

2008/09
ANNUAL
REPORT



ready for change



Community
Futures 

Change is the law of life.
And those who look only to the
past or present are certain
to miss the future.

John Fitzgerald Kennedy

2008 / 2009

network impacts

	BC	AB	SK	MB	TOTAL
Community Futures Organizations	34	27	13	16	90
Loans	638	472	123	168	1,401
Value of Loans (\$M)	31	28.7	6.3	8.1	74.1
Jobs Created/Maintained	2,082	1,371	725	763	4,941
Dollars Leveraged (\$M)	39	29.2	8.5	13.2	89.9
Employees	311	151	62	85	609
Volunteers	344	286	152	246	1,028
Volunteer Hours	20,860	13,472	6,517	9,672	50,521



Change is upon us.

With western Canada facing uncertain economic times, our rural communities are dealing with greater challenges than ever. As Community Futures continues to nurture entrepreneurship and support economic diversification, it is crucial that we lead the way as a force for change. Our experience shows that times like these require new thinking combined with confident action in order to drive economic growth.

The success stories featured in this Annual Report clearly demonstrate how our clients and projects reflect the changing conditions ruling our economy. From Saskatchewan and Manitoba we hear of projects addressing the increasing need for immigrant workers. British Columbia brings us two stories about the use of technology to reach rural areas. Alberta is working hard to recruit and retain its young people in local industry. And all four provinces are focusing on the importance of diversification in creating long-term, viable rural economies.

At Community Futures, we know the value of using local knowledge and expertise to overcome global challenges. We are working hard to inspire change at a local level – one community, one business, one idea at a time.

We're leading the way.

Volunteer Representative messages

Bill Matlock

Saskatchewan

Community Futures has always been a resilient program. In bad times we are there to lend support and money to communities and companies in need. In good times, we have prepared many of our businesses for their entrepreneurial lives whether we funded them or not. We continue to be a needed support mechanism and an engine for Canada's economic action plan.

Bob Annis

Manitoba

Community Futures was born during the economic downturn of the mid-1980s as a way to use grassroots volunteer leadership to direct the economic development and sustainability of our rural, northern and remote communities. Our results during the current economic downturn have served to remind us of the value of using local knowledge to overcome global challenges. Through the dedicated work of our volunteers and staff, we've contributed to the success of numerous community economic development projects,

fostered many strategic partnerships, and helped create nearly 5,000 jobs across western Canada in the past year. My fellow volunteers and I are proud to have been part of this tremendous force for positive change in rural Canada.

Rick Joyce

British Columbia

During this challenging global and local economic climate, support to the entrepreneur towards diversification and new business promotion has never been more significant.

Small business in BC is responsible for 56% of private sector jobs, the greatest number per capita in Canada. Our 34 offices are ideally situated to respond to the unique regional needs and concerns of entrepreneurs to ensure lasting impact and growth.

The projects highlighted in this report demonstrate the important role Community Futures plays in nurturing entrepreneurial innovation, fostering regional cooperation, and ultimately building meaningful economic solutions.

Community Futures in BC has been serving small businesses for over 23 years. We are excited to continue to be a key player in stimulating small business growth.

Harry Prummel

Alberta

During the past year, Community Futures organizations in Alberta focused on supporting and developing entrepreneurial rural communities.

These activities are leading to the further diversification of rural Alberta and the development of strategic initiatives which, over the course of the next several years, will help rural communities in Alberta become strong entrepreneurial communities.

Based upon the success of past projects such as the "Road Ahead" marketing campaign, and from the desire to continue to be relevant to rural Alberta for 2009 and well beyond, we are excited about the future and look forward to assisting our rural regions and communities in being vibrant and diversified for a stronger tomorrow.

Our network



Bill Matlock



Bob Annis



Rick Joyce



Harry Prummel

Our mission

We are a proactive network that undertakes activities to lead and assist our provincial Associations to strengthen the Community Futures movement.

What we believe

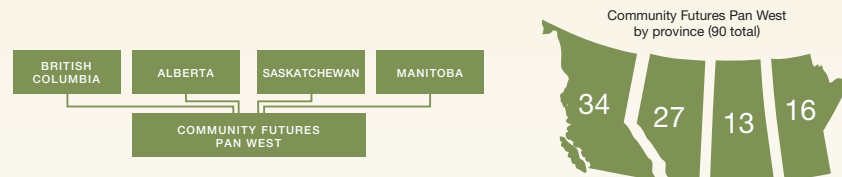
Local, community-based decision-making is the key to shaping our economic future. Diversification is crucial to the health of small communities. Every business, regardless of size or impact, deserves our support.

