



FRONTIER CENTRE
FOR PUBLIC POLICY

2010 ANNUAL REPORT



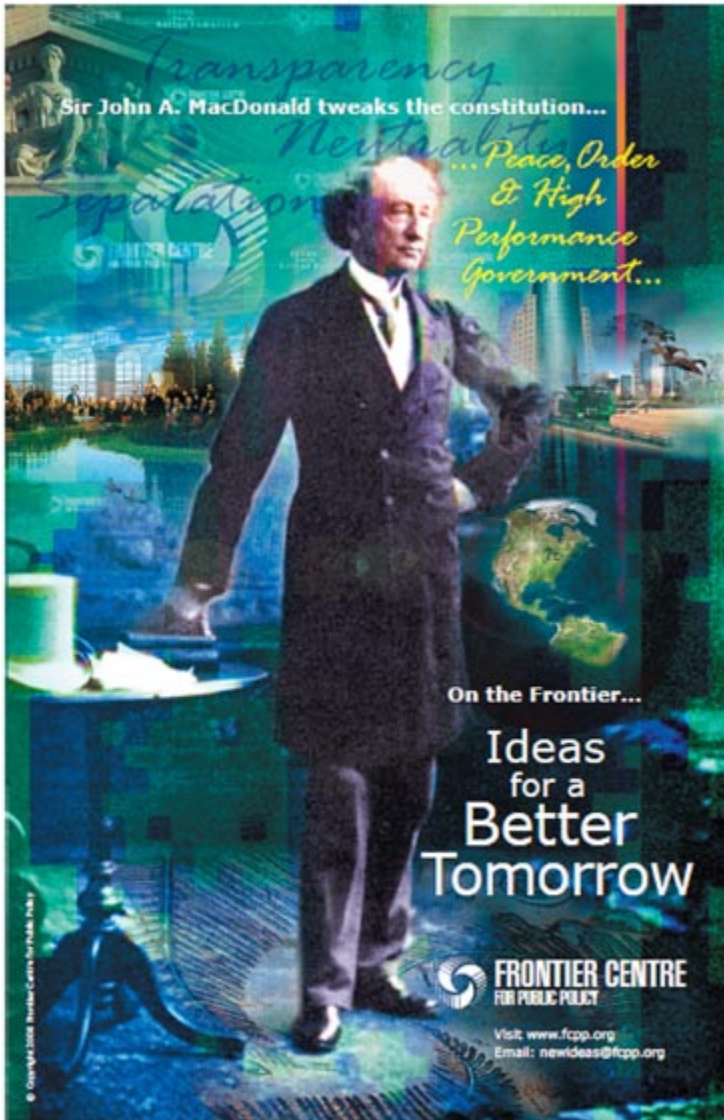


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The Frontier Centre is an independent, non-profit think tank founded to undertake research and education in support of economic growth and social outcomes which will enhance the quality of life in our communities.

Through a variety of publications and public forums, the Frontier Centre explores policy changes required to make the Prairies a winner in the open economy. It also provides new insights into solving important issues facing our cities, towns and provinces.

A professional staff and an advisory board of policy practitioners and experts, research, write, and communicate new policy ideas, sharing them with the media, decision-makers and opinion leaders throughout the Prairies.

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Frontier activities at a glance

During 2010 the Frontier Centre continued to inject thoughtful new ideas into the public dialogue through its outreach and publication programs covering 10 project areas.

In 2010 the Centre produced 23 major policy studies and 394 newspaper op-eds or commentaries.

It hosted high-profile speakers central to important public policy issues and supplies its perspectives through interviews in local and national radio, television, and print media. Frontier Centre staff made 30 speaking appearances, 74 radio interviews and 19 TV appearances. The Centre hosted 28 public speaking events.

In 2010, the Frontier Centre had over 190,000 unique visitors to its website (see Table below). The office's activities are reported in a wide range of media formats including radio, television, and print media as news stories, opinion editorials, and live



"In more ways than one, we are a richer nation because of the work of this organization. Your eloquent advocacy for free markets and sound public policy will help us lay the groundwork today for the economic growth and opportunity of tomorrow."

