

RRFDC ACTIVITY REPORT

April to June 2016

RAINY RIVER FUTURE DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
601 MOWAT AVENUE, FORT FRANCES, ONTARIO P9A 1Z2
PH: 807-274-3276**FAX: 807-274-6989

The RRFDC continued to move forward with the enhanced economic development project and “The Path Forward” action plan.

- Supported the Fort Frances Economic Development Office (FFEDO) with Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) meetings and numerous projects.

Economic Development Activities :

Mining – Industrial and Residential Preparedness

The RRFDC’s pre-employment training program for First Nations and District residents to work at the New Gold mine has been completed. Report to follow.

The RRFDC is working with New Gold on another pre-employment training program for processing facility workers.

We continued to promote the District as a mining supply and services location and did a second more focussed mining supply and services mail out.

The RRFDC attended meetings with the Township of Chapple in their discussions on the creation of a Legacy Fund with royalties received from New Gold.

We continued to support the banners at the Thunder Bay airport.

The RRFDC is also looking into possible upgrade to the CN rail spur in Fort Frances as a result of mining supply and service needs.

We assisted an Emo developer in severing residential lots for mining related housing development.

Forestry and Wood Products

The RRFDC met with FP Innovations to discuss the development of a work products cluster in the region. A meeting of business leaders is being planned for fall.

Canada Day

The RRFDC has planned and staged the Fort Frances Canada Day Parade.

The RRFDC also supplied the events tent to Emo for their Canada Day activities.

Branding/Digital Marketing

Chris Fields, formerly of Twist Marketing, came to Fort Frances in early April to give two presentations on the Fort Frances brand, and provided input into the priorities and needs.

The RRFDC employed Ferg Devins, who was here in the Fall of 2015 to do social media training to review our platforms and improve our performance. Online advertising (either paid or self-generated content) is where most people acquire news and information on destinations. It is important that we use the new mediums in a "social" way and put our best face on to tourists and interested future residents.

The RRFDC released the third of the Fort Frances "Boundless" marketing videos. This tourism video can be viewed at the Town of Fort Frances' Official Facebook page and was shown to Council at a previous meeting.

The RRFDC has placed ads in various trade literature such and Bearskin Magazine and Northern Miner.

Tourism Center

The Tourism Center opened in advance of the fishing opener. A small event for the community was held to reinforce the importance of tourism. This year the Center's glass panels on the roof were sun protected and the building has been repainted to remove the red and turquoises.

Report to the Town of Fort Frances
April to June 2016

Visitation is up with twice as many visitors to the Center in June 2014 versus 2015. Signage was improved, with billboards in the US and at Customs pointing to the Center.

Displays have been added featuring local souvenirs.

Information packages have been distributed to hotels to help staff “plan” a tour of Fort Frances, a few hours, half-day and one-day trips are highlighted.

Sports Tourism

A sports tourism expert was hired to consult with groups planning events in 2017. He will be in town to speak on September 21. A session was held in April with all the groups to determine how the Ec Dev department could help.

Rainy Lake Market Square

The final design is nearing completion but there are a few more details to work out. Construction has been delayed until the spring of 2017.

The RRFDC has been working on a business plan to make the square a destination that will encourage visitation to the downtown. This includes interviewing the farmer’s market managers and determining best practices.

Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Support

The RRFDC’s market analysis of International Falls and Koochiching County, Minnesota was completed and sent to the Fort Frances Economic Development Committee.

Age Friendly

The RRFDC and Age Friendly Fort Frances continued the process of developing an Age Friendly survey for the community. In addition, the group received approval of their grant application.

Telecommunications

TBay Tel is continuing to roll out this project which is expected to be completed by this fall.



Go Local Report: July 2016

Throughout the summer, Go Local has continued to maintain its strong membership with the community. Since the program's inception, Go Local businesses have issued over 1.6 million (1,629,595) loyalty rewards points to cardholders. Around 5000 Go Local cards are activated, with 3,511 registered.

As of July 6, 2016, Go Local has reinvested \$68,506.02 worth of gift cards back into the community. In the past month alone, Go Local issued 190 gift cards to members, totaling \$4,750.

Go Local is continuing to focus on expanding outside of Fort Frances. We are currently looking for potential businesses in both Fort Frances and Emo to join the program. Go Local will once again set up a booth at this year's Emo Agricultural Fair, and has had a presence at "Market Thursdays" in downtown Fort Frances throughout the summer.

Project Petunia 2016

Earlier this year, RRFDC took over Project Petunia from the Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce. RRFDC's first year at the helm of Project Petunia was a success. With a goal of selling 45 baskets, RRFDC sold 47 petunia baskets that now line King's Highway from Tim Horton's all the way to the Tourist Information Centre.

The petunias were grown by Lowey's Greenhouses, and RRFDC partnered with the town to hang and maintain the baskets.

The project was well-received by the community, as sponsors were able to "dedicate" flower baskets to family members, friends, loved ones, and important causes. Upon

Report to the Town of Fort Frances
April to June 2016

completion, Project Petunia placed an advertisement in the Fort Frances Times thanking its donors and recognizing those who had a basket in their honour. These graphics were also shared on social media, through The Town of Fort Frances' Facebook and Twitter accounts.

Those who donated to the project had the option of a one or two year commitment. Project Petunia already has 14 commitments for next year.

Agriculture

Land Clearing and Tile Drainage

The participants of the Land Clearing #1 project are moving ahead with their clearing and the RRFDC has made its first claim to the NOHFC.

The Tile Drainage #2 project is 50% and will be completed this coming summer. A third tile drainage project is currently being developed for submission to the NOHFC this summer.

The NOHFC has put the Land Clearing #2 project on hold until Land Clearing #1 is 90% complete.

Abattoir

RRFDC staff met with Rainy River District Regional Abattoir Board of Directors and funders to seek a path forward.