign up for a library card; make sure everyone in your family has one.

A. Cramer

A. Unreiner

getting started

In 2008 Southeast Alberta Childcare and Family Services contracted for 670 child spots with 6 family day home agencies.

fact or fiction?

Immigrant Income
The median total income for non-immigrant economic families in Medicine Hat in 2000 was $61,638 and for immigrant families was $56,489. By 2005 both medians increased, the non-immigrant family income to $69,815 and the immigrant family income to $61,693. The increase in the non-immigrant family income median was 13.3% while the increase in the immigrant family income was 9.2% - in 2005 dollars.

Unemployment Rate of Immigrants and Non-Immigrants
In 2006, the unemployment rate of recent immigrants (i.e. entered the country within the last five years) was 2.1% in Medicine Hat. The provincial rate for the same group was 6.7%. Medicine Hat's rate was down from 6.9% in 2001.

English as a Second Language (ESL) Programs
With an increasing need for skilled labour Canada has focused on immigration as a way to fill this need. "Census data show that immigrants who landed in Canada during the 1990s, and who were in the labour force in 2001, represented almost 70% of the total growth of the labour force over the decade. If current immigration rates continue, it is possible that immigration could account for virtually all labour force growth by 2011."

Currently Saamis Immigration provides settlement services to recent immigrants. In 2007, 514 people obtained services which the agency was not able to claim statically due to the individuals current status within Canada. The ESL classes provided at Saamis Immigration are directed to immigrant and refugee learners. The current ESL offerings range from preliteracy to Canadian Language Benchmarks Assessment (CLBA) level 4. Saamis Immigration has been providing classes for over 15 years in Medicine Hat. The Medicine Hat College (MHC) has recently expanded its ESL programming incorporating the CLBA assessment allowing a more transparent transition for learners. The MHC 2007-2008 offerings of ESL at two campuses increased by 58% from 2006-2007. The total class hours offered in 2007-2008 was 60 hours, and in 2008-2009 a total of 180 hours will be offered which will be a 200% increase in one year.

Vital Activity

- Make a point of getting to know your neighbours.

Child Poverty

In 2006, the child poverty rate in Medicine Hat, based on the Low Income Measure (LIM), an indicator of relative poverty, was 16.1%, down 18.0% since 2001. The 2006 figure was 11.3% lower than the provincial average and 30.3% lower than the national average.

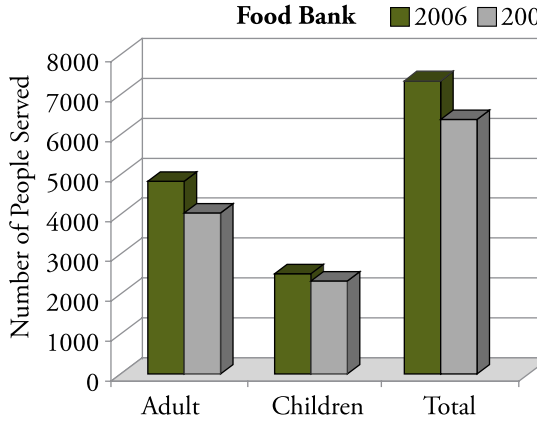
Salvation Army Donations

A significant number of donations are made daily to places like the Salvation Army, the Canadian Diabetes Association, and the Food Bank. In 2003-2004 the Salvation Army spent over $8,500 to take dumped items such as fridges, ruined household items, and unusable clothing from the Thrift Store to the dump. In 2007-2008 the cost of taking donations to the dump increased by over 80% to $15,769.

Hunger

The soup kitchen at the Salvation Army saw an increase in spending from $5,964 in 2005-2006 fiscal year to $8,685 in 2007-2008 – a 45.6% increase. Meals on Wheels served 13,983 meals in 2005 and in 2007 experienced a 19.8% increase.

In 2006, the Medicine Hat Food Bank assisted 7,352 people in total with approximately 34.0% of those being children. In 2007, 6,380 people were served and 36.0% were children.



