

Economic Development Activities:

RRFDC ACTIVITY REPORT

June 2019

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.

General

The RRFDC is currently leveraging funds to support economic development working with NOHFC. Funding was approved by NOHFC for \$150,000 at a 70% Provincial, 30% Municipal to Support:

These funds are now supporting activities in:

- Mining
- Agriculture
- Digital Economy
- Forestry

An increase in these funds is currently before the NOHFC Board.

Most activities related to Tourism Development are no longer supported by NOHFC grants, so we have looked to other Ministries to support those efforts.

In this quarter we have applied for funds from:

Summer Experience Grant:	(APPROVED)
Canada Summer Jobs Grant:	(APPROVED)
Canadian Heritage; Community Support, Multiculturalism, and Anti-Racism Initiative Events component (South Asian Festival):	(APPROVED)
Celebrate Ontario:	(APPROVED)
Northern Ontario Tourism	(APPROVED)

Mining – Industrial and Residential Preparedness

We continue to work closely with New Gold's material procurement manager in order to identify potential companies for locating in the District. We have requested a meeting with New Gold's new manager and they have agreed, we are currently attempting to find a suitable date.

We are working with New Gold to start to develop a partnership that will grow and support entrepreneurship. This is the partnership funding mentioned in the previous page.

We continued marketing efforts to establish Fort Frances as a location for mining/industrial service center.

Forestry

ESFL and Crossroute/Sapawe Forest Amalgamations

The Province is moving forward with the creation of the ESFL Corporation. A facilitator has been named to carry on the negotiations with forest fiber users for the creation of the new company that will become the manager of the forests. In a separate but aligned process the Crossroute and Sapawe forests will be amalgamated into one body for the purposes of management.

The company now has a drafted legal agreement and RRFDC has had this draft reviewed by its attorney council has been requested to provide a letter requesting that the RRFDC be named to the board on behalf of the Town of Fort Frances.

The committee is starting to come to a place where the final make-up will be determined and a public consultation phase will begin.

A Shareholder Agreement, establishing the forest management corporation and transferring the licence to the new company is scheduled for April 1, 2020.

Our lead on this file is Mike Willick of M. L. Willick & Associates Ltd. This is a forest and management consulting company specializing in government relations, tenure reform, wood supply negotiations and not for profit corporations.

Michael Willick began his forestry career in the Northwest when he worked in Minaki for the Ontario Department of Lands and Forest as a University student. During his career in the Ministry of Natural Resources he rose to the position of Assistant Deputy Minister. He was part of the team that freed that popular fibre in the 1990's from the wood basket which led in the Rainy River District to the development of a new and expanded industry – the Barwick OSB plant.

Michael has been involved in many efforts to increase the value Ontario realizes from its' forest resources, creating wealth and growing jobs. This includes roles working with the Centre for Research and Innovation in the Bio-Economy (CRIBE).

June 2019

Mill Asset

An enormous amount of activity continues to be undertaken in the effort to successfully transfer of the mill property to an owner who operate the property as a paper mill.

Work done by Council and the Economic Development Office to assist in that endeavor included:

- Providing any interested entities with information and documentation on fiber supply, assessment values, labour force, grants and programs for industry as well as being introduced to various agencies and Ministries.
- Setting up meetings for Council and a working group with various government and industry decision makers.
- Development and organization of a broad partnership of interests.
- Retaining expert legal assistance to review documents and provide Council with the best advice.
- Retaining the services lobbyist services to forward the opinions and interests of Fort Frances.
- Liaised frequently with our MPP's office.
- Preparing communications on behalf of Council.

As we are in a transitional period working with many moving pieces, we must thank the stakeholders and public for their patience. We expect that council will have a statement in the next weeks and we remain very optimistic about the future of the mill asset.

Fort Frances Woodlot

Two applications were completed requesting funding to hire a consulting firm to undertake a consultation and study of the best possible utilization of the former Resolute woodlot and Nursing Station that were gifted to the Town in the summer of 2018. FedNor provided funds via a grant but we were unsuccessful with the REDI application.

We have successfully submitted a Phase one NOHFC application and will have a Phase to NOHFC completed by the early June.

Hilderman, Thomas, Frank, Cram will carry out the study and begin work when the final funding is in place.

June 2019

Tourism

Tourism Center

The Fort Frances Tourism Center was reopened in May 2019. Emma Dykstra and Lauren Hamilton will work in the center again this summer.

Emma is studying journalism and communications at University and Lauren pursuing an academic path that will lead her to a career in marketing. We are incredibly pleased to have these bright, young women work as our communities' ambassadors.

MAT

Council and the RRFDC signed an agreement to transfer 50% of the MAT funds earlier this year. From there based on Council's advice the Board of Directors of the RRFDC sent invitations to Fort Frances hotels, stakeholder organizations and festivals and events. We have now received representatives from most of these groups and the first planning meeting is scheduled for June 11.

