



MEDIA RELEASE

NOTE: Embargoed until 5:00 p.m. Wednesday, May 30, 2012

SOUTHGROW RECEIVES TWO MAJOR GRANTS FOR RENEWABLE ENERGY AND WATER AND WORKS CLOSELY WITH ALBERTA IRRIGATION PROJECTS ASSOCIATION (AIPA) FOR WATER FOR ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

SouthGrow Regional Initiative will announce two major grant application successes as well as results of the Water for Economic Development Initiative which culminated in AIPA affirming water availability for development in southern Alberta on Wednesday, May 30, 2012 to media and special guests at a brief news conference/presentation that begins at 5:00 p.m. in Anton's Dining Room (Main Floor) at the Lethbridge Lodge Hotel and Conference Centre.

Please note that this information is to be embargoed until 5:00 p.m. May 30 (Wednesday afternoon). Advance notice of the funding announcement is provided as a courtesy to media who have early deadlines.

The media announcement will specifically include:

- Rural Development Alberta Fund (RADF) Funding (\$480,000) for ***“Empowering Renewable Energy Clusters in the SouthGrow Region Using Renewable Energy Co-ops”*** – This initiative will build on the outcomes of the Community Renewable Energy Assessments conducted by Lethbridge College's International Wind Energy Academy (IWEA) in each of the 22 SouthGrow member communities. The multi-year project will result in building community capacity to develop municipal/community driven renewable energy initiatives through the development of rural renewable energy clusters and the development of a rural renewable energy co-ops based on these clusters. One of the project objectives is to create the governances, processes and information that will allow rural communities to analyze and develop their own Co-op's for renewable energy generation. These Co-op's bring new jobs and revenue generation opportunities to rural communities thus creating sustainability and expanded economic and capacity development. Communities identified for cluster development will be educated using training seminars and workshops. Communities ready for the development of renewable energy Co-op(s) will be trained using a Co-op toolkit. Ultimately, a strategy will be created for replication and sharing of best practices in Co-op development.
- Alberta Municipal Affairs (AMA) Regional Collaboration Program Funding (\$250,000) for Water for Economic Development in the SouthGrow region – This initiative will result in an analysis of existing water/waste water systems, status of the ability to deliver 'safe' water and determine preliminary additional capacity requirements to support expansion and attraction for potential industry / business development as well as research and recommendations for innovative water/waste water systems for communities to consider in their planning. SouthGrow will also participate in the Oldman River Operational Modelling Project to develop plausible and sustainable scenarios for protecting the health of the river throughout the basin and meeting the

needs of water users, particularly for economic development. The modelling project will help SouthGrow guide communities on what controlled and measured growth from an economic development perspective can look like given water treatment and waste water options as well as the health of the Oldman River. The initiative will result in an awareness campaign positioning the SouthGrow region as environmentally responsible and progressive in terms of water for economic development.

- Alberta Irrigation Projects Association's (AIPA) Statement in Support of SouthGrow's "Water for Economic Development" Initiative – Ron McMullin will announce AIPA's affirmation that water is available for development in southern Alberta, including the SouthGrow region. Specifically, the Statement in Support is as follows:

Alberta's irrigation districts affirm that water is available for development in southern Alberta, including the SouthGrow region. Districts individually have set aside specific volumes of water for a number of purposes, including water for economic development and water for communities in their locale. Historically, districts have played a vital role in southern Alberta in delivering water to communities, businesses, livestock operations, and habitat projects, and will continue to do so within the bounds of legislation and government policy.

*AIPA Executive Committee
May 2, 2012*

"SouthGrow is a strong regional economic development alliance that has planned key initiatives for the next two years, which are valuable to our members as well as the south central region. The major funding we have received for our multi-year projects in the key areas of water and renewable energy as well as the support we receive from key stakeholders in the region such as the Alberta Irrigation Projects Association (AIPA) show that SouthGrow is progressive and is working on priorities that will ensure this region is unified, prosperous and sustainable." says Sandra Nelson, SouthGrow Chair.

The media announcement will be held at 5:00 p.m. prior to SouthGrow Regional Initiative's Eighth Annual General Meeting, which begins at 5:30 p.m. in Anton's Dining Room at the Lethbridge Lodge. All members of the media are invited to the General Meeting and Dinner.

For more information, contact:

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Background information -- SouthGrow Regional Initiative

SouthGrow Regional Initiative was formed in 2003 and is a member-driven, volunteer-supported, not-for-profit regional economic development alliance for south-central Alberta. SouthGrow encompasses twenty-two communities with a total population of about 50,000. SouthGrow encourages collaboration, focuses on regional economic development issues and ensures the region has equal opportunity for growth and development. The Chair of SouthGrow Regional Initiative is Sandra Nelson, a resident of the Village of Stirling. She leads a ten member board of Directors.