



Northern Alberta Development Council

Annual Report
2007 - 2008



Message from the Chair

I am very pleased to present our Annual Report for 2007-2008 on behalf of the Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC). The report highlights Council's achievements that contribute to the development of the North.

The NADC experienced a year of change, moving to two different ministries and finally settling in with the Ministry of Finance and Enterprise. Continuity was maintained through the consistent guidance of Minister Iris Evans. Despite Ministry changes, the NADC forged ahead working closely with communities, business, industry, and other northern jurisdictions on a wide range of initiatives and issues related to education, transportation, agriculture, forestry and tourism.

Engaging and communicating with northerners through conferences, seminars, Regional Stakeholders Forums, the *NADC Communiqué*, and our website remained fundamental to our work. The Youth Apprenticeship Program, Northwest Corridor Development Corporation, Branding the Peace, Woodlands Operations Learning Foundation, and the Deh Cho Travel Connection are only a few of the organizations and programs Council was involved with in the past year.

In 2007 we introduced our Youth Entrepreneurship pilot project working with community Futures and regional school divisions. This pilot project is aimed at keeping kids in high school, while teaching them good business practices and entrepreneurship skills. Early indications are this program is a success and will hopefully be implemented throughout the NADC region.

Increasing northern skills level remained an NADC priority through the continued success of the NADC Bursary Programs and Northern *LINKS*, a program to encourage students to complete high school and pursue post-secondary education. We also continue our work with post secondary through the Northern Clearinghouse.

The past year marked the beginning of the planning and preparations for the Challenge North 2009 triennial conference to be held in Cold Lake, April 22-24, 2009. This conference traditionally hosts more than 250 stakeholders from across the province, predominately from the north and provides much background for the NADC's future work.

The Northern Alberta Development Council appreciates the commitment and efforts of our diverse partners and remains firmly committed to advancing northern development.

Robin Campbell, Chair
MLA West Yellowhead

NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL ANNUAL REPORT 2007-2008

OPERATIONAL OVERVIEW

The Northern Alberta Development Council (NADC) is a council of and for northerners. In 2007-2008, the Council was a reporting entity of the Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Industry.

The NADC consists of nine public members and one elected Member of the Legislative Assembly (MLA) of Alberta. Council membership reflects the geographic, cultural and vocational diversity of northern communities. In 2007-2008, the Council was chaired by Denis Ducharme, MLA for Bonnyville-Cold Lake. The public members were:

Iris Callioux, Peace River
Carmen Ewing, Girouxville
David Kirschner, Fort McMurray
Michael Ouellette, Grande Prairie
Harvey Yoder, Lac La Biche

Kim Courtoreille, Wabasca
Helen Henderson, High Prairie
Joseph Layton, Bonnyville
Williard Strebchuk, Whitecourt

Mission

The mission of the NADC is to advance northern development through developing and implementing regional strategies and initiatives in partnership with the private sector, community-based organizations, industry, other jurisdictions and ministries.

Core Business

The mandate of the NADC, as set out in the Northern Alberta Development Council Act, is to "investigate, monitor, evaluate, plan and promote practical measures to foster and advance general development in northern Alberta and to advise the Government accordingly." The NADC supports the government's commitment to prosperity by facilitating the development of a thriving and progressive northern economy.

The NADC Region

The Northern Alberta Development Council region represents 60% of Alberta's landmass and only 9% of the Province's total population. The region has 100% of the province's mineable oil sands development, 21% of provincial crop production, 10% of provincial livestock production and 75% of the forestry portion of Alberta's Gross Domestic Product.

Although portions of the northern economy flourished, the region faced significant challenges for continued and sustainable growth. These challenges included growth pressures on physical and social infrastructure associated with resource development. Substantial investment was made to address inadequate transportation and municipal infrastructure but more needs to be done. A shortage of skilled workers to meet demand continued to be an issue faced by all northern

employers. The difficulty in providing services to a relatively small and sparse population and a lack of economic diversification were a concern to northern organizations. Accordingly, regional priorities include: improving access to markets through better transportation networks; raising skill levels so northerners can take advantage of employment opportunities; adding value to and diversifying northern products; continued exploration of additional resource development opportunities; and raising awareness of what makes the north important to the rest of Alberta and Canada.

