

PROGRESS IN SOUTHGROW

SouthGrow Welcomes the Blood Tribe

In December, the Blood Tribe (Kainai Nation), which is the largest reserve in Canada in terms of geography, became the twenty-fourth member community of SouthGrow Regional Initiative. The Blood Tribe is SouthGrow's first tribal member and the Nation's membership with SouthGrow aligns with the alliance's mandate to develop and build regional partnerships.

Plan for Economic Attraction in Cardston and Area

The County of Cardston and the Town of Cardston have initiated the development of an economic strategic plan. In an effort to create a vibrant, progressive and sustainable community, the study will identify Cardston and area's assets, determine the current economic state of Cardston and area, detail the specific advantages of and impediments to certain types of economic attraction, and recommend the types of businesses that the area should try to attract.

A Field of Dreams in Vauxhall



Vauxhall High's teacher and baseball coach, Shane Mazutinec, has spearheaded the creation of The Vauxhall Academy of Baseball, a high school program to operate out of Jets Stadium. Players must attend Vauxhall High School in order to be part of the Academy, resulting in a welcome increase in student body numbers and residents. The Academy will focus on three main areas to ensure balance: academics, baseball development and community development. The warm weather and proximity to the United States border make Vauxhall the ideal location for the Academy, which becomes a reality in September 2006.

NextLibrary Inc. to Facilitate Historic Newspaper Digitization Project

NextLibrary Inc. is facilitating the compilation of Southern Alberta Digital Library's major regional historic newspaper digitization project. The project will result in an estimated 100,000 pages of digital images and a searchable index on the Internet for up to 50 historic community newspapers from southern Alberta published from the 1880s. NextLibrary's website address is www.nextlib.com. For more information, contact Ian Dew at (403) 627-4552 by phone or at ian@nextlib.com by e-mail.

SouthGrow backs the More People in Trades Initiative

The More People in Trades Initiative is a partnership between business, industry, education and government with the goal being to attract more people in trades occupations. As part of the initiative, "Re-discover Careers in Trades: Demo Day" is organized for April 1, 2006 at the Lethbridge Exhibition Grounds. For more information, contact Nadia Lehbauer, Event Coordinator at (403) 328-3996 or (403) 381-1259 by phone or at lehbauer@shaw.ca by e-mail.

Jacques Demers In Milk River

Jacques Demers, who coached the Montreal Canadiens to the Stanley Cup in 1993 and was later a general manager in the NHL, recently admitted that he was illiterate. Demers coached the Quebec Nordiques, St. Louis Blues, Detroit Red Wings, Montreal and the Tampa Bay Lightning. The Chinook Community Futures, County of Warner Further Education and Warner Economic Development are pleased to host an evening with Jacques Demers during which he will discuss his coaching career, his illiteracy and his belief that people are capable of doing great things even when faced with huge challenges. The event takes place at the Milk River Civic Center on February 15th. Call the County of Warner at (403) 642-3635, Chinook Community Futures at (403) 223-2984, Town of Milk River at (403) 647-3773 or Lethbridge and District Business Development Center at (403) 320-6044 for more information and tickets.

Peter Legge's 27 Success Habits Coming to Taber

Peter Legge, president and CEO of the largest independently owned magazine publishing company in Western Canada (Canada Wide Magazines & Communications Ltd.) has been invited to speak in Taber on March 15th at the Taber Heritage Inn about "27 Success Habits". Peter has written seven books that have motivated thousands of people towards positive change. For more information or tickets (\$35 per person), contact the Taber Chamber office (223-2265) and Chinook Community Futures Development Corporation office (223-2984).



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SOUTHGROW'S GENERAL MEETING - KEEPING MEMBERS INFORMED

GREAT LEARNING OPPORTUNITY

SouthGrow's General Meeting is scheduled for Thursday, February 9, 2006 at the Lethbridge Lodge. Presentations include:

- **SouthGrow Project Updates**
- **"Making Water Work For Economic Development"** David Hill, Executive Director at Alberta Irrigation
- **Attracting Investment to Your Community.** Allan Matthews, a site selector expert will inform member communities how major investors make decisions and what you can do to make your community the location of choice. This workshop session focuses on how community decisions will prepare communities for investment. Key questions answered include:
 - How do major tenants such as Tim Hortons make decisions?
 - What triggers investment decisions?
 - What is the role of municipal council and staff in investment attraction?
 - How does a community response impact decision makers?
 - How does a municipality take back their highway?

