

Alberta Rural Development Network  
Creating Rural Solutions

11-12



2011 - 2012  
Annual Report



## Transforming Research into Action

Have you ever wondered how to help your community grow? Have you ever read a research report that promised to give you the tools to move forward but only left you confused and disheartened? Have you ever wished that you could spend less time deciphering and more time acting?

If you have, the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) can help. As a not-for-profit, the Network works with its members (colleges, universities, and technical institutes) to enhance the vibrancy of Alberta's rural communities.

**ARDN introduces researchers to the benefits and possibilities that stem from partnering *with* communities instead of conducting research on communities.**

A few months ago, a researcher came to ARDN requesting assistance for a project on environmental issues facing Alberta's rural communities. Staff at ARDN determined that the communities didn't appear to fully understand the purpose and scope of the project, or the benefits it could bring to them. So, ARDN facilitated a networking event that brought together the community members and the researcher to discuss the project and ensure that the communities were engaged in the entire process, **not as research subjects, but as partners**. Now, not only has the researcher ensured the cooperation and support of the partners, but the communities will gain practical information, helping them overcome environmental challenges.

In addition to facilitating better partnerships, ARDN also requires that researchers share the results with communities – not as research papers with scientific jargon and undefined next steps, **but as plain language reports detailing specific and actionable conclusions**, steps that communities can use to move forward.

In Fall 2010, ARDN caught a glimpse of the possibilities these results can create when a pair of researchers worked with two communities to identify the challenges around creating and maintaining businesses in the area.

With ARDN's help they engaged the towns in nearly every step of the process, conducting a survey and holding workshops. After the research was compiled, the researchers went back to the communities to share their results, such as the need for joint marketing initiatives, revitalization of the local Chamber of Commerce, and increased involvement of local agencies and organizations, all of which can be used to **propel the communities forward**.

Less than a year later, the towns have already started to implement the ideas. They are holding workshops on website development and facilitating local training to enhance planning, marketing, IT knowledge, and the financial skills of local business owners. As a direct result of the study, new businesses are springing to life. **And everyone is more willing to work together**. Seeing the two communities progress by leaps and bounds has driven the researchers to begin working with other ARDN members to turn the small research study into one that will cover over 20 other rural communities throughout Alberta.

ARDN knows the value of research increases when rural communities and researchers collaborate to create great projects.

**Knowledge shouldn't sit unused on a shelf; it should form the foundation on which communities can grow and thrive.**

The Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) is a not-for-profit partnership of Alberta's 21 public colleges, universities, and technical institutes working together to support rural communities. ARDN is funded in part by Rural Alberta Development Fund whose funding is provided by the Alberta Government. For more information on ARDN please call 1-877-987-1006 or visit [www.ardn.ca](http://www.ardn.ca).



# Table of Contents

About the Alberta Rural Development Network.....	4
Message from the Chair.....	5
Message from the Premier of Alberta.....	6
Message from the Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education.....	7
Message from the Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development.....	8
Message from the Executive Director.....	9
Community-Engaged Rural Learning Initiative (CERLI).....	10
ARDN Facilitated Projects and Events.....	11
Year in Review.....	12
The Validity of Multiple Mini Interviews.(MMIs).....	15
ARDN-Led Initiatives and Research Projects Over \$10,000.....	16
Research Projects Under \$10,000.....	19
Up in Smoke: The Emergency Facing Fire Services in Rural Areas .....	26
Networking Events.....	28
Inside the 2011 Indie Band Experience.....	39
Financial Statements.....	40
ARDN Teams.....	42
ARDN Members.....	43

## VISION:

A strong sustainable network that is the leading source of trusted rural development research and learning.

## MISSION:

To create a model of rural community development through collaboration in research and learning.

## MANDATE

The Alberta Rural Development Network uses the combined expertise of Alberta's post-secondary institutions to support rural development in Alberta and help rural communities grow through learning and research.

# About the Alberta Rural Development Network

The Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) is a not-for-profit partnership of Alberta's 21 public colleges, universities, and technical institutes. ARDN members work together to support and enhance the well-being of individuals and the vibrancy of communities. ARDN assists with the creation of community driven projects, provides opportunities to create new partnerships, collects and shares applied research and information, and works with rural communities to identify and address gaps in education training.

ARDN draws on the strengths of rural communities, post-secondary institutions, community-based organizations, and the federal, provincial, and municipal governments, to assist in the development of rural Alberta through education, research, collaboration and networking.

RESEARCH is knowledge and information that provides rural communities with the tools they need to move forward and make changes. ARDN assists and facilitates research and projects to improve the quality of life in rural communities, and shares this information through its website, newsletter and events.

EDUCATION is every community's link to growth. ARDN partners with post-secondary institutions and community-based organizations to make education and training more available and to provide links to opportunities that already exist.

COLLABORATION is the sharing of knowledge and abilities. Collaborative relationships increase a community's capacity to make positive changes. ARDN connects individuals and groups and facilitates or participates in those partnerships to foster an effective team approach to rural development.

NETWORKING is the creation of relationships and the exchange of ideas and information. By creating connections with others, rural communities gain access to more ideas and greater support. ARDN provides opportunities to connect virtually and in person. It facilitates networking events, provides a virtual meeting place, and stimulates discussion on rural issues.

ARDN became fully operational in 2009 when it received funding from Rural Alberta Development Fund whose funding is provided from the Government of Alberta.



*“It's only through joint efforts by post-secondary institutions and groups like ARDN that we can do the kind of footwork that needs to be done to expand access to rural Albertans. The effort couldn't exist without their organization and funding so it's critically important to improving the education side of rural communities.” Phil Chatters, Regional Director at NorQuest College*

## Message from the Chair



The Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) has achieved much in the past year and in its three years of operation. None of this would have been possible without the Rural Alberta Development Fund (RADF), which provided significant funding. As RADF nears the end of its mandate, we would like to express our appreciation with both a simple thank you, and by demonstrating through this report and our mutual accountability procedures, that trust in ARDN was an excellent investment for Government of Alberta dollars and in particular, for rural Albertans.

As Chair of ARDN for the past two years and Vice-Chair previously, I have seen the Network grow and mature. ARDN continues to be the only organization that directly connects the full resources of Alberta's advanced education system with rural development through research and collaboration. In its infancy, the emphasis was on establishing a firm foundation (funding, leadership, staff, an office, a brand and marketing). Internal communication was important as we focused on creating awareness of the Network and uniting the 21 public post-secondary institutions (PSIs).

ARDN grew its network through key contacts in the institutions and its support of research projects and networking events that originated from the PSIs and their partners. The Network initiated further outreach by attending regional meetings and events, connecting with rural leaders and communities in person and through written communications, maintaining and growing an online research forum, and organizing provincial events such as the annual *Creating Rural Connections* conference.

During 2011–2012, ARDN continued this work, but also expanded into new areas. The Network is leading two major projects in addition to supporting the work of PSI-led initiatives: the Community Engaged Rural Learning Initiative (CERLI) and Reducing the Social Isolation of Rural Deaf Albertans. ARDN was also instrumental in starting a number of other projects, including: working with Lacombe County to develop a set of best practices around performing an environmental perceptions survey, creation of a Photovoice "How To" brochure, and publication of a rural issue of *Curb Magazine* in partnership with the University of Alberta's *City-Region Studies Centre*.

I believe ARDN's original goals have been achieved and in the past year, we have begun to exceed expectations. We have seen stronger and more frequent connections between member institutions, rural communities and with like-minded organizations in Alberta and across the country. The accomplishments of ARDN came from the vision of its founders, the leadership of ARDN's board and key contacts, the support of our funders, the hard work of the Network's staff and PSI project leaders, and the ideas, initiative and trust of Alberta's rural communities and organizations. The collective contributions have enabled the ARDN to grow and mature. With continued support, ARDN will continue to play an integral role in rural Alberta and evolve to meet the challenges and opportunities of the future.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rick Neidig".

Rick Neidig, Chair  
ARDN Board of Directors

# Message from the Premier of Alberta



Premier of Alberta

Office of the Premier, 307 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada, T5K 2B6

## Message from Honourable Alison M. Redford, QC Premier of Alberta

*On behalf of the Government of Alberta, it is my pleasure to extend greetings to all members and supporters of the Alberta Rural Development Network.*

*Alberta's rural roots run deep. Our province was built from a foundation based on the rural way of life and a strong sense of community that remains an important part of our core values.*

*The Government of Alberta is committed to ensuring all corners of this province have the opportunities and resources they need to grow and prosper. The Alberta Rural Development Network is an important partner in supporting rural communities by enhancing access to learning, research and expertise that help communities make the most of economic development opportunities and enhance their quality of life. Through the network, Albertans can connect and share ideas that help make their communities stronger.*

*Special thanks to the many learning institutions and dedicated staff who make the Alberta Rural Development Network possible. Every day you are making a positive difference in people's lives and helping ensure rural Alberta continues to thrive.*

*Best wishes for another year of success and service to the province!*

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Alison Redford".

Alison M. Redford, QC

2012

The word "Alberta" in a stylized, cursive font, with a small blue square to the right of the letter "a".



ALBERTA  
ENTERPRISE AND ADVANCED EDUCATION  
*Office of the Minister*

## **Message from Honourable Stephen Khan Minister of Enterprise and Advanced Education**

Alberta's competitive economy has always depended on flourishing rural communities. While for many Albertans, these communities represent our province's history, they also represent our future. Innovative thinking and community-driven projects are making rural Alberta more vibrant than ever before.

The 21 public colleges, universities and technical institutes that make up the Alberta Rural Development Network foster the development of rural Alberta through education, research, collaboration and networking. I know that this annual general meeting will produce more ideas and opportunities for growth.

The Government of Alberta is committed to collaboration with the Alberta Rural Development Network to support sustainable economic growth and make Alberta globally attractive and competitive. I look forward to continued work with your organization to grow our knowledge-inspired economy.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Stephen Khan".

Stephen Khan  
Minister



ALBERTA  
AGRICULTURE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT

*Honourable Verlyn Olson*  
*MLA, Wetaskiwin-Camrose*

## MESSAGE FROM THE MINISTER

As Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, I am very pleased to extend greetings to members of the Alberta Rural Development Network, and to thank you for another year of great work supporting Alberta's rural communities.

A strong rural Alberta is essential to the future of this province. Rural communities are at the heart of our vibrant agriculture sector and home to some of the most innovative producers and entrepreneurs in the country. Every day, rural Albertans embody our province's pioneer spirit and are admired for their devotion to family, community, and the environment in which they live.

One of my priorities as minister is to enhance rural development opportunities so communities throughout Alberta are able reach their full potential. The Alberta Rural Development Network has a vital role assisting rural residents and businesses achieve success. Through education and ongoing support to important research and development projects, the network helps provide the necessary tools for communities to shape their future, diversify and strengthen their local economy, and enrich their quality of life.

Members of the Alberta Rural Development Network share a passion for building a stronger Alberta. Thank-you for your leadership and ongoing efforts to form important partnerships with communities across the province. I look forward to our continued work together to help ensure rural Alberta remains a vibrant place to live, work and raise a family.

Verlyn Olson, Q.C.  
Minister

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Verlyn Olson', written over the printed name.



## Message from the Executive Director

Maturity — it's the stage in life where you have gained enough wisdom and experience to share what you have learned, lead and mentor others, and set realistic goals with measurable objectives. The Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) has reached that stage in less than four years. It's a good place to be.

When ARDN officially began in April 2009, it was a nebulous collection of partner post-secondary institutions with a goal to share rural development research and best practices with each other and with Alberta's rural communities. A network can be simply a means of communication like a telephone line, but our Network soon evolved into much more. Though providing networking opportunities and maintaining the online rural project library are still important components of what ARDN has to offer, the organization is now recognized in Alberta and across Canada for its leadership and innovation.

This has been particularly apparent during the past year. While ARDN continued to support research projects that originated with our member institutions — allocating \$793,868.55 to an amazing 34 projects and 47 events — we also forged new ground. For the first time, ARDN became lead on several projects, large and small, ranging from community engaged rural learning to using technology to help deaf rural Albertans.

ARDN continues to host the annual Creating Rural Connections conference, a pivotal event that shares information from and with a diverse group of stakeholders and spawns new collaborations. This past year was spent taking it beyond Alberta's borders as we planned a national conference for fall 2012.

