

Working together for the future of rural communities

2009 / 2010 ANNUAL REPORT





NETWORK IMPACT STATISTICS

2009 / 2010

	MB	SK	AB	BC	TOTAL
Community Futures Organizations	16	13	27	34	90
Loans	171	181	594	649	1,595
Value of Loans (\$M)	8.7	5.8	31.7	33.1	79.3
Jobs Created/Maintained	678	479.5	2,042.5	2,502.5	5,702.5
Dollars Leveraged (\$M)	9.5	8.0	31.1	37.8	86.4
Employees	78.5	62	145	305	590.5
Volunteers	210	155	289	342	996
Volunteer Hours	8,905	7,936	13,493	25,046	55,380

Building a Strong Rural Economy

In 1986, the Community Futures program was designed to provide labour market adjustment support in rural communities and regions hard hit through transitions occurring in rural economies. These transitions included the closure of Canadian Forces Bases, high unemployment, youth out-migration, and high interest rates for small businesses. Historically, Community Futures organizations worked to develop and implement locally-driven community economic development (CED) strategies. Their tools included CED planning and strategic CED projects, as well as loans for small businesses and advisory and training services.

We still use these tools 25 years later, but our approach has evolved. We are more and more focused on important wealth-generating sectors in rural economies and on entrepreneurs interested in growing, exporting, and being innovative and productive. These are the businesses that can transform rural communities – and we are a big part of it.

This kind of approach lines up with priorities identified in 2009's *Advantage Canada: Building a Strong Economy for Canadians*. In western Canada, the priorities are seen as follows:

- Enhance business productivity and competitiveness
- Improve small businesses' access to information, training, business advisory services and capital
- Increase the participation of western small business in export markets
- Increase investment and branding
- Improve trade corridors between the United States, Asia-Pacific and western Canada
- Support the development of networks, clusters, and alliances to share knowledge, new ideas and technologies.

Community Futures organizations agree that these priorities make sense in the rural West. We see the need to provide:

- Services that contribute to business productivity and competitiveness
- Increased access to business information, capacity building (training), business advisory services and capital
- Support to develop industry clusters, networks, and alliances to expand and diversify rural economies

Community Futures organizations believe that growth, enhanced productivity, competitiveness and economic diversification will happen through building entrepreneurial communities, working with businesses that want to grow, and developing successful clusters and business networks. Our priorities match the federal government priorities because they just make sense for the rural West.

Volunteer Representative Messages



Dave Kendall
Manitoba

The recent economic downturn has created many challenges to the health of our local rural economies. Fortunately, the Community Futures program was designed to address challenges like these. The efforts of our organizations across western Canada have helped our communities to weather the economic storm and emerge better positioned to participate in the new global economy. Our 90 organizations have led collaborative economic development projects and provided business counselling and financing assistance that helped create over 5,700 jobs in our communities. My fellow volunteers and I are proud to have helped our communities remain strong and vibrant by utilizing local solutions to combat global economic challenges.



Rick Joyce
British Columbia

Change has been a key word in economic development circles recently. But change can't just be a reaction to the economic climate of today if our goal is to build the economy of tomorrow. The change we need is found in how we respond to the fresh ideas of today's entrepreneurs. It means understanding that it is those most able to adapt who will succeed. Adapting new ways to meet today's challenges is one of Community Futures' greatest strengths. We show it in our capacity to see opportunities and truly connect with the communities throughout the province. We know the people and the place behind the idea, and we know their potential.



Harry Prummel
Alberta

Community Futures offices in Alberta faced some significant challenges this year. Rising operating costs, the shaky global economy and continued high expectations meant that staff and volunteers had to work harder than ever to meet their goals. This hard work has paid off with significantly improved loans delivery and a dramatic increase in the delivery of core advisory services. Our offices are learning to increasingly focus their work in areas that will maximize impacts for our rural communities and key stakeholders. Change is constant, and is rarely easy: our provincial organization is committed to providing the leadership and support required by Community Futures organizations in their role as agents of change.



Bill Matlock
Saskatchewan

While globally this has been a year of change, things have remained relatively stable in Saskatchewan. The staff and volunteers of Community Futures have kept the economic development conversation strong, helping to maintain the edge that will keep our rural communities competitive in the global market. Thanks to our prosperity, people are returning home to Saskatchewan, bringing diverse talents with them; Community Futures is helping to prepare communities to integrate these new workers into rural areas. Making sure that the entrepreneurial spirit remains alive and well in Saskatchewan, fostering these values in the younger generation, and keeping young people here, is a role that Community Futures is committed to succeed at.