BUSINESS PLAN GOAL AND STRATEGIES

As part of the Provincial strategy the NADC supported the Ministry of Employment, Immigration and Industry's 2007-2010 business plan by addressing the following goal:

GOAL: Alberta has strong and vibrant regions and rural communities

The Northern Alberta Development Council partners with northern communities, organizations, businesses, industry and other jurisdictions to coordinate, plan for and support the sustainable development of northern Alberta.

Key Strategies

1. Partner with other jurisdictions, other ministries, northern and Aboriginal communities, business and industry on initiatives to promote northern, regional and rural development.
2. Promote awareness of the significance of northern development to all Albertans.
3. In partnership with northern communities, business, industry, learning providers and students, support initiatives to increase northern skill levels.

Performance Measures

PERFORMANCE MEASURES AND RESULTS

Partner satisfaction with Northern Alberta Development Council's contribution in advancing northern interests

The Northern Alberta Development Council annually commissions an independent party to conduct a client and partner satisfaction survey. The results of the survey are intended to help the Council evaluate its progress in meeting its goals and to rate the satisfaction of the people who are involved in its activities. The following question in the survey was used for the performance measure:

"Overall and on a scale of 1 through 10, with 1 being very dissatisfied and 10 being very satisfied, how would you rate your satisfaction of the Northern Alberta Development Council's contribution to advancing northern interests?"

The average rating for this question was 8.2 out of 10.

Performance Measure	Previous Result (2005-06)	Previous Result (2006-07)	Result (2007-08)	Target (2007-08)
3.a Partner satisfaction with NADC's contribution in advancing northern interests.	8.2	7.7	8.2	8.0

Source: 2007-2008 Clients and Partners Survey

The NADC Bursary includes a requirement for students to enter into a reciprocal agreement to work in Northern Alberta for a period of time upon completion of their education. The NADC follows-up with each NADC Bursary recipient to confirm fulfillment of the return service obligation. The return rate of service is based on the percentage of students who have completed their studies in the three calendar years. It includes both those students who are completing their return service and those who have fulfilled their obligation. Students who do not fulfill their return service obligations are required to repay any bursaries received.

The current return service rate for the NADC Bursary is 78% which represents a decrease of 3% from last year and exceeds the business planning target of 75%.

Northern Alberta Development Council Bursary recipients' return service rate

Performance Measure	Previous Result (2005-06)	Previous Result (2006-07)	Result (2007-08)	Target (2007-08)
3.b Bursary return rate.	80%	81%	78%	75%

Source: NADC bursaries database

KEY PROJECTS AND INITIATIVES

1. PARTNERSHIPS

Inter-jurisdictional Initiatives

Alberta-Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding for Cooperation and Development

The co-chairs of the Alberta –Northwest Territories Memorandum of Understanding met in July 2007. Ongoing planning has been underway to prepare for a co-chairs meeting once post-election appointments have been confirmed by both jurisdictions.

The Northern Forum

The Northern Forum is an international consortium consisting of northern regional governments with the mandate to promote cooperation and exchange information on northern socio-economic issues and initiatives. In addition to Alberta, members include: Yukon; Nunavut; Alaska; Heilongjiang, China; Hokkaido, Japan, City of Akureyri, Iceland; Gangwon, Republic of Korea; Lapland, Finland and eight Russian regions.

The NADC continued to support the Minister's role as North American Vice-Chair of The Northern Forum. In 2007-2008 Alberta made a presentation, on the Alberta Heritage Trust Fund, to the Board of Governors Bi-Annual General meeting. Several members, particularly large oil and gas producing regions in Russia, have developed or are in the process of implementing similar plans.

Northwest Corridor Development Corporation

The NADC continued to provide technical and organizational support to the Northwest Corridor Development Corporation (NCDC). Key objectives of the NCDC and the NADC include the promotion of the transportation corridor to Prince Rupert, development of a container port at Prince Rupert and upgrading the rail line to Prince Rupert. In 2007-2008, the NADC participated in regular meetings as well as planning sessions to provide advice on direction and ensure Alberta's interests were represented.