While ARDN continued to generate and support worthy projects, the board and staff worked on strategies to secure new funding and financial sustainability for the future.

All of these milestones were achieved with virtually the same staff and volunteer complement we have had in other years. Early work has begun to bear fruit. We have learned how to focus and work better; to more efficiently channel our energies into our priority goals and let others lead in their own sphere of influence. We have, in short, matured.

I owe my deepest gratitude to the board, key contacts, staff and supporters who have been open to ARDN's new directions and who enabled this growth. Together we have accomplished a remarkable amount of new, innovative projects while continuing to develop and support our foundational work, all while ensuring that the results are shared, beneficial and adoptable. I look forward to an even more exciting future.



*From Left to right; Judy, Joy, Thom, Dee Ann, Paul, Nick*

Dee Ann Benard  
Executive Director

### **ARDN Staff:**

**Executive Director:** Dee Ann Benard

**Operations Manager:** Joy Vonk

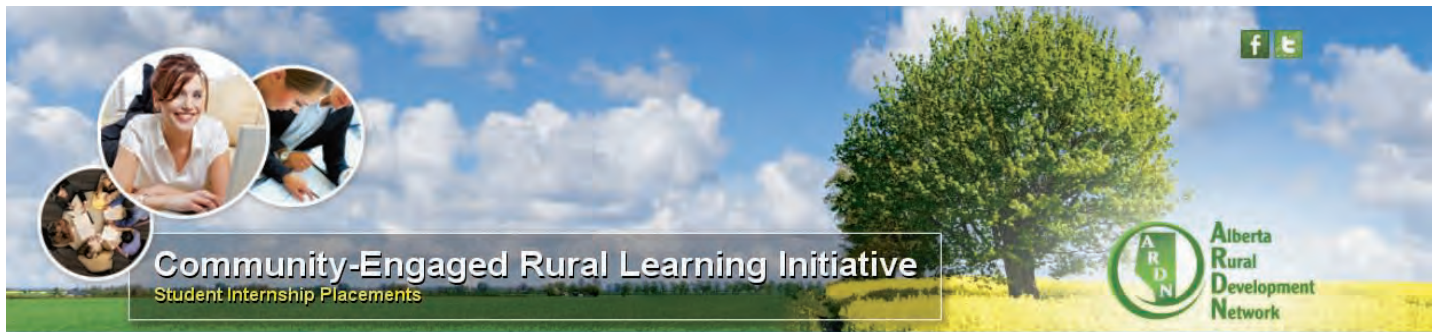
**Research Director:** Paul Watson

**Director, Community & Member Engagement:** Judy Ferguson

**Communications Officer:** Nicholas Conrad

**Communications Associate:** Thomas Yee

# Community-Engaged Rural Learning Initiative (CERLI)



## Rural Alberta is Overflowing with Opportunities... **Discover Them!**

A rural internship can be a daunting thing to consider for the students trying to break into their field or for the rural community with opportunities to be had. A student might wonder how they could cover living expenses living away from home, and for that matter, where to live when they're there. A rural business might not be aware of how to go about setting up or offering an internship — or that there might be a wealth of student potential to help with a number of tasks or efforts. How do we go about facilitating this great potential? Where to start?

The Community-Engaged Rural Learning Initiative (CERLI) is an effort to help overcome some of the barriers to rural student placements while highlighting the unique advantages of rural community life. Originally conceived by a group of 27 representatives from the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN), the University of Alberta, the University of Calgary, the Community Futures Network of Alberta, Alberta Municipal Affairs, le Conseil de développement économique de l'Alberta (CDEA), and the Centre for Rural Community Leadership and Ministry (CiRCLe M), the CERLI website is a place for students, rural communities and organizations, and student placement directors to come together and share information with the goal of making rural student placements less intimidating. Students will be able to find placement opportunities and information about rural Alberta communities; rural organizations will be able to share information and opportunities, and placement directors will be able to share their experience and resources in one centralized, accessible location.

Over the last year, CERLI has continued to develop. The CERLI website was created and is being improved on an on-going basis. To date, community profiles have been posted for over 90 different Alberta cities, towns and villages. These community profiles feature information on local services, events, where to stay, what to do, population counts and all manner of useful material and web links. Also, CERLI's first promotional brochure was designed, created and shared at events and conferences and has now become part of ARDN's marketing cache.

With a soft launch of the website in June 2012, the CERLI project is moving on to the next phase of operations — attracting community and student involvement. Already, communities are starting to contribute information and take interest in the CERLI concept.

There are valuable opportunities in rural student placements. With a focus on communications, CERLI is beginning to make the connections that will help create and facilitate new rural internships and relationships.

## Embark...

On An **Alberta Adventure**

<http://studentplacements.ardn.ca>

# ARDN Facilitated Projects and Events

## 2009-2010

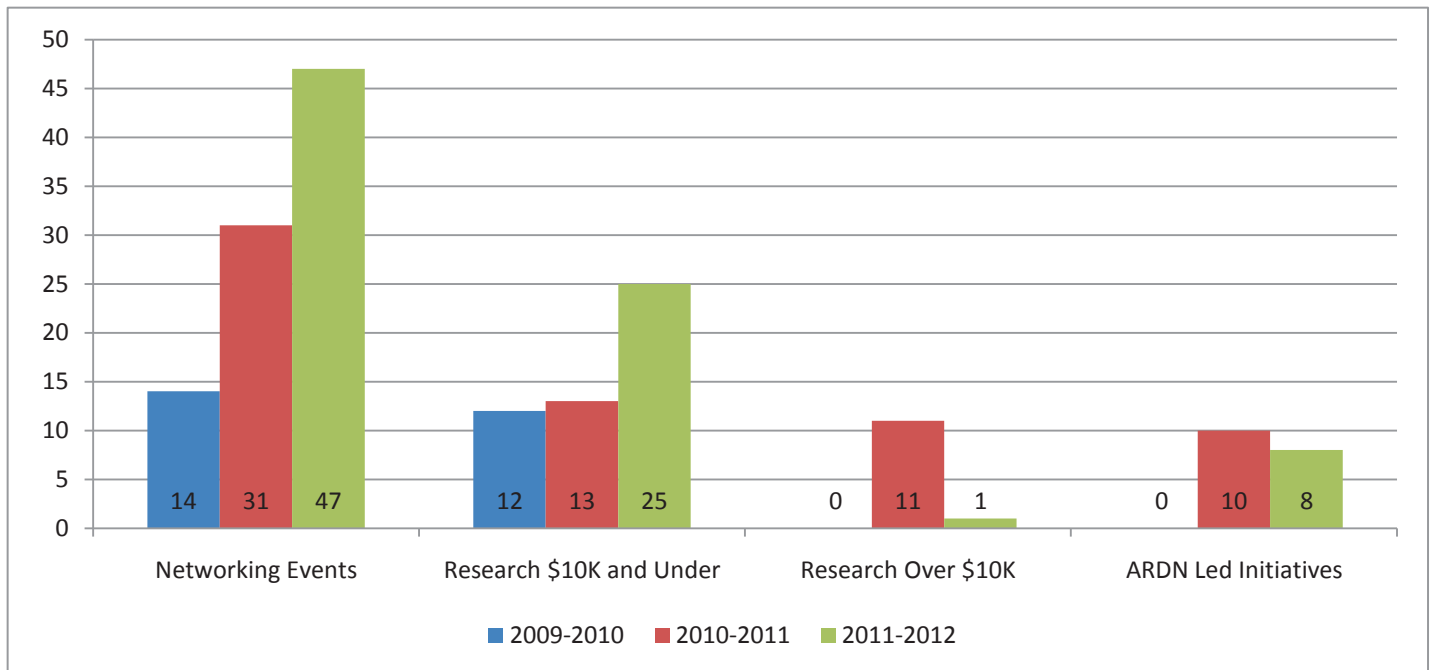
**14** New Networking Events  
**12** New Research \$10K and Under  
**0** New Research Over \$10K  
**0** ARDN-Led Initiatives

## 2010-2011

**31** New Networking Events  
**13** New Research \$10K and Under  
**11** New Research Over \$10K  
**10** ARDN-Led Initiatives

## 2011-2012

**47** New Networking Events  
**25** New Research \$10K and Under  
**1** New Research Over \$10K  
**8** ARDN-Led Initiatives



After trying a number of strategies, we believe ARDN has found its niche. We are now focusing on seeding small projects, ensuring pre- and post-project networking, and facilitating the adoption of results (best practices).



*“To us, there is a direct correlation between post-secondary education and rural development. Our partnership with ARDN showed us the capacity of the PSIs to conduct research, so we thought we’d give it a try.”* Judy McMillan-Evans, senior project manager for Community Futures Alberta (CFA), on collaborating with Bow Valley College

# Year in Review

The nature of development is that it never stops; it's an on-going process. In 2011-2012, the Alberta Rural Development Network continued its efforts to support Alberta's rural communities, post-secondary institutions, and all rural stakeholders in the development process.

We believe there are opportunities in every sector to change the status quo and ARDN worked to continue providing the solutions that lead to a richer, more vibrant, rural Alberta.

## **Our People: None as capable as all**

ARDN is only as strong as its board and staff and 2011-2012 saw some changes. Our Board of Directors continued to be led by Chair Rick Neidig (Northern Lakes College). Vice-Chair Dietmar Kennepohl (Athabasca University) left for a one-year sabbatical in Germany, and was replaced by John Kennelly (University of Alberta). Robert Woodrow (University of Calgary) and Gerry Paradis (Red Deer College) continued as Treasurer and Secretary respectively.

Executive Director Dee Ann Benard's leadership was complemented by Research Director Paul Watson, Director of Community and Member Engagement Judy Ferguson, and Operations Manager Joy Vonk. Communications Officer Melissa St. Dennis left to pursue her passions in Nicaragua, while Nick Conrad stepped into that role. Student Thomas Yee spent the summer of 2012 with ARDN thanks to funding from the Government of Alberta's Student Temporary Employment Program (STEP).

## **Some Numbers**

It was a busy fiscal year for ARDN as interest in networking, research, and collaborative projects hit new heights. 2011-2012 saw 47 approved networking projects for which \$398,465.50 was allocated; 26 approved and research projects for which \$307,643.05 was allocated; and eight approved ARDN-led initiatives for which \$87,760.00 was allocated.

## **Networking: Fostering many a relationship**

ARDN-facilitated networking events brought together thousands of people to share information, discuss ideas and work on a myriad of issues and topics. From Development of Immigrant Workforce in Cochrane to Promoting Rural Connectivity in Camrose; from the Ecotone Art/Science Symposium in Lethbridge and Stavely to the AROWRN Workshop in Grande Prairie, ARDN networking events facilitated an increase in knowledge, understanding, and action on topics covering agriculture, Aboriginal issues, education, health, environment, employment and workforce development to name a few.

Networking events like these are often the beginnings of plans of action. Some of our networking events in 2011-2012 were exciting starting points for bigger initiatives. ARDN partnered with Lethbridge College on an event to create the Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder Virtual Community of Practice. Caregivers, educators, professionals and others affected by the impact of FASD can now connect online to share information, resources and support. With this online community they can now reach out to each other and create better supports and services in their own geographic communities.

## **Conferences: Coming together is a beginning; working together is a success...**

As networking and relationships are at the core of what we do, ARDN was involved in many conferences, symposiums and other meetings of the mind. Some of the highlights included:



The Power of Knowledge, held in September in conjunction with the Network's annual general meeting, was an opportunity for ARDN, its members, businesses, and organizations to share some of exciting projects that came to fruition with help from ARDN. This event was attended by over 100 of rural Alberta's stakeholders.

Renew West 2012, held in April, connected industry, educators, students and the general public in an effort to develop and apply wind, solar, bioenergy, and geothermal energy solutions. This conference was a partnership of ARDN, Medicine Hat College and The Economic Development Alliance of Southeast Alberta (EDA) and was the result of ARDN's Regional Themed Meeting program.

In May, ARDN partnered to organize the national Rural Research Workshop Policy: Research in Community Investment conference in Ottawa, which explored the relationships between policy, research and development practice.