Income Distribution of Economic Families

In 2005, 7.6% of families in Medicine Hat had annual incomes lower than $25,000, compared to 7.4% in Alberta and 10.5% in Canada. There was a 28.7% fall in the proportion of families in Medicine Hat making less than $25,000 between 2000 and 2005.

In 2005, 25.0% of families in Medicine Hat had annual incomes of over $100,000, compared to 33.1% in Alberta and 25.5% in Canada. There was a 34.4% increase in the proportion of families in Medicine Hat with incomes above $100,000 (2005 dollars) between 2000 and 2005.

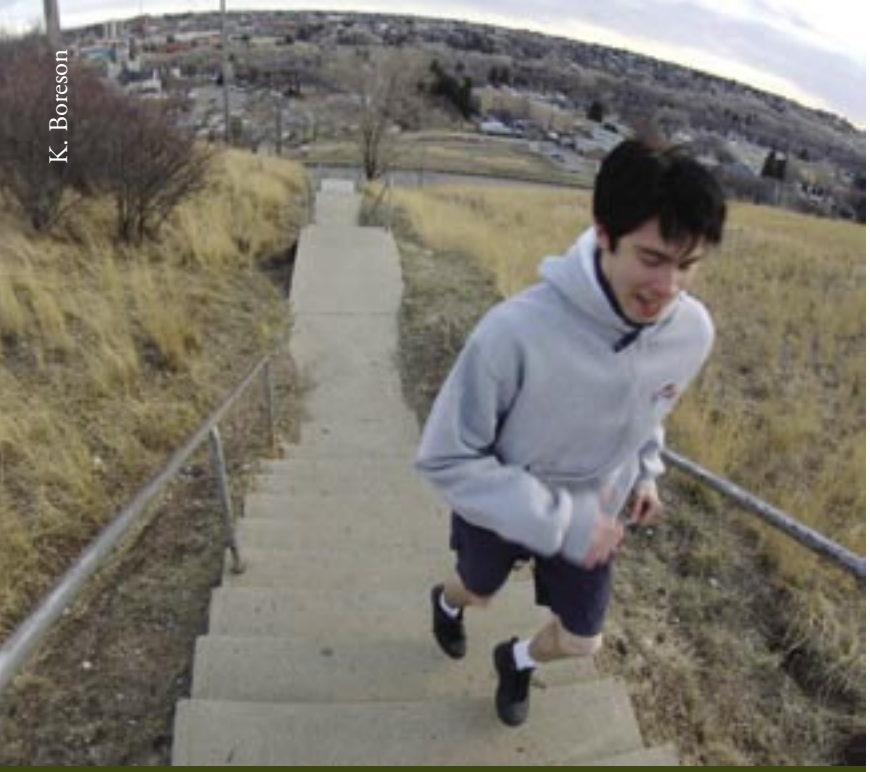
Vital Activity

- Give quality items to organizations who give people a hand up.
- Support a local school Breakfast program.

P. Paton

gap between rich & poor

In 2007-2008, the Salvation Army Thrift Store together with Canadian Mental Health-Alberta Southeast Region spent over $33,000 to dispose of unusable dumped items from their donation bins. *fact or fiction?*