Passionate, engaged and dedicated volunteers are the lifeblood of our organization. The best new ideas and approaches come from sharing. The entrepreneurial spirit is alive and well in rural Canada.

What we do best

Community Futures Pan West plays a leadership role in ensuring that Community Futures across the West thrive and grow. This is what we do best:

- Represent the diverse interests of the western Community Futures organizations
- Build capacity within all Community Futures offices
- Promote Community Futures as a key community economic development player in western Canada
- Assist the western provinces' Community Futures associations to champion Community Futures' work and achievements in rural communities across the West



Network Partners

Community Futures Pan West is made up of the four western provincial associations: British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. These associations represent a total of 90 Community Futures organizations.

Saskatchewan



Business Services

Addressing immigration settlement in southeastern Saskatchewan

The Southeast Community Settlement Committee (SCSC) was initiated by Community Futures Sunrise in June, 2007 as a result of the increasing need for foreign workers to fill the labour shortage in southeast Saskatchewan. Its mission is to retain new immigrants and foster a sense of community, working with community and government partners in order to provide settlement services across the region.

The goals for the SCSC include assisting communities in the development of settlement committees and helping newcomers to settle in the region. The committee also provides information and assistance to businesses as they recruit immigrants, including referral and support services and education opportunities in order to ensure that employers are prepared for the arrival of newcomers.

Community Futures Sunrise has taken on the role of administrator for the project, performing duties such as writing and submitting grant applications which have secured almost \$100K in funds from outside sources. Community Futures Sunrise has also contributed \$13,400 in operation funds and dedicates several hours per week towards the initiative, including chairing the committee.

Community Economic Development

Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan

The goal of the Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan (LDTDAP) was to identify tourism issues and opportunities in the region, and to recommend specific strategies and actions to deal with them. The plan was completed in July, 2008 and implementation began in September, 2008.

CDTDAP's overall objectives were to improve the quality of tourism products in the region; to support business retention, expansion, and development; to recommend strategies and actions to develop the area as a competitive, investment ready, and marketable tourism destination; to recommend strategies and actions to overcome barriers to development and population growth; and to provide

a strategy for the implementation of the plan. The result is an action plan which shows how these objectives can be achieved.

Twenty-eight tourism issues were identified through committee discussions, public meetings, and consultations. Strategies reflecting that input are provided in the plan, along with recommendations and specific actions. Tourism Saskatchewan, Community Futures MidSask, Whitecap Trail Association, and Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Inc. are providing \$360,000 in financial support to manage the implementation of this plan over the next three years. The plan has been endorsed by 40 area municipalities, Whitecap Dakota First Nation, and the West Central and Southwest Saskatchewan Tourism Region Associations.



“...overall objectives were to improve the quality of tourism products in the region...”

Saskatchewan

Small Business

Creating local jobs and providing a much-needed rural service

Eric Bell looked into many business possibilities after leaving his work as a Parks Canada warden, but decided on the La Ronge ambulance service (or EMS). He spent about a year pre-planning and arranging financing before buying the business in August 1994. Although it was a risk, he also sank all of his superannuation into the purchase.

Community Futures Visions North helped with operating dollars and money to upgrade equipment. “Visions North has always stood behind me, and I think that's because the Board of Directors has a clear understanding of businesses that are important to the community,” Mr. Bell observes.

“...the Board of Directors has a clear understanding of businesses that are important to the community...”

When Mr. Bell took over La Ronge Ambulance it had five employees, including one northerner. Now, it has a staff of 23, including 15 of First Nations background. Mr. Bell has recently been recognized as a Pioneer by the Saskatchewan Ambulance Association, as well as being named in their Leadership category.

Diversification

A small-town business with a firm footing in the global market place

A local entrepreneur in Biggar, SK has taken his business to a whole new level thanks to his innovations in the field of archery – proof that rural businesses can generate world-class products and successfully compete in the global market.

Nibal and Katy Achkar started off repairing and selling archery accessories from their home before the business grew enough for them to set up a storefront in downtown Biggar. In 2002, Mr. Achkar started marketing an arrow rest that he had designed. Its components were manufactured in Saskatoon, with assembly, packaging and shipping handled in Biggar. As the years went on, Mr. Achkar added more of his designs to the market, and in 2007 he achieved one of his life's

goals when his Black Mamba bow won the title of fastest in the world. This success generated product sales throughout Europe and in South Africa.

As the company's product line expanded and sales increased, more capital was needed to purchase and stock raw inventory and acquire more equipment. Given the large amount of capital required, Community Futures Mid-Sask invited Community Futures Meridian and Region and Community Futures Northwest to participate in a joint venture to provide the necessary loan.