Our Network

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.

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

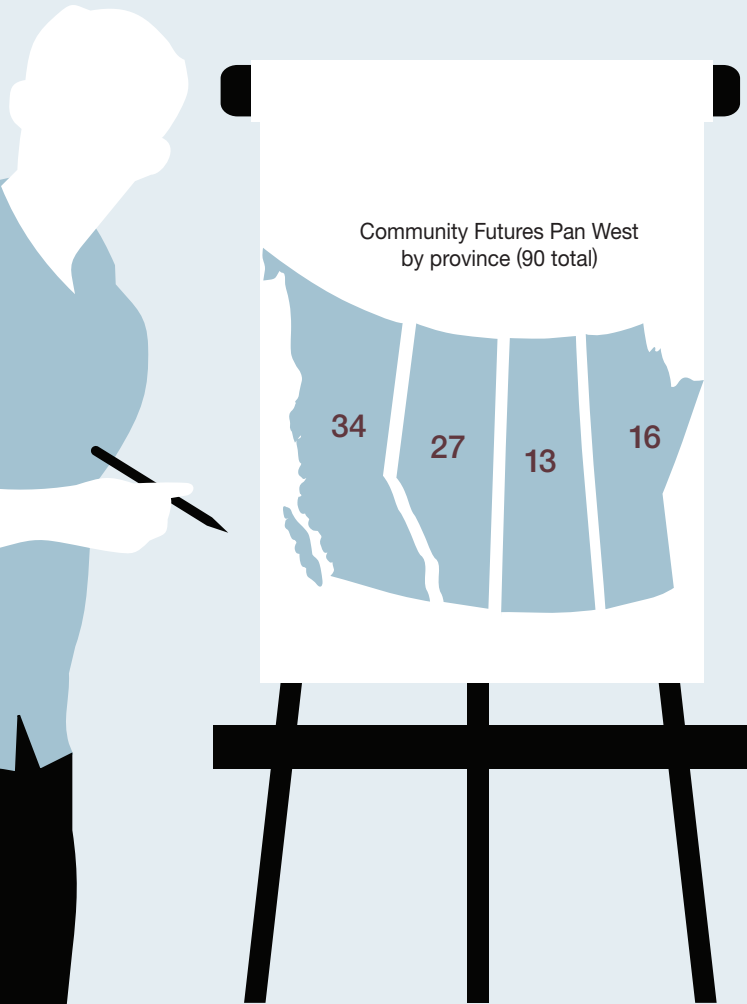
Community Futures Pan West plays a leadership role in ensuring that Community Futures across the West thrive and grow. This is what we do best:

- 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.





manitoba

BUSINESS SUCCESS

Cole Wire Products and National Pet Cages

Two years ago, Gerald Barkman found what he was looking for: a small business that could be moved to Altona, Manitoba, and which would allow him to work with metal yet use his brain and creativity. Community Futures Triple R was integral to helping Gerald get started; along with being a part of his financing package, they have provided ongoing advice. “They keep their fingers in here enough so I’m confident in moving forward,” says Gerald, owner of Cole Wire Products and National Pet Cages.

Gerald, a self-proclaimed dog lover, is especially proud that his company (www.nationalpetcages.com) provides pet cages to people throughout North America and is the supplier for retail giant Costco. “Not bad for a little guy,” he chuckles. The company currently has two full-time and three part-time staff to help meet existing orders and manage expectations while Gerald sources new markets – he is in ongoing discussions with major companies about opportunities to work together. While growth is exciting, it needs to happen at a manageable pace.

Balancing receivables and orders to ensure a consistent cash flow while growing can be challenging. Gerald takes things one step at a time and relies on advisors to ensure he is going in the right direction. Receiving support from Community Futures was most welcome. “They’re committed to growing the community and eager to attract small business,” he says.

Days are often long and six-day work weeks are common. To aspiring entrepreneurs, Gerald says: “A farmer will harvest when the grain is dry enough to harvest, not look at the clock and say, ‘that’s my eight hours’. Lay the groundwork and make sure you have advisors that coach you well.”



Gerald Barkman of National Pet Cages

Creeway Aviation

Sweeny Enterprises Inc., operating as Creeway Aviation, is a privately owned corporation with sole ownership held by Timothy Sweeny, a member of the Cross Lake Band. The corporation, currently starting its third year of operations, is 100% aboriginal-owned and operated.

Creeway Aviation first opened its doors in February 2007 to offer aircraft maintenance and hangar space rentals. In April, 2009,

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the company purchased a Piper Navajo aircraft and expanded its services to include aircraft charters, serving northern Manitoba from its main base in Thompson. The expansion of Creeway Aviation was supported by Community Futures North Central Development, Aboriginal Business Canada and First Peoples Economic Growth Fund.