K. Boreson

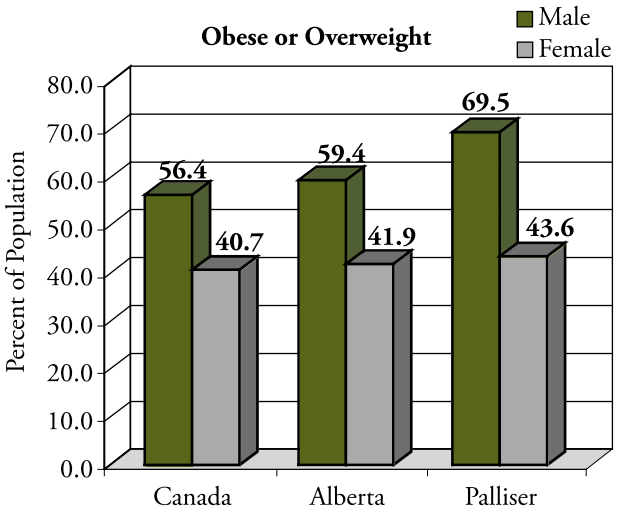
health

In 2005 Medicine Hat (Palliser Health Region) had 32% less General/Family Physicians per 100,000 than Alberta and Canada in 2005.

fact or fiction?

Obesity

In 2007 the obesity rate for the population aged 18 and over in the Palliser Health Region was 17.7%. This was 10.6% higher than the national average and 3.3% lower than the provincial average. The rate was down 2.7% from 2005.



Please note: These rates are greater than in the indicator because they include both people that are obese and overweight.

Breast Feeding

The Alberta Breast Feeding Committee works to increase breast feeding rates and education. Their goal for Alberta is to have a breast feeding initiation rate of 85% and at 6 months to still have 50% of mothers breast feeding.

When a baby is born breast feeding is recorded on the notification of birth and the breast feeding rates are then captured at various intervals up to 18 months. In the Palliser Health Region in 2006 the breast feeding initiation rate was 87% and at 2 weeks it dropped to 60%. The breast feeding rate at 6 months then dropped to 28%.

Smoking

In the Palliser Health Region in 2005, 33.7% of males ages 12 and over reported as smoking daily or occasionally, while 25.6% of male Albertans smoke daily or occasionally. Females do smoke less, 24.3% in the Palliser Health Region and 20.2% in Alberta. The overall smoking rate in the Palliser Health Region went from 29.0% in 2005, down to 22.7% in 2007. Nearly 50% of people between the ages of 40 and 49 in the Palliser Health Region smoke.

Diabetes
Diabetes is a growing health problem in Alberta, Canada and the rest of the world due to the increased use of the medical system to treat the disease. The total cases of diabetes in the Palliser Health Region has risen 43% from 3,604 case counts in 2000 to 5,154 case counts in 2006.

People with diabetes:

- Spend 2.5 times more days in hospital each year than people without diabetes.
- Are 2 to 4 times more likely to be hospitalized for cardiovascular or kidney disease, and over 16 times more likely to need lower limb amputations.
- From 1995 to 2005, the average number of General Practitioner (GP) visits remained fairly stable. People with diabetes had about 75% more GP visits per year compared to people without diabetes.

Births
In 2007 there were 48,589 births in Alberta; this broke the 45,465 record from 1983. From 2003 to 2006 in the Palliser Health Region there was an increase of 8.4%.

E. Sadlemyer

Vital Activity

- Smoker's Quit Kits are available at the Canadian Cancer Society Office, AADAC and the Community Health unit. These kits can help you on your journey.

- Join in a group fitness class, once a week. Knowing that you signed up for 1 class per week for eight weeks may help you get started. Small steps.

B. Watson

belonging & leadership

Medicine Hat's percentage voter turnout in the 2007 Municipal Election was the highest in the province.

fact or fiction?

Federal and Provincial Elections

The percentage of voter turnout for the 2006 Federal Election in Medicine Hat was 56.3%. This turnout was 8.4 percentage points lower than the national average (64.7%) and 5.6 percentage points lower than the provincial average (61.9%).

