



SouthGrow

Regional Initiative

Creating Opportunities...

We Are...

- City of Lethbridge
- Town of Cardston
- Town of Claresholm
- Town of Coaldale
- Town of Coalhurst
- Town of Magrath
- Town of Milk River
- Town of Picture Butte
- Town of Raymond
- Town of Taber
- Town of Vauxhall
- Town of Vulcan
- Village of Barons
- Village of Carmangay
- Village of Courts
- Village of Champion
- Village of Lomond
- Village of Milo
- Village of Nobleford
- Village of Stirling
- Village of Warner
- Cardston County
- County of Lethbridge
- MD of Taber
- Vulcan County
- County of Warner
- Blood Tribe

Celebrating Collaboration at the Sixth Annual Meeting

With a focus on celebrating collaboration, SouthGrow Regional Initiative held its 6th Annual General Meeting on June 17th, 2010. In addition to being informed of the progress of the regional economic development alliance's three committees, the membership heard a presentation on the Power of Regional Innovation by Rick Tofani, Director, Southern Alberta Operations, Alberta Innovates-Technology Futures. The presentation highlighted innovation efforts in other parts of the province. SouthGrow hopes to build a network of stakeholders that will result in residents and entrepreneurs of the region being assisted by any of the members of the Network to develop ideas into market focused innovations.

The founding members (Economic Development Lethbridge, Alberta Southwest Regional Alliance and SouthGrow Regional Initiative) of the Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership (SAAEP) were also recognized for their contributions to developing alternative energy initiatives in south central and south western Alberta.

Allison Byrne, Manager, Tools and Services of Productivity Alberta was also on hand to recognize SouthGrow for its efforts in increasing awareness of productivity initiatives in south central Alberta. Allison also announced the first provincial Productivity and Leadership Conference organized by Productivity Alberta on March 3, 2011 in Lethbridge.

Linda Erickson, Director of Regional Economic Development Branch within Alberta Finance and Enterprise provided the financial report and detailed the 2010-2011 Operations Plan. Election of the new board also took place at the meeting. Members are:

- Chair – Sandra Nelson, Village of Stirling
- Vice Chair – Mayor Kym Nichols, Village of Carmangay
- Treasurer – Councilor Don Wentz, Town of Coaldale
- Secretary – Mayor Paul Goldade, Village of Nobleford
- Director – Councilor Harlan Cahoon, Cardston County
- Director – Daryl Sutter, Town of Claresholm
- Director – Mayor Bob Tarleck, City of Lethbridge
- Director – Councilor Ron Lagemaat, Town of Coalhurst
- Director – Jon Stevens, Town of Picture Butte
- Director – Rob Crow, Blood Tribe Council, Standoff

The Board and the staff are looking forward to another productive and successful year.



Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership Presentation

Ron Lagemaat, Chair, SouthGrow Strategic Collaboration Committee; Lenze Kuiper, Chair, Economic Development Lethbridge; Sandra Nelson, Chair, SouthGrow Regional Initiative; and Mayor Shawn Patience, Town of Fort Macleod, Vice-Chair, Alberta SW Regional Alliance



Key Note Speaker, Rick Tofani, Director, Southern Alberta Operations, Alberta Innovates – Technology Futures



Ensuring a Strong Culture for Innovation

One of SouthGrow Regional Initiative's priorities is to ensure that regional business and industry thrive and increase its global competitiveness through innovation and productivity. For the past two years, SouthGrow Regional Initiative has been assessing the feasibility of additional innovation supports in the region as well as developing a business plan to ensure adequate resourcing of these supports. During the 2009-2010 operational year, SouthGrow's efforts resulted in the development of a draft business plan for an innovation network. This operational year will focus on working with various stakeholders to take the necessary steps so that the network becomes a reality. It should result in the existence of a market-focused, industry driven innovation and commercialization network that includes technology development advisors and that is linked to the area's post-secondary institutions, business development centers and other innovation supports.