Register today by calling Mary Swanek at 381-5414

EMPOWERING MEMBERS BY PROVIDING INFORMATION

The **Strategic Collaboration Committee** works with member communities, industry/business, government and others to foster a shared vision for regional economic development and shared service opportunities and provides southcentral Alberta with a unified voice on regional priorities.

During the next few months, the following **workshop** has been organized:

- **Aboriginal Awareness** – This workshop, presented in collaboration with Mounties to Mounties Economic Regional Initiative, focuses on gaining a better understanding, awareness, and knowledge of the Aboriginal communities (Blood, Piikani, and the non-land based Metis) in order to foster relationship building. The workshop will deal with topics such as historical and cultural information about Alberta's diverse Aboriginal population, business reasons for developing relationships with Aboriginal communities, major barriers and opportunities concerning Aboriginal economic development, organizational strategies for enhancing relationships and an introduction to aboriginal protocols. This one day workshop is on February 16, 2006 in Fort Macleod. To register or for more information, call Barb Beckett at (403) 627-1165.

OTHER TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE REGION

- Tiffen Conference: The Prosperous Farm of the Future
Sessions include:
 - Sustaining the Family Farm
 - Challenges Facing Agriculture in the 21st Century
 - The Cartagena Protocol and What it Means for Canadian Agriculture
 - Water Agreements Between Canada and the U.S. - An Overview
 - The Future of Water - Policies, Process, Licenses, Who Gets it
 - The Sacred Cows of the Family Farm
- Sessions take place on February 16, 2006 in the LaValley Theatre in the Instructional Building at Lethbridge Community College from 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. Call Kathy Waddell at (403) 329-7212 to register.

Creating Opportunities...

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 Coalhurst
Town of Vulcan

Village of Barons
Village of Carmangay
Village of Coutts
Village of Milo
Village of Nobleford
Village of Stirling

Village of Warner
County of Lethbridge
MD of Taber
Vulcan County
County of Warner
Blood Tribe



PRODUCTS...

examples of SouthGrow's resources and diversity.

Expanding Food Processing in the Area



The Lethbridge & District Business Development Centre (LDBDCA) on behalf of Alberta Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (AAFRD) and SouthGrow Regional Initiative, conducted a market demand study in order to identify if there is a need in Southern Alberta for a value-added processing facility to allow the expansion of the food processing industry within the region. The study, which consisted of using surveys, interviews and focus groups, determined that sufficient demand exists for a food-processing centre in Southern Alberta as well as storage facilities and agricultural business training programs. The food-processing facility would provide a physical location for value-added processing activities such as baking, canning, meat processing and developing skin care products. Now that demand has been established, the next phase is an engineering feasibility study that will determine the suitability of the potential location.

Opportunities Along the Gateway to Alberta

The SouthGrow region provides a key connection along the extensive CANAMEX Highway Trade Corridor that extends from Alaska to Mexico. Exploring opportunities as a result of our strategic location along this Gateway to Alberta has been a focus of the **Economic Development and Innovation Committee**. Phase 1 of Gateway to Alberta project generated an assessment report of trade goods moving along the corridor. The study identified existing transportation practices, patterns and tonnage as well as commodity and transportation modes. Phase 2 of the project has been building on this information and further examined opportunities for targeted foreign companies and industries to expand or grow in the area by taking advantage of the unique trade corridor. Although the study will be completed in February 2006, an interim report was presented with business opportunities identified for the development of four concise business cases targeted at investment attraction for the region:

- Intermodal Terminal Facility in SouthGrow Region
- Ready Food Processing
- Confectionary (non-chocolate)
- Alternative Energy (Manufacturing and Municipal delivery)

PEOPLE...

are the focus of economic development in the SouthGrow region.

