

PROJECTS...
to keep the
region
progressive



**Creating
Opportunities...**

Mapping the Agricultural Economy

SouthGrow Regional Initiative has been working with the Farm Irrigation Management Section of Alberta Agriculture and Food to develop a picture of agriculture in the SouthGrow region. Specifically, maps have been developed based on data gathered by AAFRD that show the crops and livestock activity in the SouthGrow region. These maps will soon be available on SouthGrow's website and are a first step to SouthGrow's "Grow Your Own" project.

The "Grow Your Own" project involves getting an accurate picture of the import, export and value-adding activity taking place in the SouthGrow region as it pertains to agriculture. The project will result in a clear understanding of the agriculture and value-added agricultural activity taking place in the region for opportunity identification and investment attraction purposes.

SouthGrowN People, Products and Pride

SouthGrow has partnered with Alberta Agriculture and Food to develop a publication focusing on SouthGrowN People, Products and Pride. Supplementing the "Grow Your Own" effort, the publication will show the people that are involved in the agricultural economy, from primary to value-added to food service. The 16-page, tabloid sized publication will feature value chain players in various segments of farming and ranching processors and end users in the area. The publication will be distributed to over 45,000 homes in the SouthGrow region free of charge in an effort to showcase SouthGrowN people, products and pride that contribute to a thriving agricultural economy.

New Foreign Worker Hotline Announced!

Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry has recently announced a new toll-free Foreign Worker Information Line to assist employers with questions on the immigration process. Experienced Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry staff are available Monday to Friday to answer questions on the immigration process. Call: 1-877-427-6419 within Alberta or (780) 427-6419 outside Alberta.

Energy Efficiency Tune-up for Farms

A new pilot program is looking to help 100 producers in the SouthGrow region make their operations more energy efficient. Energy audits will help these producers identify ways to cut operating costs and improve their bottom line. The OnFarm Energy Efficiency Program was developed by Climate Change Central and Alberta Agriculture and Food to explore opportunities to help improve energy efficiency within the agriculture sector. For a limited time, SouthGrow-region dairy, poultry and swine producers in Alberta may be eligible for energy efficiency audits. These audits will evaluate energy use on the farm and provide recommendations for changing equipment or practices that will result in economic and environmental benefits.

Beyond the pilot, the OnFarm program will establish a regional network that includes equipment, supplies, services, financing and expertise needed to improve energy use in Alberta's agriculture sector. If you are interested in participating in the program call now to book your audit. Contact Debbie Campbell at (403) 329-1212 or by e-mail at Debbie.campbell@gov.ab.ca

This program is funded by Alberta Innovation and Science's Unleashing Innovation Program and Alberta Agriculture and Food. More information is available at SouthGrow Regional Initiative's website (www.southgrow.com) by following the links to the Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership and Climate Change Central.

2007 Tiffin Conference Series

The Tiffin Conference Series at the Lethbridge Community College is made possible through the Ronald Tiffin Agricultural Endowment Fund, held in honor of Ronald Wight Tiffin, to provide world class learning opportunities to southern Alberta's farmers and ranchers. The series continues on February 15th with the topic: "Alternative Enterprises in Agriculture". The session takes place at the LaValley Theatre in the Instructional Building at the Lethbridge Community College. Key Note Speaker is Ted Bilyea from the Canadian Agri-Food Council. For more information or to register, contact Kathy Waddell at 403-329-7212.

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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 Coutts
Village of Champion
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

Members Get Road Map

The **Three Year Business Plan** was presented at the general meeting of the membership on January 17, 2007 at the Sandman Inn in Lethbridge. The Strategic Collaboration Committee was charged with overseeing the development of this document. Priority initiatives for the 2007/2008 include: developing and building partnerships by forming Ad Hoc Industry/Sector Committees, providing training to member representatives, developing regional success stories and recognition event to further brand SouthGrow, developing industry/sector profiles, conducting an opportunity identification study of the region and continuing with Alternative Energy Initiatives including the inaugural Alternative Energy Conference. These initiatives will be funded mainly through membership monies as well as Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry through its partnership agreement.

Lenore Rockenbach, Committee Chair said, "we are very pleased with the strategic direction this is taking the organization. It will allow us to move forward with our goals and provides us with a road map for how to get there." Focusing on the natural and existing strengths of the region and building on the past initiatives of SouthGrow, "this plan reflects the synergy of the committees and their projects." The business plan was endorsed unanimously by the membership.