Owner/operator Timothy Sweeny has over 15 years experience in the aviation industry, and is a licensed commercial airline pilot with multi-engine and IFR ratings as well as being a licensed aircraft maintenance engineer. In forming Creeway, Timothy saw an opportunity to take his education and workplace skills and use them to create an exciting business opportunity that brings together the challenging worlds of aircraft maintenance and aircraft charters to serve the residents of northern Manitoba.

Timothy believes it is important to give back to the community and the people Creeway Aviation serves. The company currently employs four staff, and Timothy is planning several initiatives aimed at providing an opportunity for aboriginal youth to train and gain employment in the aviation industry. One of these programs is a 4-year Aircraft Maintenance Engineer program that allows students to work 10 months of the year while attending school for 9 weeks. Another program involves partnering with surrounding communities to sponsor several students pursuing careers as pilots. By giving local youth the opportunity for on-the-job experience and the necessary flight hours required to complete their licensing, Creeway Aviation will also have a pool of “home grown” pilots with which to staff its aircraft.



Timothy Sweeny of Creeway Aviation

Award Winners:

Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Futures Volunteerism

Rodney Burns has dedicated almost half of his life to public service through municipal politics, serving on the council of the Regional Municipality of MacDonald for 22 years, the past 14 years as Reeve.

Rodney has had extensive involvement with a broad range of local boards and committees. But he has also looked beyond municipal lines and become a leader in regional organizations. He has been a Board member with Community Futures Triple R corporation since 1994 and served as the organization's Chairperson for six years. During his term as Chairperson, Rodney also served on the Board of Community Futures Manitoba. He then took his regional commitment even further as a Board member for Pembina Valley Development Corporation.

Rodney and his wife Donna have three children and three grandchildren, with one more soon to arrive. They operate a “Century Farm” in the Starbuck area and have won many horticultural awards for their farm site. They also have experience

as entrepreneurs, having owned a fertilizer company, a garage and a restaurant – hands-on experience that has contributed to Rodney's expertise as a member of the Business Investment Review Committee. Family, community, and the enrichment of Manitoba are Rodney's commitments, and he continually fulfils these every day.



Award winner Rodney Burns

Minister's Award for Excellence in Community Futures Innovation

In 2008, Community Futures East Interlake and Community Futures West Interlake partnered with the Interlake Development Corporation – the provincial agency responsible for development in the Interlake – to create the Interlake Community Development Project Support Initiative (ICDPSI), a fund that would support economic development projects in the region.

Priority is given to initiatives which create permanent capital development or foster economic development, and which will have a permanent impact on the community. The ICDPSI fundamentally supports

projects that will create employment, indirect employment spin-offs, or directly lead to the attraction of new permanent residents by making communities more attractive to them.

Though the funding provided by ICDPSI may seem modest (the program will contribute a maximum of \$10,000 or 50% of total project costs) its impact is already significant. In its pilot year the ICDPSI provided support totalling \$80,000 to nine projects within the region. This funding leveraged an impressive \$4,220,740 in community contributions.

Some examples of supported projects are:

- Warren Business Park Development – engineering, survey and design
- St. Laurent CDC Community Vision Process – assistance to hire community input facilitator
- Arborg Aquatic Centre – design of community recreational facility
- Inwood Development Association Inc. – assistance for the development of short-term rental suites within an existing property
- Fisher River Radio Station Project – non-profit community radio station



The Interlake Community Development Project Support Initiative team

british columbia



BUSINESS SUCCESS

Innovation: RFind

Sharon Barnes, CEO of RFind Systems, Inc. has developed a great elevator pitch. She begins by setting the stage: “It’s likely we have all spent time and energy looking for a certain thing, knowing it’s ‘out there’ but just not able to lay hands on it. Now imagine the frustration – and time and money lost – of not knowing where a product you just sold is located in a warehouse of hundreds of thousands of items.”

For years the technology has existed for manufacturers to use GPS and a wireless LAN as a solution to this problem – but the cost and limitations of such large scale systems often outweighed the advantages of no longer having to play hide and seek with assets. RFind offers a unique solution to these real-world logistics challenges. The company has a patent pending (in the US, Europe, Japan and Canada) on technology that uses a small, palm-sized disk that can be placed directly on stored items. The disks then “talk” to each other to communicate the data required for locating specific pieces. With RFind there is no need for the enormous capital infrastructure investment or bulky and expensive Wi-Fi access points, cabling, and multiple readers or repeaters that other systems require.