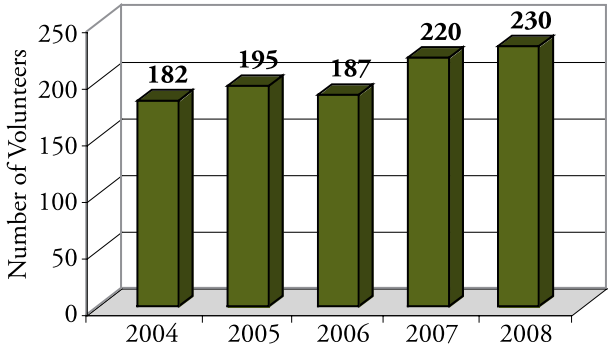
Provincial Election 2008

The unofficial election counts for the 2008 Provincial Election report that in Medicine Hat there was a 35.4% voter turnout, which was an approximate decrease of 14% from 2004 and a 32% decrease from the 2001 Provincial Election.

Volunteer Rate in Medicine Hat

Medicine Hat is known as a great city for participation and volunteerism. In 2004, 53.2% of persons aged 15 years and older in Medicine Hat were engaged in unpaid volunteer activities. This is 5.5 percentage points above the provincial volunteer rate of 47.7% and 7.9 percentage points above the national rate of 45.3%.

Medicine Hat Canada Day Volunteers



Municipal Elections

Medicine Hat's Municipal Election in 2007 had a voter turnout of 48%. The 2004 voter turnout was 34.5%, which was 43.5% lower than the turnout for the 2001 Municipal Election which had a turnout of 49.3%.

Municipal Election Voter Turnout - October 2007

Lethbridge	22.6	Medicine Hat	48
Red Deer	28	St. Albert	37
Grade Prairie	29	Leduc	42
Camrose	21		

Salvation Army Volunteerism

In 2007-2008 the Salvation Army recorded 704 volunteer hours. It would take a full time employee 37.5 hours a week for 19 weeks to replace the work completed by those volunteers. At an average hourly wage of $22.20 in Medicine Hat's economic region it would cost the Salvation Army $15,817.50 to replace these volunteers.

Salvation Army Volunteer Hours

2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006
704	568	951

Vital Activity

- Log onto www.volunteerseab.ca to find out about volunteer opportunities in your community. This site usually boasts hundreds of opportunities ranging from reception duties to event volunteers to translators. Looking for an exciting volunteer opportunity with over 800 organizations to choose from - check it out today!

G. Wright

A. Cramer

housing

In order to purchase the average priced home in 2007 in Medicine Hat, two people in one household must be working full-time (at least a combined total of 311.8 hours per month) and be making at least the average wage in the Medicine Hat-Lethbridge region of $22.20 / hour.

fact or fiction?

Rental Vacancy Rates
In Medicine Hat in 2007, the rental vacancy rate of two bedroom apartments was 1.6%; this was 40.7% lower than the average for all Census Agglomerations. The rental vacancy rate was up 166.7% from that in 2006.

Residential Prices vs. Family Income
In 2006, the ratio of the average house price to the median income for census families was 2.9 in Medicine Hat. In other words, the average house costs are equivalent to 2.9 years of annual income for the median family. This ratio was 34.0% lower than the national average and 21.0% lower than the provincial average. However, the ratio increased 24.4% over the time period 2001 to 2006.

Housing Starts
At 1,098 housing starts in 2007, Medicine Hat saw a 60.1% increase from the 686 housing starts in 2003. This compares to a national increase of 4.5% and a 33.6% increase in Alberta.

Salvation Army Shelter
The Salvation Army Shelter has seen a steady increase in use. From 796 people in 2003-2004 to 1,938 in 2007-2008, a 143.5% increase, which hosted on average 23 people per night in 2007-2008.

	2007-2008	2006-2007	2005-2006	2004-2005	2003-2004
Males	1,488	84	640	786	665
Females	450	204	137	138	101
Teens	0	1	1	3	2
Children	1	24	36	30	28
Other	0	2			
Total	1,938	1,076	814	957	796

Property Taxes
The City of Edmonton conducts an annual Residential Property Taxes and Utility Charges Survey of cities in Canada. For at least six years the city of Medicine Hat had the lowest property taxes out of the cities assessed. In 2007, out of 24 cities surveyed, Medicine Hat ranked the third lowest with a tax rate of $1,665 for a single detached home in Canada, after St. John's, NB of $1,540 and Surrey, BC of $1,592. The property taxes for a single detached home in Medicine Hat increased 5.7% from 2006 to 2007.