At the meeting the New **Economic Development Coaching Guide** was also introduced to membership. The Guide compliments and builds upon existing training resources in the province, enhances the coaching and leadership skills of CED practitioners and provides additional tools to use during community economic development projects. The Guide was developed in response to the 68 percent of the membership who identified in SouthGrow's Opportunity Attraction Needs Assessment that they needed assistance in developing and delivering their Economic Strategic Plan.

Marie Logan, sixth generation farming family from County of Vulcan and director of **Rural Alberta's Development Fund**, also spoke about the Fund which is a not-for-profit company created by the Government of Alberta in order to support communities, regional alliances, government departments and not-for-profit organizations in starting initiatives that stimulate

economic growth and address rural challenges and opportunities. The \$100 million fund will consider projects that contribute to the growth, prosperity or quality of life of rural Alberta and that demonstrate how they support the community. Projects that are identified as priorities through comprehensive community planning processes or where a broad cross-section of the community is involved are encouraged. More information and details are available at www.ruralalbertasfund.com.

New Members

SouthGrow Regional Initiative is pleased to announce that the Village of Champion and Cardston County have joined as member communities, bringing total membership to 26 communities. The new memberships align with the alliance's mandate to develop and build regional partnerships.



SouthGrow

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**PEOPLE...
make the
SouthGrow
region proud.**

Sakamoto Earns More Accolades

Ron Sakamoto continues to do Canada and in particular, South Central Alberta proud. Not only is Sakamoto a fourteen time winner of Promoter of the Year Award from the Canadian Country Music Association (CCMA), he was named the U.S. CMA's international promoter of the year. Adding to these accomplishments is his recent election onto the board of directors of the American Country Music Association in Nashville, becoming only the second Canadian named to the Board that represents 5,000 voting members. Sakamoto of Gold and Gold Productions joins a group of powerful and influential people in country music, including the CEO of



Universal Music and CEO of the William Morris Agency. Sakamoto's election on the Board enables him to participate in decisions in country music that will guide its direction and potentially increase the profile of the Canadian country music industry and its artists. Ron is a familiar face on SouthGrow's website. He's featured as one of our SouthGrowN people.

Blood Tribe's Creighton Honoured

Eugene Creighton of the Blood Tribe was recently honoured by the University of Alberta with one of 37 Alumni Honour Awards. These prestigious awards recognize alumni who have made significant contributions to their communities and beyond, improving the lives of others through their efforts in human

rights, housing and hunger prevention. Creighton's law firm, Walsh Wilkins Creighton, in Standoff acts as counsel for a number of First Nations organizations. An expert in Aboriginal Law, Creighton has educated non-Aboriginal lawyers about first Nations people, and taught at the University of Lethbridge and Red Crow College on Aboriginal issues.

Justin Duban ... SouthGrow Spotlight



How can restaurants help to limit environmental pollution and reduce greenhouse gas emissions? Ask Justin Duban, President of Refuel Bioproducts Corporation who recently completed a Bachelor of Science degree in Agriculture Studies at the University of Lethbridge and won the Agri-Value category of the Chinook Entrepreneur Challenge, which SouthGrow proudly sponsors annually. Justin recycles used deep fryer oil into biodiesel. After doing a study on biodiesel blend detection as an Engineering Research Assistant at the Agtech Centre, Justin started to produce

fuel for his family's farm near Nobleford. The fuel is used in nearly all the diesel equipment on the farm at blends of 10 to 40 percent with regular petroleum diesel.

So, how does he convert used restaurant oil into biodiesel? The waste vegetable oil is processed via a chemical reaction called transesterification. This reaction breaks down the triglyceride (oil) molecules into methyl esters (biodiesel) and crude glycerin. The properties of methyl esters closely mimic the properties of petroleum diesel, thus making biodiesel a compatible fuel for use in all diesel engines without requiring any modifications.

Justin, as part of the Chinook Entrepreneur Challenge, developed a three year business plan for Refuel Bioproducts Corporation. He plans to expand his business to provide Southern Albertans with an environmentally friendly, alternative fuel choice. Justin's entrepreneurial spirit and knowledge and experience in alternative fuels is sure to benefit the South Central region of Alberta!

Westwind Rodeo Academy Set to Develop Talent

Cardston High School is preparing to launch a rodeo academy that will soon bring dozens of high school rodeo competitors for world class training and instruction. The pilot program would see 10 boys and 10 girls attend regular classes throughout the day, with a trip to the Cardston Agridome for two hours of rodeo instruction from professional rodeo riders and horsemen at the end of the day. Beyond gaining

a wide range of rodeo skills, the participants will have a chance to instruct younger children in the basics of rodeo during seminars, earning them credit for their instruction. The program has been carefully thought out including a sponsorship from Wrangler Jeans. This is sure to result in the fruition of the Academy's vision of providing the opportunity for high school students to continue progress towards graduation from high school while developing their talents in the sport of rodeo.