Water for Economic Development in SouthGrow

SouthGrow Regional Initiative recognizes water as a key regional asset and continues to focus on ensuring that it is considered in all planning, especially for economic development. Over the last two years, SouthGrow has worked with the University of Lethbridge, Department of Economics to research the existing water situation, both societal and economic; the existing legislation pertaining to water; the situation surrounding water licenses in the region and the impact of existing water licenses as well as the other legislation. Consultations took place with various stakeholders last operations year to identify the role that SouthGrow should take with respect to water for economic development. Overwhelmingly, stakeholders indicated that SouthGrow should market that there is water for economic development in southern Alberta and maintain a focus on creating awareness of the fact that SouthGrow is "open for business". Over the next year, SouthGrow will work with stakeholders to develop a marketing and communications strategy in line with the role that stakeholders have suggested. In addition, information pertaining to water will continue to be updated on SouthGrow's website (www.southgrow.com).

Profiling Member Communities

Providing information about member communities is important in investment attraction. SouthGrow staff has been working with communities to gather information about their communities that would be of importance to site selectors to include in Community Economic Development Profiles. These two-page profiles will be available at each member community and on the SouthGrow website (www.southgrow.com). The profiles will also be included in investment attraction packages ensuring the quality and assets of member communities and the SouthGrow region are marketed, portraying the region as the place to live in, visit, do business in and invest in.



Reeve Hank Van Beers, MD Taber; Councillor Gordon Brown, Vauxhall; and Pete Lovering, Manager, Community Futures Chinook



Karen O'Dwyre, Lethbridge College; Bev Thornton, Director, Pincher Creek; and Mayor Shawn Patience, Fort Macleod

Productivity Improvement in SouthGrow

In January 2009, SouthGrow surveyed businesses in the region in order to identify challenges experienced with productivity. The results of the survey were revealed in conjunction with a one-day productivity seminar that was well received by participants. The final recommendations resulted in SouthGrow making a commitment in 2009/2010 to increasing awareness of productivity products, tools and services offered through the Province as well as regionally; discussing the importance of productivity strategy in organizations; facilitating the networking and support important to industry so that business people can share challenges and solutions; providing more learning opportunities; and identifying best practices in the region. Building on the initiatives and activities completed last year, SouthGrow Regional Initiative will be facilitating the formation of a Productivity Improvement Networking Group in the region. The group will initially guide SouthGrow as it organizes the provincial Productivity and Leadership Seminar as well as develops a publication that showcases companies on the productivity journey. If you are interested in participating in the Productivity Improvement Networking Group or in recommending an organization to be showcased, contact Shilpa Stocker at 403-330-7869 or westwindsmanagement@shaw.ca.

SouthGrowN Sustainability

On March 4, 2010, SouthGrow hosted a Sustainability Conference for regional stakeholders. The one-day conference included keynote speakers Dr. John Izzo, best selling author and visionary; Greg Weadick, MLA Lethbridge West; and Mike Harcourt, former premier of British Columbia, mayor of Vancouver and city councilor. In addition, three concurrent session streams took place throughout the day focusing on various topics related to sustainability.

Building on the interest in sustainability that exists within SouthGrow, the regional economic development alliance will be embarking on a twenty-seven member community collaborative sustainability project. This project will start as part of the member community Visitation and Validation, with each member community identifying a sustainability project that can be part of the overall shared project. SouthGrow will then work with each member community to implement an appropriate sustainability related project, culminating in a showcase of twenty-seven individual sustainability initiatives. While ambitious, this project is seen as a major step by SouthGrow to "walk the Sustainability talk" in an innovative fashion.

Fourth Annual Recognition Event

SouthGrow Regional Initiative will be organizing its fourth annual "Celebration of Creating Opportunities" Event and will be making a call for nominations starting September 7th in the categories of:

- Excellence in Investment/Business Attraction
- Excellence in Business Retention/Growth/Expansion
- Excellence in Collaboration/Partnership
- Excellence in Innovation

As in past years, this event is geared towards recognizing success and rewarding the efforts made towards developing the regional economy. Through this process, SouthGrow Regional Initiative honours organizations/individuals/municipalities/businesses in the region that contribute to the excellence which makes SouthGrow a great place to live, work, do business and invest in. Key dates to note include the nomination deadline of November 22nd, and the "Celebration of Creating Opportunities ..." event on January 20, 2011.

