

Community Futures

Peace Country



2024-25

Annual Report



Growing communities one idea at a time

Our Mission: *To facilitate rural diversification through business and community economic development*

Our Vision: *Healthy, thriving, diversified region*

Our Purpose: *The purpose of Community Futures Peace Country is to support community economic development, encourage rural diversification and innovation, stimulating and diversifying the regional economy through viable business plan development and developing innovative economic development initiatives*

Our Values: *Innovative • Entrepreneurial • Accountable • Professional • Inclusive*

Community Futures (CF) is a national economic development program supported in western Canada by Prairies Economic Development Canada. Community Futures are nonprofit organizations guided by volunteer boards of directors and staffed with business professionals. Together, CF staff and community volunteers are actively engaged in helping develop and implement community-based economic development and diversification strategies. These strategies create growth within our rural communities one idea at a time.

Access to Capital - CF organizations (CFs) are developmental lenders. Priority is given to viable business ideas that result in wealth generation for the business and economic development for the community or region. CFs may invest in qualified business projects to a maximum of \$150,000.00.

Business Services - CF provides a wide range of coaching, training and technical assistance to businesses, including support with business planning.

Strategic Community Planning & Support - For rural communities to continue to compete in a fast-changing world full of economic uncertainties, they must adopt new economic development strategies. These strategies must be focused and intentional, but also flexible enough to allow the community to capture new opportunities presented by a truly global market place. CF organizations provide community support through strategic planning facilitation.



BOARD OF DIRECTORS



Cathy DeZutter
1st Vice Chair/ Interim Chair
Sub Region #2
Peace River & area



Frank Light
Director
Sub Region #2
Peace River & area



Carolyn Kolebaba
2nd Vice-Chair
Sub Region #2
Peace River & area



Dalen Richardson
Director
Sub Region #5
Fairview & area



Melissa Visser
Director
Sub Region #7
Valleyview & area



Sarah Turcotte
Director
Sub Region #8
Indigenous regions



Cheryl Anderson
Director
Sub Region #2
Peace River & area



George Leger - Board Chair
Sub Region #1
Grimshaw & area

In December of 2024 George retired from the Board. We sincerely thank him for his years of dedicated service to CF Peace Country!

STAFF



Sherry Crawford
General Manager



Heidi Dubé
Business Analyst



Judy Pepler
Office Administrator



Vanessa Burns
Communications
& Project Lead

MESSAGE FROM THE GM

Our 2024-2025 year was a wonderful flurry of activity! We had a highly successful year with 20 loan approvals worth close to \$800,000 and 56 jobs created and/or maintained.

Long time Board member George Leger retired after a great 9 year run, we will miss his insights and humour and hope to see him join the Board again someday! Director Marie Dyck resigned in June due to the numerous other commitments she has on her plate, we wish her all the best. We welcomed new Board members Melissa Visser and Sarah Turcotte in September, both from the Valleyview area, and finally we were pleased to welcome back long time former Board member Cheryl Anderson after a year hiatus. The office is always a great positive atmosphere conducive to great team work thanks to our strong staff. Judy Peppler keeps the office organized, is the friendly voice on the phone and is always a bright light in our day. Heidi Dubé shines in her role as Business Analyst with her excellent coaching and lending skills and her love of learning. Vanessa Burns keeps raising the bar on our events while she leads the charge on the Women in the North Conference, monthly Lunch & Learns and more, plus she has brought CFPC to the forefront of social media resulting in sold out events!

In the spring of 2024, we delivered the informative and uplifting Women in the North Conference in three communities including Peace River, Fairview and Manning. Monthly business training for our communities were offered in the Lunch & Learn hybrid virtual/in person format, and we expanded the Lemonade Day project to include the Town of Fairview. Over 80 kids registered for the program resulting in 9 stands each in Peace River and Fairview. During Small Business Week in October, staff visited businesses in Manning, Grimshaw & Peace River for the 11th Annual Hug an Entrepreneur Day. We also partnered with the Peace River & District Chamber of Commerce to host a business networking evening. 2024 saw the return of the SongRise Music Conference now hosted by CFPC. It was held in Fairview and was a smashing success with over 40 small business musicians from all over the province attending.