Northern Development Ministers' Forum

The NADC acts as the secretariat for Alberta's participation in the Northern Development Ministers' Forum. Forum membership is composed of seven provinces, the three territories and the Federal Government. *The Dynamic North* was the theme for this year's annual forum, which was hosted in Ottawa by the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development, and by Federal Interlocutor for Métis and Non-Status Indians, the Honourable Chuck Strahl. Discussion on key issues impacting northern regions included climate change, moving towards more efficient regulatory regimes and a Federal update on their activities regarding Aboriginal consultation and accommodation.

Ministers asked their officials to establish two working groups. One working group focused on climate change to document and share information on strategies to mitigate and adapt to climate change as it affects northern development. A second working group developed a proposal for the future direction of the Forum, and how best to focus efforts to maximize the Forum's impact.

In other discussions, Denis Ducharme, MLA and Chair of the NADC, indicated that Federal support and help was required to address the pine beetle infestation. Presentations by two northern community youth groups—the Cross Lake Army Cadet Program, based in Cross Lake, Manitoba, and Nunavut Sivuniksavut, based in Ottawa, Ontario – highlighted efforts to ensure that northern youth are equipped to take advantage of development opportunities.

The NADC participated in developing the Knowledge North website which catalogued research sites pertaining to northern issues.

Cross Ministry Activities

The NADC participated in cross ministry activities, including Climate Change and Adaption and the Land Use Framework Symposium. NADC collaborated with Alberta Municipal Affairs & Housing and the Rural Physician Action Plan to organize a provincial workshop on physician recruitment (more details are below).

Working with Northern Organizations

The NADC provided organizational and other support to a number of groups such as the Peace Oilsands Synergy Group, the Northeast Education and Training Committee. The following provides more detailed examples of involvement in support of northern organizations.

Cold Lake Coalition for the Recruitment and Retention of Professionals

The NADC assisted the Cold Lake Coalition for the Recruitment and Retention of Professionals and area stakeholders to plan and organize a Human Resource Conference titled Unleash the Northern Potential Workforce Symposium/ Human Resource Conference for the Cold Lake region April 9-11, 2008. The NADC provided technical support and advice to conference organizers.

Branding the Peace

Branding the Peace is an Alberta - British Columbia initiative with the mandate to achieve the highest dollar for the region's agricultural commodity producers. The organization is attempting to do this through chemical analysis of Peace region commodities to be followed by national marketing of positive results. NADC has supplied organizational, intellectual and financial support to this organization to help secure a value-added agricultural sector in northern Alberta.

Northern Opportunities and Initiatives

Transportation

Stakeholders meetings with CN increased awareness of shipper and community concerns. NADC provided input to the Commuter Air Access Network of Alberta (CAANA) about best methods to leverage CAANA resources and reach the organizations' goals and objectives.

Forestry

In July 2007, the Northern Alberta Development Council organized the Grande Prairie Mountain Pine Beetle Conference to initiate discussion on the pine beetle infestation in Alberta, and its impact on communities. It provided networking opportunities and a venue to raise concerns. The conference was very well received by the 147 participants and broke a media attendance record at an NADC event.

The NADC also organized two follow-up meetings to address additional concerns from the Mountain Pine Beetle Conference. The December 18, 2007 follow-up meeting saw a \$6-million federal funding announcement for Grande Prairie by Federal MP Chris Warkentin. The NADC arranged a follow-up meeting to be held in June 2008 to provide an update of the pine beetle infestation as well as an update of government and industry forestry activities.

Deh Cho Travel Connection

The NADC acted as the Alberta lead in the Deh Cho Travel Connection, an inter-jurisdictional tourism marketing group comprised of stakeholders from the Northwest Territories, Northeastern British Columbia and Northwestern Alberta. The group promotes a scenic touring route that connects the Mackenzie, Liard and Alaska Highways in the three jurisdictions.

The route is gaining recognition as a destination evidenced by a fifteen page Deh Cho travel section in the 2008 edition of "The Milepost", a renowned travel guide published in the United

States. There has also been wide media coverage and interest in the 2008 “Diamonds in the Rough” summer contest and promotion. Twenty-five visitor centres will be participating in the 2008 promotion, and will act as stamping locations for the passports being distributed to travelers undertaking the route. These travelers have the opportunity to win the grand prize of a 1.0 carat diamond from the Northwest Territories valued at \$11,500. This contest provides regional, national and international exposure of the region.