“Community Futures provided us with an operating loan that we used to fund day-to-day operations,” says Sharon. “But the value of Community Futures to us is much larger than that. Not only do they have a lot of support services that we can draw on, but the loan provided a ‘confidence’ foundation that successfully leveraged private investment.”

RFind has won awards for both Innovation and Community Involvement. It has also taken on a role in the DASH 7 Alliance, an international non-profit industry consortium founded to promote interoperability among RFID devices and system standardization.



Sharon Barnes of RFind

Adaptability and Export

The current mountain pine beetle epidemic has peaked in most areas of the BC interior, but not before it led to a huge loss of both direct and indirect forestry jobs. This, plus the economic downturn, meant that Rob and Jenny McDonald were running out of wood waste for their small business. They had a block and sort facility, using the waste wood from local mills to create two by fours, which relied heavily on large loans from Community Futures Nicola Valley. They knew they had to get solid information and be skilfully creative if they were going to adapt to the times.

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They turned to Community Futures for guidance. The first step was to commission a report on the fibre content in the pine-killed wood. Armed with that information, they looked for opportunities to use what they could. The answer was a new venture, Highland Pellet Manufacturing. The company will create pellets from forest waste, including mountain pine beetle-killed timber. These pellets can be used as an alternative form of energy to heat homes and businesses, as well as to generate electricity.

The export potential is huge – as is the investment and workload. “We had to reinvent ourselves,” says Jenny McDonald, “with a lot of help from Community Futures Nicola Valley. With their counsel, support and hard work leading us through the Community Adjustment Fund process, we got \$2.4 million in a stimulus repayable loan and we are starting up a co-generation plant combined with a pellet plant.” They initially will be creating 25 – 30 well-paid on-site jobs, with great potential for more work from material and delivery services.



Williams Lake, BC

Award Winners:

Investment Fund Portfolio Award

Follow-through and a consistent marketing plan were the secret to Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin’s success in 2009, which showed an impressive 503% growth in loans disbursed over the previous year. The office was awarded the 2009 Investment Portfolio Award for their efforts.

Using targeted radio and newspaper ads, rack cards, direct mail and “green friendly” bags, Community Future Cariboo Chilcotin fostered relationships with existing and past clients while actively seeking opportunities to mentor youth and First Nations. The mix worked exceptionally well. It led them to build new links to the community and exceed their own expectations: while they had set out an operational loans target of \$650,000, the actual dollar value of the loans made was \$2,580,233. And this was accomplished with a 1% bad debt expense.

Engaging strongly with youth and the aboriginal sector bolstered their own goals while positively impacting local growth and future entrepreneurship. Community Futures staff looked for opportunities in agriculture and found much of their success lay in start-up opportunities. They also held true to their roots by continuing to celebrate and showcase the work of local loan and self-employment clients with an annual Business Awards dinner. They chose to honour ten of these individuals in categories such as “Best New Business,” “Best Manufacturing Business” and “Environmental Excellence.” The evening was a great success, with the local press and representatives from municipal, provincial and federal government on hand to lend



Chilcotin Region, BC

support and create awareness of the success of these emerging business leaders.

Community Futures Cariboo Chilcotin will continue building on its success by participating in local events and networking with the Williams Lake Chamber of Commerce and other associations. With this commitment to outreach and awareness-raising, they will no doubt once again exceed their own expectations – and are truly leading positive change in their region.

Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation

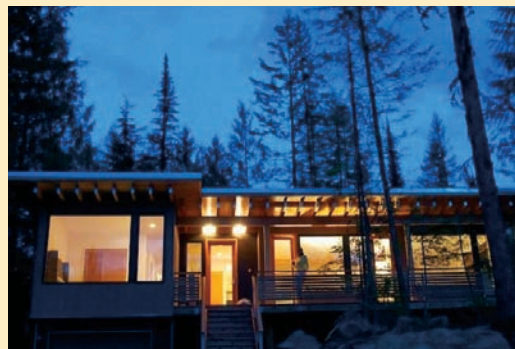
This award recognizes outstanding achievement in creating an innovative local solution to a local challenge. This year, Community Futures Greater Trail showcases a truly British Columbian solution with its involvement in development at the Red Mountain Ski Resort.

In 2009, Community Futures of Greater Trail successfully initiated a \$2.785 million syndication for resort development properties in the City of Rossland. This syndication was part of a \$6 million development, and initially consisted of 10 sister Community Futures Offices across BC investing \$150K each, a private lender

investing \$1 million, and the Community Futures of Greater Trail putting in \$280,500. Thanks to this commitment, 14 of 18 single family lots were developed at the base of Red Resort. All 14 of the lots were pre-sold and closed in the late spring of 2009.