### **Research has shown...**

Research and scholarship inform our understanding of the issues that affect our well-being. In 2011-2012, ARDN supported research and other projects at almost every post-secondary institution in Alberta, all of which were collaborations between institutions and/or with community partners.

ARDN has helped build the collection of research knowledge covering many of the issues that affect standard of living in rural Alberta. ARDN-supported studies have assessed the quality of life for those with Parkinson's Disease, examined northern education networks, tested the quality of drinking water in rural communities, and evaluated the dynamics of rural internships, to name but a few.

### **ARDN-Led: Becoming the change...**


ARDN took the lead on eight new projects in 2011-2012, including Reducing the Social Isolation of Rural Deaf Albertans. Access to the resources, supports and services in areas such as employment, education, and recreation is vital to all rural Albertans. All too often, there is a lack of access to those integral aspects of life for Alberta's rural deaf community, which can lead to feelings of social isolation. Reducing the Social Isolation of Rural Deaf Albertans will help improve support for rural deaf Albertans through the use of technology that will facilitate communication in the community, and with professional and other services. Improved access to services and support, and reduced isolation will help this community have the same opportunities as their hearing peers.

While new initiatives were undertaken, others were continued and built upon. The Community Engaged Rural Learning Initiative (CERLI) continued to grow with website design, community content, and communication with Alberta community town representatives and chambers of commerce. CERLI is poised for the next stage of action: to be a virtual meeting place for students seeking rural internships to come together with communities with internship opportunities.

### **Communications: Smarter when we listen, stronger when we share**

The increase in ARDN projects and profile resulted in a steady need for communications materials and efforts. The social media plan was and continues to be implemented and contests like Follow2Donate, with its \$1000 prize awarded to the Town of Oyen for a community development project, helped drive up social media engagement.

The Rural Connector newsletter featured stories on ARDN projects and successes, profiles on ARDN key contacts, contests and much more information. A significant new addition to the ARDN communications roster



was the Rural Team Alberta (RTAB) newsletter, which is a streamlined and sorted collection of notices and information of importance to rural Alberta.

ARDN partnered with the City-Region Studies Centre of the University of Alberta to create the first rural-focused issue of Curb Magazine. ARDN was instrumental in ensuring that this issue, published in October 2011, contained several rural-development related articles from a range of sources.

Bringing together all these efforts was the ARDN website, which acts as a central gateway for all of ARDN's information, as well as other info of interest to rural Albertans. The website is continually updated with content, stories, events, projects, and community resources that are relevant to rural Alberta. Our goal is to be a key source for timely and pertinent information for rural Alberta.

### **In closing**

In 2011-2012, ARDN continued to facilitate, support, and initiate the projects and efforts that will help build better rural communities. We know our research projects, networking events, and ARDN-led initiatives will continue to pay dividends in the future, be it as the basis for future research and the development of best practices, or from connecting the people who can share information and ideas, and lead new ways of thinking and doing.

The year saw awareness of ARDN and the potential benefit to rural communities hit new heights. Communities and community based organizations increasingly seek out ARDN to enquire about how we can work together to change the status quo. This is a positive affirmation that rural Alberta is eager to create the connections and communities that will sustain our province in the future. We're glad to be part of so much promise.

The Alberta Rural Development Network thanks the Board of Directors for all their time and commitment over the past year.

### **2011-2012 Board of Directors:**

**Chair:** Rick Neidig, Northern Lakes College

**Vice Chair:** John Kennelly, University of Alberta

**Treasurer:** Robert Woodrow, University of Calgary

**Secretary:** Gerry Paradis, Red Deer College

**Director:** Mike Gismondi, Athabasca University

**Director:** Mel Mathison, Lakeland College

**Director:** Peter Leclaire, Lethbridge College

**Director:** Jason Dewling, Olds College

## The Validity of Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs)

For the rural or remote student, landing a job in academia or post-secondary, or even getting accepted into a post-secondary institution can pose a unique problem: they just can't get to the interview. Given the rapid changes in communications technology, there might be new and better ways to give these students an equal opportunity for success. That's what Dr. Randy Dreger is trying to achieve with an evaluation of web-based teleconferencing with Multiple Mini Interviews (MMIs).

"Somebody who's up in Slave Lake, for example, if they wanted to interview for NAIT they'd have to drive down, get a hotel...it becomes a financial burden for them. Maybe we're eliminating potential great students due to finances," said Randy, who is a personal fitness instructor and researcher at NAIT. "Using MMIs via teleconferencing would allow them to have that interview without the burden."

The MMI interview technique is a series of one-on-one interviews performed in a "circular format" where typically, applicants have two minutes to read a scenario or problem, and then they meet with the interviewer for a short period to answer the question. It has become particularly popular among post-secondary institutions, Randy said, especially in the medical fields. In fact, it originated from a focus on the bedside manners of newly-hired doctors; interviewers wondered if that was something that should be taught or something that should be looked at from the outset.

"The MMI started to look at those non-cognitive skills — chemistry, eye contact, feel, tone — and what people brought to the table before they were admitted into med school," Randy said. "What we are trying to find out with this research is, when we do interview someone online, do the evaluators give the same score as when they are face-to-face?"

The research study tested the success of 23 students from NAIT's School of Health Sciences in interviews via a web-based method (Skype) versus the traditional in-person method. After interviews were conducted, surveys were given, numbers were crunched and tallied, and the initial results showed that there were no systematic differences in applicant scores for the two methods, though participants did prefer the in-person method.



"I think we'll be able to use this in the field," Randy said. He added that MMI via videoconferencing would reduce the cost and time commitment of not only the interview candidate, but for the interviewers themselves.

The first stage of the research will be presented to post-secondary institutions through conferences and a scientific research paper. Also, the research team is developing an operating procedures manual — everything from how close an interviewee should sit to the screen to how to deal with technical difficulties. A second phase that will replicate the study in a real-world setting, and with a larger and more diverse sample is forthcoming.

Research is about uncovering the answers in a systematic way," Randy said. "Sometimes all that is required is a straight-forward question and I think this research is a prime example."

# ARDN-Led Initiatives and Research Projects Over \$10,000

Part of ARDN's rural development approach is to support research projects over \$10,000 and lead our own development initiatives. Research over \$10,000 projects provide the robust foundation for projects that can increase rural capacity and collaborations on a large-scale. ARDN-led initiatives enable us to address rural issues and research proactively.

In fiscal year 2011–2012, ARDN approved one research over \$10,000 projects for a total of \$70,000 in financial support, and eight ARDN-led initiatives for \$87,760.00 in financial support.

## ARDN Video: \$10,000.00

In this project, ARDN enlisted the expertise of the Alberta College of Art and Design (ACAD) to produce a short promotional video for ARDN. A large portion of the graphic and technical work was conducted by ACAD student interns under the supervision of experts. This opportunity to experience hands on learning benefited both the ACAD students and the ARDN, and resulted in a beautifully-coloured moving animation, with a voiceover that tells a short story about the ARDN.

*ARDN Partners:* Alberta College of Art + Design

## Rural Research Workshop 2012: \$5,000.00

Ottawa – May 24-25, 2012

The second national Rural Research Workshop (RRW), “Policy and Research in Community Investment”, explored the three-way interrelationships between policy, research, and development practice. How do they relate to each other? What lessons have we learned from these experiences? How can we improve the connectivity between these three? How can a positive interrelationship be crafted to enhance the creativity and effectiveness of rural community investment? This participatory workshop also addressed the challenges facing public policy for municipal, provincial, territorial and federal governments, community-based and other organizations, and the co-operatives and private sectors, and explored the research challenges for academics, practitioners, non-government organizations, and others.

*Collaborative Partners:* Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Canadian Co-operative Association, Rural Development Network, Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, Canada's Rural Partnership

## Renew West 2012: \$20,000.00

Medicine Hat – April 24, 2012

This conference focused on opportunities for the development of the renewable energy sector in southern Alberta. Speakers discussed the importance of and need for a diversified energy sector and, consequently, the needs for renewable energy; sectoral developments within solar, wind, biofuels and geothermal energy industries across Alberta; economic development opportunities and resources for industry, homeowners and agricultural producers in renewable energy; and personal and professional opportunities in renewable energy.

*ARDN Partners:* Medicine Hat College, Lethbridge College  
*Collaborative Partners:* Economic Development Alliance of South-east Alberta, City of Medicine Hat, Medicine Hat Stampede and Exhibition, Alberta Innovates-Technology Futures



## Exploring the Potential for Marketing Alberta's Agricultural Products as Rat-Free: \$10,000.00

Edmonton – May 9, 2012

Hosted by ARDN, this meeting explored the potential for marketing Alberta's agricultural products as being produced in a rat-free environment. Attendees partici-



pated in a facilitated session to discuss the benefits of marketing Alberta's Agricultural Products as rat-free, the challenges or issues in marketing Alberta's agricultural products as rat-free and what might be done to market Alberta's agricultural products as rat-free.

*Collaborative Partners: Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development*

### **Reducing the Social Isolation of Rural Deaf Albertans: \$8,000.00**

Deaf Albertans have more limited access to resources generally available to hearing citizens of Alberta. Access to social activities and professional services as well as to employment, education, and recreation is vital, and communication barriers should not prevent or severely limit access. Lack of access to supports for deaf Albertans can be particularly acute in rural Alberta where services tend to be more limited overall and where the ability to directly connect with other deaf Albertans is more limited. This project's goal is to reduce the feelings of isolation and improve support for rural deaf Albertans through the use of technology that will facilitate communication among rural deaf Albertans and with professional and other services. There are three phases proposed for this project, which should ultimately reduce social isolation and increase access to supports and services for deaf rural Albertans.

*ARDN Partners: University of Alberta*

*Collaborative Partners: Alberta Association for the Deaf, Ministry of Health,*

### **Curb — Rural Futures Magazine: \$15,000.00**

ARDN sponsored an issue of Curb Magazine, a semi-annual publication of the University of Alberta's City-Region Studies Centre (CRSC), focused on rural themes. This Rural Futures issue addressed the opportunities and challenges facing rural areas and towns, focusing on such issues as business retention and expansion, rural emergency services, arts and culture, agriculture

and sustainability, resource-based economics, and rural health care. ARDN ensured that this issue was widely circulated in rural Alberta.

*ARDN Partners: University of Alberta*



### **Evaluation of the Networking & Research Projects: \$10,000.00**

This project will evaluate where ARDN's small Research Grants and Networking funds were most effective by examining completed projects. Projects will be placed into three categories: successful, unsuccessful, and don't know (yet). In each category, a key word will be developed to describe why the project was rated as it was. This will then form a rubric for evaluation. As more projects are completed, they will be evaluated against the rubric to determine: (1) if the rubric adequately captures relevant themes leading to placing projects in categories, and (2) to assess why projects were successful or not. This will lead to improved project application forms and increase the success rate and impact of ARDN's future projects.

## Lacombe County Environmental Perceptions Survey \$9,760.00

The objective of this proposal is to produce a set of principles to guide practitioners and academics when conducting research about environmental perceptions, specifically by data collection through the survey method. This information can be used by other rural communities to help the development of their own Environmental Perceptions Surveys

*ARDN Partners: University of Calgary*  
*Collaborative Partners: Lacombe County*

## PhotoVoice Update

For those of you who attended last year's AGM, you may remember Tim Wray's presentation on the Young Adult Photovoice Project in Pipestone, Alberta. We are pleased to say it's now up on our website under the ARDN Initiatives section. There you'll find information on the project, galleries of the photos taken, and a "How To" brochure for interested parties to follow Tim's lead.



## Research Projects Over \$10,000

### Northern Lakes College

#### Supporting the Development of Heritage Potential in Grouard: \$70,000.00

This project will make the Grouard, Alberta area a regional tourist destination for local, regional, national and international visitors, creating employment and providing educational opportunities for northern school districts. The project seeks to protect and share the historical treasures and sites in the area as heritage destinations, including parts of Alberta's history that date back as far as 1799, including the Native Cultural Arts Museum, a number of heritage buildings, and Moosehorn Lodge

*ARDN Partners: Athabasca University, Grande Prairie Regional College, University of Calgary*  
*Collaborative Partners: Municipal District of Big Lakes, Grouard & Area Historical Society*



*Alberta Culture Minister Heather Klimchuk speaks with Rick Neidig, president of Northern Lakes College and ARDN chair*



*"We have a real strength and a real opportunity to showcase one of the unique and almost fundamental features of the fabric of Alberta: the rural landscape...I'm talking about the family, connections between people, businesses...it's such an important priority to what it means to be an Albertan. I think ARDN is such a great networking and great vehicle to really showcase and prioritize that." Dr. Lesley Brown, Associate Vice President of Research, University of Lethbridge*

## Research Projects Under \$10,000

Research is essential in increasing knowledge and gathering information, two crucial elements in engaging stakeholders and increasing quality of life in rural communities. The ARDN facilitates rural research projects through its post-secondary members, providing financial assistance to mobilize projects aimed at increasing rural community prosperity.