I look forward to a great 2025-2026 year ahead, it is already zooming by. We still get to see former GM Randy Hodgkinson when he stops by for coffee or handles our A/V needs at events. I still appreciate his insight and years of corporate knowledge. Our exceptional Board and staff continue to make this an excellent organization to work for and I look forward to each day.

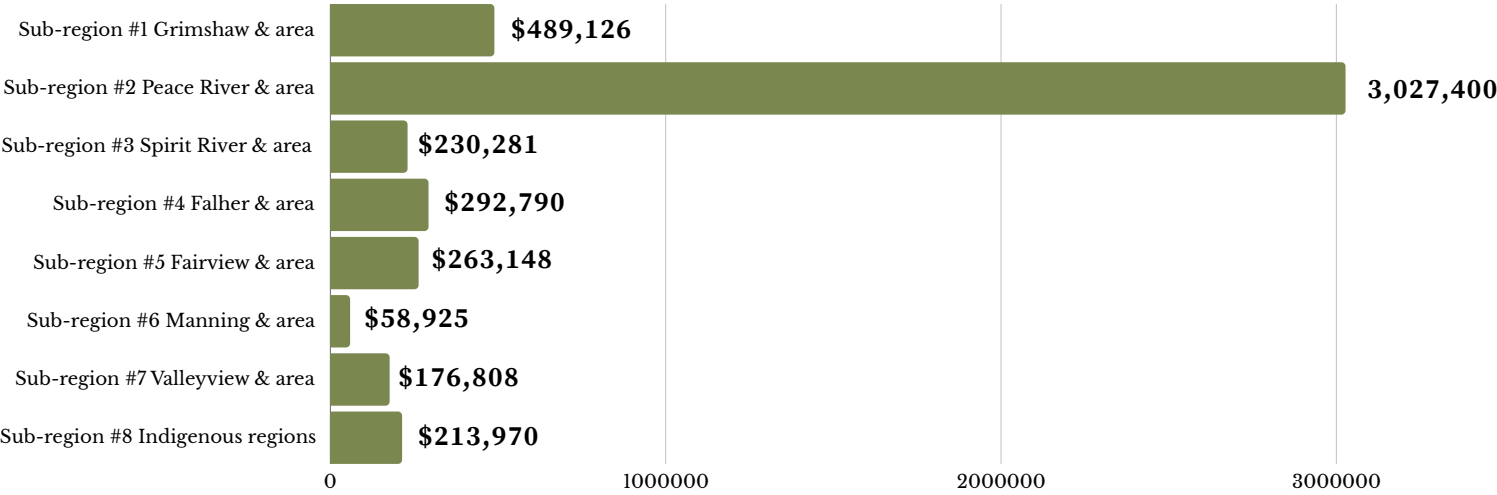
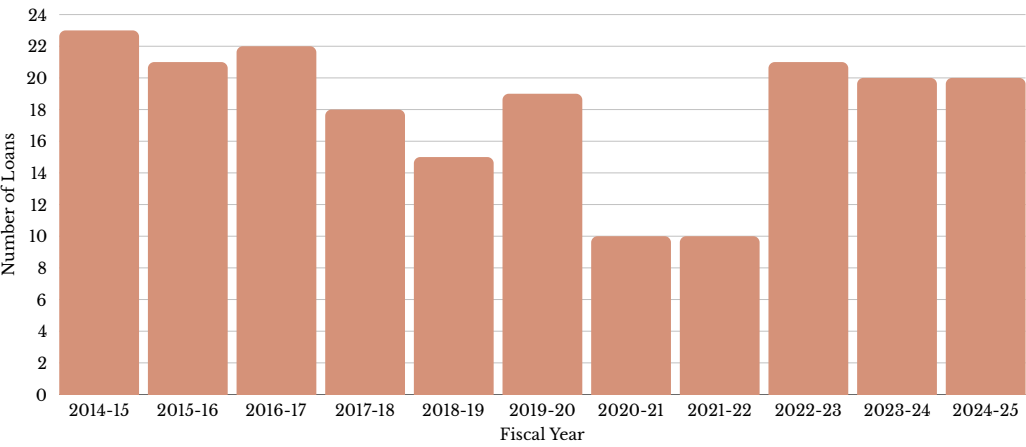
Respectfully,