The **Strategic Collaboration Committee** coordinated many training opportunities for SouthGrow members:

- The Aboriginal Awareness Workshop was held in Fort Macleod and Cardston in November. About 40 people took advantage of this one-day workshop.
- Project Radar Screen ended with "Growing a Reputation for Excellence in the Film Industry", a half-day workshop attended by seventeen people and focusing on making communities aware of how to take advantage of film, television and commercial production opportunities. The session was held in Lethbridge in November and a follow-up working session for those who attended will be held in February.
- The Foreign-Worker Readiness workshop was coordinated by the Lethbridge Office of Alberta Economic Development. Held on January 18th, over 35 employers and agencies in attendance learned more information about the Provincial Nominee Program and how to attract skilled foreign workers. These sessions are being held through out the province to address the skilled labour shortage.
- The Supporting Agriculture Through Community Economic Development two-day workshop was held in Lethbridge at the end of January. Those who participated learned about challenges to the agricultural sector and their impact on communities and the province in general. Examples of community-based initiatives were presented and those in attendance were given the opportunity to work through case study exercises dealing with both primary and value-added agriculture scenarios.



PRIDE...

in our SouthGrowN People and Products

Branding SouthGrow

Two key goals of the **Marketing and Communications Committee** have been to:

- Build awareness of SouthGrow as an organization and establish the advantages of membership, thereby branding SouthGrow as an organization.
- Increase pride in the region's people and accomplishments.

In order to accomplish these goals, an awareness campaign has been launched consisting of radio and television spots highlighting SouthGrow as an organization, its purpose, regional statistics and facts as well as its members. Watch for the commercials and take pride in SouthGrowN people and products.

Cooperatively Marketing SouthGrowN

In November 2005, a campaign focusing on "SouthGrowN People, Products & Pride" was conceptualized. A key goal was to build awareness of local products and services produced in the SouthGrow region and hence increase sales of those same items and brand regional products and services. In order to accomplish this goal, SouthGrow Regional Initiative is taking the next step and conducting additional primary research in order to validate the concept and ensure that the concept is feasible for the SouthGrow region. Specifically, the concept of cooperatively marketing SouthGrowN will be validated from the perspective of producers, associations and industry organizations, retailers and consumers and a feasibility study will be developed.

Showcasing the Many Faces of SouthGrow

We are in the process of updating SouthGrow's website (www.southgrow.com). The objectives of the website include marketing the regional alliance to residents in southern Alberta, and providing a source of information for potential site selectors, investors and residents. As part of the update, recognizable people representing various areas, businesses, and industries in the region are featured in the top banner of each page. Check out the website and let us know what you think of the many faces of SouthGrow.

PROGRESS...

through a commitment to sustainability.

A Move Towards Alternative Energy



As part of the Gateway to Alberta – Opportunity Identification Project Phase II, several opportunities related to alternative energy were identified. These opportunities included wind energy, solar energy, and bio-mass energy (integrated manure utilization system). Intrigued by the suggestion that an opportunity for an Alternative Energy Centre in the region exists, the **Economic Development and Innovation Committee** have decided to proceed to the next stage whereby the feasibility of the following are explored:

- Being a Canadian centre of companies to manufacture and assemble components for wind and solar systems.
- Municipal application of alternative energy projects in SouthGrow communities.
- Maximizing carbon credits in the area.

GTS Consulting has been hired to develop a thorough business case on wind and solar energy system manufacturing and servicing in the region, determine alternative energy options for communities and identify how to maximize carbon credits in the area.

Increasing Community Readiness to Attract Opportunities

SouthGrow Regional Initiative is kicking off a new project called "Opportunity Attraction Needs Assessment". This Needs Assessment will include each member community and assist those involved in economic development in the communities to identify the information, tools, processes and systems required in order to meet the needs of site selectors and others considering your community for investment. One on one interviews are being conducted in each community in order to gather information about each community's readiness to respond to and attract investment opportunities. Once the information has been gathered, we will communicate where gaps exist in member community's ability to respond so that individual action plans for dealing with these areas can be developed by each community. The **Strategic Collaboration Committee** will also use the aggregate information in order to guide it in developing future learning opportunities or workshops for member communities.