- Prime Minister Stephen Harper, Winnipeg MB





interviews. They are also covered by a wide range of outlets, including the *National Post*, *Saskatoon Star-Phoenix*, *the Globe and Mail*, CBC radio and TV, CTV, Global TV, and major radio talk shows like Calgary's Rutherford show, Saskatchewan's John Gormley show, and others. The Centre's weekly public policy commentary was broadcast on thirteen radio stations across the prairies. The Centre's website (www.fcpp.org) is an educational resource with a plethora of publications, audio and video, interactive games and links to leading think tanks and other resources. During 2010 our visitors downloaded over 2.72 million pages of information.

In 2010 the Frontier Centre expanded its new media footprint with the development of the LGPI2 website, an interactive "Wikipedia-

style model" database for the Centre's Local Government Performance Index. This cutting edge software represents an innovative new way for think tanks to communicate comparative data by allowing interested volunteers to input data into the database. Also new to Frontier this year was the development of a mobile friendly version of the FCPP website for smart phones and both an iPhone App and Android App for smart phones. Frontier also uses social media and social networking to expand its content outreach and engagement. Frontier posted 17 videos on YouTube. Over the year, more than 300 people became Frontier's Facebook fans and over 200 people followed us on Twitter.

Month	Unique Visitors	Number of Visits	Pages	Hits	Bandwidth
January 2010	21,703	35,039	25,3012	1,098,871	23.05 Gb
February	22,098	36,114	24,4290	1,097,193	20.77 Gb
March	20,061	36,079	276,886	1,091,372	18.28 Gb
April	15,461	31,601	220,602	820,582	14.00 Gb
May	15,274	33,686	192,012	781,607	15.17 Gb
June	13,685	32,317	229,583	765,980	15.41 Gb
July	13,104	33,316	201,677	790,262	12.92 Gb
August	10,913	28,237	226,815	739,813	17.58 Gb
September	12,494	28,907	246,223	751,784	23.44 Gb
October	15,988	40,467	240,332	805,857	27.75 Gb
November	16,010	49,874	210,918	794,253	28.17 Gb
December	13,271	46,142	181,708	675,046	23.24 Gb
Total	190,062	431,779	2,724,058	10,212,620	239.80 Gb



New Personnel

Marco Navarro-Génie (BA [Hons.] Concordia University; MA, PhD [Political Science] University of Calgary), joined the Frontier family in September 2010 as the new research director. Marco also teaches political science in the Department of Policy Studies at Mount Royal University in Calgary, and has taught at St. Mary's College, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology (SAIT), the University of Calgary, and Concordia University in Montreal. His academic work focuses on radical revolutionary movements, and cultural and political identity in Latin America. He has taught Canadian and Alberta politics. His teaching and pioneering research have been recognized, respectively, by a Distinguished Faculty Teaching Award (1999) at Mount Royal University, and an Izaak Walton Killam Memorial Scholarship (2004-2006) held at the University of Calgary.

In addition to his academic credentials, Marco brings a unique combination of skills to Frontier, from editor and traffic controller of Frontier's prolific research agenda, to strong management, media and public relations skills. Navarro-Génie is a board member of The International Centre for Human Rights and Democratic Development (Rights and Democracy) and fluent in English, French, and Spanish. He regularly comments on Canadian and Alberta politics for various local, national, and international print and broadcast news outlets that include *Calgary Herald*, *Leader Post*, *Vancouver Sun*, *Windsor Star*, *National Post*, *Radio-Canada International*, *Radio-Canada*, *CTV News*, and *RDI*. Together with Joseph Quesnel, Marco holds the Frontier fort in Alberta.

Our Work

The work at Frontier is divided into 10 project topics with each of the 3 provincial offices taking responsibility for national or cross-provincial projects in various critical areas.

Healthcare Frontiers

In 2010 we released the annual Canada Health Consumer Index and the Euro-Canada Health Consumer Index, this time in Calgary. In these reports, we continue to promote a culture of performance measurement in healthcare policy a culture in which citizens are aware of where their healthcare system is succeeding and where it needs improvement. Our research continues to show meaningful performance gaps between the Canadian provinces in terms of reducing wait times for care. Furthermore, we have identified meaningful performance gaps between Canada and the top-performing European healthcare systems, many of which provide universal access to high-quality care without the long wait times that plague the Canadian healthcare system. This research continued to influence public discourse surrounding Canadian healthcare policy in 2010 and was featured in numerous publications across Canada including the *National Post*, the *Globe and Mail* and *Maclean's* magazine.