Sherry Crawford
General Manager

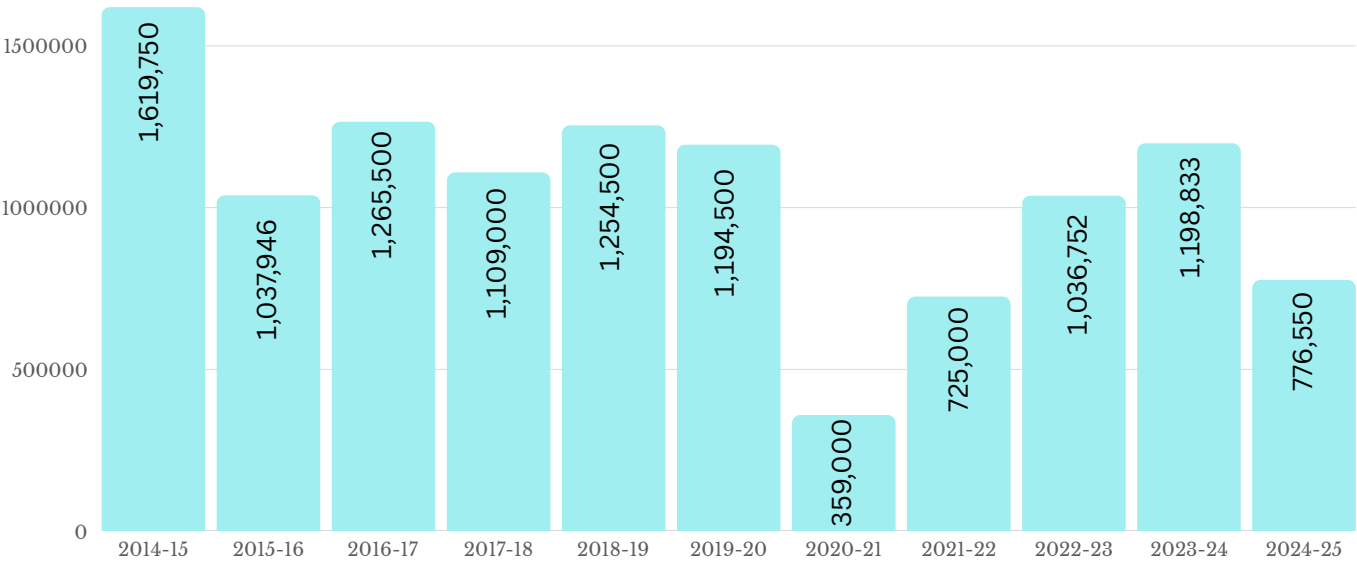


ALL THE STATS!

NUMBER OF LOANS BY YEAR



VALUE OF LOANS BY REGION



DOLLAR VALUE OF LOANS DISBURSED BY YEAR

April

The Capital Growth Initiative (CGI) loan program was approved by CFNA for offices to continue lending out to women business owners. This program is available for qualifying women owned business within the CFPC region with a competitive rate and a 25% forgivable portion. Staff attended the CFNA Spring Training sessions in Nisku to further enhance their skills. We also had a booth at the Grimshaw & District Chamber of Commerce Business Expo to promote CF services as well as the Entrepreneurship Bursary for students in Grade 12.

May

The 16th Annual Women in the North Conferences were held in three communities - Peace River, Fairview & Manning and featured keynote speakers Kristen Cumming who spoke on the generational gap in the workplace and Ariel Haubrich who gave tangible tips on how to manage stress. The day also included the highlight on local business leaders during the Talk Show and as always, door prizes, great food and awesome networking opportunities.