The Boreal Bird Network

The NADC worked with its partners throughout the north to further develop the concept of the Boreal Bird Network, bringing together existing resources and partners to promote bird watching in the boreal forest region for tourism and community development. The Network has developed an inventory of bird-related resources using information provided by local birding experts and other interested parties. Travel Alberta In-Province showed interest in working with the group to promote the birding product. The Travel Alberta North Tourism Destination Region has included birding as part of marketing plans for 2008/09. Several areas are at the next stage to encourage local participation and investigate the tourism and economic development opportunities associated with birding.

River of Death and Discovery – Grande Prairie

The NADC supported the Pipestone Creek Dinosaur Bone Bed Interpretive Facility near Grande Prairie, which is implementing its marketing and fundraising plans developed in 2006/07. Some milestones for the project included:

- Hiring of a project manager
- Hiring of a Paleontological Professor with the Grande Prairie Regional College for the development and implementation of Palaeontology program at the college
- Summer Science camps developed around Palaeontology
- Advertising for a Fundraising Coordinator.

Travel Alberta North

The NADC is a voting director on the Travel Alberta North Board. This northern Tourism Destination Region (TDR) works closely with local Destination Marketing Organizations and tourism operators to entice tourists to look north as a holiday destination. As a board member, the NADC participates in board decisions about funding for tourism marketing projects implemented by northern operators and clients.

Housing

The Northern Alberta Development Council continued to monitor housing and related issues and provide information and support where needed. Planning was initiated for a series of affordable community and housing design consultations by Dr. Avi Friedman through northern Alberta for two weeks in June 2008. In addition, a research paper was undertaken on municipal practices to facilitate affordable housing. The NADC also met with the Minister responsible for housing and discussed northern housing issues and challenges

Health Care

Medical education was one of the key health care topics for the NADC this past year. A two-day Medical Student Training Symposium brought stakeholders from across the region together with Deans of various Faculties of Medicine to discuss ways in which the educational options could increase the number of physicians practicing in the region. Alongside Peace Country Health, the Grande Prairie and District Chamber of Commerce, Peace Regional Economic Development

Alliance and Grande Prairie Regional College, the NADC helped to prepare background research and to organize the event. The Symposium brought over 100 attendees together to clarify the need and make recommendations. A follow-up report summarized the key principles developed during the Symposium for expanded medical education in Alberta that would meet the needs of the region. This will form the basis for a more detailed feasibility study.

The NADC has also worked with the Rural Physician Action Plan and Alberta Municipal Affairs and Housing to organize a provincial recruitment and retention workshop which will take place in April 2008. In addition, an NADC representative provides northern input to the Alberta Rural Integrated Community Clerkship Stakeholder's Committee. This committee provides advice to Alberta's medical schools related to extended rural clerkships.

Youth Focus Groups

In the fall of 2007, the NADC hosted three youth focus groups in Grande Prairie, Lac La Biche and High Level. The intent was to gauge priority youth issues in the region through consultation with service providers and individuals dealing directly with northern youth. A key recommendation of participants was that the NADC needs to engage youth directly to determine their priority issues. Based on these focus groups, the NADC is taking steps to work with the Youth Strategies Division, Alberta Children and Youth Services (ACYS) and has been exploring options to collaborate on identifying and advancing youth priority issues in northern Alberta.

2. PROMOTE AWARENESS

Communication with the community and business leaders continues to be a key priority for the Northern Alberta Development Council. The NADC engages northerners in discussions about regional priorities, opportunities and challenges, and solicits their input to sustainable solutions.

Regional Stakeholders Forums

Regional Stakeholders Forums provide an opportunity for northern stakeholders to present issues and concerns to Council and to identify specific opportunities and/or barriers to development. The NADC holds Regional Stakeholders Forums with northern community and business leaders in conjunction with its regular Council meetings. In 2007-2008, Forums were held in Worsley, Fort McMurray and Beaverlodge. Issues included potential closure of railway to oil sands, nuclear power, required investment in highway and hospital infrastructure, George Lake Aquatic proposal, forestry, retention of doctors, education and post-secondary issues.