Vauxhall High: A Source of Pride and Celebration

Vauxhall High School was recently recognized at the Garfield Weston Awards for Excellence in Education for Academic Achievement in Excess of Expectations (runner-up) and received an honourable mention in Improvement in Academics in the high school category. Vauxhall High School was one of only seven schools in the province to be nominated in the two categories. Based on analysis of the his-

torical data of each school included in the Fraser Institute's annual report card, out of 270 high schools and 729 elementary schools in Alberta, only the top 30 were invited to attend the awards. Principal Todd Ojala notes that "without the community that we have and without the teaching staff that we have, without the feeder schools that we have, I don't believe we would be in line for this award. It's a combined effort from the division to the communities to the parents, to great students to great teachers."

PRODUCTS... SouthGrowN and valued.

Broxburn Vegetables in Finer Restaurants

Imagine growing produce and spices that are used in regional cuisine at area restaurants creating a fresh, healthy win-win scenario for producers and restaurants in the region. The key ingredient in this picture is Rudy Knitel, a marketer with a vision. Knitel's company Galimax has partnered with Broxburn Vegetables and Café Owner Paul DeJonge, and using a ready network of Calgary and Banff restaurants, has ensured that regionally produced fruits, vegetables and other foods are available to consumers through restaurants. Currently, Galimax-Broxburn is supplying fresh vegetables and spices as well as in season fruits to more than 30 restaurants in Calgary, Canmore, Banff and Lake Louise. Galimax ... bringing SouthGrowN products together with consumers in the region to ensure a truly regional cuisine.

to add value to canola and flax oils with enhanced health properties to use in foods and food preparation.

The first aspect of the Bioactive Oils Program aims to increase the saturated fatty acids in canola from 6 to 7 percent up to 15 to 20 percent, allowing processors to use Canadian grown canola for trans-free food applications such as baking. The second aspect of the program involves developing flax seed lines with enhanced polyunsaturated fatty acids content in the form of omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids. These are linked to the maintenance of good health and show promise in reducing rheumatoid arthritis, high blood cholesterol, coronary heart disease, diabetic neuropathy and high blood pressure.

With the advantage in Western Canada being uniform growing conditions in a large area that produce a uniform oil, the program is sure to provide a link between plant breeders and the end users through the development of more oils to meet specific market demands with special applications.

Adding Value for Health

Alberta Agriculture researchers, including one at the University of Lethbridge, have received \$5.3 million from AVAC towards a \$16 million program

PROGRESS... success in the region.

A Special Plan for a Special Place

In 2004, the Village of Nobleford committed to a Special Plan to make it a more vibrant, growing and sustainable modern community. In order to implement the plan, several things were accomplished. First, a state-of-the-art, PALL, water treatment plant was funded cooperatively by the Province and the Village in 2005. This resulted in an abundance of top quality water, making way to the next stage of the plan: completing a 2 km paved walking path, as well as, the purchase of modern oscillating swings and unique playground equipment for parks, reinforcing the active and healthy lifestyle of residents. Next, the Village planned for expansion and growth of the community by boldly purchasing 45 acres of land in order to develop the largest residential, commercial and industrial subdivisions in the Village's history. The marketing and sales of the development proved to be a success with only a dozen residential lots left for sale and about \$3 million in development permits already issued. Nobleford has truly positioned itself as a

Special Place by offering excellent property values and a solid modern infrastructure, resulting in population growth that will increase property assessment values and reduce taxation mill rates.

Raymond: Thriving Small Urban Community

The Town of Raymond's housing and development market landscape has been reshaped dramatically with a steady stream of private developers approaching the Town Administration and Subdivision Authority with subdivision applications and plans. Current projections are that within the next 24 months, 140 to 160 lots will be fully serviced and on the market. This compares to 12 new homes being constructed in 2005 and 32 in 2006. In addition to affordably priced lots, Raymond's charm includes clean, safe lifestyle with tremendous schools and recreational amenities; close and easy access to city life; a good cross-section of health services; and well-developed infrastructure and responsible fiscal operations. Raymond is truly poised to be a thriving small urban community.

**PRIDE...
in the region's
accomplish-
ments.**