The syndication took several months to put together and was a truly new approach to financing, being the largest single syndication deal ever initiated by a Community Futures office in the BC network. Community Futures Greater Trail created an open and transparent process that was bolstered by a secondary review of due diligence by Community Futures British Columbia, third party accounting and a comprehensive syndication agreement. This agreement has now formed a template which has been distributed to all syndicate partners for future use in the Community Futures network.

Community Futures of Greater Trail took the leadership not only in pooling network resources but also in working with other lenders to see large scale community economic development initiatives come to fruition in the region. It has also opened the doors to future deals amongst those Community Futures offices that participated and made way for Community Futures British Columbia to create lending partnerships with a strong private partner.



Red Mountain Ski Resort, Trail, BC

alberta



BUSINESS SUCCESS

Thematic focus

Over the past year, Community Futures Alberta has concentrated its work around two primary themes: “Building Entrepreneurial Communities” and “Rural Diversification.” These themes have provided the focus for everything from new marketing initiatives to staff and volunteer training.

The theme of building entrepreneurial communities is encompassed by Community Futures Alberta’s “e-Power” marketing campaign. It focuses on the power of entrepreneurship to fuel economic growth and diversity, and was designed so that individual offices could tailor it to their specific goals and objectives. Deb Markley and Karen Dabson, of the Center for Rural Entrepreneurship, were invited to give a workshop on Energizing Entrepreneurs: Charting a Course for Rural Communities Staff during spring training, and introduced participants to a variety of tools and resources to use in pursuing rural entrepreneurship. And to assist individual offices in creating strategic plans focusing on creating entrepreneurial communities, Community Futures Alberta created a 2010 Strategic Planning package which included planning facilitation by CFA-certified facilitators. Seven offices used this package to create new and dynamic strategic plans.

The focus on rural diversification was sparked by the Rural Diversification Initiative (RDI), which funds projects that provide measurable economic benefits to rural communities and/or industries. A new website, www.ruraldiversification.com, was created to provide a wide range of information on the topic. In addition, a

15-week interactive online course for rural development practitioners was launched in January, 2010. In 2009–2010, twenty people participated in the course, which teaches strategies to build on community advantages and define diversification opportunities.

Perhaps most excitingly, Community Futures Alberta was able to obtain funding to hire five recent graduates to work as interns on the rural development portfolio within individual Community Futures offices. These highly talented individuals possess Bachelor’s and Master’s degrees in diverse fields – communications, business, economics, and sociology – and come to us from across the country.



Energizing Entrepreneurs workshop

Setting and surpassing goals

In January 2008, Community Futures organizations in Alberta set some very clear strategic directions to improve performance. The numbers from the previous year were dismal – Community Futures in Alberta were doing an average of 13.7 loans per year. A goal of an average of 21 loans per year by March 2010 was set.

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Community Futures offices were very strategic about how they went about improving their performance. The first step was to ensure that all staff were fully and adequately trained, mainly through the Commercial Lending course offered by Community Futures Pan West. Then, it was important ensure that all the individual offices had loan policies and procedures well in place. Community Futures Alberta led a best practices study to facilitate this process.

Once the offices were ready, a new and dynamic marketing campaign took the process to the next level. The “Road Ahead” campaign featured Codie Prevost, an up-and-coming country singer who had received assistance from Community Futures. This campaign was even more successful than anticipated, with several offices stating that they had never been so busy with inquiries. The following year’s “ePower” campaign continued to build Community Futures’ visibility in the province’s rural communities.

Since the accurate tracking of results was essential, Community Futures Alberta worked with the individual offices to ensure they fully understood the reporting process. Quarterly performance results were published in order to create some friendly rivalry among the offices and keep everyone abreast of progress.

At the end of the three-year period, results are impressive. Fourth quarter results for 2009/2010 show an average of 22 loans per office – an increase of 65%. Not only that, but the value of the loans made has increased by 85%. The number of services

provided and number of clients served have also increased dramatically – proving that a strategic, consistent and dynamic approach can yield exceptional results.



Road Ahead campaign

Award Winners:

On Target Award

The 2009 On Target award was presented to Community Futures Highwood for its overall performance and for the innovative initiatives designed and implemented by its staff members. The On Target award is intended to recognize a Community Futures organization in Alberta whose loan portfolio has resulted in enhanced economic diversification in the region.