Transformational Equalization

During 2010, Frontier Centre analysts vigorously participated in the ongoing national debate about the future of Canada's equalization program, and the country's system of fiscal federalism more generally. In February, Frontier released *The Real Have-Nots in Confederation: Ontario, Alberta and British Columbia*, a policy series co-authored by Ben Eisen and Mark Milke. This study documented some of the unintended consequences of equalization, including the fact that the program often subsidizes more generous and more accessible public services in recipient provinces compared to those that exist in the provinces whose residents foot the largest part of the equalization transfer bill. The study received considerable media attention across Canada, including coverage in the *National Post* and the *Toronto Star*.

In December 2010, a second major study on fiscal policy was released entitled *Stealth Equalization*, authored by Ben Eisen. This paper examined regional imbalances in federal government hiring policies, and also received national and regional media coverage, including a full spread in the *National Post* and the leading editorial in the *Calgary Herald*. In between these major studies, the Frontier Centre also published a series of op-ed and radio commentaries from Frontier Centre staff and policy fellows examining equalization's negative impact on provincial level public policy and national productivity growth, while presenting options for constructive policy reform.

Smart Green Project

The Frontier Centre's Smart Green project area, which focuses on outcomes-based environmental policy, continued to be one of our most active in 2010. In May, the Frontier Centre released *Environmental Policy and Unintended Consequences* using a case-study approach to show how poorly designed environmental policies can create unintended consequences that harm economic performance and sometimes the natural environment itself. In addition to this major policy study, the Frontier Centre released numerous commentaries climate change, energy policy and forest protection. Relative to other think tanks, Frontier distinguished itself by highlighting the mounting policy damage created by the politically driven, anti-conventional energy green lobby.

Aboriginal Frontiers Project

In 2010, we released the fourth annual Aboriginal Governance Index that measures good First Nation governance across the Prairies. In total, 78 First Nation communities were surveyed across the Prairie provinces. We adjusted our methodology this year by excluding communities with fewer than 100 adult residents for our sample. These smaller communities presented challenges in accessing statistically significant samples. The survey included new questions about proven best practices for First Nations in order to help them improve their governance processes and, ideally, improve their ranking.



We also made adopted new touch screen technology to collect survey data, using Netbooks (small laptops) instead of paper surveys.

Each band's overall ranking is based on a weighted composite of scores that evaluate five broad areas of good governance. The dimensions of good governance that are evaluated in this report are:

- Elections: How fair and impartial are votes for leaders?
- Administration: How effectively is the band's business conducted?
- Human Rights: How much regard is assigned to basic rights?
- Transparency: How well informed are citizens about government?
- Economy: How well is the community providing economic development?

In June, we released the results of the AGI at our second Big Bear gala in Winnipeg. While several of the bands that earned top scores from the previous year once again landed near the top of the index, there were also some surprises, with several new bands performing very well. In Manitoba, we had Sapotaweyak Cree Nation, Mosakahiken Cree Nation and Cross Lake First Nation in the top three spots. For Saskatchewan, the top three were Ochapowace First Nation, Muscowpetung Saulteaux First Nation and Saulteaux First Nation. Alberta's top three bands were O'Chiese First Nation, Paul First Nation, and Siksika Nation.

The winner of the \$50,000 Big Bear prize went to Saskatchewan's Ochapowace First Nation.

In front, from left to right, Ochapowace: L- Councillor Heather Bear, Councillor Elvis Henry, Chief Ross Allary (holding cheque), unidentified elder (wearing leather jacket), Councillor Audrey Isaac.

Back from left to right (distinguished guests and Frontier): L- Joan Beatty, Elijah Harper, Robert Nault, Peter Holle, Don Sandberg, Calvin Helin.





On the publication front, the Aboriginal Frontiers Project made several controversial recommendations that made waves in the policy community. The first was the publication of *Respecting the Seventh Generation: A Voluntary Plan for Relocating Non-Viable Native Reserves*. The policy series, authored by policy analyst Joseph Quesnel, called for a conversation on what defines a non-viable reserve and what can be done to help these communities. The solution presented was a voluntary move closer to urban centres to take advantage of economic and educational opportunities. The paper received widespread media coverage, some very positive endorsements, and an invitation to discuss the paper at a Native Studies class at the University of Manitoba.