June

Our 2nd Annual Lemonade Day was a sweet success despite the pouring rain in both Peace River & Fairview. Kids went through training, built stands and set up for business on June 15th. 18 stands in total were built, with winners in three categories - Best Tasting, Best Stand and Best Entrepreneur. Thank you to all of the kids, parents, community members who supported and of course our volunteer judges! We held our AGM in the Town of Valleyview with more than 35 people in attendance. A delicious supper was catered by Glitz'd Boutique and we were treated to lovely music by Greg & Brooke Loewen.

July

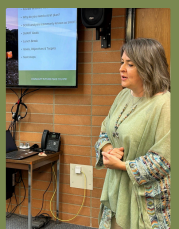
We had a great summer focusing on touching base with clients, as well as taking some time off for ourselves.

August

August is when we take some time to celebrate and appreciate the time and care put in by our volunteer Board of Directors. We spent the afternoon in Berwyn playing on their new Disc Golf course, followed by a delicious meal at Muther Truckerz Smokehouse.

September

We welcomed two new Board members Melissa Visser and Sarah Turcotte, both from the Valleyview area. Board members George Leger and Cathy DeZutter attended the Annual CFNA Symposium in Red Deer. Jason Bacon of Sunstone Strategic gave a presentation on Artificial Intelligence platforms at our monthly Lunch & Learn.



October

This month was busy with the return of the SongRise Music Conference in Fairview, which provided small business musicians with skills training and performance opportunities. Our mentors included Duane Steele, Robert Walsh, James Murdoch, Earl Pereira and Jaydee Bixby. 30 songwriters were in attendance over the weekend which culminated in a sold out concert. We celebrated Small Business Week with our annual Hug an Entrepreneur Day in Grimshaw & Manning, Board members attended Chamber of Commerce Award nights and we partnered with PR & District Chamber, ATB & BDC for a business networking mixer. We were happy to welcome back Board Member Cheryl Anderson after a year hiatus.

November

The Board spent a strategic planning day together to develop the 2025-26 Operational Plan led by GM Sherry Crawford. Staff reviewed the CFPC Lending Policy for Board approval. Our November Lunch & Learn featured Stacey Messner, HR Expert with a session focused on "When Things go Sideways". Our GM also spent a day with the Village of Berwyn Town Council to facilitate their strategic planning session.

December

After a busy fall, we are grateful for the slower pace of December! Staff and Board members attended the Peace River & District Murder Mystery Christmas party where fun and intrigue was enjoyed by all. After many years of dedicated service, we said a fond farewell to Board Director George Leger. We wish him well in all of his business and personal endeavours!

January

Our Lunch & Learn session was a crash course in payroll facilitated by Crystal Alfred of First String Bookkeeping. We sent information packages to the 26 municipalities in our region resulting in opportunities to present to councils.

February

Stacey Messner returned to give us a Lunch & Learn session on Active Listening. We have partnered with CF Central Alberta to offer online training, you can find more information on our website under the LaunchPad tab.

March

Our last Lunch & Learn before we take a break until fall was facilitated by Jason Bacon of Sunstone Strategic with more on AI. We also partnered with Northern Sunrise County and Jason to offer a year long "Wayfinder" Business Coaching program. We hosted our first Business Bites Mixer with 47 business and community leaders in attendance at Peace River Brewing over the lunch hour.

2024-25

Aside from all of our wonderful projects, our main focus remains helping businesses through lending, coaching & training which is all year round!



CLIENT HIGHLIGHT



Avis Gagné, CEO &
Daniel Labreque, Director of Operations
Photo: South Peace News

Smoky Hemp Decortication Ltd.

Smoky Hemp Decortication Ltd. (SHDL) was founded by a group of local business leaders and farmers who saw an opportunity to be part of the growing global demand for natural and sustainable products. Based in Falher, the company focuses on producing some of the highest quality hemp fiber in North America.

