



Annual Report

2020 - 21



9816 - 98 Ave
 Peace River, AB T8S 1J5
 780 624 1161
 admin@cfpeacecountry.com
 www.cfpeacecountry.com



MISSION STATEMENT

To facilitate rural diversification through business and community economic development



WHO WE ARE * WHAT WE DO

- 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 economic diversification strategies



Community Futures (CF) is a national economic development program supported in western Canada by Western Economic Diversification 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

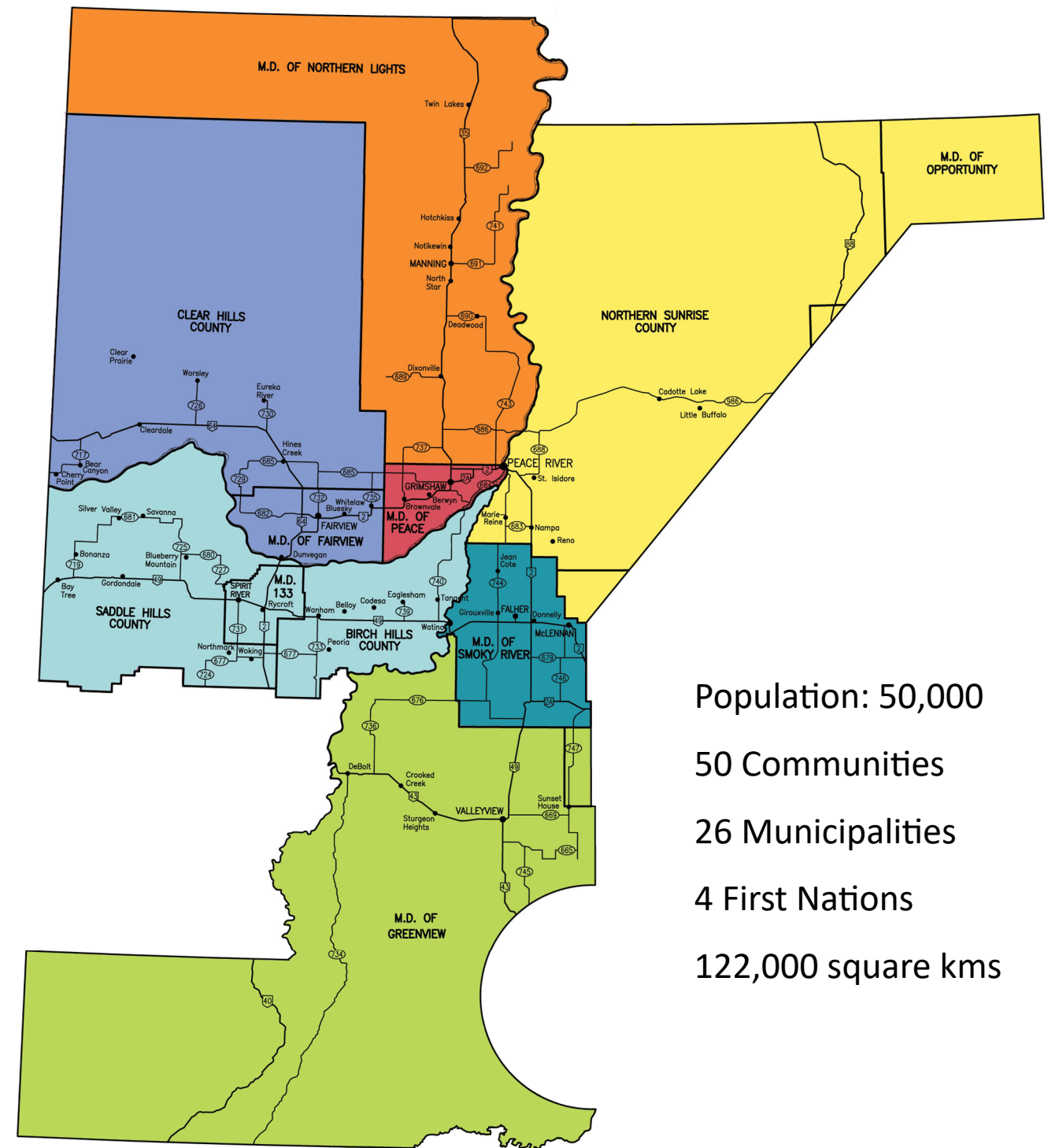
helping to develop and implement community-based economic development and diversification strategies. These strategies create growth within our rural communities one idea at a time.