We have begun work on an application to the Federal Government to leverage MAT funds in year 1 and 2 to a 25/75 local/federal split.



June 2019

Rainy Lake Market Square

Rainy Lake Series

We have again been able to provide entertainment of Thursday night events from May to the end of September 2019.

We are pleased that all our 2019 sponsors will be returning for the next season. We are very happy to thank Tbay Tel, New Gold, Ontario, Sunset Country Ford, Gillons and B93 the Border for their generous support of the square.

Tour du Fort will be helping this year by hosting two concerts at the square!

A special thank you to TDBank is in order – they have joined our sponsorship group and are helping us show the movies in the square through out the summer.

Festival of India

This year we will also host a Festival of India event. This event is co-hosted with the Vedic Cultural Center in Thunder Bay on July 22, 2019.



This event was possible through the efforts of Gurvinder Grewal who has been with us doing an internship in economic development since last fall. Gurvinder grew up in Brampton Ontario in a family of Shik heritage from India's Punjab region. He will return to University to complete his Masters at the end of summer.

June 2019

New Activities

We are still eager to have others use the square and ask anyone interested to call our office to see how we can make that happen. Please check out <http://www.fortfrances.com/calendar> to see all the great events.

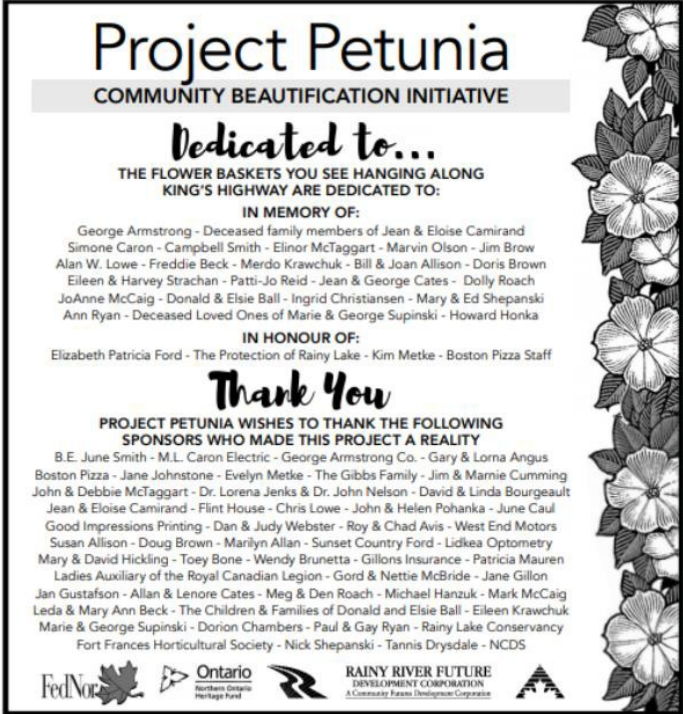
Rainy Lake Market

In 2019 to increase the success of the farmers market we moved to a single day market on Thursday morning. The market is already a busy place and we work each summer to grow the vendor numbers and the visitation.

It is important to note that while the Rainy Lake Square has become a fairly popular local attraction the long term goal is to leverage the activities there to attract and retain tourists. We notice frequently that activity on Scott Street increases as the events create a buzz downtown. We advertise events in a number of ways into the US market.

Project Petunia

Thank you for those that have sponsored Project Petunia – baskets will be up soon followed by our thank you ad in the Times.

A poster for Project Petunia, a community beautification initiative. The poster is titled "Project Petunia" in a large, serif font, with "COMMUNITY BEAUTIFICATION INITIATIVE" in a smaller, sans-serif font below it. The main heading "Dedicated to..." is in a cursive font, followed by "THE FLOWER BASKETS YOU SEE HANGING ALONG KING'S HIGHWAY ARE DEDICATED TO:". Below this, it says "IN MEMORY OF:" and lists several names: George Armstrong, Simone Caron, Campbell Smith, Elinor McTaggart, Marvin Olson, Jim Brown, Alan W. Lowe, Freddie Beck, Merdo Krawchuk, Bill & Joan Allison, Doris Brown, Eileen & Harvey Strachan, Patti-Jo Reid, Jean & George Cates, Dolly Roach, JoAnne McCaig, Donald & Elsie Ball, Ingrid Christiansen, Mary & Ed Shepanski, Ann Ryan, and Deceased Loved Ones of Marie & George Supinski, and Howard Honka. Below this, it says "IN HONOUR OF:" and lists: Elizabeth Patricia Ford, The Protection of Rainy Lake, Kim Metke, and Boston Pizza Staff. The poster then says "Thank You" in a large, cursive font, followed by "PROJECT PETUNIA WISHES TO THANK THE FOLLOWING SPONSORS WHO MADE THIS PROJECT A REALITY". It lists many sponsors: B.E. June Smith, M.L. Caron Electric, George Armstrong Co., Gary & Lorna Angus, Boston Pizza, Jane Johnstone, Evelyn Metke, The Gibbs Family, Jim & Marnie Cumming, John & Debbie McTaggart, Dr. Lorena Jenks & Dr. John Nelson, David & Linda Bourgeault, Jean & Eloise Camirand, Flint House, Chris Lowe, John & Helen Pohanka, June Caul, Good Impressions Printing, Dan & Judy Webster, Roy & Chad Avis, West End Motors, Susan Allison, Doug Brown, Marilyn Allan, Sunset Country Ford, Lidkea Optometry, Mary & David Hickling, Toey Bone, Wendy Brunetta, Gillons Insurance, Patricia Mauren, Ladies Auxiliary of the Royal Canadian Legion, Gord & Nettie McBride, Jane Gillon, Jan Gustafson, Allan & Lenore Cates, Meg & Den Roach, Michael Hanzuk, Mark McCaig, Leda & Mary Ann Beck, The Children & Families of Donald and Elsie Ball, Eileen Krawchuk, Marie & George Supinski, Dorion Chambers, Paul & Gay Ryan, Rainy Lake Conservancy, Fort Frances Horticultural Society, Nick Shepanski, Tannis Drysdale, and NCDS. At the bottom, there are logos for FedNor, Ontario Northern Ontario Heritage Fund, Rainy River Future Development Corporation, and a logo for the City of Rainy Lake. The poster is decorated with a floral border on the right side.

Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Support

The RRFDC continues to support small and medium sized businesses in the District and report of those activities is outlined in our annual report which can be found at www.rrfdc.on.ca. This support includes one on one counselling and a loans fund to help existing and start-up ventures.

Transition and Succession Match

We have invested in a new program that assists with the transition and sale of small businesses through a company called Succession Matching. The RRFDC held a seminar earlier in the year discussing issues and steps to prepare a business to sell and we now can offer free advertising and promotion opportunities to local businesses. Succession Matching has developed specialized programming to help new immigrants in Ontario find Provincial Nominee eligible businesses to purchase. The company has representatives who visit countries where investment class immigrants are shopping for companies to purchase and matches them with their identified businesses for sale.

Branding/Digital Marketing

The RRFDC continued the social media work to present the Town of Fort Frances on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. We do ongoing training in social media management and the utilization of those tools to market the district.

Social and Digital Media Training

As we work internally to improve the digital and social footprint of our community, we have provided a number of training sessions for local small businesses to gain skills and develop their marketing on various social platforms.

Industrial Lot Sales

The RRFDC continues to work with administration assisting with lot sales. We had little activity on lots in the last quarter and remind those interested in growing a business in Fort Frances that we have a limited amount of properties available to develop.

June 2019

Go Local

Go Local is now 6th years old. You will notice we did a renewed signage effort at our retail members. And we are thrilled to have Rainy River meats now as a retail member of the program.

By the numbers we are now:

4082 Loyalty Member cards
17640 gift cards issued worth \$441,020
3261263 points issued by retail members

It is important to note what a team effort keeping this program going requires. We have our marketing folks creating demand and monitoring results, a technical vendor in Givex providing security to the system and operating a complex database and our internal accounting department making sure the merchant invoices are sent and the members receive their cards each week.

The keystone of that accounting department is Shaari King who in addition to operating GoLocals finances, tracks the finances for the corporations many grants. At any given time we may be utilizing a dozen grants to leverage business, operating or municipal funds. This is a huge task tracking and we are fortunate to have Shaari organizing our finances.

Agriculture

Land Clearing and Tile Drainage

The RRFDC has facilitated the following tile drainage and land clearing projects with area producers and the NOHFC. These projects represent significant financial investments by the producers and the NOHFC.

- ☐ Land Clearing #1 - \$1,800,000 (100% Complete)
- ☐ Land Clearing #2 - \$1,700,000 (Approved in October)
- ☐ Tile Drainage #1 - \$2,000,000 (Completed)
- ☐ Tile Drainage #2 - \$2,000,000 (Completed)
- ☐ Tile Drainage #3 - \$2,000,000 (Completed)
- ☐ Tile Drainage #4 - \$2,000,000 (Approved)

Land Clearing

The land clearing projects are a direct benefit to the District as all producer and NOHFC investment dollars will go to local contractors who undertake the land clearing. These contractors hire employees, maintain and purchase much of their equipment locally.

Tile Drainage

Once all the tile projects have been completed the District will have approximately 8,000 acres of tiled cropland. The projects have significantly diversified the area's agricultural economy through the growing of canola, soybeans, wheat and oats which has dramatically increased the economic benefits of the sector to Fort Frances and the District. The following is a sample of the increase in economic activity which did not exist in 2014.

Report to Fort Frances Council

June 2019

Trucking:

The chart below indicates the number of loads of cash crops sent to these destinations in 2017.

Thunder Bay	56 loads
Manitoba	6 loads
United States	21 loads