SHDL is committed to not just creating top-quality hemp fiber but also supporting the development of a thriving hemp industry in the region and encouraging local growth. The company's mission is to become a recognized leader in the hemp fiber industry, setting new standards for sustainable production and helping drive the development of this emerging sector. They aim to play a key role in building a successful hemp fiber industry that benefits communities, businesses, and the environment. SHDL's vision is to make hemp fiber a leading material in sustainable industries, contributing to a circular economy and providing a natural alternative for a variety of uses. By fostering innovation and supporting local farmers and businesses, the company is working to create a strong, interconnected hemp industry that benefits everyone involved.

Integra Tire

Trevor Wiebe is a journeyman welder and transport mechanic from Central BC. He started his own business operating a welding truck in 2006. In 2008, Trevor moved to Fort McMurray and gained years of experience working in the tar sands for over seven years. In 2015, he received his Red Seal as a transport mechanic.

Trevor then moved to Peace River to help run a mechanic shop, where he quickly built up his welding and mechanic business and bought his very first service truck. He ran that business from 2017 to 2023, when he purchased Integra Tire. "I started my own business for the growth opportunities it offers. We are a family-oriented business, and I've always wanted a work environment where everyone looks out for each other and gets along. We have more than achieved that goal." Trevor opened the shop with one tire technician and himself. Two weeks later, he added another tire apprentice and a second mechanic. During their first year, they operated with six people and have now grown to 10 employees. Integra Tire is a full-service mechanical business and also have a welder on staff. The facility has six bays, including a drive-through bay that can accommodate a B-train unit. Integra Tire is located in the Sunrise County Business Park in Northern Sunrise County.



Communities we serve

Birch Hills County
 Clear Hills County
 County of Northern Lights
 MD of Peace #135
 MD of Spirit River #133
 MD of Smoky River #130
 MD of Greenview #16
 MD of Fairview #136 Northern
 Sunrise County
 Saddle Hills County

Duncan's First Nation
 Lubicon Lake Band #453
 Sturgeon Lake Cree Nation
 Woodland Cree First Nation

Bay Tree
 Berwyn
 Blueberry Mtn.
 Bluesky
 Bonanza
 Brownvale
 Cadotte Lake
 Calais
 Caracajou
 Chinook Valley
 Cleardale
 Crooked Creek
 Deadwood
 DeBolt
 Dixonville
 Donnelly
 Dunvegan
 Eaglesham
 Eureka River
 Fairview
 Falher

Girouxville
 Gordondale
 Grimshaw
 Guy
 Hines Creek
 Hotchkiss
 Jean Côté
 Kathleen
 Manning
 Marie-Reine
 McLennan
 Nampa
 North Star
 Notikewin
 Peace River
 Rycroft
 Spirit River
 Tangent
 Valleyview
 Wanham
 Worsley



LUNCH & LEARN





Join the Board

If helping local businesses develop, grow, and thrive sounds like an appealing way to make a difference, being on the Community Futures Peace Country (CFPC) Board of Directors may be an excellent fit for you. CFPC is a non-profit organization guided by a volunteer Board of Directors and managed by business professionals to provide small and medium businesses with access to capital lending up to \$150,000.00 and business services such as coaching, training and business planning.

CFPC Board Directors attend ten board meetings and approximately 6-10 virtual meetings per year. Board meetings take place at 5:00 pm at the CFPC office in Peace River or via Zoom, and travel expenses to attend meetings are compensated.

“The most rewarding part of being on the Board is seeing entrepreneurs get their feet under them, to get a start and see it come to fruition,” says Cheryl Anderson, Board Director. “As a board member, you get to see it all the way through. It’s amazing, and it triggers something in your heart.”