In 2008/2009 the Highwood Community Futures Board of Directors set the growth and diversification of its investment fund services as one of its business development priorities. In order to diversify



RISE municipal partners with the On Target Award

its loan portfolio, Community Futures Highwood has to try to move away from the region's main economic movers – agriculture, and oil and gas. The office undertook research through the RISE project, a business development initiative of the Alberta Foothills Region, and identified six key industry sectors which align with WED Rural Diversification Strategies. These sectors provide the foundation on which to build a strategy to incrementally expand and diversify the loan portfolio.

Two loans exceeding \$150,000 were approved and disbursed in 2008 by Community Futures Highwood to companies displaying outstanding potential to develop and supply innovative products, create sustainable employment in a depressed market and subsequently provide diversification options to local economies heavily dependent on few industries, primarily agriculture. In addition, the resulting technology had the potential for exporting and clearly demonstrated an opportunity for significant growth in emerging sectors.

In addition, at least 24 full-time jobs and two part-time jobs were created or maintained as a result of Community

Futures Highwood diversification loans. The relocation of two businesses to the region has created specialized jobs and labour force attraction, and as a result of Community Futures Highwood diversification loans, innovative products and services have been introduced into the marketplace.



Spark Award

Spark is a new award presented quarterly by Community Futures Alberta to celebrate Community Futures successes that help diversify rural Alberta. This award is not for huge projects; it is to celebrate attainable goals and useful activities like holding a successful strategic planning session with a Board of Directors, conducting some insightful research, making an innovative loan, doing a presentation, or getting to know an innovative company.

The Spark award is a fun way to let Community Futures offices know that their efforts are appreciated and valued. Offices are encouraged to apply often, as the award will be presented every three months, and more than one office can win. The prize package includes a certificate signed by Community Futures Alberta Chair Harry Prummel, a press release the winning office can use if it wishes, Spark temporary tattoos for Board and staff members and sparklers and blowouts to use in celebrating!



saskatchewan

BUSINESS SUCCESS

The Rouse family of companies

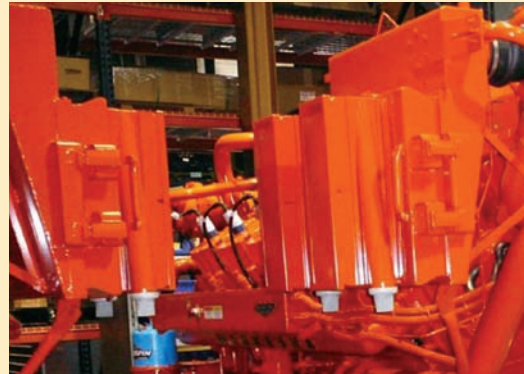
Rouse Industries, an industrial transmission and clutch manufacturer, was founded by Dustin Rouse in 2008. It is an off-shoot of Southern Industrial & Truck Ltd., a truck and trailer service shop in Weyburn, SK founded in 1989 by Dustin's father John. The pair also runs J.R. Wellsite Power, a power genset rental company geared towards the petroleum industry. Since its inception in 2008, Rouse Industries has found new applications for existing products, developed several new product lines and improved designs. With a customer base stretching across North and South America, the company is an emerging player in the high horsepower transmission industry.

With success has come the need for more space. In January, 2010 all three companies moved their operations into a spectacular 36,000 ft² custom-built facility. The building features a truck shop with 10 bays, each with an individual crane, and a parts department three times larger than before. The company expects to double its technical staff, and to substantially grow its engineering, sales and administration departments in order to keep up with customer demand.

Strategic planning has played a significant role in the success of this group of companies – the recent expansion was achieved through disciplined financial goal setting and detailed market analysis. Dustin Rouse, the president of Rouse Industries, is a firm believer in life-long learning and in continually improving management techniques. As part of this process he has accessed business learning sessions and

pathfinding services from Community Futures Sunrise, always with the goal of furthering his personal growth and success, as well as that of the companies he leads.

For far-sighted entrepreneurs, the opportunities available to Saskatchewan companies are almost limitless. Rouse Industries has strategically positioned itself in order to allow for several different expansion scenarios, and continues to move toward growing areas of strength.



Industrial transmission from Rouse Industries

Investing in the basics

Community Futures Ventures is investing in the most basic of entrepreneurial needs: literacy. Without a basic level of literacy to build on, entrepreneurship is virtually impossible – so an investment in growing the skill level of the local population is truly an investment in the future of the community.