Thanks to its expanded manufacturing capabilities, the company has now secured a lucrative contract with Matthews Bows, the largest archery manufacturer in the USA. In 2008 the Achkars employed 5 staff, and sold in excess of 750 bows.

Awards

2008 Community Futures Volunteer Recognition Award – celebrating dedication

This year's Volunteer Recognition Award winner, Paul Trottier of Community Futures Visions North in La Ronge, has been a dedicated contributor to the rural communities of Saskatchewan for many years. He has served as a volunteer for thirteen years, including ten years as the Chair of the Visions North Board of Directors.

Under his leadership, over \$11 million in lending has created or stabilized many businesses in northern Saskatchewan. He has also sat for many years on the provincial association Board and on their Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program committee. In addition, under Mr. Trottier's stewardship, Visions North has won two Minister's Awards for developing tools to help northern and aboriginal communities.

2008 Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation – The Youth E-Biz Show

The YouthBiz E-Show was developed by Community Futures Sunrise as a regional method to promote student entrepreneurship in southeast Saskatchewan.

Following in the spirit of the very successful YouthBiz Challenge program, it is designed to ignite entrepreneurial spirit in the region's young people.

The E-Show combines the skill of business planning with high-tech web-based applications in order to showcase student efforts in a dynamic and exciting way. It makes operating a virtual tradeshow booth a fun learning experience for all participants.

Grade 6 – 12 students within Community Futures Sunrise's area are invited to compete in the E-Show. In two years of operation, 162 students from southeast Saskatchewan have registered to compete for \$4,150 in prize money, and the results have exceeded expectations. Submissions include a business plan, audio commercial, poster, business card and optional webpage and supplementary materials. In completing their submissions, the students create a virtual tradeshow booth, including an interactive booth host. All the

student booths are housed on the Community Futures Sunrise website in a virtual tradeshow hall. Visitors to the YouthBiz E-Show can navigate the tradeshow hall with their keyboards and experience all the sights and sounds of an exhibit hall.

The time and effort the young entrepreneurs invest in the E-Show is evident in the businesses created: restaurants, day spas, environmental companies, a horse stable, an interplanetary travel agency, an organic farm, wedding apparel stores and art galleries have all been featured.

Students' work is live on the YouthBiz E-Show in December each year at:
www.sunrisecommunityfutures.com/youth_biz

A list of the 2008 YouthBiz E-Show winners can also be found on the site.



Manitoba



Business Services

People helping people

Cristina Escobedo of Brandon started Yaab Recruitment in the summer of 2008. Her services include recruiting eligible immigrant and newly immigrated workers, helping immigrants with the necessary paperwork, and providing language and translation services.

The work ethic of the immigrant workforce is a strong selling point to potential employers. “People came here to get a better life. They’re ready and willing to work. They’re very eager to learn and please their employers,” says Ms. Escobedo.

Ms. Escobedo received support from Community Futures Westman in preparing her business plan. Receiving feedback from Community Futures staff that she was on the right track was a tremendous source of encouragement for her. She has also participated in a variety of business seminars and has found them to be very helpful.

Ms. Escobedo knows that when a person has a support and social network, they are more likely to stay in Brandon. She is proud to work to help people develop that sense of community in any way she can.

Community Economic Development

Childcare’s economic impact

Community Futures organizations are helping shed new light on childcare and its economic impact on a community. Lindsay Rubeniuk, of Community Futures Parkland, says five quality of life indicators consistently come up with respect to economic development: health, recreation, education, broadband and childcare.

A recent Child Care Coalition of Manitoba study stated that for every dollar spent on childcare, \$1.58 of economic activity is generated. Clearly, decision makers who are interested in economic growth should be taking childcare needs very seriously.

In May 2009, the Manitoba government announced an \$11.4 million investment to support developing new childcare sites, creating more spaces, hiring more workers, enhancing child safety and developing a curriculum framework. Community Futures North Central Development was commissioned to create a new governance model for childcare in the region. They also partnered with the Thompson Urban Aboriginal Strategy to create 50 new childcare spaces.

Concurrently, Community Futures Parkland has been holding seminars and distributing a workbook/CD called *How to Start and Run a Family-Run Childcare Business*. “We see it as a self employment opportunity, but also as essential to community growth,” says Ms. Rubeniuk. “Our approach is to work with the community one-on-one and develop tools people can use to help address the issues that we’re facing.”

Community Futures Parkland will also look at finding funding to create a multimedia campaign promoting working in the childcare industry as a positive option for high school students. The campaign would focus on de-bunking inaccurate perceptions about the childcare industry.



