

Performance Results for 2019-20 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 2019-20
<i>Strong rural community strategic planning and implementation</i>	
1. Total number of community-based projects (new & on-going)	17
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	610
4. Total number of business advisory services	632
<i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i>	
5. Dollar value of loans	\$782,000
6. Total number of loans	11
7. Number of jobs created/maintained/expanded through lending ¹	58
Provide additional information (e.g. Success stories, Links to priorities, leveraging work, communication events, etc...)	
<p>Despite an economic downturn in 2019/2020, Community Futures West Yellowhead had a successful year supporting and implementing the Community Futures program to the West Yellowhead region. CFWY focused on meeting its Minimum Performance Standards, incorporating Government of Canada priorities, and ensuring that programming met the vision and strategic priorities set by the Community Futures West Yellowhead Board of Directors.</p> <p>The West Yellowhead region is unique in the province as it holds five communities that are ultimately based on five different core industries. It has allowed CFWY to have a diversified loan portfolio and provide supports to a range of businesses across most of the main economic sectors driving the Albertan economy. However, each industry is dependent on the survival of all these sectors working together to ensure the economic health of the region. In recent years, the West Yellowhead region is challenged to have a successful economy. The tourism industry in Jasper National Park is healthier compared to resources based industries but is not without its own stresses as smoke from British Columbia and Alberta forest fires deter visitation in the summer months and the 24 month closure in 2019 and 2020 for renovations of the largest campground in the park means that there is less camping available for tourists (approximately 750 sites per night). Tourism and rail traffic was impacted in February 2020 with rail blockades in northern British Columbia related to indigenous rights surrounding the pipeline construction. Forestry, tourism and oil and gas are directly affected by the infestation of the Mountain Pine Beetle through the</p>	

¹ Estimated at the time of lending

national park and into the neighbouring communities. The TransMountain Pipeline is finally starting construction in the region, but long periods of inactivity have placed a psychological hold on the region as many businesses are reluctant to expand or unable to continue working in the region. Mine closures in Hinton in 2020 and instability in the Grande Cache Coal mine are adding to the economic turmoil and are coming at a time when the region is already unstable. Adding to this is we are heading into 2020/2021 amidst the COVID-19 global pandemic with international borders and national parks closures for an indeterminate amount of time.

Despite the economic challenges, CFWY experienced success in 2019/2020 as our Minimum Performance Standards were met and exceeded in the fiscal year. Loan disbursements were at our expected annual levels with 11 loans issued for a total of \$782,000 throughout the region. This resulted in our clients' ability to leverage \$1,211,500 by accessing Community Futures funds with the creation of 59 jobs in small businesses in the West Yellowhead. This is slightly decreased from the previous fiscal year of 2018/2019 but reflects the challenges experienced in the economy in the West Yellowhead in 2019/2020. In 2019/2020, through business coaching services in the West Yellowhead, we helped create, maintain, and/or expand 266 businesses through 981 client sessions in our business advisory services. Once again, CFWY is proving to our region that we can support businesses through business coaching and business financing.

Training was once again a priority for CFWY this year as we launched the SMARTstart program in Hinton. SMARTstart is an eight-month entrepreneurial program combines online training, face to face workshops and mentorship to develop new businesses and entrepreneurial skills. CFWY and Alberta Labour and Immigration partnered on a rural speakers' project to bring training and speakers to Jasper, Hinton and Edson. CFWY continued its award-winning health and safety program with workshops entitled "Creating a Health and Safety Management System" and "Psychological Health and Safety". In total, CFWY helped 710 training participants in 2019/2020.

Partnering with the Municipal District of Greenview, CFWY helped facilitate a Triage Business Retention and Expansion project in April 2019 to assess the impact on local businesses of the dissolution of the municipality of Grande Cache and the integration of the hamlet into the municipal district. From this work, an economic development plan was created and implemented in partnership with the MD and the Grande Cache Business Support Network was formed. This successful group is working together to meet the many challenges faced by the community of Grande Cache. The MD and CFWY are nominated for a business retention and expansion award at the annual Economic Developers of Alberta conference in 2020.

