

Performance Results for 2013-14 Community Futures Yellowhead East

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 March 31, 2014
<b><i>Strong rural community strategic planning and implementation</i></b>	
1. Total number of community based projects:	<b>19</b>
<b><i>Rural access to business development services</i></b>	
2. Number of jobs created/ maintained/ expanded through business services	<b>42</b>
3. Number of business training session participants	<b>172</b>
4. Number of business advisory services	<b>223</b>
<b><i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i></b>	
5. Dollar value of loans	\$ 776,149.09
6. Number of loans	<b>14</b>
Provide additional information (e.g. Success stories, Links to priorities, leveraging work, communication events, etc...)	
<p>2013-14 proved to be a busy and successful year with many new initiatives undertaken and new partnerships formed! One example is the partnership consisting of Community Futures Yellowhead East, Woodlands County, the Town of Whitecourt and the Whitecourt &amp; District Chamber of Commerce. The concept that brought the partners together initially was to plan events for the local business community during Small Business Week. The result was three (3) days of events!</p> <p>Wednesday commenced with a Networking Breakfast followed by a presentation by motivational guest speaker Barb Stegemann.</p> <p>Thursday was a training day with various business related training sessions offered throughout the day.</p> <p>On Friday afternoon we premiered the Top Guns of Business. The premise of this event was to connect local successful business owners with either new entrepreneurs or existing business owners who were looking to develop new products and/or services. The goal was to encourage investment by locals to locals. The investment could be financial, mentorship or networking opportunities. Potential entrepreneurs were invited to submit their ideas and plans and were then given the opportunity to “pitch” their ideas and requests to a panel of proven successful business owners. After hearing the pitches, the Top Guns could choose to offer a capital investment, a donation, networking connections, mentorship, or business advice.</p>	

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Friday evening the partnership hosted a Small Business Awards Gala. Awards were presented for Staff Member, Small Business and Corporate Business of the Year. Canadian County Music Star Codie Prevost entertained the crowd after supper. Codie received his first business loan through Community Futures and between songs he shared his story of how he has grown his music career.

This initiative proved to be very successful and in fact was the winner of the 2014 Alex Metcalf Award presented at the spring Economic Developers of Alberta conference in April 2014.

A second new initiative was the launch of a local Business Support Network. The Business Support Network will be an ongoing group of businesses, business support organizations and provincial government representatives which will meet on a monthly basis to identify and address local current business and human resources issues. The goal of the initiative is to provide a venue for businesses to come together in an open and positive setting to collaborate, exchange ideas and work through identified business and workforce issues.

Planning for this initiative began in March 2014. The first meeting saw 40 individuals representing 33 separate businesses attend. The feedback received from this initial meeting was extremely positive. Meetings will be monthly and sponsorship has already been secured until March 2015.