As in past years, those earning Awards of Excellence and Recognition will be featured in Success Stories that will be featured on SouthGrow's website and included in investment attraction packages.



Mayor Paul Goldade, Nobleford; Dianne Simovic, Executive Director, Edmonton; Allison Byrne, Manager, Productivity Alberta, Edmonton; and Nobleford Administrator Kirk Hofman



Gillian Nish, President, Chinook Country Tourist Association, Kimberly Lyle, Manager, Chinook Country; Lorna Kurio, City of Lethbridge; and Bonnie Farries, Town of Coaldale



County of Lethbridge Councillor John Willms; Mayor Bob Tarleck, City of Lethbridge; and SouthGrow Chair, Sandra Nelson



Leslie Warren, Councillor Gordon Nelson and Glen Logan



Bridget Pastoor MLA Lethbridge East and SouthGrow Chair, Sandra Nelson



Dr. Lorne MacGregor, and Karen O'Dwyer, Lethbridge College and Councillor John Willms



Allison Byrne, Director, Productivity Alberta, Edmonton; and Shilpa Stocker, SouthGrow Project Manager

SouthGrowN General Meeting

Municipal elections in the Province of Alberta are taking place on Monday, October 18, 2010. These elections will result in some new elected officials within the twenty-seven SouthGrow member municipalities. In an effort to ensure that all elected officials are aware of SouthGrow's initiatives and accomplishments, SouthGrow Regional Initiative will be hosting a SouthGrowN Social prior to the Fourth Annual Celebration of Creating Opportunities ... Recognition Event on Thursday, January 20, 2011. All member municipality elected officials, member representatives, Chief Administrative Officers, Economic Development Officers and partners are invited to the meeting. A short presentation of SouthGrow's initiatives and accomplishments will provide highlights for those not familiar with the regional economic development alliance. For more information, contact Mary Swanek at 403-381-5414 or mary.swanek@gov.ab.ca.

Strengthening SouthGrow's Governance

SouthGrow Management Board prioritizes accountability and transparency to members. This year, work has begun on reviewing all of SouthGrow's policies and procedures to ensure applicability and currency given SouthGrow's progression as a regional economic development alliance. A review of the new 2010-2013 strategic business plan also prompted the need to add new policies pertaining to roles, responsibilities and expectations within SouthGrow as well as of partnerships. As SouthGrow continues to spearhead pilot projects, innovative initiatives and collaborative undertakings, the Board will be faced with decisions pertaining to contracting assistance, participating in partnerships and working with various stakeholders. Developing additional policies and procedures will assist the Board to continue to make responsible decisions and position SouthGrow as an organization representing all twenty-seven communities in a proactive fashion as the organization progresses and grows.

Validating SouthGrow's Plans

During the month of June and July, Shilpa Stocker, Project Manager for SouthGrow Regional Initiative visited member communities' Chief Administrative Officers and Economic Development Officers to review the plans SouthGrow has for the next three years and obtain feedback on the initiatives. In addition, opinions were sought on what SouthGrow can do to assist members in their efforts to attract opportunities and investment as well as retain and grow business and industry in their communities. Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) and Economic Development Officers (EDOs) were asked how they feel SouthGrow is performing as it begins its new three-year business plan cycle. Advice provided by CAOs and EDOs will be discussed with the Management Board and incorporated as appropriate into SouthGrow's upcoming operations plans. For example, feedback solicited on training needs will be incorporated into Strategic Collaboration Committee's training initiatives and information identified pertaining to each community's sustainability plans will assist with the formulation of the Shared SouthGrowN Sustainability project.

While member community representatives are critical stakeholders in SouthGrow Regional Initiative, we understand that their feedback and advice reflects one perspective. We therefore invite you, our partners, industry stakeholders, and supporters to provide us with additional feedback from your perspective. Tell us what you think of the progress SouthGrow Regional Initiative has made in the past and more importantly, what issues, projects and opportunities we should be investigating and assessing as we progress. We encourage you to send any comments you may have to info@southgrow.com.



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