

## National Business Development Campaign Attracts People and Business to Calgary

By Mary Moran, August 2011

With unemployment numbers continuing to decrease, Calgary is facing a looming labour shortage. The Corporate Economics Unit at The City of Calgary forecasts the unemployment rate to be at 5.2 per cent by 2012 (in June 2011, the Calgary Metropolitan Area was at 5.8 per Cent – statistics from Statistics Canada). To address the requirement to attract workers and target business growth, on Tuesday, June 21, 2011, a “wave of red” appeared in downtown Calgary with a guerrilla marketing event involving hundreds of Calgarians to mark the launch of *Calgary. Be Part of the Energy*, an exciting national business development and marketing campaign to generate awareness about the opportunities in Calgary.

To help define the strategy for the campaign, research was conducted and included one-on-one interviews with key business influencers across the country and a six-month national and international media scan. The interviews delved into people’s perceptions of Calgary, and the challenges and opportunities of doing business in the city.

It is not surprising that Calgary is still viewed as a “one horse town”, defined by its energy sector. However, key to the success of the campaign is highlighting the diversity of additional sectors that help drive Calgary’s economy. In addition, this is a city proven in international business, where deals are done on a handshake. And while not spoken about enough, the growing arts and culture sector not only provides an additional source of economic revenue but increases the quality of living for Calgarians. However, with strong economic growth forecasted, Calgary will be facing a human capital shortage. While originally conceived to be a campaign to drive demand in the real estate sector, *Calgary. Be Part of the Energy* shifted its focus towards people attraction. Based on all research conducted, the three objectives for *Calgary. Be Part of the Energy* identified a campaign mandate to:

1. Attract qualified people;
2. Target industries key to sustainable growth in Calgary; and
3. Make it known that Calgary is Canada’s emerging cosmopolitan and international city.

The campaign launch was preceded by Calgary Economic Development’s efforts to build a coalition of partners who shared common goals and viewed the campaign as a good investment. A marketing and communications plan was built and a budget of \$1,500,000 for the campaign was established. Phase one of the campaign runs from June 2011 – April 2012 and will target Canadian markets where unemployment is high and economic growth is lagging compared to Calgary; these markets include Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal and Halifax. From a people attraction perspective, the campaign targets many sub-segments including experienced professionals, aspiring professionals, new graduates and motivated immigrants. From a business attraction perspective there will be a focus on the logistics, technology and financial services sectors.

The campaign brand was built to be strong, innovative, creative and diversified. It was designed to be unlike anything that has previously been used to represent Calgary; it creates excitement and intrigue that there are opportunities and you need to be in Calgary to be part of them. *Calgary. Be Part of the Energy* is an invitation and call to action targeted at people and business. The brand and supporting tactics speak to people who are

considering a change in where they work or where they do business. The campaign takes an integrated approach and utilizes multiple marketing channels including media relations, public relations, advertising, social media and an interactive website where business leaders and high-energy Calgarians share their stories on why Calgary is the place in Canada to live, work and do business.

Phase two of the campaign will target international markets and is expected to commence in May 2012. Visit [www.bepartoftheenergy.ca](http://www.bepartoftheenergy.ca) to meet or join the people that contribute to Calgary's energy and follow the campaign on Twitter – @partoftheenergy.