“The work ethic of the immigrant workforce is a strong selling point to potential employers.”

Manitoba

Small Business

On the right track

Cam Plaisier, of Lorette, MB, started Clear Rail Consulting in December 2007. His role is to provide support for rail shippers in dealing with rail service issues and ancillary charges. Because of the complexities involved in shipping by rail, there is a lot of room for error when billing. For the shippers it can be like regularly being faced with an incorrect credit card bill, and having to fight for months to get it corrected.

That's where Clear Rail Consulting goes to work. Mr. Plaisier's 15-plus years of rail experience help him to quickly spot where the errors have occurred. He decided to go out on his own because he saw a great opportunity for his business, which to date has no direct competition in North America. And, although he doesn't consider himself disabled, Mr. Plaisier has the added challenge of living with a chronic, inflammatory form of arthritis. "By around 1:00 pm I need to rest and recharge," he says, adding that employers aren't always sympathetic to such needs.

He approached Community Futures Triple R and received business counselling as well as a loan under the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program. Mr. Plaisier is grateful for the help he has received, and for the flexibility self employment provides in allowing him to adapt his schedule to meet his physical needs.

Diversification

Relationship building helps bring international company to Manitoba

When the CEO of Zeb Rice, a company based in Pakistan and Sweden, decided he wanted to establish a Canadian processing source for lentils, chickpeas and beans, he first contacted provincial authorities. They put him in touch with Community Futures Triple R, who sent out a note to surrounding communities. Jim Spencer, General Manager of the Sunbelt Development Group, responded.

"When Zeb Rice came to see us there was genuine interest, and they invited us to meet in Sweden," says Mr. Spencer. "I think that was the beginning of making the relationship work."

Through the process of bringing Zeb Rice to Manitoba, Sunbelt Development Group worked closely with the company – who chose Sunbelt Prairie Products as the name for their Manitoba plant – to establish financing in the area. "Community Futures Triple R and Community Futures Heartland were very important in helping this deal come together through their initial involvement and financial assistance," Mr. Spencer says.

Sunbelt Prairie Products is sure to have a positive economic impact on the area. Initially, 25 people will secure well-paid positions in the plant. Supplementary businesses like trucking/transport, maintenance and the construction industry will also benefit. And that's just initially: Zeb Rice is considering a second phase of expansion that would add even more value to their product.

Awards

Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation: Vision Quest Conference continues tradition of success

The organizers of the Vision Quest Conference celebrated their 13th year of delivering Canada's most successful conference on Aboriginal community economic development this past May. Vision Quest seeks to broaden awareness, build capacity and provide valuable sharing of successes and opportunities in the field of CED. It is operated by a community based organization formed through partnerships with six Community Futures organizations in Manitoba.

"Every year we say we've had our 'best year yet' but then the next year we seem to top ourselves in terms of attendance and the variety and quality of workshops. The positive feedback we receive confirms to us that Vision Quest continues to fill a very real need for Aboriginals in terms of educating and promoting the importance of community economic development," says Kim Bullard, Chair of Vision Quest and General Manager of Community Futures Dakota Ojibway.

This year's conference built on past themes of business development and community development for Aboriginal peoples, as well as youth capacity building. It also featured inspiring key note addresses from Aboriginal role models like author Calvin Darrell Helin and singer songwriter Crystal Shawanda.

The success of Vision Quest and its impacts did not escape the attention of MLA Bidhu Jha (Radisson), who commended the organizers in a speech at the Legislature.

Minister's Award for Community Futures Volunteerism: Community Futures Manitoba bids farewell to influential director

It is with much gratitude and no small measure of regret that the Board and staff of Community Futures Manitoba say goodbye to Dr. Robert Annis, who is retiring from the provincial Board of Directors. Dr. Annis has been awarded the 2008 Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Futures Volunteerism.

Dr. Annis, an internationally renowned academic leader in the field of rural economic development, had a 15-year involvement with the Community Futures program. He has been an active volunteer on the Boards of Community Futures organizations at the local, provincial, and western Canada level, serving a term as Chair of each organization. With his guidance, Community Futures organizations in western Canada have greatly increased the services provided to their communities through small business lending, business counselling, community development projects and fostering new partnerships throughout the region.

Community Futures Manitoba extends its congratulations and thanks to Dr. Annis for his long-time unwavering support of the Community Futures program, and extends best wishes as he embarks on the latest chapter of his life in British Columbia.