Vital Activity

- Support organizations who promote affordable housing.

Esplanade Attendance

The Esplanade Arts & Heritage Centre opened in October 2005. The total attendance in 2006 was 59,113 (67.9% theatre attendance) and in 2007 the total attendance was 64,318 (64.1% theatre attendance). This was a total attendance increase of 8.8% between 2006 and 2007.

City of Medicine Hat Spending on Cultural Development

The Cultural Development annual budget at the City of Medicine Hat has increased 76.6% from 2004 to 2008.

The budget includes: Esplanade, Cultural Centre, Arts and Heritage Board grants and festival grants, support for Medalta, Kiwanis Centre, the Saamis Tepee and both the Public Library and Shortgrass Library systems.

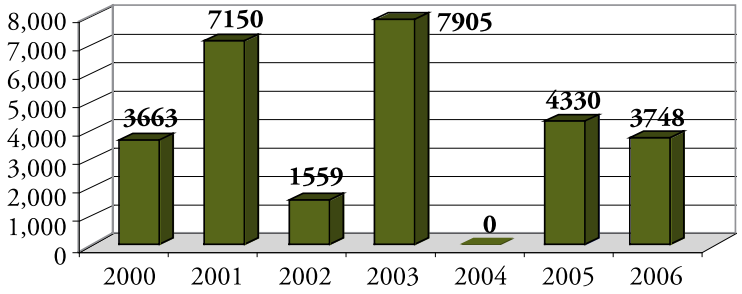
Cultural Development Annual Budget

Year	Spending	Year	Spending
2008	$5,282,000	2005	$3,586,609
2007	$5,031,000	2004	$2,991,390
2006	$5,188,000		

Soccer Participation

Medicine Hat Soccer Association registration has been steadily increasing. Outdoor soccer registration has increased 29.4% between 2005 and 2008. In the same time period there was a 20.4% registration increase in indoor soccer.

Medicine Hat Trail Development New Metres per Year



Vital Activity

- Contribute to the Arts and Heritage Fund at the Community Foundation.
- Volunteer for a sporting event, or at your child's track and field day.

D. Squire

arts, culture & recreation

Spectrum's attendance in 2008 was estimated to be almost 30% higher than in 2007.

fact or fiction?

L. Bohnet

fact or fiction

ECONOMY

Fact

Medicine Hat was rated the fifth best city for business out of twenty-five of Alberta's municipalities. Medicine Hat received 16.5 points out of 25 overall. Medicine Hat's decided advantages were cost, office and retail space downtown, and next to zero business tax downtown.

ENVIRONMENT

Fiction

The waste generated from building only fifteen to twenty homes creates enough reusable materials to build one new home. This shows the large amount of reusable waste that ends up in our landfill, instead of being used towards building new homes or home renovations.

SAFETY

Fact

In total there were 3,175 motor vehicle collisions in Medicine Hat in 2007. Therefore there was an average of about 8.7 accidents per day. As of June 4, 2008 there had been 1,332 motor vehicle collisions which is an average of about 8.5 per day.

b) 0

There were no reported hate crimes.

WORK

Fiction.

In 2007, 59.1% of the people employed in the agriculture industry were aged 45 and over compared to 37.2% of the manufacturing industry.

GETTING AROUND

Fact

Idling your vehicle for 10 seconds or more uses more fuel than turning your car off and restarting it. If each Albertan decreased the amount of time they leave their vehicles idling by 5 minutes per day, Albertan drivers would save 128 million litres of fuel per year. Drivers would also reduce carbon dioxide (the main greenhouse gas) emissions by 302,000 tonnes per year.