Funding received through the SaskSmart Innovation Fund, and the dedication of local literacy partners including Community Futures Ventures, Parkland College, Parkland Regional Library and Good Spirit School Division, has enabled the Integrated Literacy Services Initiative to create

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childhood, parent and adult education programs. These enable children and parents to spend time together in literacy activities, and enhance literacy and other essential skills for adults to use in life and workplace opportunities. Community Futures Ventures has taken the lead on this project, and is pleased to have made an impact in this community through its partnerships.

Taking the investment in literacy a step further, in July, 2009 Community Futures Ventures, with assistance from Circle Project in Regina, developed and organized a two-week summer literacy camp for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth. Funding for the camp, which was developed as a pilot project, was provided by SaskSmart Literacy. Half the participants' time was devoted to literacy and the other half to recreation, and in all 43 young people took part. Community Futures Ventures Staff delivered a "fishing hole" marketing game on entrepreneurship to the younger camp participants.

Community Futures Ventures' commitment to youth is well-established: since 2003 it has organized eight Youth Entrepreneurship Conferences, with over 750 students taking part. This full-day conference is a way to plant the seed of entrepreneurship in the students' minds, and show them that they can be successful business owners even in rural Saskatchewan. It also helps community leaders, school trustees and the public at large to recognize the need to foster the entrepreneurial spirit within rural town halls, schools and society.



Happy campers at Literacy Camp

Award Winners

Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation

The 2009 Minister's Award for Excellence and Innovation was awarded to two organizations – Community Futures South Central and Community Futures Southwest – for their innovative financing of Saskatchewan's newest dry mustard milling operation. Mustard Capital Inc. (MCI) is located in Gravelbourg, SK, and has received financing from the Community Futures Program on two separate occasions. The first loan helped to support the launch of the company, and the second loan assisted in the purchase of additional equipment. This joint financial package is a great example of local economic development agencies being able to find opportunities for diversification and value-added processing through strong partnerships.

MCI opened in the fall of 2007, and was given the Saskatchewan Economic Development Association's Outstanding Economic Development Initiative award in 2008. The company is kosher verified, and is already shipping three different mustard products around the world. It is also currently pursuing organic certification – as well as seeking out new markets with the support of industry partners such as AgWest Bio. MCI has now proceeded on to phase three expansion, including a \$2.5 million project in the neighboring town of Vanguard, in the Community Futures Southwest region.

Tom Halpenny, CEO of MCI, has this to say about Community Futures participation in the company's financing: "There has been a good working relationship with the advisory staff supporting the Community Futures program. Also, the cooperation of two regions, Community Futures South Central and Community Futures Southwest, helped to deliver the level of funding required to assist our project. The terms have been competitive, and the process of approval reasonably simple and straightforward. MCI would recommend the Community Futures program to other new ventures as a viable alternative to assist new and growing businesses in the region."



Les Mielke, Manager, Community Futures South Central, Martin Chilico, Western Diversification, John Parker, Manager, Community Futures Southwest

Pan West Community Futures Volunteer of the Year Award

Two exceptional volunteers shared the 2009 Volunteer of the Year Award: Terri Brischuk, of Community Futures Ventures, and Frank Simonot of Community Futures Northwest.

Terri Brischuk first joined the Ventures Board of Directors in 1998, when she took on the position of Secretary/Treasurer. As the owner of a craft business in Kamsack, SK, Terri brought direct business experience and insight into the challenges of entrepreneurship in rural Saskatchewan. In 2000 Terri became Board Vice-Chair, and was then elected Chair in 2001. She remains Chair to this day.



Volunteer of the Year Award winner Terri Brischuk

Terri is active on a number of Board committees, and in addition has been a Director on the Community Futures Saskatchewan Board for the past eight years. Her commitment to the program has been unwavering over the years – as evidenced by the fact that she has missed only one meeting in the past twelve years.

Frank Simonot of St. Walburg, SK, has been an active member of the Board of Directors for Northwest Community Futures Development Corporation for over ten years. During this time he has contributed over 2,000 hours to helping entrepreneurs create jobs, grow communities and sustain rural Saskatchewan. He has served as a member of the Executive Committee, Planning Committee, Investment Committee and Personnel Committee, and the St. Walburg Small Business Loans Association.

When asked the source of his commitment, Frank says "I want to give back whatever I can to the community that welcomed and accepted me and my family many years ago. Anything I can do to help it remain strong and vibrant, I am prepared to volunteer my time to help it grow."

As Pat Redi, General Manager of Northwest, said in his nomination submission, Frank is the essence of volunteerism – giving, contributing and working with others to make a meaningful contribution to a better community.

Board and Staff Development

Board Development

The Community Futures Board Development Program is an initiative of Community Futures Pan West, which is made up of the four western associations in British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba.