British Columbia



Business Services

Recognition for top loans performance

In 2008, Community Futures Okanagan-Similkameen was awarded the Community Futures British Columbia Investment Fund Award, due to its consistently high growth portfolio. The organization's portfolio exceeded expectations by over 15 percent, increasing by an impressive 66%. Community Futures Okanagan-Similkameen credits its success to the development of a number of partnership loans with individual Community Futures offices, as well as a syndication loan with eight other Community Futures offices, and two loans with Southern Interior Trust. Community Futures Okanagan-Similkameen is also an active lender with the Business Development Bank of Canada.

Video conferencing expands the reach of training and business development services in BC

Community Futures British Columbia has been successfully using video conferencing for regional meetings and province-wide board and committee meetings, to provide ongoing organizational development and coordinated efforts at increased frequency and reduced costs.

To enhance client training opportunities, Community Futures Stuart Nechako has partnered with Simon Fraser University to deliver a certificate program in Community Economic Development to northern BC. Twenty students have registered for the program, which will be delivered at six locations. Local delivery will better enable rural instructors and rural students to be part of certification that was not otherwise available in their communities.

All thirty-four Community Futures offices in BC work in partnership with Small Business BC, particularly in accessing business seminars from the Small Business BC Education Centre. Small Business BC also provides train the trainer sessions, region to region product information sessions, small business panel discussions and ongoing support. "It's a win-win situation," says Jennifer Reid, Manager of the Education Centre. "Working with Community Futures allows us to know what small businesses are out there, what their needs are, and how to support them by creating content that's relevant."

Community Economic Development

Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot plays key role in 2009 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge

From December 29, 2008 to January 4, 2009, ten international hockey teams competed in six BC communities in the 2009 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge – an event that generated both economic impact and a lasting legacy throughout central Vancouver Island and British Columbia.

Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot was involved from the beginning. In the summer of 2007, Port Alberni Multiplex Recreation Programmer Ron Paulson – who has since become a member of the Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot Board of Directors – approached Community Futures staff about an opportunity to apply for the 2009 World Under-17 Hockey Challenge, a major international hockey event. The response was overwhelmingly positive. "We thought, we have the facilities; we have the people; we will support it 100%. Let's do it!" says Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot's Dave McCormick. Many anxious months later, Hockey Canada awarded the tournament to Port Alberni and its partner communities of Cowichan Valley,



British Columbia

Nanaimo, Parksville, Comox Valley and Campbell River. For the first time the tournament was held in BC, and was a truly regional event.

Taking on a project of this magnitude required the full support of sponsors and key volunteers. Community Futures Alberni-Clayoquot dedicated two staff members to act as directors of ticket sales and sponsorship, as well as signing on to be the first Platinum Level corporate sponsor. Other corporate sponsors quickly came on board, and ticket sales were brisk.

The net result of 18 months of effort was \$2.9 million in economic impact throughout BC, as well as \$175,000 in legacy contributions to youth hockey-related programs among the six partner communities – not to mention the memories of hosting potential future NHL players from throughout Canada, USA, Russia, Finland, Germany and Slovakia.

Small Business

Vision and hard work have brought success to an ecologically friendly company in Comox, BC

Steve Roscoe and his wife Teresa were already small loan clients with Community Futures Strathcona when they approached the organization with a plan to expand their business. Mr. Roscoe produced wide plank flooring from his home workshop, and sales were doing well – so well, in fact, that he needed to move to a larger location and purchase more processing equipment.

The Roscoes' company, Woodland Flooring, operates with a unique approach, using only lumber that is harvested in a sustainable manner. This means using wind-fallen trees that have been salvaged, or sourcing wood from either private farms or Forestry Stewardship Council eco-certified forestry operations. The company also uses “beetle kill wood” (denim wood) from trees affected by mountain pine beetles. In addition, the flooring is pre-finished with a natural, plant-based oil and wax finish specially imported from Europe.

Since the Roscoes already had a loan in place and needed more capital, Community Futures Strathcona invested by way of buying preferred shares to see the company through the development phase. There was a buyback provision for the preferred shares which was exercised several years ago.

Mr. and Mrs. Roscoe are still loan clients with Community Futures Strathcona, and their company continues to grow and prosper, developing new processes and products in an eco-friendly way. The company has been featured on A Channel News, in the Vancouver Sun and in BC Business magazine. “When other banks turned us away as a high risk, Community Futures was able to see our future with us,” says Mr. Roscoe. “They provided the proper structure and financing we needed to fulfill our dreams.”

Diversification

Getting connected on North Vancouver Island

Community Futures Mount Waddington has won the 2008 Community Futures British Columbia Minister's Award and the 2008 Pan Canadian Award for the creation of a non-profit society designed to bring the Internet to remote BC communities.

