

Performance Results for 2016-17 West Yellowhead

Community Futures (CF) is a program that supports community economic development and builds the capacity of communities to realize their full sustainable potential. The purpose of the CF Program is to help communities develop and implement *local solutions to local problems*.

Community Futures Performance Results	Results as of 2016-17
<i>Strong rural community strategic planning and implementation</i>	
1. Total number of community-based projects (new & on-going)	47
2. Total number of local and regionally-based community strategic plans developed and/or updated	6
<i>Rural access to business development services</i>	
3. Total number of business training session participants	166
4. Total number of business advisory services	827
<i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i>	
5. Dollar value of loans	\$635,322.62
6. Total number of loans	16
7. Number of jobs created/maintained/expanded through lending ¹	77.5
Provide additional Information (e.g. Success stories, Links to priorities, leveraging work, communication events, etc...)	
<p>Community Futures West Yellowhead serves the municipalities of Jasper, Hinton, Edson, Grande Cache and Yellowhead County. The West Yellowhead has an unique and diverse economy and each community in our region had its own economic challenges in the 2016-2017 year. Like many regions in Alberta, the downturn in the oil and gas industry brought challenges to the region as small businesses in the industry experienced a decrease in the volume of work and possible contracts in the past year. However, plans to expand the Trans Mountain Pipeline in the region will increase the opportunities available to this industry in the region and we expect to see an increase in opportunities for small businesses in Hinton, Edson and Yellowhead County. Yellowhead County declared an agricultural disaster in late 2016 due to wet conditions in the region; this was the second consecutive year that the county declared an agricultural disaster in the region. Producers in the region were not able to harvest crops and we expect to see the economic impact on this sector into 2017-2018. The increase to the Mountain Pine Beetle in the region outside of Jasper National Park, the softwood lumber dispute with the United States and the need to protect Woodland Caribou is influencing change in the forestry industry. Tourism is flourishing in the region as free access to the national parks in 2017 is increasing traffic on Highway 16 into Jasper National Park. Retail businesses in the region continue to be challenged as spending habits of consumers is changing due to the ease of online shopping; however, it is hoped that these consumers will spend more time in our communities as the numbers of visitors to Jasper National Park reaches record levels. Changes to governmental attitudes towards coal and thermal energy in Alberta are challenging for the economy of Grande Cache and this community remains our biggest challenge to serve in the region due to its unique economic needs.</p> <p>Community Futures West Yellowhead's Board of Directors is served by ten directors from each of our five</p>	

¹ Estimated at the time of lending

Performance Results for 2013-14 West Yellowhead

municipalities that we serve. CFWY's Board did not experience any change in directors in 2016-2017 and we were able to spend more time on board training and development as a result. In 2016-2017, CFWY Board directors attending two Economic Developers of Alberta Conferences, the CFNA Annual Symposium in Medicine Hat and CFNA Board training sessions in Leduc. At our annual board retreat, board directors did additional loan training designed for our office and regional needs. Staff development was also very important in 2016-2017 with our Business Analyst completing a Foundations of Leadership program at Grande Prairie Regional College and our Office and Special Projects Manager completing the Personal Property Registry certification. CFWY continues to be a provincial partner of the Community Futures program and the CFNA with assisting in the training of new Business Analysts in Capital Region and Yellowhead East and by sharing best practices on Business Retention and Expansion at the CFNA conference in Medicine Hat and our Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program at CFNA Spring Training in Leduc. CFWY is also an active participant on the CFNA Symposium Planning committee and the development of the provincial BizStream program.

Business coaching, business training, business financing and community economic development continue to be the four main areas of operations for the Community Futures program in the West Yellowhead. Business coaching is our main area of operations but is challenged by the size of our region that runs almost 400 kilometers in driving distance. CFWY works with its partners in Jasper, Edson, Grande Cache and Yellowhead County to offer business coaching to our region and these partnerships allow us to meet the distance challenges in a more cost-effective manner.

Business training for our clients was a priority in 2016-2017 as we focused on our Ask the Social Media Expert lunchtime series offered monthly in Jasper and Hinton. CFWY collaborated with regional chambers from Jasper, Hinton and Edson and the Government of Alberta to jointly offer a Tourism Entrepreneurship workshop in Jasper in March. Junior Achievement activities were supported by CFWY staff and several classes were offered in the region for youth and CFWY participates in a regional Junior Achievement committee to focus on growing entrepreneurship with youth in the region. CFWY also supported the conception of the Entrepreneurs' Learning Circle in Hinton which helped create 8 small businesses in Hinton through leadership and business training. Through CFWY, the Elevate and Entrepreneurs with Disabilities program leveraged just over \$15,000 for clients in the West Yellowhead who experience barriers and wish to pursue their dream of self-employment.

Loans continue to be a focus of our operational success at Community Futures West Yellowhead. Our focus for 2016-2017 was to offer smaller loans to reflect the downturn in the economy and to better meet the needs of our clients. The strategy was very successful as CFWY dispersed 16 loans in 2016/2017 for a total of \$636,000 in direct loans and leverages of \$2,434,250 in additional capital. These loans added 77 jobs to our regional economy in 2016/2017. Loans to both the Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting industry, and Yellowhead County increased in 2016/2017; two areas that were a central focus of our operational work in the past fiscal year.

The absence of a provincial REDA for the West Yellowhead region has resulted in a strong focus on rural, community economic development projects by CF West Yellowhead. In the past three years, our organization has completed a Business Visitation study in each of the five communities which we serve as well as a two year follow up in 2016-2017 in Jasper and Grande Cache. All studies are available on our website at <http://westyellowhead.albertacf.com/business-visitation-studies>. Community Futures West Yellowhead and Agricultural Services in Yellowhead County collaborated to develop the Yellowhead Local Food Initiative in 2016-2017. This project has the goal of ensuring a wide range of local food options are readily available to consumers in our region and will help promote local goods and products to the West Yellowhead and beyond. In 2017-2018, this initiative is expanded to include Alberta Open Farm Days. More information on the West Yellowhead Local Food Initiative is available at <http://www.yellowheadcounty.ab.ca/growyellowhead>. CFWY continues to support many economic development initiatives throughout the region as they progress such as Edson beautification, development of the dinosaur tracks in Grande Cache, GPRC's Jasper Culinary School and the development of access to broadband and internet services throughout the West Yellowhead.