ACCESS TO CAPITAL - Community Futures 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. Terms and borrowing rates are competitive and tied to the cash flow of the business.

BUSINESS SERVICES - CFs provide a wide range of coaching 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. Community Futures organizations provide essential community support, and at times, community strategic planning leadership. Additionally, all CFs have access to special project funding designed to assist communities in successfully implementing identified economic diversification strategies.

CFPC MAP



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

SOME PROJECTS DON'T STOP DURING A PANDEMIC



Virtual LUNCH & Learn

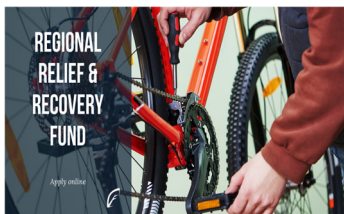
This webinar took place on Tuesday, October 20th and Thursday, October 22 and was co-sponsored by Smoky River Economic Development, in partnership with the Peace River & District Chamber of Commerce, Peace River Broadcasting and Alberta Labour & Immigration. We provided the sessions through Zoom and registration was required to attend. A total of 58 people registered and 31 of them attended both sessions. Part I included information on how to integrate photo and video into your online branding, types of video and photo on social media, tips for good DIY video and when to hire a professional. Part II was all about practical basics to make your DIY video look good, framing and composition, lighting, sound, and software & equipment options. Brianne provided the sessions using power point slides, links to video clips and I assisted her in creating polls for participants to answer. It was a very interactive event as participants were able to ask questions via the chat box to which Brianne was able to address. Both sessions were recorded, and I sent out all the links along with an evaluation survey afterwards. Responses rate the sessions as Excellent or Very Good.



“Air-Hug” an Entrepreneur

A day to celebrate small business owners – Wednesday, October 21st.

We did not advertise this day as our usual Hug an Entrepreneur Day unfortunately, but it was still a fantastic opportunity to visit our local downtown businesses in Peace River in partnership with the Peace River & District Chamber of Commerce and Alberta Labour & Immigration. We visited 30 businesses, offered COVID proof “Air-Hugs” and handed out small packages of cookies that were freshly baked by J’s Java Domain, along with information pamphlets from all three organizations. Business owners were pleased to take a few minutes to chat with us and learn a bit more about the programs and services that our organizations offer.



Regional Relief & Recovery Fund

In 2020, Community Futures Peace Country began offering tailored small business loans as part of the Government of Canada’s Regional Relief and Recovery Fund. These partially forgivable loans ensure that rural businesses, that do not qualify for other federal business support programs, receive help and support during this crisis.

“As the impacts of COVID-19 continued to mount, more and more local businesses were falling through the cracks,” said Randy Hodgkinson, General Manager of Community Futures Peace Country. “These urgent calls for support reached across the country and we are pleased that the voices of local businesses have been heard.”

Small- and medium-sized businesses could apply for loans of up to \$60,000 with terms that include:

- No interest accrual or principal payments through December 31, 2022.
- If 75% of the loan is repaid by December 31, 2022, the remainder of the loan is forgiven.
- Blended principal and interest payments beginning January 1, 2023 and loans must be repaid by December 31, 2025.
- No prepayment penalties.

Check out the RRRF Stats on page 3

OUR BOARD & STAFF



Gordon Nelson
Board Chair
Manning



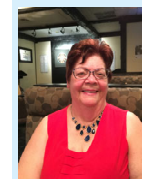
Cheryl Anderson
1st Vice Chair
County Of Northern Lights



Frank Light
2nd Vice Chair
Peace River



George Leger
Director
Grimshaw



Marie Dyck
Director
Nampa



Beatrice Tourangeau
Director
Sub-Region 8



Kamie Currie
Director
Fairview

GM’s Message: *“It was the best of times, it was the worst of times, it was the age of wisdom, it was the age of foolishness, it was the epoch of belief, it was the epoch of incredulity, it was the season of light, it was the season of darkness, it was the spring of hope, it was the winter of despair.”*
- Charles Dickens, A Tale of Two Cities

I know that Charles Dickens didn’t have the COVID 19 Global Pandemic in mind when he penned these words in 1859 but they seem eerily appropriate for 2020! Best of times? - Just ask Zoom Video Communications. Worst of times? - Ask any restaurant owner... well, you get the point.