Ragged Edge Community Network Society (RECN) was formed in response to the need for high-speed Internet services in remote North Vancouver Island communities. Although this service is vital for survival in the wireless world, large telecommunication organizations have little interest in providing high-speed Internet service to small communities.

In 2004, Community Futures Mount Waddington responded to a granting opportunity to provide high-speed service to five

communities on the North Island. They received funding from Western Diversification Canada, BC3 (Community Connectivity Cooperative) and Coast Sustainability Trust for last-mile infrastructure development for three communities to begin with, and have since expanded to more.

Ragged Edge Community Network was formed in 2005 as a not-for-profit society to act as an Internet Service Provider (ISP) and the operations arm of the project. RECN intends to re-invest any profits to assist with connecting other un-served communities. Community Futures acts a business incubator for the project.

As with other, larger ISPs, RECN assists homeowners by hooking up their signal to the network, has an established 24/7 help line and maintains the system so that it can give an optimal signal to each community member. RECN prides itself on excellent one-on-one service and attention to detail that keeps customers satisfied. The level of service is equivalent to

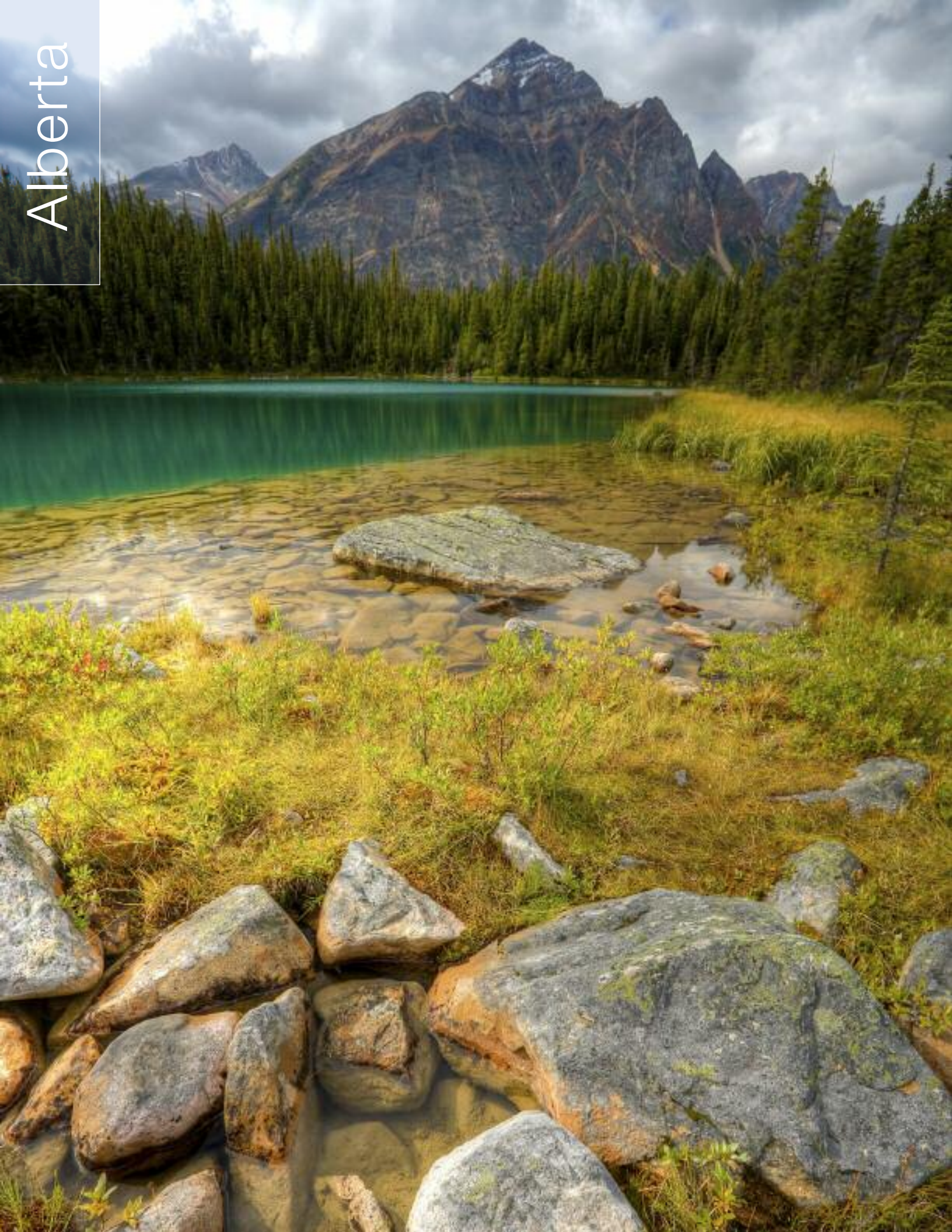
residential ADSL or cable Internet service in urban areas.

