

Summer 2009

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SouthGrow

Regional Initiative

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

Creating Opportunities...

Fifth Annual General Meeting Draws a Crowd

SouthGrow Regional Initiative held its 5th Annual General Meeting on June 18th, 2009. During the meeting, Councillor Ron Lagemaat informed membership of the progress of the regional economic development alliance's three committees. David Alexander, with the accounting firm of Nyrose & Saito, provided the financial report and Linda Erickson, Director South Central Alberta Regional Development Branch, Alberta Finance and Enterprise, detailed the 2009-2010 Operations Plan.

Election of the new board also took place at the meeting. Members are:

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

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



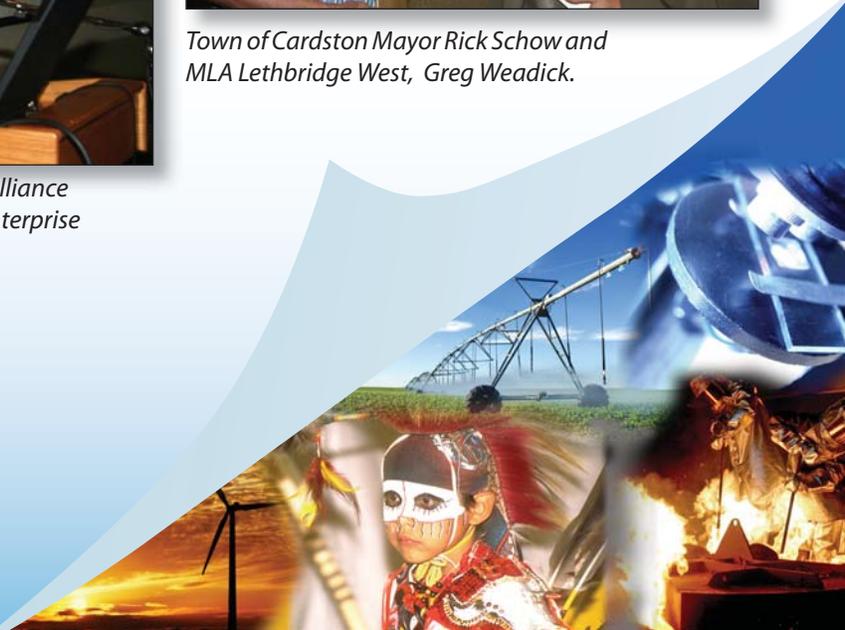
Sandra Nelson, SouthGrow Chair



George Brosseau, Director Regional Alliance Development, Alberta Finance and Enterprise



Town of Cardston Mayor Rick Schow and MLA Lethbridge West, Greg Weadick.



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. The region already has a strong base in institutional research and development and private ventures that have been "spun off" as a result of research and development through the University.

During the 2008-2009 operational year, SouthGrow had an assessment of the innovation and technology commercialization assets, systems and supports conducted for the SouthGrow region. The assessment concluded that the following types of supports are available in the research and innovation area:

- Federally mandated research which can be conducted by the Lethbridge Research Centre as well as in conjunction with industry associations, resulting in solutions and opportunities impacting industry.
- University driven research which may result in commercialization, but initially beginning with the researcher's area of interest.
- Applied industry driven research, focused not necessarily on publication or commercialization but more driven towards identifying applied problems and solutions to assist business and industry in the region.
- Individual driven research where value-added research is required by the Lethbridge Research Centre, the University of Lethbridge or Lethbridge College.

The assessment showed that there may be a gap, however, in those cases where an individual or an organization has developed an idea and is ready to commercialize it. The commercialization process is often difficult and if proper supports are not applied, the process may fail. The patent activity in Lethbridge alone proves that innovation is taking place at the individual level and this may increase if proper supports are available. Therefore, a key project for SouthGrow during the 2009-2010 operations year is a feasibility assessment of a market-focused product commercialization centre that includes technology development advisors and has a strong link to area business development centres. The objective of the centre would be to enable residents and entrepreneurs of the region to develop their ideas into market focused innovations (product or process) in a "one-stop" and easy to access manner.

Investigating a Shared Vision for Water

SouthGrow Regional Initiative recognizes water as a key regional asset and is focused on ensuring that it is considered in all planning, especially for economic development. Furthermore, water for economic development must stay on the "radar" of all regional and government stakeholders.

During the 2008-2009 operations year, SouthGrow contracted 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. The research conducted not only provided SouthGrow Regional Initiative and its members with a good understanding of the water situation in southern Alberta, but it also brought to the forefront a recognition that water was valuable (its situation evoking emotions), and that there were many stakeholders in the region researching water from a variety of perspectives (tourism, recreation, agriculture/irrigation, etc.).

SouthGrow Regional Initiative will now be investigating whether there is a shared vision for a water interpretive centre. The centre (physical or virtual) would bring together all stakeholders and the information they wish to share with residents, businesses, industry, government and visitors to make them aware of the value of water, its implications on the region and industry and its contributions to the success of the region. The objective of the centre would be to provide a "one-stop shop" for all water related information for the region. SouthGrow will be contracting consultants to hold discussions with key water stakeholders in the region to identify if a shared vision exists and what type of information would be provided on a collaborative basis.

