



Monday » January  
26 » 2009

## Mayor halved travel costs in '08

**Kim Guttormson**

Calgary Herald; With files from Joel Kom, Calgary Herald

*Saturday, January 24, 2009*

Mayor Dave Bronconnier spent \$24,000 on seven trips last year, less than half the record amount he doled out on travel the year before.

And his office budget, which includes travel and salaries for Bronconnier, eight full-time and one part-time staff, came to \$1.5 million in 2008--about \$160,000 under budget.

The budget for all 14 aldermanic offices was \$ 1.7 million last year, excluding their salaries.

Bronconnier said there wasn't a concerted effort to slash the travel budget and the amount spent could increase again this year.

"Travel is part of the job," he said. "It is down this year because that's the way it worked out.

"If (travel is) essential and in the interest of the city I'll be there to represent the city's interests. It's not a case of going for the sake of going."

Bronconnier's five Canadian and two international trips in 2008, posted on the mayor's website, added up to \$24,331.99, while he cancelled three others during the year. The most expensive trip was the nearly \$11,000 spent on an economic development mission to Dubai, the United Arab Emirates, and Qatar.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart, who has proposed that city staff reduce their travel, conference and meal budgets by 20 per cent this year, said it appears Bronconnier is being "sensitive to the public sensitivity of our travel.

"I think it's the best I've seen the mayor's travel in years and years, or any mayor."

Colley-Urquhart, who spent about \$1,300 for a trip to the HMCS Calgary in Victoria last year, added that she hopes the mayor keeps his travel costs down again this year.

Scott Hennig, Alberta director of the Canadian Taxpayers Federation, was glad the mayor's travel expenses had dropped, but said there wasn't enough information to know whether even a dollar of the travel was beneficial to the city.

"\$24,000 could have been a steal; it could have been a big waste of money," he said. "We know the price. We don't know the value."

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MAYOR'S 2008 TRAVEL - \$4,338.89-- Washington, d. C., for provincial/city economic development mission (Jan. 15-18) - \$1,836.71--ottawa for Big City mayors' meeting (feb. 7-8) - \$10,963.54--dubai, united arab emirates, and Qatar for trade mission (feb. 28 -march 6) - \$1,009.11--Victoria for the departure of the HmCs Calgary (april 12-13) -

\$3,276.52--Quebec City, Big City mayors' meeting (may 28 -June 2) - \$2,130.92--  
edmonton for auma meeting and meetings with edmonton mayor and provincial  
transportation minister (oct. 2) - \$669.82--Victoria for return of HmCs Calgary (oct. 23-  
24)

--source: mayor's office

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