In little over three years, Ragged Edge Community Network has signed up approximately 300 subscribers (both home and business). The project recently expanded to include Telegraph Cove, a popular destination spot on the North Island. With high-speed access, remote communities on the North Island are able to maintain a modern lifestyle while continuing to enjoy the benefits of rural living. High-speed Internet has greatly enhanced the ability of North Islanders to participate in commerce, education, health care and accessible government services.



"When other banks turned us away as a high risk, Community Futures was able to see our future with us."

Alberta



Business Services

Alberta Youth Entrepreneur Camps help young people discover the fun of running a business

Community Futures Alberta offers two business planning camps for youth age 13 to 15 designed to encourage entrepreneurship and teach young people real business skills. In addition to traditional camp activities such as swimming and boating, participants learn about marketing, financial statements and writing a business plan. Teams of campers come up with actual business ideas which they plan, develop and implement during the course of the week.

The southern Alberta camp (AYEC) was started in 1997, and has evolved into a unique partnership between 13 southern Alberta Community Futures offices and 4-H Alberta. The northern Alberta camp (NAYEC) was founded in 2007, and is a partnership between the 13 Community Futures offices in northern Alberta.

In addition to regular campers, both camps have a Youth Leadership program for past participants. This gives graduates the opportunity to return in a leadership role to assist in running the business activities and act as mentors to the younger campers.

Community Economic Development

The GetREAL project in Taber raises youth awareness about the local food processing industry

The Taber region is home to a number of multi-national food processors, which are important contributors to the area's economic diversity and sustainability. Community Futures Chinook and a variety of partners developed the getREAL project in order to increase youth awareness of the variety of employment opportunities in the industry. The desired long-term outcomes are that students who stay in Taber consider employment within the food processing industry, and that students who do leave to complete post-secondary training consider returning to Taber and applying their knowledge within the food processing sector.

Career opportunities in food processing were promoted at various events throughout the project. Youth from local schools were taken on tours of the processing plants, and were able to speak with workers as well as

apprenticeship representatives. In addition, a short video, "Jack and Diane go to Taber" was produced and marketed on Facebook®, Google™ and YouTube™.

This project has built a strong relationship between food processors, school staff and Alberta Advanced Education and Technology – Apprenticeship and Industry Training. Contacts have been established with local youth, who have an increased awareness of which trades are in demand in the industry. And, the collaborative nature of this project has created a blueprint for future projects within the region.



“The desired outcome [is] that students who stay in Taber consider employment within the food processing industry...”

Alberta

Small Business

A former Self Employment client aims to become a leader in the retail alternative fuel market

Green Way Fuels is a family-owned energy company operating Alberta's first biodiesel retail station in Turner Valley. It was started by Jaimey Farnese, a Self Employment client with Community Futures Highwood; after completing classroom training and submitting her business plan, she obtained financing through a chartered bank and was ready for start-up.

The company opened its biodiesel station on December 13, 2008, and provides fuel to private individuals as well as to fleet customers. A fuel delivery service is also available. The company offers a variety of blends derived from sources such as beef tallow, oil seed and yellow grease, a waste product from restaurant fryers. The biodiesel is sourced from southern Alberta producers.

Community Futures Highwood has continued to provide ongoing business advisory services and to support Jaimey in her long-term goals -- to become a leader in the retail alternative fuels market and a respected advocate of green fuels technology.

Diversification

RDI: Rural Diversification Initiative – one more way Community Futures is supporting economic diversification

Diversification is one of the most important rural economic development strategies for the 21st century. RDI provides funds to Community Futures organizations for economic diversification projects in Alberta. Projects already approved include:

- South East Alberta Technology Strategy, which aims to increase employment, investment, management capacity and available opportunities in the technology sector in southeast Alberta
- Building Tourism Clusters in the Canadian Badlands, a partnership of 52 rural municipalities working together to make the Badlands region a highly recognizable tourism destination
- Canmore – a Community of Healthy Living and Wellbeing, a project which will shift the community of Canmore from an over-dependence on tourism to a diversified economic base with the growth of a health and wellness industry

- Development of the Alberta Energy Corridor, which aims to diversify the economy of north central Alberta by attracting and developing industries that are integral to the oil sands supply chain
- Grow North Implementation Project, which will develop an integrated ethanol plant, meat processing plant, feedlot and bio-gas plant with digestors in northwest Alberta

"Diversification is one of the most important rural economic development strategies for the 21st century."