Community Futures West Yellowhead will continue to work on delivering our core services of business coaching, business training, business financing and community economic development in our five communities of Jasper, Hinton, Edson, Grande Cache and Yellowhead County. We know the year ahead will be challenging with coal mine closures and the recovery from COVID-19 but we are optimistic that CFWY will continue on a course of success and be able to work to improve both the economic conditions and businesses in the region.

Community Futures West Yellowhead focused on our core services of business coaching, business training, business financing and community economic development in 2019/2020. Our core services continue to be the foundation of the organization and as seen in our Minimum Performance Standards, continue to be the core of our work in the West Yellowhead region. In addition, CFWY introduced several new programs in 2019/2020 that were tremendously success

Grande Cache Marketing and Outreach program: Community Futures West Yellowhead and the Municipal District of Greenview partnered to hire MDB Insight to conduct a "Triage BR&E Strategic Action Plan" to highlight the transition of the community from a stand-alone municipality to a hamlet within the MD of Greenview. From this study, an economic development action plan was created with deliverables for both CFWY and the MD for the next two years. From this economic development action plan, a Grande Cache Business Support Network (BSN) was created with the first meeting in February 2020. In partnership with the BSN, CFWY launched a focused marketing campaign in Grande Cache on our core services and also funded our Business Analyst, Tim Shain, to travel and work in Grande Cache throughout the month to conduct some one on one business coaching with clients. To view this work, please go to <http://westyellowhead.albertacf.com/business-visitation-studies>

Tourism Industry Business Retention and Expansion (TIBRE): This project focused on Hinton, Alberta and tourism related businesses operating outside Jasper National Park. The Tourism Industry Business Retention and Expansion Project (TIBRE) is designed to identify business retention issues and expansion opportunities for existing tourism businesses in targeted municipalities. This project involved the identification of existing and eligible tourism businesses. CFWY conducted a face to face visit with them to assess their health and intention. This project helped tourism businesses optimize their operations by identifying challenges and implementing solutions to help them grow. Future CFWY projects are planned for 2020/2021 based on the results of this work. For a copy of the full report, please visit our webpage at <http://westyellowhead.albertacf.com/business-visitation-studies>.

Lemonade Day 2019 – Lemonade Day is a free, fun, experiential learning program that teaches youth how to start, own and operate their own business – a lemonade day stand. This year CFWY supported the program in Jasper and Hinton on June 20, 2019 where kids sold lemonade for the day. Kids designed their own business and attended entrepreneurial learning sessions to plan their business and compete for the Best Recipe (of which had to be an original recipe to sell). A few of the Jasper and Hinton’s stands were called: Dino Delish, Shae’s Wonderade, Sea Sisters Lemonade, Lil Lemon Ladies and Ashleigh’s Amazing Lemonade. Kids were encouraged to save some money, spend some money, and donate some money to a local charity. Our Lemonade Day kids donated part of their profits to SPCA, Hinton Food Bank, Resident Care Foundation, Awana, Freddy’s Homeless Resource Room, Alzheimer’s Society of Alberta, and Gateway Community Church Youth Group. Lemonade Day is organized and supported by our Youth Coordinator, Deanne Fabrick.

Accessibility Hinton Focus Group – In January 2020, in partnership with the Town of Hinton, members of the Hinton business community and local resident, Jon Halvorson, who uses a wheelchair, a focus group discussion was held. Mr. Halvorson shared his experiences and challenges he has faced since moving to Hinton 12 years ago and thoughts and recommendations were made by the group for low-cost and no-cost options to improve accessibility in businesses in Hinton. This project will continue into 2020/2021. This project is led by our Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Coordinator, Michelle MacNeil.

Green Square Working Space – In partnership with the Town of Hinton, CFWY launched the Green Square Working Space at our office at 221 Pembina Avenue. This full service co-working space is ideal for work at home professional and independent businesses who require additional space outside the home to conduct the day to day operations of their businesses. Although it is closed temporarily due to COVID-19 public health guidelines, CFWY is partnering with Project Gazelle to enhance the space and launch new marketing in 2020/2021 to increase usage of our already popular space. For more information on our Green Square Working Space, check out our webpage at <http://westyellowhead.albertacf.com/green-square-working-space>.