

REVERSING THE TIDE

Strategies for Successful Rural Revitalization

Regional Economic Development Alliances

Alberta Finance and Enterprise
Regional Development Branch

Alberta

What is Regional Economic Development?

“A collaborative approach by communities and supportive partners to achieve prosperity in a defined geographical area based on a shared economic vision for the future”

How is this done in Alberta?

Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs)

Why a Regional Approach?

- Applies a known and proven global best practice
- Provides focus on regional priorities and solutions
- Synergies of working together through collaboration and cooperation
- Stronger, unified voice in dealing with government

Why a Regional Approach?

- Capacity to undertake projects individual communities could not do on their own
- Better economies of scale by pooling and leveraging resources (human and financial)
- Stronger brand when positioning to attract targeted investment or develop export opportunities

Why a Regional Approach?

- Increased access to economic development information and expertise – broader network
- Improved local capacity to compete in a global marketplace
- Coordinated effort reduces duplication

3 examples of regional economic development in action

- Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership
- Central Alberta Regional Manufacturer's Association
- Defense Industry Procurement Initiative

Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership (SAAEP)

- Goal: become a leader in green power development
- Objective: build on region's existing wind energy developments by adding solar/geothermal and bio-fuel projects
- Involves 2 REDAs and Economic Development
Lethbridge represents 39 communities

Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Project (SAAEP)

- \$100K private sources, \$300K federal programs and \$30K from province for Created a Green Growth Plan
- Opportunity identification:
 - biofuels,
 - manufacturing component parts for wind turbines and solar panels,
 - solid waste conversion to power,
 - growing Camelina – a non edible oil
- BFuel Canada Corp. invests \$35M for bio-diesel plant using region's canola

Central Alberta Regional Manufacturer's Association (CARMA)

- Goal: Identify and address challenges facing rural manufacturers to remain competitive: access to training, access to information, peer networking
- Objective: Build a model for effective communication that engages the \$2.5B manufacturing cluster of 229 companies in 20 communities in Central Alberta

Central Alberta Regional Manufacturer's Association (CARMA)

- Supporters/Advisory Committee; REDA, NRC, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters, Rural Secretariat, Alberta Finance & Enterprise, Agriculture & Food Council, Red Deer College, Community Futures
- Developed a Best Practice and Resource Guide
- Delivered 3 Learning Events
- Incorporated with 9 champions

Defense Industry Procurement Initiative

- Goal: Expand local sourcing of goods and services by military bases located in Alberta
- Objective: Identify contract opportunities with CFBs Cold Lake, Suffield and Wainwright
- Objective: Ensure local businesses understand military's purchasing criteria and processes

Defense Industry Procurement Initiative

- Supported by 3 REDAs, 2 Community Futures, Province, The Business Link, and Chambers of Commerce
- Conduct MERX Public Tender training sessions for local businesses which expanded beyond just the defense industry
- New contracts/enhanced relationships with CFB buyers and local suppliers working together to manage larger contracts

Success Factors in Developing REDAs

- Solid trust relationships
- Patience and accommodation – respect
- Willingness and ability to think and plan strategically
- Positive attitude – what's good for a community or stakeholder in the region is good for all

Success Factors in Developing REDAs

- Grass roots, self-selecting membership
- Equitable governance model that demonstrates inclusiveness
- Transparent and accountable - measurable outcomes
- Connection to provincial strategies

Success Factors in Developing REDAs

- Defined principles/values
- Shared vision for the region's economy
- Clear mandate and mission
- Multi-year strategic plan
- Annual operational plan

Success Factors in Developing REDAs

- Solid understanding of economic development
- Strong and supportive network
- Multi-year commitment of resources by stakeholders including province and communities
- Communicate, communicate, communicate

Current REDA Status in Alberta

- 14 existing REDAs throughout the province
- 259 member communities
 - 171 towns and villages
 - 70 counties, municipal districts, special areas
 - 13 Aboriginal communities
- 10 communities belong to more than 1 REDA

Thank you!

George Brosseau,
Director Regional Alliance Development

Learn more about:

REDAs - www.albertacanada.com/regionaldev

SAAEP - www.saaep.ca

CARMA - www.centralalberta.ab.ca Manufacturer Network

Defense Procurement – www.palliser.alberta.com