In April 2010, Australian Frontier Centre intern Tahlia Maslin also contributed a policy paper that compared Canadian Aboriginal policy with Australian Aboriginal policy. The emphasis was on the similar backgrounds and problems faced by both communities.

On the speaker front, the Frontier Centre hosted several prominent commentators including Dr. Tom Flanagan, political scientist at the University of Calgary. He addressed his new co-edited book *Beyond the Indian Act: Restoring Aboriginal Property Rights*. The book focuses on the historic foundations for indigenous property rights system and how property rights can be restored to Native communities. Manny Jules, who has been instrumental in bringing the property rights model to a BC First Nation, also participated in this discussion.

In March 2010, the Frontier Centre hosted Dr. Douglas Bland, author of *Uprising*, a new fictional account of a Native insurgency in Canada. Bland teaches national defence policy at the Queen's University School of Policy Studies. In his talk, Bland addresses the very real issues surrounding Native unrest and the security concerns surrounding that.

The Frontier Centre was also fortunate to interview Robert Nault, former minister of Indian Affairs. Nault is best known for his historic attempts to reform First Nation governance in a positive direction through the *First Nations Governance Act*. Although the measure did not succeed in the end, Nault shared with the Frontier Centre some of the insights he learned and how successful reform can be achieved in the future.



Local Government Project

During 2010 Frontier unveiled a new specialty web site that graphically describes the finances of 130 Canadian municipalities. The database is now available on the website for the Frontier's successful Local Government Performance Index (LGPI). The new database will provide ways to answer important questions about municipal finances and also evaluates the quality of financial and performance reporting.

In January 2010, the Frontier Centre's Local Government Project released a policy series entitled *Creating Proper Incentives for Canada's Cities Through Smart Provincial Legislation* by senior fellow Larry Mitchell. The piece examined inadequacies in local government legislative frameworks in Canada and how they could benefit by learning from other jurisdictions, particularly New Zealand. Mitchell makes the case for high performance focused local government legislation in Canadian provinces.

Mitchell also commented on the issue of municipal amalgamation in Canada. Mitchell says concerns over amalgamation from the New Zealand city of Auckland should cause pause for Canadian urban centres considering similar moves.

A policy series study produced by Stuart Donovan, a New Zealand transportation engineer with over five years' experience created substantial discussion across Canada. It showed how accurate transportation pricing could help solve traffic congestion problems in Canadian urban centres.

Education Frontiers

In February 2010, the Frontier Centre partnered with the Atlantic Institute for Market Studies (AIMS) to release the broadest set of public information ever presented on Western Canadian high schools. Based on an earlier AIMS study on Atlantic Canadian schools, the new report examined the information currently available, what that data looks like, and how it would be used in developing a report card for Western Canadian high schools.

In 2010, Frontier's Education Research Fellow Michael Zwaagstra continued to contribute to the discussion in the media and at select education events, arguing for standardized testing and against the negative effects of 'child-centred' curricula and no-fail policies.

As the co-author of a new book, *What's Wrong With Our Schools: and How We Can Fix Them*. Michael also published a series of related columns through the Frontier Centre and did a multi-city tour across western Canada and the Maritimes. Michael's book attracted significant attention from across the country and led to an extensive string of appearances on talk radio across Canada. The book outlined the major problems facing Canadian public education today and identified some common sense solutions to these problems.

On December 4, 2010 Zwaagstra delivered his key points as to why public schools are failing properly to prepare today's students for the real world to those present at the Society for Quality Education's (SQE) annual general meeting in downtown Toronto.



Anti-Poverty Project

In January 2010, Frontier Centre contributor Fergus Hodgson released a very insightful policy paper on how the restrained housing market is contributing to the homelessness problem. The paper, entitled *Freedom to Build*, looks at how regulation is reducing the supply of low-cost housing.

Rick August also contributed to the debate through a contentious piece arguing that rising food bank usage does not necessarily mean a rise in poverty. The paper was a response to Food Banks Canada's annual "Hunger Count", a survey of food bank utilization across the country.