Although 2020 was unlike any year that CF Peace Country has ever seen, it was an amazing year just the same. The Board, guided by Chair Gordon Nelson, answered the call to support our clients through an unprecedented 4-month loan holiday relief program last spring. This just-in-time assistance was a blessing for many clients. Sherry Crawford stepped into the Business Analyst position following the retirement of Deb Kalyn in 2019, and hit the ground running. What an amazing, talented young lady. Office Administrator Sheila Blumentrath skillfully maneuvered her way through holding down the fort around here while negotiating the on again, off again on-line learning for her kids at home. Well done Sheila. CFPC administered a very successful Regional Relief & Recovery loan program that delivered over \$2.5 million in partially forgivable loans to 89 eligible clients throughout the region. In partnership with the Peace River & District Chamber of Commerce and Alberta Labour & Immigration we celebrated small business week with virtual social media training and delivered cheer and cookies to many businesses in the Town of Peace River, all while following COVID protocols. So, for CFPC, while we have seen some of the worst of times, we have also seen some of the best of times. Stay safe... a season of light is coming.



Randy Hodgkinson
General Manager



Sherry Crawford
Business Analyst/
Projects Coordinator



Sheila Blumentrath
Office Administrator/CSR

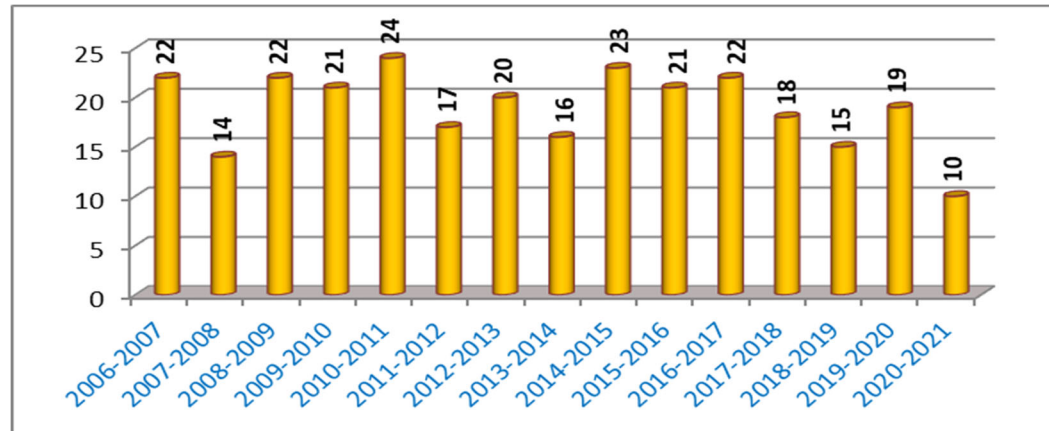
Community Futures Peace Country staff are knowledgeable, well trained and committed to providing their best to our clients and partners as we facilitate rural diversification through business and community economic development.



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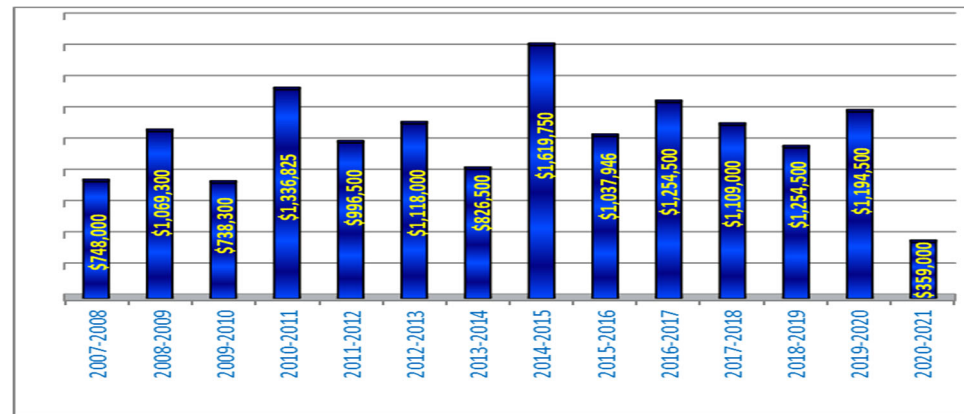
BUSINESS LOAN STATS