Under the direction of a professional facilitator, 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, visioning and goal planning
- Financial management and the legal framework

Across western Canada and Ontario, from April 2009-March 2010:

- 29 CFBD training sessions took place
 - 326 participants with 77 CFs participating
 - Average of 3 CFs per session
- and...

The most in-demand sessions facilitated were:

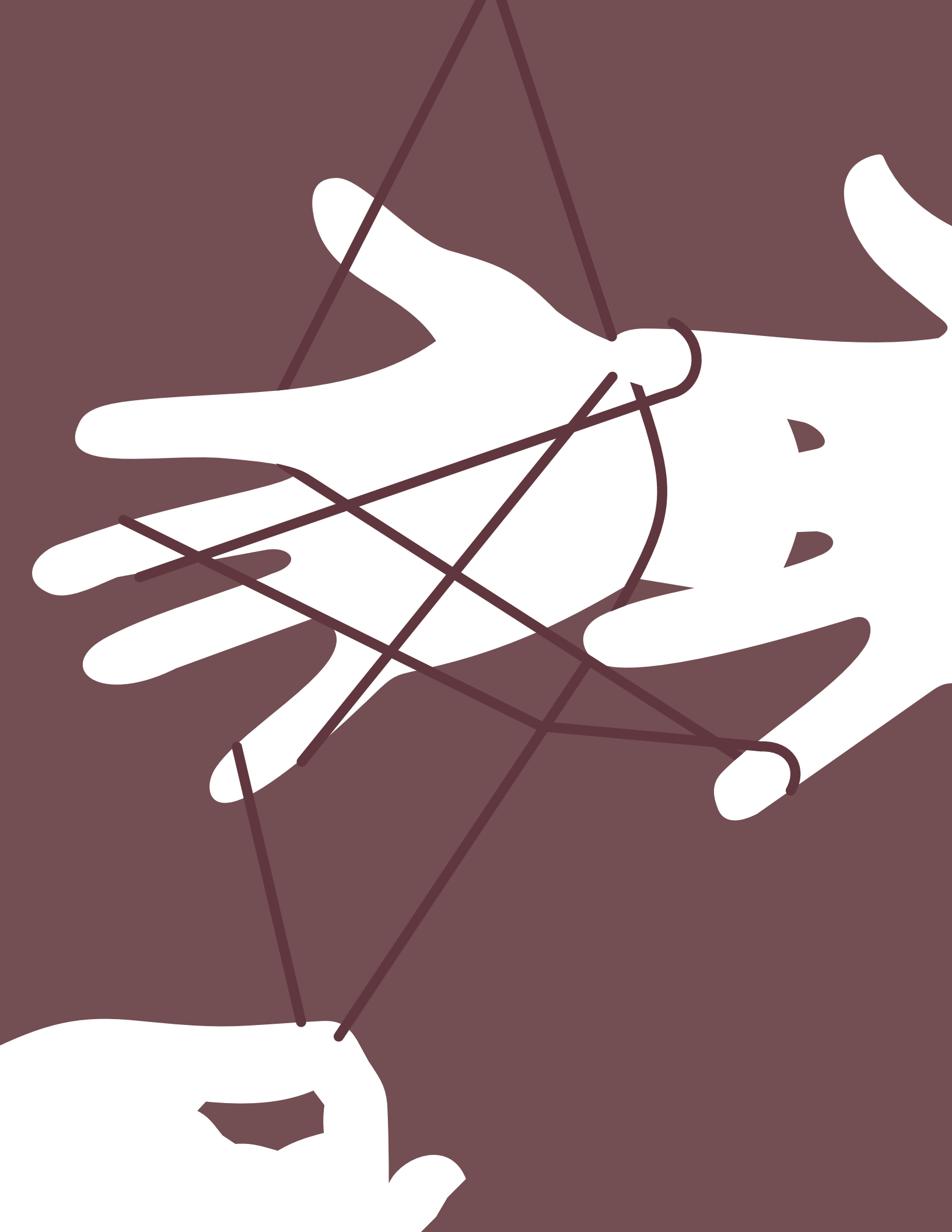
- Financial Management of a Community Futures and
- Board Development and Evaluation

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.

Community Futures Pan West would like to congratulate the staff members who have achieved Basic Certification for 2009-2010:

- Shelley Yagelniski – Business Analyst – Community Futures Ventures
- Stacey Corriveau – CED Coordinator – Community Futures South Fraser
- Shirly Prokopchuk – Administrative Coordinator – Community Futures Fraser Fort George



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