Ben Eisen evaluated the current data on the effects of childcare on a child's development. The study, entitled *Myths about Childcare Subsidies: A Review of the Empirical Literature*, found that the long term benefits of universal childcare are being oversold. In June, Eisen also tackled the issues of minimum wages increases and how they do not actually help the problem and has consequences for unskilled and inexperienced workers.

A piece by senior fellow Peter Shawn Taylor, also showed why a plan by Manitoba Public Insurance to arbitrarily take some cars out of circulation for supposed environmental reasons will hurt the poor and unemployed.

Developing a new subfield on the poverty issues file, Aruna Papp's policy paper on honour killings entitled *Culturally-Driven Violence Against Women* produced a whirlwind of national and international media attention that broke Frontier's records. The reverberations of Ms. Papp's ground-breaking research continue to this day.

Housing Frontiers

The flagship output of the Housing Frontiers Project is the Annual Demographia International Housing Affordability Survey done in partnership with Senior Fellow Wendell Cox. This year's 6th annual survey, expanded coverage to 272 markets in Australia, Canada, Ireland, New Zealand, the United Kingdom and the United States.

Over the past year, housing affordability has improved in some markets, remained constant in others and declined in still others. In the United States and the United Kingdom, the "bubble" markets that had "burst" generally reached a trough and began rising again. In the "boom" markets that did not experience a bubble, house prices generally declined in response to the intense economic disruption that occurred after the Lehman Brother's collapse, which signaled the "mortgage meltdown" and the "Great Recession," the steepest economic decline since the Great Depression.

Of significance is the increase in housing affordability in some markets. Of the 272 markets surveyed, there were 103 affordable markets, 98 in the United States and 5 in Canada. This is an improvement from 87 in 2008.



Water Project

The Frontier Centre has been expanding its work in the area of water policy, which is an emerging topic for interventionist minded nationalists and environmentalists.

Frontier contributor Will Randall examined how Winnipeg City Council was proposing a new water management model for the city.

In the new 2010 policy series, Randall argued that public-private partnership is an effective water-management model. The benefits of a new water management model are increased transparency, long-term funding for needed infrastructure improvements in a non-political, nonpartisan manner, and cost-effectiveness and environmental protection based upon smart usage and smart planning.

In an insightful commentary piece by contributor Roger Kerr, it is argued that the public should not look down upon water and wastewater services being run on a commercial basis. Kerr makes the case that

water services should meet the cost of the capital they employ (that is to say, make normal profits), just like other utilities such as electricity and gas. If they don't, capital will be misallocated because it could produce more social value in other uses.

Senior Fellow Tim Ball also contributed some excellent commentaries on how water shortages are being used inappropriately in the climate change scare debate. Ball also looked at how the idea of water shortage is misleading.

A *National Post* article in March 2010 recognized the relevance of our work on this file. It mentioned a purposefully controversial Frontier Centre study which argues that Manitoba could earn US\$1.33-billion annually by exporting via a pipeline to American markets just 1% of the fresh water flowing into Hudson Bay, thereby ending Manitoba's status as a have-not province.





Rural Renaissance Project

In April 2010, Frontier Senior Analyst David Seymour made the case for Canada's dairy industry opening up to free competition. Seymour argues that protecting any industry should not be identified with the national interest as consumers within a country lose out to protected agricultural interests.

A policy backgrounder released in April 2010 examined the future of farming. The backgrounder, called *The Shape of Tomorrow's Farming*, authored by Dennis T. Avery, director of the Center for Global Food Issues at the Hudson Institute. The policy paper analyzes the significant challenges facing agriculture. World food production must double by 2050, and production of meat and milk will more than double. Children need the key micronutrients of livestock products to prevent such diseases as pellagra and blindness due to severe Vitamin A deficiency. Their cognitive development also seems to benefit from high-quality protein.

Farming intensity must triple on the best land, in order to protect the poorer land that houses three-fourths of the wild species. Good farmland will become even more important, as one of the scarcest resources. Most of the increased farm output will and must come from the best-quality land, which maximizes yields and minimizes land requirements per pound of food. It also minimizes soil erosion, humanity's most ancient and implacable enemy.