In fiscal year 2011–2012, the ARDN approved 25 research projects, a commitment totalling \$237,643.05 in financial support. More information on these projects can be found at [www.ardn.ca](http://www.ardn.ca).

### Alberta College of Art + Design

#### The Company of Albertans: \$10,000.00

This project will examine issues of diversity in our rural areas by developing an original photographic archive of Albertans as subjects to better represent change in our rural cultures. The archive of portraits will widen provincial, national and global definitions of who Albertans are and who they can be in the new century. More and more Albertans have opted to live outside urban neighbourhoods and are not identifying with the stereotypes and styles associated with mainstream urban culture. And yet the level of cultural diversity in rural areas is growing. How it is visually represented is of great interest and a powerful indicator of Alberta's social well-being. The approach on the project will be similar to photovoice with tours to show what the new rural Alberta looks like.

### Athabasca University

#### Northern-Rural Community-Based Education Ambassador Network: \$8,000.00

The purpose of this project is to develop the foundation for a northern-rural, community-based education ambassador network through peer-to-peer influence, with the assumption that a successful local role model will better encourage first-time and returning learners. This project will develop an online portal ([www.educationaffects.ca](http://www.educationaffects.ca)) to share educational stories and create ambassadorial networks, featuring plain language information, including a geographic map with direct ambassadorial contacts, links to social media, descriptions of educational pathways and resources, and an administrative hub for partners and education ambassadors. Education

ambassadors will encourage potential adult learners to participate in community-based education and lifelong learning by sharing the real-life impact of their educational stories, struggles, and successes.

#### Raising Capital for Community through Self-Directed RRSPs: \$10,000.00

Access to development and other forms of finance capital for project development is always a major challenge in rural communities. This project will develop educational resources for co-operatives, their members, potential investors, and financial service providers to raise capital through self-directed RRSPs. It will identify stakeholder needs and educate groups on existing resources, with the goal of resolving gaps in capacities.



*“A key aspect of the ARDN is they are focused to network research and researchers so together, they can potentially share ideas and do research that is of interest to rural Alberta.” Dr. Samuel Mugo, assistant professor,*

*MacEwan University*

## Using Technology to Meet the Needs of Preschool at Risk Children Living in Rural Areas: \$9,547.95

Researchers have found that use of computer-based technologies can be very stimulating and motivating for preschool children, often leading to increases in kindergarten-readiness skills, more favourable attitudes towards learning, increased self-esteem, and improved social interaction. This project will examine how iPads can be used to support skills development among at risk preschoolers (those with some factor in their lives that may put them at risk for possible failure in the school system, including identified disabilities, speech/language delay, English as a second language, parental divorce, living in poverty, etc.) through a multiple case study of 16 at risk children and their families.



## Banff Centre

### Developing Leadership Excellence to Build Resilient Rural Industries and Communities: \$10,000.00

This project will develop a leadership program aimed at strengthening the leadership skills of rural community leaders, including learning effective communication, developing critical and creative thinking, understanding the resource spectrum, shaping rural policy, understanding national and international issues, and affecting change by leading a team. This will be achieved by a series of interactive seminars, self-directed learning

activities, and group tasks will determine the needs of emerging and experienced leaders in rural communities.

## Grant MacEwan University

### Information Literacy Assessment in Alberta Project: \$10,000.00

Information literacy, the ability to efficiently and effectively find, evaluate, and use information, is a critical job skill, particularly in rural Alberta, where workers are being called upon to do more and more of their work digitally and remotely. The Information Literacy Assessment in Alberta Project (ILAAP) is a multi-phased research project investigating the information literacy skills (IL) of post-secondary students in Alberta. The ILAAP seeks to build a robust model for promoting and assessing the information literacy skills required for student success across Alberta.



### Monitoring of Water Quality (disinfection by-products, heavy metals and endocrine disrupting chemicals) in Rural Alberta Communities \$10,000.00

Water purification processes are often not up to date in rural communities, placing these communities at a potentially greater risk of higher DBP contaminant levels. In addition, drinking water quality monitoring in rural communities is often limited. As such, in the last

few years there have been episodes of microbial water contamination (e.g., Walkerton and North Battleford). Unlike larger municipalities, where there is more rigour in the analysis of drinking water in their water treatment plants, very little is known about contaminants levels in rural drinking water, leaving fear of unsafe drinking water. This project will address those issues.



### Keyano College

#### **Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo Living Archive Interactive Forum: \$9,500.00**

This project will create a digital forum for the RWMB community to contribute to and interact with live socioeconomic research projects, published reports, and archived information (including newspaper stories and heritage documents) by adding their own stories, images, information, and local knowledge. It will enhance local self-knowledge and allow the community to tell its own story. Access to the forum will be facilitated by local institutions such as Fort McMurray Public Library.



*ARDN builds bridges between the world of advanced education and people and organizations in rural communities so they can learn, share, and work with one another.*

### Medicine Hat College

#### **Increasing Quality of Life of Those With Parkinson's Disease in Rural Alberta: \$10,000.00**

This research project will systematically and comprehensively evaluate the evidence found in the Friendly Home Visiting Program that found that seniors in rural communities with multiple health issues experienced significant increases with regard to quality of life after visits from third year nursing students. These participants valued the nursing students' visits, appreciated someone listening to their health concerns, looked forward to the students' weekly visits, found the students' visits empowering, and that the students had "provided an infusion of life" back into their lives."

#### **Survey of Point Sources and Riparian Areas Along the South Saskatchewan River: \$9,000.00**

The goal of this project is to provide a detailed inventory of point source outfalls and riparian areas along the South Saskatchewan River Basin (SSRB) in southeastern Alberta. This project will fill a gap in available data that has been identified by the South East Alberta Watershed Alliance (SEAWA) and the general public in a recent survey. This will be accomplished by reviewing water licenses and identifying riparian areas using aerial photography and ground-truthing expeditions. The information will be used by SEAWA as part of the Integrated Watershed Management Plan for the South Saskatchewan River Basin. This project will be of particular interest to irrigators and ranchers.

### Mount Royal University

#### **Multimedia Education for Rural Professionals Working with Sexual Assault Victims: \$10,000.00**

This project will produce two key media elements aimed at educating rural health professionals in the post-assault treatment of victims of sexual assault: a professional video on the proper use of the RCMP sexual assault kit and a

podcast of professionals (e.g. police, health care, social work) discussing reactions of clients and how to minimize trauma. The challenges that women face in receiving post-assault treatment are numerous, including being seen, gaps in services, inadequate staff, and staff unfamiliar with current best practices, resulting in long wait times to receive care and, sometimes, transportation outside of their community and away from their support network. The goal of this project is to minimize these sources of secondary trauma, which can lead to higher rates of post-traumatic stress and depression by educating staff on procedures and best practices.

## NAIT

### **NAIT and Alberta Triathlon Association (ATA) – Connecting the Dots: \$6,200.00**

Many successful triathlon events are held in Southern Alberta during the summer months. This project will use on-site surveying, along with follow-up results cross-referencing and direct mail surveys, to document rural youth triathletes' motivations to participate in these local events, if, where, and how they trained for these local events, whether rural youth triathletes participate in other events (sanctioned and unsanctioned) and/or would be interested in doing so, and how the results associate with absolute and relative performances for rural youth triathletes in local competition(s).



## NorQuest College

### **Delivery of Orthopaedic Clinics in Mayerthorpe and Whitecourt: \$9,600.00**

This project will seek to improve seniors' health care in rural continuing care settings by providing orthopaedic education to frontline care providers (health care aides, licensed practical nurses, and registered nurses). This project aims to cut down on the often unnecessary transport of patients to urban centres for treatment by increasing the skills and knowledge of frontline workers, both in terms of post-injury and post-surgery orthopaedic care.

## Northern Lakes College

### **Indigenous Governance and Leadership Council (IGLC- eyeglass) Training Development Research Project: \$10,000.00**

This research project will further the vision of having a premier educational program for Indigenous leaders who are healthy and respectful, reflect traditional and contemporary leadership skills and values, and who work for the benefit of their people by engaging Indigenous communities/groups/Nations/settlements with a draft program plan in governance and leadership training. The co-chairs of the Indigenous Governance and Leadership Education Coalition (one First Nations and one Métis) will work with a student research assistant to present the plan, receive feedback on it, look for people who would be interested in piloting it, identify possible related resources in the community and actively seek support.



*Did you know that ARDN can help promote your rural event on our website and in our newsletter, for free?*

## Olds College

### **Collaboration for Rural Business Growth:** **\$10,000.00**

This research project will look at how post-secondary institutions and business service providers have worked together to help support rural businesses, including how these collaborations have impacted building the management capacity of businesses, meeting the financial needs of businesses, providing business skills training, and providing effective business coaching and counseling to rural businesses. The research will identify effective models for how post-secondary institutions and business service providers can best collaborate to meet the needs of rural businesses, giving Community Futures Alberta, the Alberta Rural Development Network, and the colleges in Alberta a set of best practices for future projects.



## University of Alberta

### **Alberta Watershed Toolkit: \$9,782.20**

Rural Alberta Communities have limited access to knowledge-based resources, capacity building tools, and information around water management. This project will develop and disseminate a toolkit for communities that will foster knowledge transfer about emerging, better, and best practices for integrated watershed management and sub-basin management through three levels of community engagement — a crowdsourcing engagement

session with both interactive online tool exposure and in-session feedback, workshops for leaders, stewards, decision makers and stakeholders on best management practices and knowledge resources, and a second series of workshops on actual capacity building seminars and accessing the Watershed Toolkit and other resources.

### **Community-Based Factors Influencing the Development and Content of Integrated Community Sustainability Plans (ICSP) in Rural Alberta and Canada: \$9,937.00**

This project will gain insight into the possibilities for operationalizing and implementing ICSP plans in rural areas by analyzing the factors that determine the content and direction of ICSPs in Canada. Since these ICSPs signal a municipality's intentions for future sustainability planning, it is important to understand the content and emphases of the ICSPs as well as the factors that influence them. This project will provide a valuable resource of previous rural ICSPs to rural communities, provide an up-to-date source of information and models of best practice, and foster collaboration among the many, diverse rural communities to use ICSPs as key tools in their success.

### **Fort McMurray/Wood Buffalo Living Archive Interactive Forum: \$10,000.00**

This project will create a digital forum for the RWMB community to contribute to and interact with live socioeconomic research projects, published reports, and archived information (including newspaper stories and heritage documents) by adding their own stories, images, information, and local knowledge. It will enhance local self-knowledge and allow the community to tell its own story. Access to the forum will be facilitated by local institutions such as Fort McMurray Public Library.

### **Next Leaders Evaluative Project: \$10,000.00**

This project will bring youth and established leaders together to research, evaluate and model new social media and digital-driven rural youth engagement strategies and tactics to improve youth engagement and input integration. It will explore technology and social media-based engagement theories, including best practices in digital youth engagement, defining perceptions and expectations of youth regarding civic engagement, and exploring and evaluating the effectiveness of social media- and technology-based engagement tools, including iPads/ tablets for council, social media input gathering, video messages, online forums, infographics, etc.

### **Virtual Resources Library for Autism Spectrum Disorders: \$9,952.50**

Rural families with members who have an Autistic Spectrum Disorder (ASD) experience a range of challenges accessing the services and information needed, stemming from inadequate linkage to relevant local and specific-interest community groups, and inadequate access to relevant documents and locally-available therapeutic services. This project will develop a virtually centralized resource library that is responsive to the needs of specific local community groups.