LEARNING

Fact

Forty six percent (46%) of students at Medicine Hat College are from the Medicine Hat area. One in every seven people in Medicine Hat attended a course or program in 2006-2007; this includes programming through the Conservatory of Music and Dance and Continuing Studies.

b) 29

The average age of all students is 28.6 years. The average age of full-time students is 23.5 years.

A. Cramer

fiction or fact

GETTING STARTED

Fact

As of May 2008 the Southeast Alberta Childcare and Family Services contract with 6 Family Day Home Agencies. In 2000 there were 5 Family Day Home Agencies. As of March 31, 2008 Southeast Alberta Childcare and Family Services contracted for 610 child spots in all the day homes, since then they have added another 60 spots. This is an increase of nearly 10%. There are 16 licensed Day Cares in the region with a total licensed capacity of 730 children. This is one more Day Care than in 2000. Since 2000 there has been an 82% increase in the number of preschools available. Total licensed capacity is currently 448 children.

GAP BETWEEN RICH & POOR

Fact

In 2007-2008 the Salvation Army Thrift Store spent $15,769 to dispose of unusable dumped items. In the same time period Canadian Mental Health-Alberta Southeast Region spent $18,000. The total between the two organizations to properly dispose of and/or recycle unusable items was $33,769.

HEALTH

Fact

Medicine Hat has 130 general/family physicians per 100,000. Canada and Alberta both had 191 general/family physicians per 100,000.

BELONGING AND LEADERSHIP

Fact

Medicine Hat had a voter turnout of 48% in the 2007 municipal election. Although this is not even half of our population it was the highest turnout in the province, with the second highest being St. Albert at 37%.

HOUSING

Fact

The CPI Basket of Goods and Services Index states that a household in 2007 spent 27.69% of their monthly income on Shelter. The average home price in 2007 in the Medicine Hat-Lethbridge Region was $292,645. Under the assumption that the purchaser puts 10% down, pays monthly, 25 year amortization and a 5 year closed mortgage at 7.44%, a household would have to work over 310 hours in a month and/or bring in $6,921.96 per month. This means that if there were two persons in the house working full time at the average hourly wage of $22.20 they would just be able to afford the average home.

ARTS, CULTURE & RECREATION

Fact

Spectrum 2007 was held in Kin Coulee and was estimated to have attendance of 18,000. Spectrum 2008 was held downtown and was estimated to have attendance of 25,000. This is a 28% increase. Attendance at Spectrum is always hard to predict because there is no formal entrance.

G. Wright

acknowledgements & contributions

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Karen Blewett
Chris Deering
Trish Paton

Vital Signs Project Team
Manager: Tara Williams, React Consulting
Mike Christie
Melissa Frew-Wannamaker
Breann LaBatte
Designer: Lana Bohnet, Melan Design

Community Foundations of Canada
Sara Lyons
Andrew Sharpe

City of Medicine Hat
City Clerk: Larry Godin
Chief Operating Officer – Energy Division: Gerry Labas
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Connie Matson

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Janie Rouse

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Monica Bodnar
Kathy Murphy

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Linda Gale

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Theresa Hardiker

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Craig Wood
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Janice Blair
Trish Paton
Cathy Woolfrey
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Laura Schattle-Weiss
Terry Lawson
Pat Dietrich

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Lois Bourassa

Canada Day Committee
John John

Medicine Hat Soccer Association
Heather McLellan

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Randy Bray

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Connie Dulle

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Rob Gardner

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Rachel Sarjeant-Jenkins

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Victoria	metro Vancouver
Calgary	Medicine Hat
Red Deer	Ottawa
Toronto	Oakville
Guelph & Wellington	London
Greater Sudbury	Montreal
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COMMUNITY FOUNDATION of Medicine Hat and Southeastern Alberta

This report, as well as an expanded version with additional indicators and full source data and links, is available on our website: www.mhcf.ca.

Rm 104, 430 6th Avenue SE, Medicine Hat, AB T1A 2S8
(403) 527-9038 www.mhcf.ca

G. Wright