

Progress

North East

Growing communities one idea at a time



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Program News & Updates

The transition to new loans management software has been completed. *The Exceptional Assistant (TEA)* software will provide staff with the ability to monitor and respond to clients' needs in a more timely manner. With this transition completed, the loans program has been reopened and we look forward to welcoming new clients.

In addition to making necessary improvements in our loans software, the office will now be reporting to Equifax on a monthly basis. This measure is to further assist clients who are making regular payment to build a strong credit history. Conversely, clients who are in arrears and not making regular payments will have their credit records indicate as such, which will reflect negatively on their credit rating.

Equifax reporting commenced early September.

Manager's Minutes

This newsletter brings with it a new beginning of sorts. The loans portfolio is now back in business and ready to assist new business start ups in our region.

The Board of Directors have worked hard to completely revamp and modernize the corporation at all levels. New policy manuals have been drafted that set a governance structure that will strengthen the corporation for years to come.

Your Community Futures is committed to this region and will assist wherever possible to maintain growth and expansion projects.

Community Futures staff are eager to help you. The new slogan is *Growing communities one idea at a time.*



Western Economic
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie
de l'Ouest Canada



Regional Success

Eclipse Electric

Eclipse Electric is lighting up the home-based business scene in St. Paul. Devon Dean was working towards getting his electrician ticket in Bonnyville when he decided it was time to give something back to the community of St. Paul. With an increase in construction projects in the area, the market for certified electricians was booming. At about the same time, Dean met Community Futures General Manager, Paul Pelletier, at a town conference. Pelletier encouraged Dean to come speak with him once he was ready to get going on his business idea and the young entrepreneur was quick to take Pelletier up on the offer.



Dean thanks Community Futures St Paul – Smoky Lake Region for providing both the funding and general business counseling he needed as he worked to establish Eclipse Electric. “I learned about banking, bookkeeping, secretary work, everything,” says Dean. “Paul helped me figure out where to look and how to advertise.”

Eclipse Electric now operates out of the Dean home in St. Paul, with Devon and several part-time employees working long hours to provide the highest quality services to their clients. “I hear from a lot of people that the first three years are tough but I’m thankful I’ve done well in the first year and hope that the boom continues and I can branch out,” Dean explains. Before the end of December, Dean estimates that they will have successfully completed work on 30-32 new builds in the St. Paul area.

Deciding to open the doors to his own business is a risk Devon Dean is happy he took. He has this advice to aspiring entrepreneurs: “Go for it! Do the work, secure your funding and go. What you put into it is what you’re going to get out.”



Working Together...

Community Futures St Paul – Smoky Lake Region is at work in your community. We provide business development counseling and loan assistance, facilitate strategic planning sessions with municipalities and community service groups, and seek out opportunities that will result in sustainable economic growth throughout our region. Contact a member of St Paul – Smoky Lake team to find out how you can grow with Community Futures.

Eye on Progress

Northern Alberta Youth Entrepreneurship Camp ... a great wrap-up to summer fun!

Forty-seven campers representing regions throughout Northern Alberta came together for a week of entrepreneurship training, team building and fun before heading back to class. Organizers of NAYEC 2007 say that the camp was a huge success and that many youth were enthusiastic about returning to camp in 2008. Campers were assigned teams and worked together to develop business plans and bring their ideas into operation on the final day of camp, Market Day.

Businesses included confectionaries, key chain companies, picnic basket treats, memory frames and photo CDs, beeswax candles, ice cream stands, tees and tattooing.

The camp combines recreation activities, entrepreneurship games and business training to provide participants with a full camp experience and knowledge of business processes. Look forward to more fun at NAYEC 2008!



Smoky Lake Artist's Retreat

After a successful Artist's Retreat held in May, the future is looking bright for a full-time retreat in Smoky Lake County. The Smoky Lake and District Chamber of Commerce project began when Chamber president, Wayne Taylor, read about a similar model operating in the United States. MacDowell Colony, in Peterborough, New Hampshire, was founded in 1907 with its mission being to foster development of the arts in a nurturing, supportive and collaborative environment. Artists live and work together, sharing techniques and experiences. Taylor recognized the growth opportunities a project like MacDowell Colony would hold for local art and business communities. Smoky Lake County could become a meeting place for artists nationwide.

The project has been met with positive feedback and encouragement. The project requires a full-time executive director to coordinate the Retreat and secure project sponsors, as well as land and studio space. The group's initial request to Rural Alberta's Development Fund to hire this individual was successfully passed through to the second round. "They love the idea and want us to be a model for other communities to follow," says Taylor. "We're grateful for the support." The Smoky Lake and District Chamber of Commerce must now submit a detailed project business plan. The RADF funding requires that applicants provide 25% or more of the overall project costs, which means that Taylor's group is now working on raising their 25%. The County of Smoky Lake has committed funding to the project and the Smoky Lake Artist's Retreat has letters of support from the Town of Smoky Lake, Village of Vilna and Village of Waskatenau. For further information, please contact the Smoky Lake & District Chamber of Commerce.

One idea at a time...

Community involvement and partnerships throughout the region include:

- Beef Processing opportunity Chongqing China
- Municipal strategic planning exercises
- Community Capacity Trainer (RCED)
- Regional Arts & Leisure Centre
- Doctor Recruitment Committee
- Employment, Education & Training Committee
- Northern Alberta Youth Entrepreneurship Camp

Entrepreneur Training

Small Business Brown Bag Presentations **FREE!**

**Tuesdays & Thursdays
12 noon – 1pm**

Fall sessions are now underway. Don't miss out on great learning opportunities such as:

- **Employee retention strategies** – tips & tools to save you money
- **Home-based business tips to success** – 30 survival tips for success
- **Marketing planning** – know where you want to go & how to get there
- **Understanding your financial statements** – where the numbers come from & what they mean
- **Bookkeeping skills for small business** – what are your options & how to get started
- **E-Business basics** – using technology to help grow your business
- **Internet security** – protecting yourself & your computer

...and MORE!

Visit www.communityfuturesspsl.ca for more information. Click on the ELC Entrepreneurship Learning Centre logo for full program listings.



Contact us to **Register** & for more information today!

Entrepreneurs With Disabilities Program (EDP)

Helping entrepreneurs with disabilities build their business future.

EDP makes it easier for entrepreneurs who have a disability to access business services, including:

- Help to develop viable business plans
- Mentoring and one-on-one business counseling
- Access to business training, resources, and development
- Assistance in identifying requirements for special equipment
- Business loans

EDP supports entrepreneurs who have been unsuccessful in obtaining funding from other institutions, have a physical or mental disability, who are restricted in performing duties associated with operating their business, who have a viable business plan, and who reside in Western Canada.

For eligibility and loans information, please contact us today!

The great accomplishments of man have resulted from the transmission of ideas and enthusiasm.

-- Thomas J. Watson