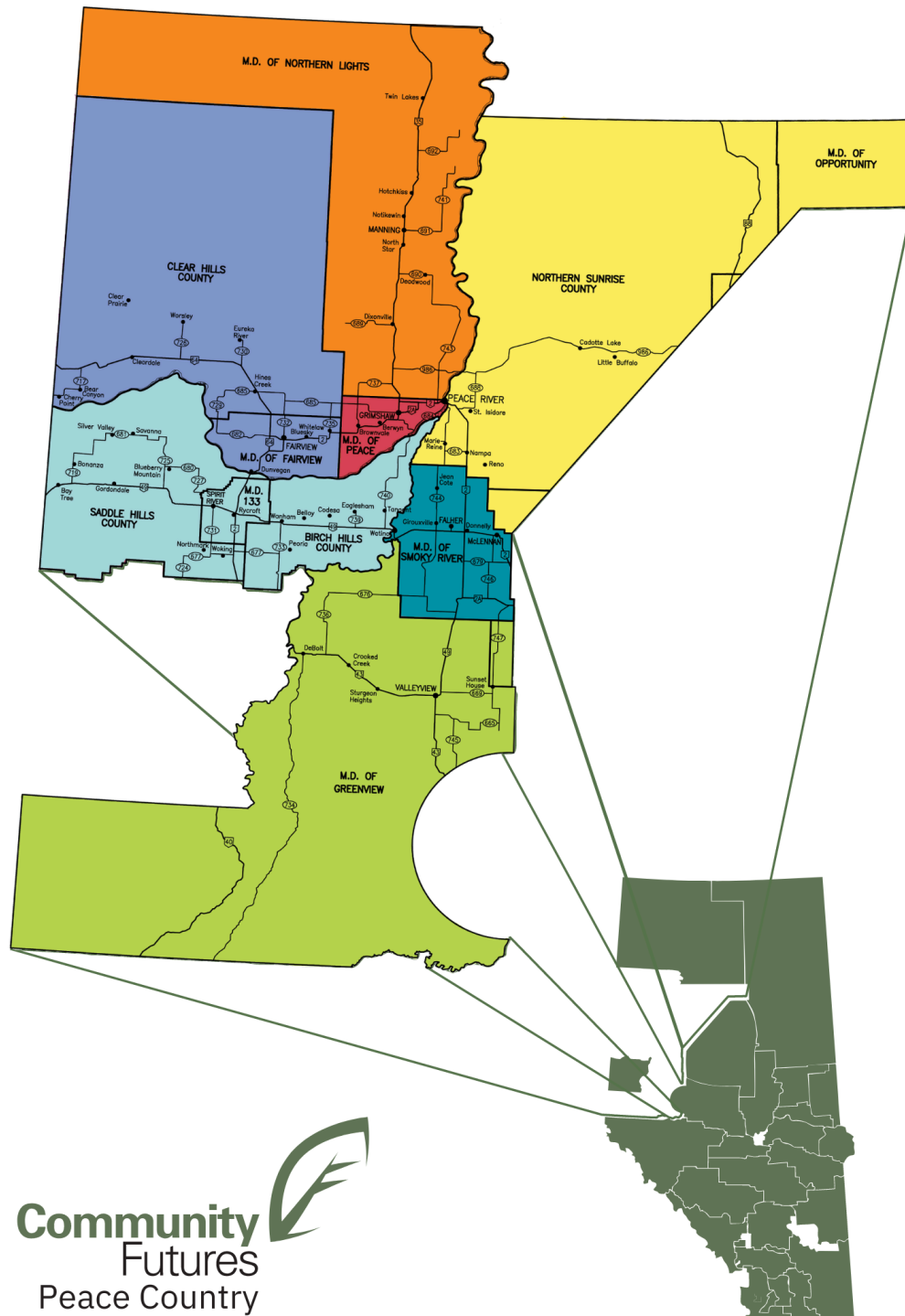
Those wishing to serve as a Board Director must be 18 years of age, reside in the region and be committed to support CFPC.

If you are interested in serving as a board director, call the CFPC office at 780-624-1161.

Guidance. Support. Community.

Growing communities one idea at a time

Business loans, tools, mentoring, guidance, and support for rural small business owners and entrepreneurs in Alberta.



**Community
Futures**
Peace Country

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Population: 50,000
50 Communities
26 Municipalities
4 First Nations
122,000 square kms