## **University of Lethbridge**

### **Engaging and Educating Rural Youth Triathletes: \$8,500.00**

Rural youth interested in triathlon may not have access to appropriate coaching resources for the co-ordinated cross-training required for participating in recreational or competitive triathlons. This project will examine the engagement and education of rural youth triathletes through on-site and direct mail surveying to identify specific barriers and an examination of current best practices in physical education.

### **Evaluating the Dynamics of Rural Internships: \$9,100.00**

This research and evaluation project will provide insight into what rural organizations can do to address their recruitment and retention challenges. It will highlight the common themes among the rural communities that experienced success and those that struggled in their first year of the Service Communities Internship Program (SCiP) and suggest ways to increase the program's success in rural Alberta.



### **Involving the Rural Community in the Discovery and Documentation of Alberta's Cultural Past: \$9,995.00**

The farming and ranching community have an intimate knowledge of the lands they use and work, though they may not be aware of their archaeological importance. Many ranchers have artifact collections themselves, but, unfortunately, are unaware of the archaeological process, resulting in a loss of cultural information. This project will educate the rural community on the importance of documenting archaeological remains by holding public lectures and workshops, and involving them in the excavation process.



*“The ARDN has helped to legitimize the importance of rural development in the province because universities are involved and rural communities are involved. They’ve gained the attention...to really show that there’s something meaningful.” Dr. Lars Hallstrom, Director of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities*



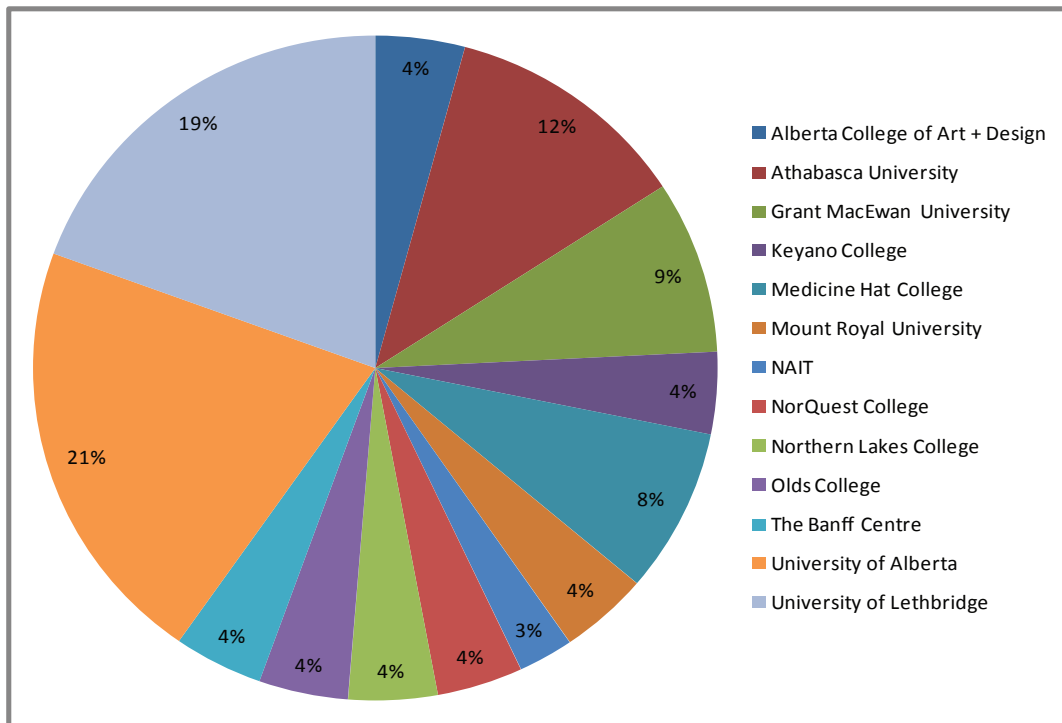
**Learning to Think Like a Rural Hospital Registered Nurse: A Case Study: \$10,000.00**

Novice nurses (and their supervisors) sometimes feel unprepared for the rigors of rural hospital nursing. This project will use ethnographic approaches to describe the sophisticated critical thinking skills novice registered nurses must master in order to be effective and efficient in providing nursing care to rural citizens. Through direct observation in the Simulation Lab at the University of Lethbridge, this study will assist in developing strategies that will support novice registered nurses in their development, thereby increasing job satisfaction and retention rates.

**Rural-Urban Reciprocity: A Study on Ranching Life, Agricultural Land Use and Labour on the Southern Alberta Foothills: \$8,528.40**

This research project will document the concerns of rural agricultural producers and ranch land owners on the encroachment of industrial and residential acreage on productive lands with the goal of effectively translating and disseminating these concerns to urban residents using both public presentations and various social media tools.

25 Research \$10K and Under = \$237,643.05



*Did you know ARDN has 384 projects in the Rural Project Library?*

# Up in Smoke: The Emergency Facing Fire Services in Rural Areas

*Imagine that you are driving down Highway 63 towards Fort McMurray, Alberta. Curving left and right, the highway follows the contours of the land. The sun is past its peak and casts a soft glow on the green leaves and needles of the birch and pine. You notice the wildlife: a deer, a fox, even a moose at the far end of a field. Admiring the freedom you feel out here in the country, you drive the speed limit and shake your head at the vehicles whizzing past, heading north and south.*

*Around the upcoming corner you see a semi and a pickup driving toward you — one in each lane. One in your lane. With only slight hesitation, you decide to risk hitting the ditch rather than the oncoming vehicle. The wheel cranks to the right and your car flies off the road. When the motion stops, you cannot feel your feet. Panic and adrenaline surge throughout your body. Suddenly, you remember that the nearest emergency responders, volunteers from the local fire department, have ceased operations. You hope that the second closest is on its way.*

Almost all rural municipalities in Alberta rely on volunteers to provide fire and emergency services. Though some larger towns and smaller cities have one or two paid positions, the major part of the workload, from firefighting to highway accident response, is carried by volunteers. The Wandering River Fire Department in east-central Alberta is one example.

Wandering River, 95 kilometres north of Athabasca and 200 kilometres south of Fort McMurray, is one of few communities along Highway 63, the only all-season road to Fort McMurray. The highway is often called “Suicide 63.” Thousands of people drive it each day, many in big industrial vehicles, all in a hurry to make money in the oil-rich region. According to a CTV report in October 2008, police issued around 4,500 tickets during a nine-month period, mostly for speeding and reckless driving. On average, this highway triggers a road accident once a week; nearly once a month, it claims a life.

Until recently, seven volunteers made up the Wandering River fire department. They were on call 24 hours a day, seven days a week, and were trained to fight fires in Wandering River and the surrounding area. They were also required to act as a first-response team for a 200-kilo-

metre stretch of highway between Grassland and Mariana Lakes. With 70 per cent of emergency calls related to highway response, the five women and two men in the fire department often travelled more than an hour away from the community they live in. Though the provincial government allocates \$500,000 annually for regional firefighting training, the Wandering River team was not formally trained in emergency response and, therefore, is not allowed to transport accident victims. Instead, they wait at the scene for EMS responders to arrive and are usually left to clean up after the victims are taken away. Each member of the department has tales of accidents that would make most people ill; the after-effects were draining and drove many volunteers away after their first calls.

## Rural Fire Departments Losing Pressure

In a 2010 report, the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association pointed out that so few people are volunteering for fire departments, some municipalities have notified citizens that emergency services would only be available during evenings and weekends. For the Wandering River Fire Department to be stable enough to provide community service, it needs at least 10 members. With a population of 400 people, that means 2.5 per cent of its population. If Edmonton expected the same percentage to volunteer, it would need at least 25,000 volunteers — that’s 10,500 more than all of the paid and volunteer firefighters working in the province today.

**Almost all rural Alberta municipalities rely on volunteers to provide fire and emergency services**

Wandering River faced enough of a challenge trying to find more volunteers to provide services at home. But with the added responsibility of a highway that takes these volunteers away from their families and jobs once a week, the town was struggling to recruit and retain volunteers.

In May 2011, a firefighter recruitment and retention tool kit was published by Volunteer Alberta for the Alberta Fire Chiefs Association; the Government of Alberta contributed \$50,000 to the creation of the tool kit and has promised another \$36,000 in the coming years to help the association implement strategies outlined in the publication. But despite the newly available information and

techniques, the fire department in Wandering River still could not find the capacity to continue its role. So, in June 2010, Wandering River Fire Chief Sheri Johnson announced the suspension of fire and emergency services for the town and the highway. Since then, the fire departments in Grassland (half an hour south of Wandering River) and Wood Buffalo (two hours north) now cover most of Highway 63.

Ten months after the announced suspension, the Government of Alberta and Athabasca County announced they are partnering to improve driver safety and enhance emergency services in this region. A five-year contribution of \$1.3 million (\$800,000 from the province and \$500,000 from the county) will enable Athabasca County to hire up to four full-time emergency responders, develop a regional approach to fire and emergency response, and purchase portable speed-indicator devices to alert drivers approaching emergency scenes.

The county has leased an old forestry site in Wandering River as the site of the paid emergency service. This location has office buildings, room for training exercises, and housing options if any of the paid members are not from the community, though it is hoped that at least some of the paid positions go to residents, to better benefit the local economy. Hiring is expected in late fall 2011, but the exact makeup of the service is still to be determined. Will there be four full-time firefighters, a larger number of part-time or on-call members, or a combination of paid and volunteer?

### First paid service in rural Alberta

Twenty-four per cent of Alberta's firefighters are paid \$62,000 a year, on average. The remaining 76 per cent are paid nothing or earn a small honourarium. These volunteers can also claim the new \$3,000 national tax credit, which amounts to about \$6 an hour if a volunteer works 10 hours a week, not counting time on call.

To ensure Wandering River's paid service is sustainable, the provincial government and the county are working with a consultant on developing partnerships with other local municipalities, such as Lac La Biche and Wood Buffalo, as well as industry stakeholders. "This is a new initiative for the province," said Ron Jackson, director of

agriculture and emergency services for Athabasca County. "The Alberta government has never provided funding for a paid force in a rural community, and we want to make sure that this is a sustainable success."



Grassland - Government of Alberta

In the meantime, Wandering River is expected to find enough volunteers to resume the community fire service and assist the paid emergency response team once it is active. Training was to begin in June 2011, but some new volunteers were unable to attend due to work and other commitments, so the start-up date is uncertain. With destructive fires in nearby Slave Lake and other areas still a vivid memory, local residents are feeling the effects of the uncertainty.

Wandering River's situation is extreme, but all rural communities that rely on volunteer firefighters need support to keep their local fire services in place.

If the local and provincial governments and industry can collaborate effectively, the new initiative in Athabasca County may be a precursor for a new emergency service model in rural communities. But for now, it is a small drop in the bucket for a province with many highways to protect and fires to fight.

---

*You are pinned upside down in your seat. Finally, sirens of the new paid emergency service sound in the distance and you breathe a sigh of relief. Help is here. But what if you had been driving on Highway 40 or 16, where fire and emergency services still rely on volunteers? What if help had come too late?*

By Melissa St. Dennis, from Curb Magazine, Rural Futures Issue



created group projects using media such as the web, television, print and three-dimensional scenarios that have developed under the influence of debates, visits, talks and one-on-one dialogues in a meaningful way for the development and acceleration of ongoing voluntary community projects.

## Bow Valley College

### Assessing & Enhancing Rural Employer Access to Workforce Training Needs Conference: **\$9,000.00**

*High River, Okotoks – April 2012*

This conference presented the post-project wrap-up on the “Assessing & Enhancing Rural Employer Access to Workforce Training Needs” project that created a partnership between Alberta Employment & Immigration (AE&I), Bow Valley College, ARDN, Community Futures Highwood, and the rural communities of Okotoks and High River.

### Bow Corridor Community Consultation: **\$3,925.00**

*Banff – April 25, 2012*

Bow Valley College, Canadian Rockies Public Schools and the Bow Valley Learning Council are initiating a network of community organizations to look at the possibilities of integrating approaches to learning that encompass life-long learning, community learning, employment and training opportunities to build a smart network that supports learners, businesses, and agencies. This event was an important first step in establishing this network in an in-depth conversation with our community to inform, engage, and work together to prioritize the needs, identify opportunities and resources, and to envision solutions.



