

## Southern Alberta Alternative Energy (SAAEP) Implements Investment Attraction Project

With its SAAEP partners, South Grow is moving forward in the research & development of three investment attraction business cases. This component is recognized as a vital step to raise the awareness of our region's investment opportunity in the globally emerging sector of alternative energy. Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, the Advanced Industry Development Unit of Alberta Finance and Enterprise, and the Lethbridge College have come forward with in-kind or funding support to research and develop three professionally designed investment attraction documents. One will focus on wind, another on solar and the third will be on geothermal energy. The business cases will be geographically concise, detailing the unique opportunities that are only available in this region and targeted at the global alternative energy industry leaders. It is important to present future investors with quick and easily accessible information on each industry that is customized to the SAAEP region, showcasing the "natural" resources and benefits of the region.

## Improving Productivity for Bottom Line Results

SouthGrow Regional Initiative focused on productivity in the region by identifying the players in the value-added processing and manufacturing sectors and consulted with many of these players on productivity and innovation challenges and opportunities they face through an on-line survey. A one-day seminar was coordinated and hosted by SouthGrow Regional Initiative for businesses and industry in the area on February 4, 2009 at the Lethbridge Lodge. The eighty people in attendance learned how to improve productivity from two experts from the United States: Dr. Dean Schroeder and Ron Mastichelli. Participants were given practical tips on leading innovation and productivity improvements in companies, supporting the creation of a company culture that fosters productivity, and developing new processes and products that emerge from innovative teams. Participants also provided SouthGrow Regional Initiative with advice on what SouthGrow Regional Initiative can do to assist them in improving productivity. This feedback as well as the information provided in the on-line survey will guide SouthGrow's productivity implementation efforts in 2009/2010 which include awareness, education, networking and best practices development.



**Alberta  
Regional Economic  
Development Conference**

*"Sustaining Progress  
in a Transitioning Economy"*

**May 12 – 14, 2009**

Coast Edmonton East  
Sherwood Park, Alberta

Contact: [info@AREDConference.com](mailto:info@AREDConference.com)

Visit [www.AREDConference.com](http://www.AREDConference.com)  
for more information

Hosted by Alberta Finance & Enterprise



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## 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 Coutts  
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



**SouthGrow**  
Regional Initiative

**Creating Opportunities...**

## Members to Review the Results in June

SouthGrow Regional Initiative is holding its Annual General Meeting on June 18th at the Lethbridge Lodge at 5:30 p.m. The regional economic development alliance's Marketing & Communications, Strategic Collaborations and Economic Development and Innovations committees' 2008/2009 results will be reported. In addition, the 27 members will receive information about the proposed new initiatives that are planned for the 2009/2010 year. For more information on the Annual General Meeting or to attend, please contact Mary Swanek at 403-381-5414 or at [info@southgrow.com](mailto:info@southgrow.com)

## SouthGrow Receives Rural Communities in Transition Grant

SouthGrow Regional Initiative is the recipient of a \$300,000 grant over two years from Alberta Finance and Enterprise as part of the Supporting Regions in Transition Initiative. The objective of the grant is to assist rural Alberta regions mitigate adverse effects due to the global marketplace, especially those regions reliant on the traditional agriculture and forestry sectors, and those regions affected by Mountain Pine Beetle. SouthGrow Regional Initiative will use the grant to continue its work with the Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership, to ensure innovation and commercialization supports are provided within the region as well as to implement its productivity improvement initiatives for the region.

## Project Management in Economic Development Workshop

**Thursday, April 23, 2009**

**Room 1-26 (Main Floor), Canada-Alberta Service Centre  
200-5th Avenue South, Lethbridge  
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.**

Fee: \$25 (includes tuition, course materials, lunch and refreshments)

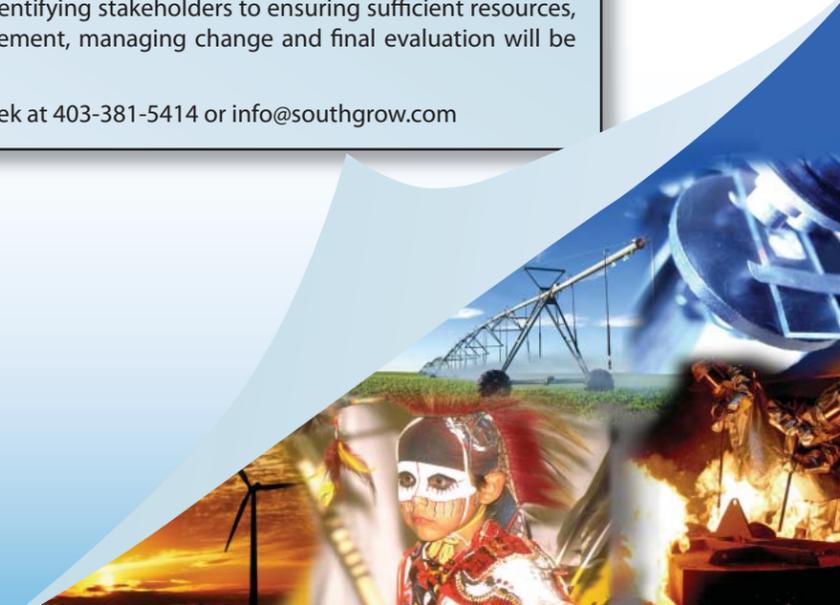
Limited to the first 20 individuals that register

Learn about the value of project management as well as the five stages of project management, including:

- Initiation
- Planning
- Execution
- Control
- Closing

From selecting projects and identifying stakeholders to ensuring sufficient resources, staying on track, crisis management, managing change and final evaluation will be covered.