NADC Communiqué

The NADC produced and distributed four editions of the *NADC Communiqué*, a one-page report outlining key discussions, directions and events of the NADC following regular council meetings. The report is distributed to northern businesses, industries, municipal governments, Aboriginal organizations, and community groups, as well as government departments and all MLAs. The *NADC Communiqué* is also available on the NADC website.

Edmonton Journal Editorial Feature

The NADC initiated a special series on northern Alberta in “The Edmonton Journal” to raise public awareness of the north. The first of three special reports was published on March 26, 2008. This fourteen-page section focused on northern opportunities and challenges relative to the region’s growth pressures. Future sections are planned for June and October 2008.

Meetings with Key Northern Stakeholders

The NADC met with Northern Elected Leaders on an ongoing basis to discuss significant issues common to northern municipalities. The NADC used these meetings to present to northern leaders the work being undertaken by the Council. Additionally, these meetings allow the NADC to identify issues and opportunities faced by northern municipalities. In some cases these meetings have provided opportunities for NADC to pursue research that addresses municipal concerns and identify areas where more research or work may need to be done. NADC follow-up included a review of research on northern water resources and issues, air services, and forestry issues.

The NADC hosted its annual breakfast meeting with northern Members of the Legislative Assembly in Edmonton to share regional concerns and successes. This meeting allowed northern Ministers, MLAs and the NADC to share concerns, successes and opportunities in the region and their respective constituencies. Additionally this meeting allowed NADC to inform northern MLAs and Ministers of the work of Council and of any issues they may need to be aware of.

The NADC also hosted a meeting with southern MLAs and Ministers to communicate to them the role of NADC in northern Alberta and in particular why it is relevant to southern Albertans.

Challenge North

Planning is well underway for Challenge North 2009. Cold Lake was selected as the location of the next Challenge North Conference which will take place April 22-24, 2009 and bring together northern stakeholders to discuss key northern priorities and strategies.

Opportunity North

The Opportunity North website, CD-ROM, business cards and brochures continued to be a valuable tool for northern employers and organizations in recruitment and promotional activities. Website hits numbered 335,462 in the 2007-2008 fiscal year. In the last quarter, 62% were international hits (next year this data will be available for the full year).

NADC Website

The NADC contains information on NADC programs, specifically northern student bursary programs (see BeNorth below) and Northern *LINKS*, in addition to northern statistics, northern industry profiles, publications and news releases. Between April 1, 2007 and March 31, 2008, the NADC website received 430,325 hits.

BeNorth Branding and Website

A new brand, marketing plan and materials were developed during this year for the NADC’s bursary programs. All on-line bursary information was moved to the new www.benorth.ca website at the end of March, 2008.

3. SKILL DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVES

NADC Bursary Programs

The NADC offers bursary programs in collaboration with Alberta Advanced Education and Technology. Northern bursary programs include the NADC Bursary, Bursary Partnerships Program and NADC Bursary for Medical Students and Pharmacy Students. These programs require recipients to live and work in northern Alberta for a period of time upon completion of their studies. The NADC Bursary return service rate is discussed under Performance Measures. The Northern Student Supplement helps new post-secondary students with the cost of their studies. There is no return service requirement attached to these funds.

The Northern Health Care Practicum Funding Pilot Program is offered by the NADC with the three Northern Regional Health Authorities (RHAs) (Aspen, Northern Lights, Peace Country). This program encourages health care students to complete their practicum placements in Northern Alberta.

Results for the 2007-2008 NADC Bursary Programs are summarized below:

- The Northern Student Supplement encourages first-and second-year students from Northern Alberta to pursue a post-secondary education and reduces their level of student debt. In 2007-2008, 447 students from Northern Alberta received the Northern Student Supplement. Average funding per student was \$1,252, for a total of \$559,610.
- The NADC Bursary Program encourages students to train in occupations with shortages of northern labour. In 2007-2008, 159 Alberta students received NADC Bursaries of \$3,500. With one-time additional funds available on a basis this year, fifteen of the recipients in health care programs and with a high financial need were provided additional bursary funds.
- Through the Bursary Partnerships Program, businesses and community organizations sponsor return service bursaries with the NADC. In 2007/2008 110 bursaries were awarded through the BPP program with a total value of \$295,750.
- In 2007-2008, four students received \$5,000 Medical Bursaries. Two of these received an additional \$5,000 through a co-sponsored bursary. Two of the medical students with a high financial need were awarded an additional \$2,000.
- Seven pharmacy students received a \$3,000 Pharmacy Bursary; three of these received a matching \$3,000 from sponsors.
- In its fourth full year, the Northern Health Care Practicum Placement Pilot program provided funding support totalling \$44,760 to 46 students (an average of \$973 per student) completing a practicum placement with one of the three participating Regional Health Authorities.