*Did you know that ARDN now produces two newsletters- Rural Connector and the Rural Team Alberta Newsletter?*

### Development of the Immigrant Workforce in Smaller Communities and Rural Alberta Part 1: **\$3,150.00**

*Cochrane – September 26, 2011*

Bow Valley College led a year-long collaborative research project focused on the development of the immigrant workforce in seven to 10 rural communities situated in close proximity to Calgary. This workshop provided stakeholders with the opportunity to help define the project’s scope and to influence the project’s objectives. It established project advocates in local communities and fostered a shared sense of ownership of the project’s outcomes. Holding the workshop also helped increase local awareness of the project, which will in turn encourage broad participation in the research component as well as broad application of the project’s final recommendations.



### Development of the Immigrant Workforce in Smaller Communities and Rural Alberta Part 2: **\$10,000.00**

*Cochrane – September 20, 2012*

This networking event will support a collaborative research project (co-funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Alberta Human Services and Bow Valley College) currently underway that focuses on the development of immigrant workforce in smaller communities and rural Alberta. The event will present the results of the research to community stakeholders, funders and other interested parties. It will disseminate clear recommendations for action regarding how rural communities can better coordinate existing services and capacity to engage immigrant populations in a manner that promotes their full economic integration and contribution to community vitality.

## **Foothills Community Support Services Resource and Service Guide: \$9,900.00**

*Okotoks – May, October 2012*

This project involves two networking events. The first brought together all the Foothills Family & Community Support Services (FCSS) coordinators in the Foothills region for discussion on key topics, such as challenges of the FCSS organizations in rural communities, information sharing in the region, FCSS collaboration and partnership opportunities with each other and other service providers, and advising on the development of a resource and service guide to help alleviate some of the communication issues in the region. The second event, along with the reveal of the resource guide, will involve collective discussions on such topics as best practices for establishing referral systems for community members, information sharing, and partnership and collaboration opportunities in the non-profit and service groups in rural communities.

## **Launch Kick-Off: Rural Employer Access to Workplace Training & Aboriginal Engagement: \$3,850.00**

*Strathmore – March 7, 2012*

This launch event was essential in familiarizing key sectors (government, business and community) in the Strathmore and Chestermere region with the Rural Employer Access to workplace Training & Aboriginal Engagement labour market research project. A casual networking opportunity to discuss the value and importance of the research from both a municipal and community development level, this event discussed the project research phases, processes and deliverables and provided a statement of work with an explanation of how the project was of direct value to the employer and business community.

## **Rural Employer Access to Workforce Training Needs and Aboriginal Engagement - Wrap Up: \$5,250.00**

*Strathmore – Sept 13, 2012*

This wrap-up event will support the culmination of the research project, data compilation and presentation of recommendations and strategies to advance employer training needs in the region. The research project will engage employers to inventory and identify needs for workplace training opportunities. Best practices from this process will be replicable in other communities with the region over time. The project will also inventory the employment of aboriginal peoples in the region by examining current employment data and identify specific training needs.



## **Grande Prairie Regional College**

### **Alberta Rural Organic Waste to Energy Network (AROWEN) Workshop: \$10,000.00**

*Edmonton – April 30, 2012*

This event helped build awareness among current and potential stakeholders of the benefits and goals of AROWEN and the sustainable wood energy plantation (SWEP) concept. It also facilitated dialogue, networking and knowledge transfer opportunities among AROWEN members, researchers, private sector organizations, government representatives and other interested parties. Further, the event examined future economic,

environmental and social opportunities for rural Alberta communities related to bioenergy and bioremediation using fast-growing woody crops.

**Applied Research Networking Event: \$8,700.00**

*Grande Prairie – January 18, 2012*

The Peace Region is large, with many pressing economic issues within the agricultural communities. There are numerous researchers and organizations involved in agriculture-related research, but no structure to share information or network with stakeholders. This event acted as a report back to the community about a proposed new applied research organization related to agriculture, food and fibre, and to get their response and guidance in going forward, with the intent of creating a 'go to' source for what's going on, who's doing what and who to talk to within the region about agriculture, food and fibre applied research.

**Grant MacEwan University**

**Networking Event for Stakeholders of Alberta's Oil Sands Development Economic Impacts to Aboriginals: \$9,000.00**

*Edmonton – November 20, 2012*

Connecting rural Albertans with industry is essential to ensuring positive economic and social outcomes for their communities. This networking event will inform Alberta oil sands stakeholders — government, industry, and rural and aboriginal communities — on best practices and investments going forward, and help to establish initial contacts between the various stakeholder for future collaborations and partnerships. This event will also allow for direct dialogue with Chinese companies, a potential game changer for the industry.

“All of the support the ARDN lends to different levels of research builds bridges between Albertans regardless of where they're living.” Wayne Baerwaldt, Director and Curator of the Alberta College of Art and Design's Illingworth Kerr Gallery

**Lakeland College**

**Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Workshop: \$10,000.00**

*Vermilion – June 19-21, 2012*

This workshop brought together stakeholders from a wide range of disciplines in a venue where the ALUS concept, and the experience with the pilot project in the County of Vermilion River and in other provinces, were shared. The event allowed for and encouraged participant input by including panel discussions with facilitated breakout sessions and tours of some of the pilot projects in the County of Vermilion River area, providing excellent opportunities to learn what the projects involve, how they were implemented and how they have progressed.



**East Central Regional Innovation Network - Network Development: \$9,868.75**

*Lac La Biche, Lloydminster, Vegreville, Vermilion – November 29-30, 2011*

East Central Alberta has been identified as a future Regional Innovation Network (RIN). This event brought organizations with an interest in supporting productivity and innovation within the region together to clarify a collective vision and mission so that the region can present a strong case for Alberta Innovates support.

## Growsafe Technology Site Visits & Vermilion Networking Event: **\$10,000.00**

*Airdrie, Kinsella, Lacombe, Lethbridge, Olds, Strathmore, Vermilion – ongoing*

These site visits and event foster rural development in East Central Alberta by helping to build linkages to other research groups in Alberta and in the US to better demonstrate and utilize the residual feed intake research equipment to the maximum benefit for local producers. In addition, by learning about the best practices within other groups for outreach and producer education, Lakeland College is better able to facilitate and maximize regional outreach and educational opportunities for key audiences: livestock producers, special interest groups and the general public.

## Lethbridge College

### FASD Virtual Community of Practice Platform Launch: **\$9,700.00**

*Lethbridge – February 28, 2012*

This collaboration between Lethbridge College and the Southern Alberta Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder (FASD) Service Network was intended to provide an opportunity for the FASD Virtual Community of Practice to meet, reach out, and connect with each other. It allowed them to build working relationships in order to build community capacity through the use of the virtual community of practice platform tool, currently under development.



## Medicine Hat College

### Innovate @ MHC Research Symposium: **\$10,000.00**

*Medicine Hat – October 26-28, 2011*

This event promoted and built MHC's capacity to engage in scholarship of teaching and learning, research and innovation through workshops to develop knowledge and skills. It showcased the work already being done and identified opportunities to engage with the community to undertake research and innovative projects. MHC has taken small steps to encourage a culture of research and scholarship and this event is intended to demonstrate that the college is serious about its willingness and its capacity to move in this direction. The symposium was organized around three themes: funding, proposal writing and publishing; scholarship of teaching and learning; and, research and innovation.



### Meeting of All Alberta Post-Secondary Institutions Conducting Renewable Energy Research and Programming: **\$5,565.00**

*Edmonton – September 20, 2012*

This meeting will gather all Alberta post-secondary institutions conducting renewable energy research to determine the specific areas of research of the different institutions, the opportunities for collaboration between the different institutions, and to develop a cluster around the concept of renewable energy involving post-secondary institutions and to create an agenda for this cluster.



It will also create a post-secondary entity that can be a player in the development of any renewable energy policies and/or incentives that the Government of Alberta and other municipalities may provide in the future and to develop a foundation to work with other organizations in the province in the development of renewable energy policies and/or incentives that the Government of Alberta and other municipalities may provide in the future.

## Mount Royal University

### Facilitating the Revitalization of Rural Communities through Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E): **\$10,000.00**

*Calgary – June 4, 2012*

This symposium created linkages between the researchers engaged in a province-wide Business Retention and Expansion project for rural communities and the agencies and organizations that provide services to small businesses. It provided an opportunity for the principal researchers at the four post-secondary institutions engaged in the first stage of the project to share results by showing the trends and issues identified in the six rural communities.

### Knowledge Exchange – So What Series!: **\$7,000.00**

*Lethbridge, Red Deer, Hinton, Jasper – May 8, 2012*

This partnership with Volunteer Alberta - Knowledge Connector will provide a forum for knowledge exchange between Mount Royal University (MRU) and community-based non-profit organizations. Lethbridge, Red Deer, and either Hinton or Jasper will host meetings to discuss a series of research projects conducted by MRU's Institute for Non-Profit Studies. The long-term impact may be a new network of like-minded organizations that continue to meet and discuss research, related topics, and how that information might impact their local communities.

## NorQuest College

### Executive Forum in Canada: **\$8,000.00**

*Banff – September 27-October 1, 2011*

The purpose of this networking event was to award a \$1000 ARDN subsidy to up to eight rural Alberta companies to participate in an industry-specific workshop. ARDN committed \$8000 in subsidies to award to companies after they attended the event.



## Northern Lakes College

### Community and Post-Secondary Working Group on Aboriginal Leadership and Governance Training Needs: **\$10,000.00**

*Edmonton, Grouard – November 23-25, 2011*

This meeting developed a business plan to bring the following vision and mission to life. Vision: a premier educational program which develops Aboriginal leaders who are healthy, respectful, and who draw on traditional and contemporary leadership skills and values, working for the benefit of their communities. Mission: to develop and implement a quality training program that will provide an education for Aboriginal leaders in a culturally appropriate learning environment, curriculum and governance foundation.



*Did you know ARDN has a Community Info tab on the website?*

## Portage College

### **Action Planning for Sustainability of Water and Wastewater Systems in the Communities of Rural Northeastern Alberta: \$6,450.00**

*Lac La Biche – September 26, 2012*

The sourcing, training and retention of qualified water and wastewater treatment plant operators is a major challenge. This workshop will provide a venue and all of the information necessary for participants to develop an action plan for moving towards achieving fully self-sufficient, community-based operations and management of their water and wastewater systems.



### **Driving Economic Growth and Diversification in Rural Alberta: \$10,000.00**

*Lac La Biche – November 17, 2011*

This event brought together a cross-section of social, political and economic leaders from Lac La Biche County, along with similar individuals from Cold Lake, Bonnyville, St Paul, Lac St Anne, Athabasca, Boyle, Westlock and the Kikino Metis Settlement to share best practices, along with hopes and dreams, to drive economic growth and diversification in Northeastern Alberta. Through a series of breakout sessions using the Conversation Café method, participants shared their ideas, expressed their issues and proposed their solutions.

### **East Central Regional Innovation Network - Network Development: \$9,868.75**

*Lac La Biche, Lloydminster, Vegreville, Vermilion – November 29-30, 2011*

East Central Alberta has been identified as a future Regional Innovation Network (RIN). This event brought organizations with an interest in supporting productivity and innovation within the region together to clarify a collective vision and mission so that the region can present a strong case for Alberta Innovates support.

### **Economic Diversification and Sustainability in the Oil Sands Gateway: \$8,000.00**

*St. Paul – April 18, 2012 - April 19, 2012*

The purpose of this conference was to explore and identify existing and future economic opportunities in the Oil Sands Gateway regional area (Athabasca, Lac La Biche, St. Paul, Bonnyville and Cold Lake). While the Oil Sands play a significant role in the economy of the region, the conference organizers are looking at exploring other existing and potential economic opportunities.

### **Leadership and Wellness Conference: \$10,000.00**

*Cold Lake – September 15, 2012*

This conference will be used to lead the Cold Lake Campus partners in the shared Energy Centre facility through a joint initiative to demonstrate how working together will assist all parties, including the Cold Lake High School and the City of Cold Lake, with meeting their mandates and assist with raising the profits of the partnership and the services of each of the parties. In addition to improving the network within the facility, Portage College is attempting to create a network of community supporters and potential students to feed into a recreation program at the Cold Lake Campus and demonstrate how its programs and services can be used to leverage and grow community resources.