To register, contact Mary Swanek at 403-381-5414 or [info@southgrow.com](mailto:info@southgrow.com)



# Building Partnerships, Innovating, Improving Productivity and Assessing the Region's Assets

## Strengthening Relationships

Improving communications and increasing awareness of SouthGrow's purpose, projects and goals was the primary purpose of SouthGrow's Visitation and Validation whereby all 27 member communities were visited. SouthGrow's annual results report as well as its Annual Operations Plan was presented to Chief Administrative Officers or Economic Development Officers in person and in turn, they were asked for feedback on how SouthGrow could serve the communities better and help them meet their economic development goals. In addition, the communities' readiness for investment attraction was assessed. Through the Visitation and Validation, SouthGrow Regional Initiative not only received valuable advice that impacted the creation of the 2009-2010 Operations Plan, but it also helped further build the organization's reputation as a credible, pro-active economic development organization in the region.

## Building Capacity Throughout the Region

On March 26, 2009, a dozen individuals participated in a Site Selection Process Workshop. Participants learned about the site selection process, the different roles of site selectors, why companies use site selectors, how they "select" communities, how to work with site selectors and building a business climate that is attractive to site selectors.



## Marketing Communities

SouthGrow Regional Initiative updated Community Economic Development Profiles for each of its 27 member communities. Each community profile includes lifestyle as well as statistical information, aimed at assisting those that want to reside in, do business in and invest in the region to assess strengths. The Community Economic Development Profiles are available for download on SouthGrow's website [www.southgrow.com](http://www.southgrow.com) in the member community section.

## Celebration of Creating Opportunities ...

On Thursday, January 15th, SouthGrow Regional Initiative held its second annual "Celebration of Creating Opportunities ..." Awards Ceremony. Organizations, agencies, municipalities and businesses were honoured in an effort to recognize success and reward the efforts made towards developing the local and regional economies by attracting, retaining and/or growing business and industry as well as by innovating. A team of three judges, consisting of partner agency representatives from outside of the region reviewed all nineteen submissions in four categories: Excellence in Investment/Business Attraction; Excellence in Business Retention/Growth/Expansion; Excellence in Innovation; and Excellence in Collaboration/Partnership. The examples of excellence in the region within various award categories have been developed into SouthGrowN Success Stories and will be used to further market the region as an excellent place to live, invest in and do business in.

## Managing Success

Sandra Nelson, member at large from the Village of Stirling, is the Chair of SouthGrow Regional Initiative. The full complement comprising the Board of Directors is:

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

## Branding SouthGrow in the Region

Increasing awareness of SouthGrow Regional Initiative within the region was a major goal of the Marketing and Communications Committee. In addition to the Annual Report providing information on the year's activities, quarterly newsletters keeping members informed of progress and upcoming events, and various press releases notifying the public of SouthGrow events and projects, SouthGrow also developed and aired television commercials increasing awareness of the organization in the region. These television commercials also served to market the region's strengths and assets.

## Innovation and Commercialization Assessment

SouthGrow values innovation in the region and believes that it is the key to increased standard of living in the region. In order to ensure that industries grow in the region, SouthGrow believes it is important to encourage and support innovation and technology commercialization. In order to gauge the support that exists for industries, an assessment of the innovation and technology commercialization assets, systems and supports was conducted. The assessment led to an identification of systems and supports that currently exist given the existence of the post-secondary institutions as well as the federal research institutes in the region as well as the gaps/barriers that need to be addressed. As a result of the assessment, SouthGrow Regional Initiative will be working with regional stakeholders to develop a feasibility study aimed at ensuring innovation and commercialization support is available for those in the region that are developing new ideas, processes and products.

## Regional Water Assessment

The University of Lethbridge, Department of Economics completed the first phase of the Regional Water Assessment and presented the assessment to 75 municipal representatives and other regional stakeholders on March 19, 2009 at the Lethbridge Lodge. The researchers, Lorraine Nicol, Dr. Kurt Klein and Henning Bjorlund detailed the existing water situation, both societal and economic in the SouthGrow region. In addition to the availability of water in the region, existing legislation pertaining to water as well as the impact of water licenses was explained. Understanding and ensuring the capacities of the sustainable water supply is key to the economic well being of the region's agriculture and processing sector. The researchers outlined some "next steps" for SouthGrow Regional Initiative. The organization will ensure that water for economic development purposes remains at the forefront of future discussions in the region. Furthermore, subsequent phases to this project will ensure that communities continue to be aware of water's impact on economic development and investment attraction, and that the balance required to achieve optimal societal and economic use of water in the region is achieved.

## Strengthening SouthGrow Governance

SouthGrow governance continues to be strengthened with the addition of policies and procedures that guide Management Board, Committees and general membership. As situations arise that may require formal policies and procedures, SouthGrow is diligent about ensuring that appropriate external assistance is garnered to help develop guidelines that will ensure continued proper controls are in place and that accountability to its membership and funders is paramount.