Award Winners

Gold Minister's Award 2008 – Leadership West Yellowhead

Six neighbouring municipalities in the West Yellowhead area have joined forces to create Leadership West Yellowhead, a community leadership training program that works with emerging, potential and experienced leaders to develop and enhance their skills.

The program has four components: Learning Days and Retreats, which provide a total of 10 days of training; Community Action Projects, completed in teams for area non-profit organizations; a Mentor Program, in which each participant is paired with a mentor; and an Alumni Program, which keeps graduates connected.

The graduating class of 2008 consisted of 12 emerging leaders. It is expected that the program will expand to 18 participants in 2009.

Silver Minister's Award 2008 – Computer Gaming, Community Futures Grande Prairie

The goal of this project was to build the computer game industry in the Grande Prairie region, thereby diversifying the regional economy and providing youth with viable and interesting jobs. Since Grande Prairie is already home to a successful computer gaming company, it makes sense to build on this and expand the industry. The project was supported by local and provincial governments, the regional college and private industry.

Project activities included building community awareness, creating an industry flowchart and regional database of computer game industry occupations, creating customized materials for the Community Futures self employment program, and developing a discussion board. Thanks to the project's impact, Grande Prairie Community College is planning to offer a Computer Gaming program that integrates computer science and fine arts.

Bronze Minister's Award 2008 – CED Coaching Guide, Community Futures Chinook

This project was conceived as a tool to assist Community Economic Development (CED) practitioners in dealing with the communities that they serve after it was found that, while there are resources available to assist communities in CED, the long-term follow-up and coaching components that are critical to successful implementation of a CED plan were either non-existent or quite costly. The project was a partnership of Community Futures Chinook, Entre-Corp and Lethbridge, and 2 Regional Economic Development Authorities, SouthGrow Regional Initiative and Palliser Economic Partnership.

After the Coaching Guide was developed and beta-tested in southern Alberta, it was offered to Community Futures organizations across the province. In fact, it was found to be so useful that it was adapted into two modules for the Pan West Staff Development Program: *Know and Grow your Coaching Style*, and *Working with Community Groups*.



Board and Staff Development

Board Development

The Community Futures Board Development program is an initiative of the Community Futures Pan West Network, which is made up of the four western associations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Under the direction of professional facilitators, Community Futures Board members and Managers can now access a modular series of eleven informative sessions, packed with useful information, tools and tips every Community Futures Board member and Manager should use. Board members and Managers will learn about:

- Community Futures services, programs and alliances
- Board member roles, leadership, teamwork, and accountability
- The importance of strategic planning and visioning
- Useful development strategy, recruitment, orientation and evaluation
- Financial management and the legal framework of Community Futures organizations

Across western Canada and Ontario:

(From April 2008 to March 2009)

- 29 CFBD training sessions took place
- 338 participants with 95 CFs participating
- Average of 3 CFs per session

and...

75 Certificates were given out, including:

- 69 Certificates of Merit
- 4 Certificates of Accomplishment
- 2 Graduate Certificates

Staff Development

The Community Futures Pan West Staff Development program was designed to facilitate the attainment of the standards of competency required by the staff and managers of all Community Futures organizations across the West. By encouraging individuals to gain new skills and build upon the knowledge and expertise they use in their work, the program ensures that Community Futures has the tools to live up to its promise of excellence. We would like to congratulate the staff members who have achieved Basic Certification for 2008-2009:

Basic Certification 2008-2009

Jennifer Brooks – CED Coordinator – Community Futures Wild Rose
Jodie Eckert – CED Coordinator – Community Futures Centre West
Marty Eisner – Business Analyst – Community Futures 16/37
Susan Green – Business Analyst – Community Futures Boundary
Leah Holler – CED Coordinator – Community Futures Grande Prairie & Region
Tammy Hudyma – General Manager – Community Futures East Interlake
Clark Knight – Business Analyst – Community Futures East Central Alberta
Anna Lactin – Administration Coordinator – Community Futures Boundary
Anne MacGillivray – Business Analyst – Community Futures Central Island
Jason Paterson – Business Analyst – Community Futures Grande Prairie and Region
Jenny Petersen – CED Coordinator – Community Futures Winnipeg River
Janis Sall – CED Coordinator – Community Futures Central Island
Janis Sall – Business Analyst – Community Futures Central Island
June Stewart – Business Analyst – Community Futures Shuswap
Lee Anne Veres – Business Analyst – Community Futures Central Island
Michelle Wazny – Business Analyst – Community Futures Winnipeg River
Jennifer Wetmore – CED Coordinator – Community Futures Boundary

Growing communities one idea a time.



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