Regular CF Loans



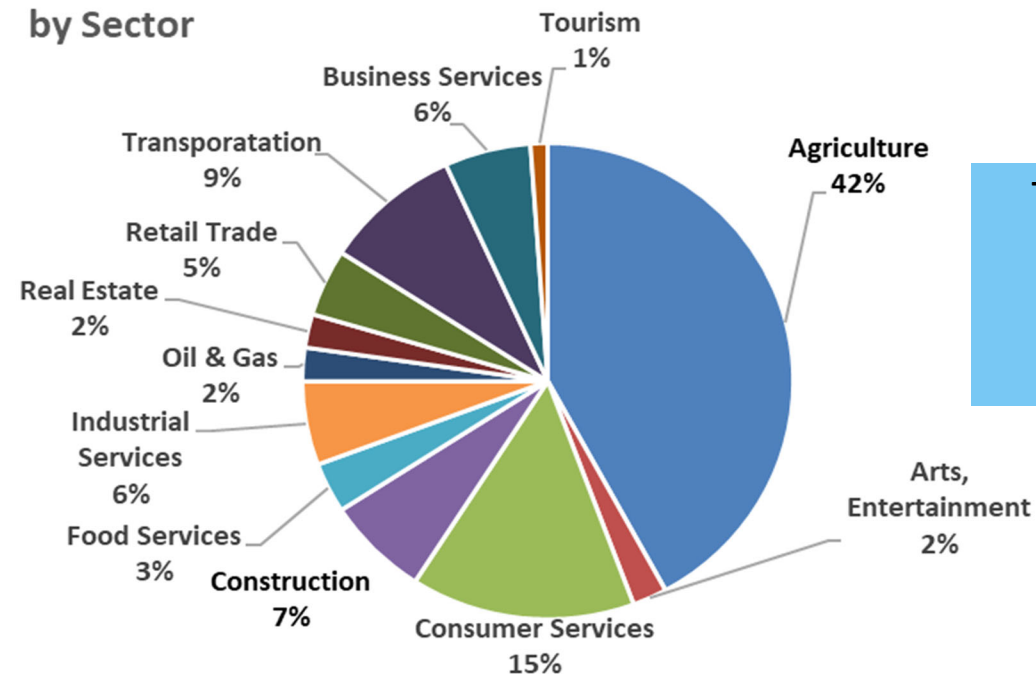
NUMBER OF LOANS BY YEAR

DOLLAR VALUE OF LOANS BY YEAR



Regional Relief & Recovery Loans

RRRF Loans by Sector



TOTAL RRRF LOANS DISBURSED

89 LOANS
\$2,576,050

CLIENTS & COVID - IN THEIR OWN WORDS

We reached out to a few of our existing clients to see how COVID 19 was affecting their business and what strategies they were utilizing to survive the crisis. Here's what they said...

Riverside Ranch Décor - Grimshaw, AB | Roxanne Alexander



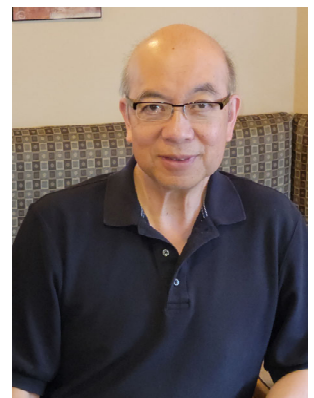
"The main effect Covid has had on my business are the restrictions on events. My sales from out of town guests have drastically decreased. People would come for hockey tournaments or swim meets or rodeo's and when in town they would shop and these sales I miss. I am very grateful to the locals for shopping local but you can only expect them to buy so much. I am looking forward to restrictions lifting so we can open up all events and get back to normal. During the hardest times I made up DIY kits for curbside pickup and people could purchase products from the store via curbside as well. I also made virtual videos and hosted online auctions. I created an online shopping website that really took me out of my comfort zone but sometimes you have to make sacrifices. Moving forward I will continue with my online website and fingers crossed more restrictions will be lifted and sales will begin to increase".

Trinity Repair Ltd. - Berwyn, AB | Barry Dale



"We have slowed to less than half of our normal workload. I have had to lay off 2 employees and am about to lose another. This COVID is a business killer. Some days we have almost no one come in for gas or repairs, so that makes for some consternation on our part. It seems people come in groups. We have been fortunate to have all the bills paid and employees paid at the end of each month, but we have almost zero left over after everything is paid. We have pulled in all expenses as much as possible, and I have been monitoring the billing from services we get like garbage disposal etc. We have been shopping for pricing and trying to go local. We try to run for parts only when absolutely required. I have been asking for our employees to over-deliver on service to keep people coming back. Trying to keep a clean shop and front office area and make things as presentable as possible without spending money on new stuff. I think people like coming into a clean shop and office area more than being in a dirty old garage kind of place. These are just some of the ways we are trying to make it thru this slow and uncertain time".

Rigger's Dining - Peace River, AB | Tony Yu



"We had the misfortune of taking over this business on May 15, 2020

Growing communities one idea at a time.