

Performance Results for 2014-15 Community Futures 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 X
<i>Strong rural community strategic planning and implementation</i>	
1. Total number of community based projects:	59
<i>Rural access to business development services</i>	
2. Number of jobs created/ maintained/ expanded through business services	78
3. Number of business training session participants	178
4. Number of business advisory services	505
<i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i>	
5. Dollar value of loans	\$902,500
6. Number of loans	15
Provide additional Information (e.g. Success stories, Links to priorities, leveraging work, communication events, etc...)	
<p>Community Futures West Yellowhead experienced a successful year in 2014-2015 as a result of the focus on transition and organizational change from the past two fiscal years. One of the key elements of introducing change into an organization is realizing that success takes time and focused energy.</p> <p>Community Futures West Yellowhead's Board of Directors implemented the majority of revitalization initiatives introduced by Western Economic Diversification. We are formally adopting a number of new policies over the next few months through board motions and Articles of Association amendments. Currently, we are amending our General Policy and Procedures, Investment Review Committee Policy, Human Resources Policy and our Articles of Association to make sure that we are meeting all revitalization initiatives. Board training and orientation was a priority throughout the year as staff and board members attended the CFNA Annual Conference in Canmore and a large percentage of our board attended a Board Leadership conference at Grant MacEwan University. CFWY also finalized its board orientation package in the past year.</p> <p>Our biggest challenge is the size of our region in the West Yellowhead. Once again, we looked for innovative ways to physically reach out to our clients to help them start or grow their businesses. Through partnerships with the Jasper Park Chamber of Commerce and the Edson and District Chamber of Commerce, we were able to offer outreach days where our staff could meet clients in their home towns as opposed to them travelling to Hinton to our main office. The result of these partnerships was a growth in our loan portfolio in both communities as well as our business advisory services for the 2014/2015 fiscal year. CFWY continues to look for innovative and cost effective ways to reach out to businesses in our region.</p>	

Performance Results for 2013-14 Community Futures West Yellowhead

Fifteen loans were dispersed in the fiscal year and we saw a number of successes in the West Yellowhead region. Patricia Street Deli in Jasper finished their loan payments after five years. Patricia Street Deli is located in Jasper and offers an unique styled deli that charms locals and tourists. This business is proud of their success and thanks Community Futures West Yellowhead in helping them getting started and working with businesses through their five years.

In 2014/2015, Community Futures West Yellowhead initiated a three year Business Visitation Program in the West Yellowhead region. Our biggest community economic development project over the next three years focuses on the economic development tool of business retention and expansion. The Business Visitation Program determines the needs and opportunities for business growth in the communities we serve through a systematic, survey approach. It creates research and information that partners with community engagement to address business needs and opportunities. In 2014/2015, CFWY received funding from Alberta Human Services to complete a Business Visitation Program in Jasper and we utilized RABC Grande Cache funding from Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education to complete the study in Grande Cache. Our success with this program is evident as Community Futures West Yellowhead received Non-Profit of the Year at the Small Business Gala in Jasper in October 2014 and our Business Advisor was asked to speak about the program at the Economic Developers of Alberta Annual Professional Development Conference in April 2015. In the next fiscal year, we plan to complete the program in Hinton and Yellowhead County and in Edson in 2016/2017. For access to the final reports, please see our website at westyellowhead.albertacf.com.

Training opportunities through CFWY were very prosperous in 2014/2015. We offered a number of training opportunities to our clients and found very creative ways to offer programming to a very large, rural region that often has the challenge of sporadic internet services.

The upcoming fiscal year will once again see its challenges in the West Yellowhead. The lower value of the Canadian dollar and the price of oil is a challenge felt by all CF offices in Alberta. This also influences our clients in the West Yellowhead as training, exports and imports and work in the oil and gas industry is once again impacted. Our tourism clients will see a profitable year however as the lower dollar and cheaper gas prices encourage more travelers to come to the West Yellowhead to see our beautiful mountains and UNESCO World Heritage Site Jasper National Park. The changes to the temporary foreign worker program has influenced a high number of businesses in the region as workers are continually needed for entry level jobs. Many business owners in the region are struggling to staff their businesses adequately so that they can meet the higher tourist demand. The lower price of coal lingers again in the upcoming fiscal year to influence the communities of Hinton and Grande Cache as we continue to see closures, layoffs and delays in production in the region's coal industry.