## Northeast Alberta Pipeline Builder - Workshop and Public Information Session: **\$8,400.00**

*Boyle – September 27, 2012*

This event will have two components, an invitation-only workshop/networking opportunity and a public information session. The workshop is intended for pipeline companies, smaller contractors in the Athabasca/Lac La Biche area and larger pipeline construction companies and will focus on new technologies and advances in pipeline construction and maximizing the use of local resources during construction, followed by a discussion forum focusing on training for those working in pipeline construction. The public information session, held after the workshop, will provide a chance for landowners and the general public to find information about local pipeline construction, environmental concerns and landowner rights and responsibilities, with government and pipeline industry representatives available for information and discussions.



## Red Deer College

### Bettering the Life of Rural Albertans: Health Quality of Life Survey Project Meeting 2012: **\$10,000.00**

*Leduc – September 19, 2012*

This meeting will provide practitioners and managers working in rural Central and Northern Alberta Zone Primary Care Networks (PCNs) with the opportunity to meet face-to-face to build strong relationships and collaborate by continuing to share knowledge and exchange

ideas on the implementation and administration of the Quality Metric SF12v2 Health Quality of Life survey, a survey instrument that provides mental and physical health measures for primary care health providers to screen individuals for challenges to wellness.



### Move Your Mood – Exercise to Enhance Children and Youth’s Mental Wellness: **\$10,000.00**

*Red Deer – August 27, 2012*

The “Move Your Mood” project is a joint effort between Red Deer College, Alberta Health Services - Mental Health and the City of Red Deer designed to promote the mental health benefits of physical activity and make movement part of mental health treatment and prevention. This one-day “Move Your Mood” workshop will showcase a variety of speakers who will present evidence, practical strategies and successful programs taking place throughout Alberta, Canada and the US, providing an opportunity to build the knowledge, incentives, strategies, supports and inspiration for Central Alberta child and youth advocates and communities. It will allow for the exchange of knowledge, evidence-informed insights and innovative ideas among physical activity and academic experts, health practitioners and stakeholders, with the aim of fostering a greater appreciation for and understanding of how physical activity can be more engaging for children and youth, support treatment and ultimately enhance wellness.

## SAIT Polytechnic

### **E-Readiness in Alberta Network: \$2,700.00**

*Edmonton – October 27, 2011*

With the growth of post-secondary institutions offering online courses in North America, knowing the capabilities of learners becomes more and more important in providing necessary recommendations to policy makers. This project brought together experts in the area of e-learning, learning styles and community engagement, to discuss the level of e-readiness among post-secondary learners, i.e., Internet connectivity, computer literacy and network access. Participants agreed on the need to identify online students' capabilities in rural Alberta so that post-secondary institutions can offer courses and programs that are beneficial to their academic, social and economic development.

### **Homecare Technology Focus Group: \$9,945.00**

*Calgary – March 30, 2012*

This networking event identified requirements for homecare personnel for a healthcare-specific electronic device to improve communication between home healthcare providers. Four focus groups were held — two in rural communities and two in urban communities. The groups were a mix of private and public service providers with varying business processes and needs, often with significant differences in the same organization. The event participants identified a significant number of challenges faced by all of the homecare providers. These challenges and potential solutions were explored during the focus groups; one of the main outcomes was the consensus that there was a need for two devices among healthcare providers — one for communication (phone) and one for charting (tablet).

### **Preceptor Education 2012: \$10,000.00**

*Calgary – June 12, 2012*

This event provided additional information to preceptors (instructors) so that they are better equipped to train and supervise allied health care students during their practicum experience. It brought preceptors from all 15 allied health care programs who currently train these students together. They had an opportunity to participate in an exchange of instructional methods designed to improve the quality of education in the health care field. An outcome of this program, and hopefully others to follow will be the provision of a positive training environment resulting in graduates making the decision to return or stay in the rural area and become a part of the local health care workforce.



## University of Alberta

### **Beyond Access: Promoting the Use of Rural Connectivity: \$10,000.00**

*Camrose – February 8, 2012*

The digital divide between metropolitan and rural communities is a global problem. This roundtable event built on the efforts of the Alberta Supernet Research Alliance, bringing stakeholders together to identify current needs and opportunities regarding the use of rural broadband and program delivery with the intention of developing action plans and next steps.

## University of Calgary

### **Management in Rural and Northern-living People Living in Alberta and British Columbia: \$7,450.00**

*Calgary – October 2012*

Atrial fibrillation (AF) is the most common sustained cardiac arrhythmia (irregular heart beat) and is associated with significant morbidity and mortality, including a 500% increase in the risk of stroke. Soaring levels of this chronic disease combined with a burgeoning aging population, particularly in rural communities, has given rise to a 'growing epidemic' of AF. This creates significant burden for both patients and the healthcare system. The primary goals of this networking and planning event are to: (1) expand our clinical and research partnerships and (2) initiate a collaborative research team focused on developing timely and responsive research that improves the patient and health system outcomes of rural and northern-living people with AF.

### **Rural-Urban Immigrant Seniors Network Development – Network development meeting for ethno-cultural minority immigrant seniors in Alberta: \$10,000.00**

*Edmonton – October 5, 2011*

The purpose of this provincial networking development meeting was to develop a network, exchange best practices and challenges, and build collective capacity and strategies for engaging immigrant seniors in non-major cities and rural areas in Alberta.

## University of Lethbridge

### **Ecotone Residencies: \$6,600.00**

*Southern Alberta ranches – ongoing*

This event is a follow-up to the Ecotone: An Art/ Science Symposium in September 2011. Based on participation in Ecotone, the artists and ranchers who made connections will now be invited to spend more direct time together in the form of an artist residency at various ranches in southern Alberta to explore issues that were

raised during the Ecotone Symposium, including agricultural sustainability, impact of oil and gas exploration and production, and local food production. Artwork that is produced as a result of these residencies will be eligible for consideration for exhibition at the Southern Alberta Art Gallery in 2013.

### **Learning From What Works: Microcredit and Microfinance for Low-Income Entrepreneurs in South-Western Alberta: \$8,175.00**

*Fort Macleod, Lethbridge – November 22-29, 2011, March 13, 2012*

This event explored community-based attitudes about microcredit's potential to alleviate poverty by financing small-business start-ups. Stakeholders from the Fort Macleod and Lethbridge areas who understand poverty's impacts in these communities, and business and municipal government representatives were invited to a series of public workshops to accommodate a dialogue on the role of microcredit/microfinance and social enterprise development as mechanisms for individual capability development, poverty reduction and rural socio-economic development.

### **Rural-Urban Reciprocity: A Study of Ranching Life, Agricultural Land Use, and Labour on the Southern Alberta Foothills: \$9,968.00**

*Southern Alberta – August 1-September 30, 2012*

This event will disseminate the results of research gathered from fieldwork conducted between May and August 2012, including public presentations to classrooms at the post-secondary and high school level in the hopes of representing the perspectives of rural residents in their own words in presentational "digital storytelling" formats for educational purposes. This will allow the work to be delivered directly in classrooms and in other educational and public forums, including to the non-profit, publicly accessible community and organizational website run and maintained by the Southern Alberta Land Trust Society (SALTS), a community partner and consultant on the project.

**Women and Rural Development Session 2012:  
\$10,000.00**

*Lethbridge – March 30-31, 2012*

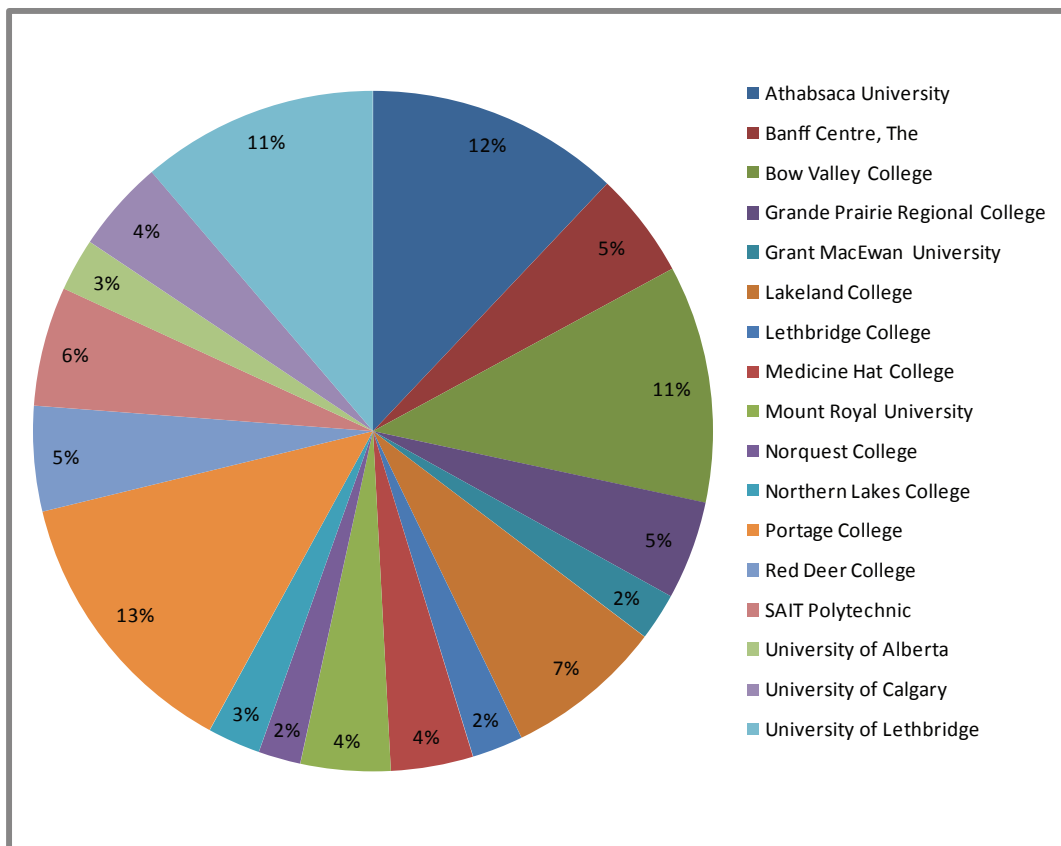
This networking session brought together scholars, practitioners, rural community leaders, women’s groups and policymakers on the theme of women in rural development in Alberta in the hopes of creating a community network that will promote the interests of women in rural development at all levels of governance. Emphasis was placed on the centrality of concerns, existing gaps in policies, and current best practices to facilitate more effective strategies to support women. While the focus was on women, the event and its anticipated outcomes will benefit the whole community in the long run as women are indeed vital members of all aspects of community life.

**Writing Transitions: Mapping Expectations for  
Student Writing in Alberta: \$10,000.00**

*Lethbridge, Sherwood Park – TBA*

This event is designed to begin a dialogue between English language arts teachers in the secondary system (grade 10–12) and writing instructors at the post-secondary level in Alberta. The goal of the conference is to help instructors on either side of this transition understand the curriculum, goals, supports, challenges, and perspectives on the teaching of writing that inform student learning about writing in both the secondary school system and in the post-secondary school contexts.

**47 Networking Projects = \$398,465.50**



## Inside the 2011 Banff Indie Band Experience

They met at a centre for inspiration to live and breathe music for two weeks in the fall of 2011; three young independent bands from across Canada experienced the artistic opportunity of a lifetime.

“We were excited to support an event that would provide young artists a unique experience, one that would allow them to meet with producers who could help them meet their personal goals,” said Judy Ferguson, director of community and member engagement at the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN).

The program is the Banff Indie Band Residency and it offered the up-and-coming bands *Mise en Scene*, *The Abramson Singers*, and *Doldrums* the chance to be immersed in an all-encompassing creative environment at The Banff Centre, an artist’s haven nestled amidst the idyllic surroundings of Banff, Alberta. The bands wrote and recorded in music “huts” in the woods and had full access to some of the best technology and savvy in the music industry.

“There are a lot of schools that teach pop and rock recording, but here, these things are not just being taught, they’re actually happening,” said Shawn Everett, a Los Angeles-based sound engineer and music producer. “I’ve never heard of any other program like this in the world.”