Mannkal Intern Partnership

Frontier was proud to host a student Tahlia Maslin, as an intern from the Mannkal Foundation, a think tank based in Perth, Australia during early 2010. As the Frontier Centre's international student intern she helped with primary research on the Euro-Canadian Healthcare Index, where she collected data on Australian health care systems. She produced two papers, both published by Frontier, on Australian equalization and a comparison of aboriginal policy in Australia and Canada. She was studying for a Bachelor of Law at Notre Dame University in Fremantle, Western Australia. Her stay included time in both the Winnipeg and Regina Frontier offices.



Remembrance for Claire Toews



The following is a condensed version of the eulogy for Claire Toews in Winnipeg, June 10, 2010, by Peter Holle

It was the middle of March, 2010, when Claire called me up and said she wasn't feeling very good. She was having trouble reading the computer screen and was going to stay home. We didn't think much of it at that time but it was unusual in that Claire was someone who, rain or shine, dependably came to work.

She never came back to us.

Three and a half months later we had lost our colleague, friend and passionate promoter of good public policy, Claire Toews.

From the beginning, Claire was always more of a partner and a loyal friend than a worker bee. In reality, she was one of a few founders.

I first met Claire back in 1998 when the Frontier Centre for Public Policy was still an early, very fragile work in progress.

It had a small office in Winnipeg's exchange district, with a couple computers and some used office furniture. At least this office had functioning washroom facilities and some level of security. The first office had cycled through two sets of office equipment after two back to back break-ins. Money was tight but this old heritage building did not have the latest in comfort technology. It was a place where clanking steam pipes would get the place boiling hot in the winter. And it was also boiling hot in the summer months.

Opening one of the windows was the extent of the air conditioning back then. I can remember walking in with Claire smiling at the main desk next to a Costco fan. We finally broke down and bought her a cheapo window air conditioner. One of my favourite memories was a beaming Claire among the boxes and files and clutter of the Frontier Centre. The pay was low and occasionally erratic, the conditions challenging, but she loved being part of the intellectual missionary work of that most unusual Canadian creature—a baby think tank.

Claire was quite the find for the Frontier Centre. She brought order to chaos. Frontier was like a sparking grinding wheel that shot controversial ideas off into the parochial and stagnant local public policy dialogue. But someone had to organize things, set up events and meetings, make sure the bills got paid, do the banking, and otherwise administer the inner workings of the organization. She did this smartly and efficiently. As Frontier's first director of administration Claire did a fantastic job. Her talent shone brightly in organizing board of directors meetings, handling the requirements for legal notifications, minutes, reporting and all the other minutiae. Claire was a master at short hand, a cryptic, now mostly forgotten way of speed writing—how better to record the dry, but important business of the board meetings.



Somehow we had stumbled onto a real professional. I later learned that Claire had been the executive secretary for one of Winnipeg's former top business executives over at National Grain, once one of the city's biggest companies.

What explained Claire's enthusiasm for a plucky little start up that specialized in upsetting the applecart? There was little prestige or big pay to be had at the Frontier Centre. It all came back to her strong passion for better public policy. She was a huge fan of education reform and had put her money where her mouth was by organizing a group of concerned parents called the Parents Network who were demanding better schools during the 1980s. During that part of her life she became acquainted with prominent academics like Tom Flanagan, Mark Holmes, and other intellectual bomb throwers.

In the early Frontier Centre years, education was one of our hot topics. Every June, Claire delighted in organizing a meeting with a new education reform group that included Professor Rod Clifton, High school teacher Michael Zwaagstra, and former Principal Bill Bumstead. Over a pizza, on hostile territory usually in the education faculty lounge at the University of Manitoba, the group would map out a dozen or so topics for the coming year. Claire also would organize the annual education frontiers lecture where we brought in some prominent education policy expert to push the boundaries on smarter thinking outwards.

Over the years at Frontier, even though Claire was immersed in the day to day details of administration she kept her passion for better education policy. Every few weeks she would email out tidbits from groups like the Society for the Advancement of Education. To the very end she never lost that passion for education excellence.

As Frontier expanded into three provinces, Claire's role evolved into more specialized areas. As the second longest serving Frontier person, she managed the important board of director process. She became intimately involved last year in a complete update of the Frontier's corporate bylaws. She took on the aggressive Frontier's events machine.

Claire was the first point of contact to the many prominent public policy speakers and experts that Frontier worked with to get new thinking into the public dialogue including education reformers, former Prime Ministers, big city American mayors, and a whole range of international, national and local policy provocateurs. Way back in 2000 there were ten events at Frontier. Skip forward a decade. During 2009 she organized over 40 events across three provinces. Of course, Claire was not all business as was plain to see in her superb organization of the annual Frontier Christmas party.