Awards Booklet

An Awards, Scholarships and Bursaries booklet was produced and distributed to northern high school students, northern Alberta Service Centres and college awards offices. This booklet contains information to help those interested in pursuing a post-secondary education find the necessary funding.

Northern LINKS

Northern Links is an NADC program that increases northern students' exposure to post secondary opportunities, encourages completion of high school and transition to further education. Funding was provided to 43 northern organizations including school divisions, post-secondary institutions, Métis Settlements and First Nations.

Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse

The Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse is a joint initiative that partners with the NADC and the four Northern post-secondary institutions. The Clearinghouse provides the member institutions with labour force and economic information to help them identify new training programs, or to modify or cancel existing ones. It also serves as a potential forum for further communication and cooperation between the partner institutions. The research this year focussed on Information Technology Related Skills and Training Needs in Northern Alberta. The NADC coordinated the activities of the Northern Labour Market Information Clearinghouse.

Woodland Operations Learning Foundation (WOLF)

The foundation is comprised of industry, government, and Northern Lakes College. Alberta's forest industry struggles to compete in world markets, while maintaining high environmental standards. In order to maintain and build a competitive advantage, Alberta's forest workers must adopt productivity, environmental and information enhancing technologies. These technologies require a highly skilled and properly trained work force. WOLF provides unique training opportunities to forest workers to meet this demand for higher skill levels.

Northern Planning Circle – University Level Social Work Education

The NADC provides administrative and leadership support to the Northern Planning Circle – University Level Social Work Education. This committee provides advice to the Virtual Learning Circle social work programs offered by the University of Calgary in northern Alberta and works to ensure other social work education needs in the region can be addressed. Masters level social work education has been a particular focus this past year.

Youth Apprenticeship Program

The Youth Apprenticeship Program (YAP) is a six-year pilot project that began in the 2003-2004 school year in three communities in northern Alberta. The pilot project introduces trades and technologies to students at the Grade 7 level, providing an opportunity for them to participate in the Registered Apprenticeship Program (RAP) starting in Grade 9. The NADC financially assisted in supporting the on-going operations of the program. In 2007-2008 288 students in Grades 7 through 10 from participating schools were enrolled in the program.

The future of Northern Alberta will continue to be one of issues and opportunities. Rapid industry expansion in the past led to soaring housing costs in all northern communities, severe labour shortages and potential closures of SME due to loss of labour. The year 2008-2009 will see NADC working toward addressing challenges to economic growth, pressures on social infrastructure such as affordable housing, labour shortages and rural health shortages, and social program gaps.

Youth and the environment are seeing greater profile in the north. Working with other ministries and departments to develop programs to address issues surrounding high school drop out rates, youth entrepreneurship and environmental sustainability will be tackled in 2008–2009.

Transportation remains a vital opportunity to ensure the success and expansion of value-added processing and manufacturing in Northern Alberta as well as providing more direct connections to the Port of Prince Rupert. Access to rail containers and the ability to reach western ports in a timely manner will remain a focus for NADC. Air access to the Edmonton Municipal Airport and creating east/west linkages will also remain a priority.

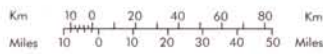
The NADC Bursary program continues to be very beneficial with an 78% success rate. NADC will continue to seek additional funds to increase bursary amounts and the number of bursaries awarded.

The Northern Links program will continue to explore new pilot projects and expand on existing ones to create more concrete measurements to show student retention and completion of high school.

Finally, the NADC will continue to partner with other governments; federal, provincial and municipal to ensure the advancement of the north.



NORTHERN ALBERTA DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL AREA



PRIMARY HIGHWAY

SECONDARY HIGHWAY

RAILWAY



Produced by Recource Data Division, Alberta Environmental Protection
 Base map provided by Spatial Data Warehouse
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