“I’m used to doing all the recording myself on my laptop, so (the technical help) really helped me focus artistically,” said Airick Woodhead, who solely comprises *Doldrums*.

The residency brought to Banff some big names in music production including Shawn, who had studied in the The Banff Centre audio program before working with the likes of Bob Dylan, Eddie Vedder, and Weezer. Joining Shawn as mentors were Tony Berg, former scouting and artist development division head of Geffen and Virgin Records; Howard Bilerman, formerly of Grammy-winning *Arcade Fire*; and Graham Lessard, Canadian Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences award winner.



*Airick Woodhead, of Doldrums, on stage at The Club.*

In addition to the top-notch talent and tech, this year’s residency featured a new element. With support from ARDN, Delux Design Group (DDG), a Calgary-based production company was brought in to document the experience and produce a video geared towards promoting the possibilities of The Banff Centre to rural communities.

“Maybe some aspiring musicians never thought they could do something like this,” said Theresa Leonard, director of the audio program at The Banff Centre. “They’ll see that these bands were just like them.”

After two weeks of writing, recording, performing and living music, the residency culminated in a concert at the Banff Centre. The young bands performing in the magnificent mountain ambience of the Banff Centre made for a gratifying finish to the Banff Indie Residency.

“There’s just something about all the negative ions up there in the mountains — it’s a fantastic environment,” Airick said.

# Financial Statements

The following financial statements were prepared in accordance with an audit conducted by Barbra L. Surry, CMA. In the statement of operations, the revenue from Rural Alberta Development Fund represents the portion of a \$5,000,000 grant received this fiscal year.

## ALBERTA RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK

### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL POSITION

JUNE 30, 2012

	2012	2011
<b>ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current assets</b>		
Cash	\$ 937,295	\$ 863,106
Accounts receivable	1,640	950
Goods and services tax receivable	5,286	6,651
Prepaid expense	<u>7,728</u>	<u>3,315</u>
	951,949	874,022
<b>Equipment (Note 3)</b>	<u>26,416</u>	<u>35,512</u>
	<u>\$ 978,365</u>	<u>\$ 909,534</u>
<b>LIABILITIES AND NET ASSETS</b>		
<b>Current liabilities</b>		
Accounts payable and accrued liabilities	\$ 37,714	\$ 28,244
Deferred revenue (Note 7)	<u>908,320</u>	<u>838,551</u>
	<u>946,034</u>	<u>866,795</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		
Unrestricted net assets	5,915	7,227
Net assets invested in equipment	<u>26,416</u>	<u>35,512</u>
	<u>32,331</u>	<u>42,739</u>
	<u>\$ 978,365</u>	<u>\$ 909,534</u>

Approved by the Board

\_\_\_\_\_ Director

\_\_\_\_\_ Director



**ALBERTA RURAL DEVELOPMENT NETWORK**

**STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED JUNE 30, 2012**

	<b>2012</b>	<b>2011</b>
<b>REVENUES</b>		
Rural Alberta Development		
Fund Grant	\$ 1,430,231	\$ 1,117,003
Partner Contributions (Note 5)	670,558	268,790
Other Project Grants	28,200	-
Interest	10,894	6,068
STEP Program	3,248	3,528
Conference registration fees	-	41,075
	<u>2,143,131</u>	<u>1,436,464</u>
<b>EXPENSES</b>		
<b>Administration</b>		
Salaries and Benefits	349,951	351,611
Administration	72,471	58,029
Rent	24,577	20,700
Amortization	11,670	12,541
Telephone	7,888	9,098
Office expense	6,980	6,604
Advertising and promotion	6,976	8,017
Staff training and conferences	6,092	9,638
Professional fees	4,113	3,510
Insurance	2,506	2,575
Memberships	2,058	725
Bank charges	604	542
	<u>495,886</u>	<u>483,590</u>
<b>Programming</b>		
Working Groups (Note 5)	670,558	268,790
Research projects	485,750	223,510
Networking events	225,832	121,659
Community engagement	103,785	97,115
Communications	84,194	56,239
Contract costs	46,524	56,892
ARDN led networking events	41,010	18,992
Conference	-	102,715
Needs assessment	-	13,502
	<u>1,657,653</u>	<u>959,414</u>
	<u>2,153,539</u>	<u>1,443,004</u>
<b>Deficiency of revenues over expenses</b>	<b>\$ <u>(10,408)</u></b>	<b>\$ <u>(6,540)</u></b>

## Key Contacts

*The Key Contacts are members of the Community & Institutional Engagement Team*

Alberta College of Art + Design, *Wayne Baerwaldt*

Athabasca University, *Mike Gismondi*

The Banff Centre, *Jim Frideres*

Bow Valley College, *Andy Cichos*

Grande Prairie Regional College, *Kellan Eckstrom / Marg McCuaig-Boyd*

Grant MacEwan University, *Steven Joyce / Meghan Abbott*

Keyano College, *Cindy Amerongen*

Lakeland College, *Diane Harms*

Lethbridge College, *Karen O'Dwyer/ Leah Wack*

Medicine Hat College, *Cathy Crockford / Walter Garrison*

Mount Royal University, *Trevor Davis*

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, *Stuart Cullum / Klay Dyer*

Northern Lakes College, *Monica Kreiner / Ernie Shanahan*

NorQuest College, *Phil Chatters*

Olds College, *Dan Fullerton / Toby Williams*

Portage College, *Trent Keough*

Red Deer College, *Eric Kokko*

SAIT Polytechnic, *Greg Michaud*

University of Alberta, *Lars Hallstrom*

University of Calgary, *Gary Libben / Anne Katzenberg*

University of Lethbridge, *Dan Weeks / Lesley Brown*

## ARDN Working Groups

### *Accountability & Reporting*

**Chair:** Trent Keough, *Portage College*

**Past Chair:** Wayne Shillington

**Member:** Greg Michaud, *SAIT Polytechnic*

**Ex Officio:** Dee Ann Benard, *ARDN*

ARDN Staff

**Consultant:** Leslie Ayre-Jaschke

### *Research Advisory*

**Co-Chairs:** Tom Thompson / Bob Wilson, *Olds College*

**Member:** Trevor Davis, *Mount Royal University*

**ARDN Executive:** Rick Neidig (*Northern Lakes College*), John Kennelly (*University of Alberta*), Robert Woodrow (*University of Calgary*), Gerry Paradis (*Red Deer College*)

**Ex Officio:** Dee Ann Benard, *ARDN*

**ARDN Staff Member:** Paul Watson

### *Community & Institutional Engagement*

**Chair:** Trent Keough, *Portage College*

**Vice-Chair:** Lesley Brown, *University of Lethbridge*

**Ex Officio:** Dee Ann Benard, *ARDN*

**ARDN Staff Member:** Judy Ferguson

### *Communications & Website*

**Chair:** Rick Neidig, *Northern Lakes College*

**Vice Chair:** Cathy Crockford, *Medicine Hat College*

**Member:** Diane Morrison, *Athabasca University*

**Ex Officio:** Dee Ann Benard, *ARDN*

**ARDN Staff Member:** Joy Vonk, *ARDN*

**ARDN Staff Member:** Melissa St. Dennis / Nick Conrad

**Consultant:** Andrea Collins, *ROI Communications*

# ARDN Members

Alberta College of Art + Design

Athabasca University

The Banff Centre

Bow Valley College

Grande Prairie Regional College

Grant MacEwan University

Keyano College

Lakeland College

Lethbridge College

Medicine Hat College

Mount Royal University

Northern Alberta Institute of Technology

NorQuest College

Northern Lakes College

Olds College

Portage College

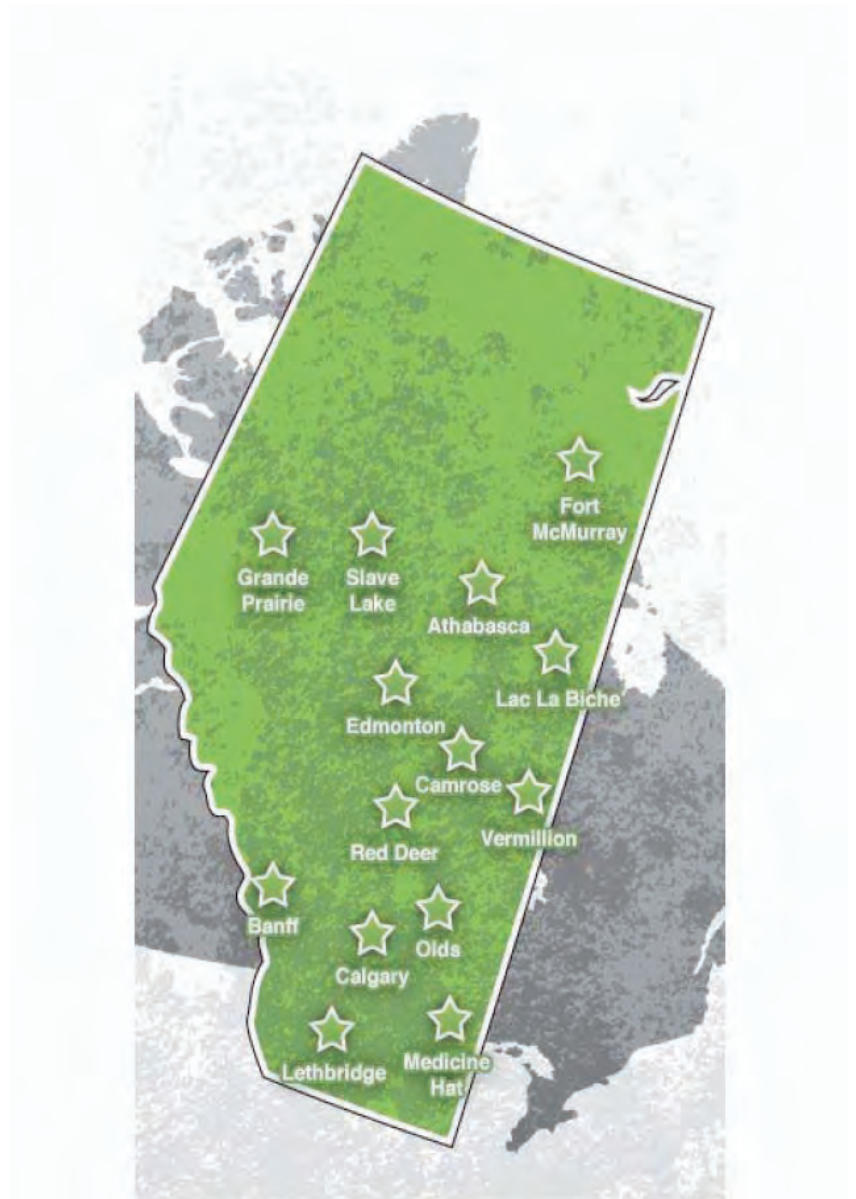
Red Deer College

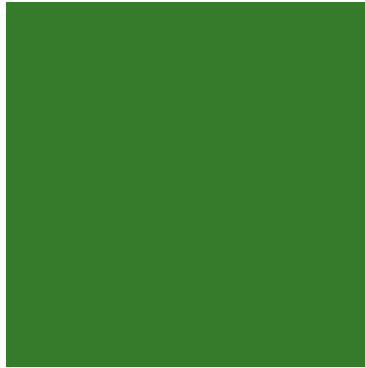
SAIT Polytechnic

University of Alberta

University of Calgary

University of Lethbridge



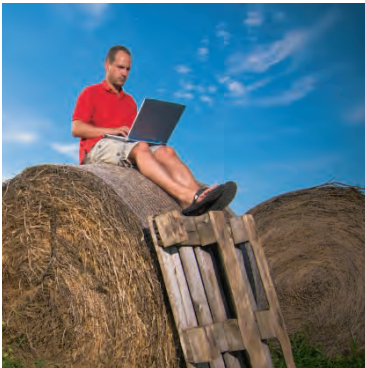


# Alberta Rural Development Network

215 - 50 Brentwood Boulevard  
Sherwood Park, AB T8A 2H5

Tel: (780) 449-1006  
Fax: (780) 449-0054

Toll Free: 1 (877) 987-1006  
Email: [info@ardn.ca](mailto:info@ardn.ca)



[www.ardn.ca](http://www.ardn.ca)