

The **Lethbridge Lodging Association** is a Destination Marketing Organization comprised of a voluntary partnership of Destination Marketing Fee (DMF) collecting accommodation businesses that attract and increase visitors to Lethbridge through the development of partnerships, events and activities that raise awareness of Lethbridge, grows hotel/motel occupancies and benefits our community. Although not all accommodation properties are part of the Lethbridge Lodging Association, members account for approximately 75% of the rooms in Lethbridge. The Lethbridge Lodging Association markets as VisitLethbridge.com and envisions that Lethbridge is the hub of tourism experiences in southern Alberta.

As of the latest labour-force data for the Lethbridge Census Metropolitan Area (CMA), the Accommodation & Food Services sector, which includes hotels, motels and restaurants, employs approximately 3,695 people. This accounts for about 5.5% of total employment in Lethbridge and region. As part of our commitment to advocate for our industry, we are asking all candidates in the 2025 municipal election to share their views on issues that are of concern to our members and their employees. Your responses will be shared with members, non-members, our employees and may be made public.

1. Lethbridge hotels currently face the highest commercial property tax rates in Alberta. What specific actions will you advocate for to address this tax burden on local hotel operators who are essential to tourism and economic development?

I will continue to support policies that ensure fiscal responsibility and work to establish and maintain a competitive tax environment across all business sectors. This ensures fairness while ensuring the City's ability to deliver services and encourage investment.

2. With hotel occupancy rates in Lethbridge hovering around 56%, do you believe the city should support or incentivize additional hotel development, or would you commit to a moratorium on new hotel incentives until occupancy rates recover?

Hotel development is a market decision. My focus is on creating the conditions for success by growing demand through initiatives including Tourism Lethbridge's sport and meeting development, airport marketing, and downtown activation. With stronger tourism demand, it should be the decision of private operators to choose whether to expand, renovate, or add new hotels if they see opportunity for investment.

Currently, the City has Development Based Incentive programs that were developed with the input of local industry, in the sectors of Agrifood and Agribusiness, Alternative and Renewable Energy, Trade and Logistics.

3. Since 2020, our members have been told by various city funded organizations that the accommodation inventory is not of an adequate caliber for tourism and event attraction.

Would you support tax relief or targeted grants for renovating or modernizing existing hotels that are already supporting the local economy and employing Lethbridge residents?

The City's role is to ensure a fair, competitive environment by maintaining fiscal responsibility, reducing barriers such as permitting or zoning delays, and supporting overall tourism demand drivers. Modernization decisions should remain in the hands of hotel operators. That being said, the City does offer the Targeted Redevelopment Incentive Program that may be of interest to some of the Lodging Association's membership.

As the owner of local businesses that were required to regularly modernize on a fixed schedule, I understand the burden that comes with this requirement; however, renovation and modernization are business decisions and best managed by private operators.

4. How do you see existing hotels fitting into Lethbridge's broader tourism, events, and economic development strategy, and how will you ensure they receive fair representation when it comes to municipal planning and budget decisions?

Tourism is a key part of my Business and Community campaign pillars. I've supported Tourism Lethbridge's initiatives in sport tourism, business event hosting, and airport marketing. Hotels are an important part of this ecosystem, and an important sector among many in the hospitality industry. My commitment is to continue supporting coordinated economic development strategies that attract visitors and investment to Lethbridge.

5. If elected, will you commit to meeting regularly with local hotel and hospitality stakeholders—like the Lethbridge Lodging Association—to ensure policies and city plans are aligned with the needs and realities of the industry?

My platform emphasizes regular engagement with local and regional business representatives, community groups, and organizations. This includes the hospitality sector. I will continue to meet with groups that are interested in meeting with me, such as the Lethbridge Lodging Association, to ensure that their perspectives, along with those of other industries, are heard in the City's economic development discussions.

The City also regularly engages groups such as the Lethbridge Lodging Association in stakeholder engagement sessions.

6. How do you plan to support and enhance the Lethbridge Airport to improve accessibility for visitors, attract new tourism, and strengthen the local hospitality and lodging industry?

I have consistently supported the airport's role in economic development and tourism marketing. Expanding air service and improving accessibility benefits all sectors, including hospitality and lodging. I will continue advocating for airport investment as part of our long-term economic growth strategy, and as a key piece of positioning Lethbridge as a hub for southern Alberta tourism and economic development initiatives.