In the year prior to her unexpected departure she managed to pull off two mega events at Frontier with her usual standard of excellence and high quality. In May of 2009, without a great deal of notice, she organized Frontier's 10th anniversary gala dinner with the Prime Minister of Canada and former ambassador Allan Gottlieb.

She followed this up with the spectacular Big Bear Traditional Feast where we awarded an Alberta First Nation a \$50,000 prize for good reserve governance. In true Claire style, the event was flawless, from the superb entertainment to the little chocolate box on each plate.

It was Claire's professionalism, passion and hard work that helped make the Frontier Centre the big success that it is today. With over a dozen staff and a substantial budget that, were we back in 1998, would only be considered a wild fantasy, it's an organization that has come a long way. It was our dear Claire who sat on the catbird seat the longest on this interesting, often bumpy, journey across time, over three provinces to national and international respectability.

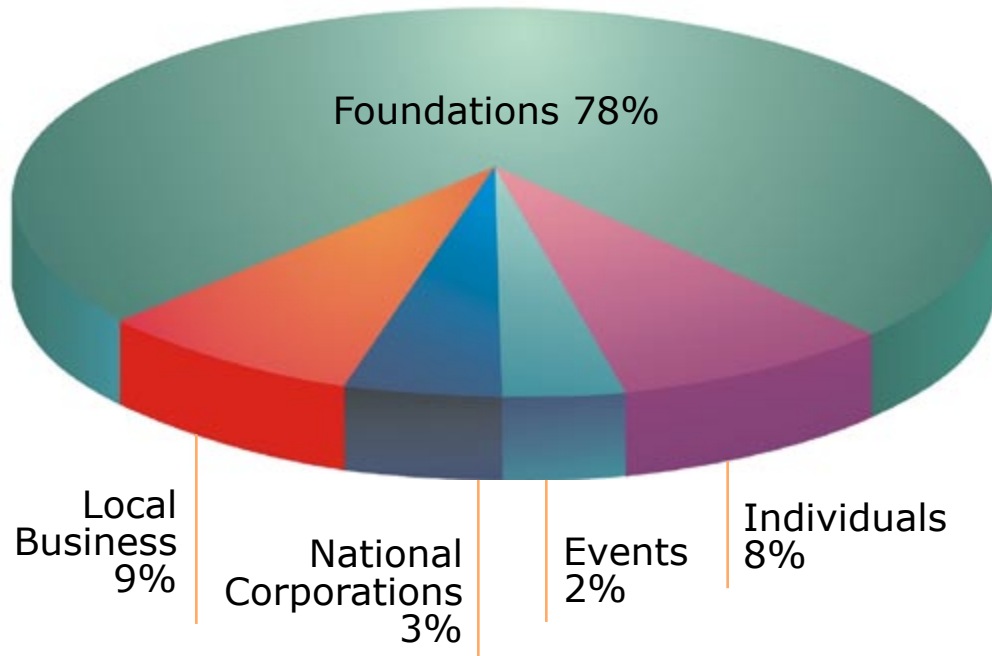
On behalf of your friends and colleagues at the Frontier Centre for Public Policy we will miss your Monday morning smile. We will miss your emails on education reform. We will miss your big cakes at Christmas.

You have graced our lives and made the world a better place more than you will ever know.

God bless.



Frontier’s sources of support 2010



STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS YEAR END DECEMBER 31, 2010

Income		
Grants and Activities	\$	1,314,349.00
Expenses		
Salaries, Office Costs, Projects & Publications	\$	1,514,471.00
Increase/Decrease in Unrestricted Net Assets from Operations	\$	(200,122.00)

Statement of Financial Position as of December 31, 2010

Bank Account	\$	424,309.00
Goods and Services Recoverable	\$	18,596.00
Accounts Receivable	\$	3,579.00
Prepaid Expenses and Deposits	\$	4,695.00
Capital Assets	\$	48,573.00
Total Current Assets	\$	499,752.00
Accounts Payable	\$	92,573.00
Retained Earning	\$	407,179.00
	\$	499,752.00

01-Dec-11



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