Re-Designing www.southgrow.com

www.southgrow.com provides detailed and accurate information in an easy to read and understand format to SouthGrow's various target audiences. This operating year, the website will be re-designed to ensure that it continues to market the quality and assets of the region, thereby portraying it as the place to live in, visit, do business in and invest in. The new site will be designed to invite investment and promote the SouthGrow region to businesses and various site selectors that are interested in locating to the area, or businesses considering expansion. The website will be a key source for economic development information within the SouthGrow region. The new website will be launched in January 2010.

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 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. This second phase of the Productivity Improvement Initiative will begin at the end of summer.

SouthGrowN Sustainability Conference

SouthGrow will be organizing and hosting a Sustainability Conference for regional stakeholders to be held on March 4, 2010. In past public consultation projects, stakeholders clearly indicated a desire to know more about Alternative Energy and Community Sustainability and to understand the opportunities inherent in these areas. The one-day conference includes keynote speakers as well as concurrent sessions which showcase examples of sustainability and alternative energy initiatives which make the SouthGrow region a great place to live, invest in, visit and do business. Keynote speakers are:

- Mike Harcourt, former premier of British Columbia, mayor of Vancouver and city councilor. Mr. Harcourt helped British Columbia earn its reputation as one of the most livable places in the world. His focus on conservation and sustainable development - and his resolve to contribute to the transformation of cities and communities around the world - has played a significant role in promoting quality of life for those in Canada and abroad. Mr. Harcourt will speak on sustainable cities and communities.
- Dr. John Izzo, best selling author and business visionary. Dr. Izzo has devoted his life and career to facilitating deeper conversations about values and work, life, leadership and success. He has worked with thousands of leaders, professionals and front-line employees to foster workplaces of excellence, purpose, learning and renewal. Dr. Izzo's presentations both inspire and challenge his audiences to rediscover their values, reflect upon their power to influence positive change, and reconnect with their personal and professional vision. He provides the practical tools they can use to create the organization of the future.

In conjunction with the Sustainability Conference, SouthGrow will be distributing a publication that focuses on the "SouthGrowN" people and industries that are impacting the economic health of the region by either manufacturing alternative energy components, implementing practices that result in increased sustainability at the organizational or community level, or employing a best practice that positively affects their bottom line and the environment.

Anyone interested in being featured in the publication or presenting at a concurrent session are asked to contact Project Manager, Shilpa Stocker at 403-330-7869 (or at westwindsmanagement@shaw.ca) for session and publication details/criteria.



Accelerate Your Business

On September 17th at the Lethbridge Lodge, SouthGrow Regional Initiative will be hosting a full-day, interactive workshop featuring management guru Donald Cooper, that has the power to fundamentally transform any business, large or small. The program provides a complete set of step-by-step implementation templates to facilitate effective action. Participants will learn how to create a compelling competitive advantage; market and promote effectively on a tight budget; attract, lead and retain a dedicated and top-performing team; improve long-term profitability; and create a clear direction for the future of their business and a plan to get there. For more information on this one-day seminar or to register (\$50 per person includes lunch and refreshments), contact Mary Swanek (403-394-0615; mary.swanek@southgrow.com).

SouthGrow Visioning

SouthGrow Regional Initiative will be having its 2010-2012 business plan developed during the Fall. In order to ensure that input from the membership is incorporated into the business plan, a visioning session will be held on September 29th in Lethbridge. This one-day session will be facilitated by Natalie Gibson of InnoVisions and Associates. If you are a representative, a Chief Administrative Officer or an Economic Development Officer of a SouthGrow member community, you are invited to join us for the session. Please call or e-mail Mary Swanek (403-394-0615; mary.swanek@southgrow.com) for more information and to register.

Third Annual Recognition Event

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

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

You may recall from past years that 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/communities/agencies/businesses. Key dates to note include the nomination deadline of November 30th, and the "Celebration of Creating Opportunities ..." event on January 21, 2010.

MERX Procurement Seminar

On February 2, 2010, SouthGrow Regional Initiative will be hosting a MERX Canadian Public Tenders Opportunity Seminar at the Lethbridge Lodge. David Peace, Senior Director of Aerospace and Defence at the Industry Development Branch with Alberta Finance and Enterprise and his team will be providing information on how to "sell" to the government. The workshop takes place from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. and will be of interest to persons/companies that make or add value to a product or service and wants to sell it to the government. The workshop has also received interest from those entrepreneurs who want to middle man some contracts. Many government contracts are a matter of getting a product to the door of government. Consultants may also be interested as there are often contracts for professional services and/or report writing. Those that want to expand their market or sales should invest one day to attend the seminar and 30 minutes to set up a profile so that the door is open to select opportunities. Cost of the seminar is \$20 and includes lunch. To register, contact Mary Swanek (403-394-0615; mary.swanek@southgrow.com).



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