



# Annual Report

## 2022 - 2023

Growing communities one idea at a time.

# 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 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. Terms and borrowing rates are competitive and tied to the cash flow of the business.

**BUSINESS SERVICES** - CF provide 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 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.

Growing communities one idea at a time.

# OUR BOARD & STAFF



**George Leger**  
Board Chair  
Sub-Region 1



**Frank Light**  
1st Vice Chair  
Sub-Region 2



**Cheryl Anderson**  
2nd Vice Chair  
Sub-Region 2



**Gordon Nelson**  
Director  
Sub-Region 6



**Marie Dyck**  
Director  
Sub-Region 2



**Rene George**  
Director  
Sub-Region 1



**Catherine DeZutter**  
Director  
Sub-Region 2



**Carolyn Kolebaba**  
Director  
Sub-Region 2 & 8

**GM's Message:** The past year has proven to be something of a bounce back year following the devastation of the covid pandemic. After two years of historically low loan numbers, 2022-23 saw a return to "normal" with the approval of 21 loans worth just over one million dollars. All indications are that the economy is returning to pre-pandemic levels. Yay!!

CFPC projects continue to be successful including our first Women in the North (WIN) Road Trip. We took WIN to the people this year with stops in five communities including, Fairview, Spirit River, Valleyview, Manning and Peace River. The format is a lot of work but reviews are outstanding. Small Business Week included Lunch 'n Learn training sessions, our world famous "Hug an Entrepreneur" campaign and a 70's Retro Dance in partnership with the PR Chamber to celebrate entrepreneurs.

Long time Board Director and past Chair, Gordon Nelson retired in October. Gordon brought his wisdom and knowledge to every meeting and will be missed at the table. Following an active recruitment drive, we welcomed three new Board members. Directors Rene George, Catherine DeZutter and Carolyn Kolebaba are fitting right in and already proving their value.

Staff is everything and I am blessed to have amazing staff. Business Analyst Sherry Crawford continues to grow in her role and has become my right hand woman. You just watch, she will have my job before you know it! Unfortunately, Office Administrator Sheila Blumentrath made the decision to move on this year. I thank her for everything she brought to her role and wish her success wherever life takes her next. What can I say about Vanessa Burns? She slips seamlessly between WIN and RRRF Coordinator roles with a smile that will brighten any day. Simply put "she's great".

I see that the bottom of the page has crept up on me and it is time to close. This organization means the world to me and our services have changed so many lives for the better. I am proud to be a part of it and look forward to another great year, or at least a part thereof, ahead! Stay tuned!



**Randy Hodgkinson**  
General Manager

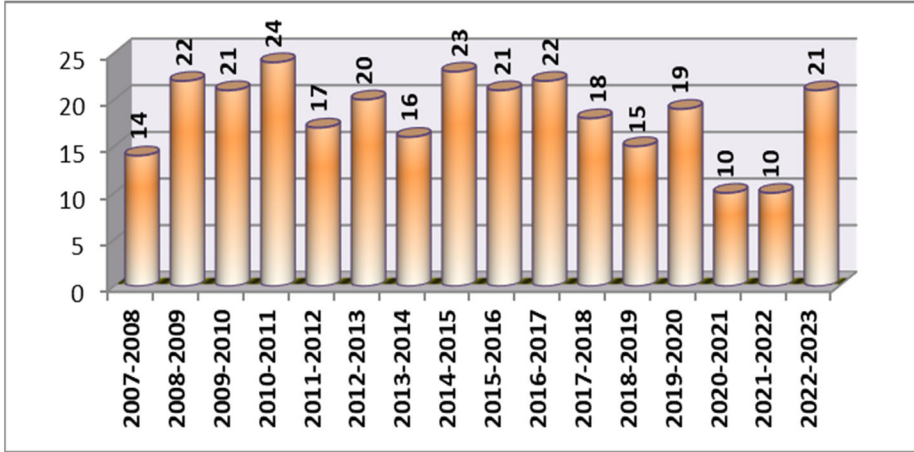


**Sherry Crawford**  
Business Analyst  
Projects Coordinator



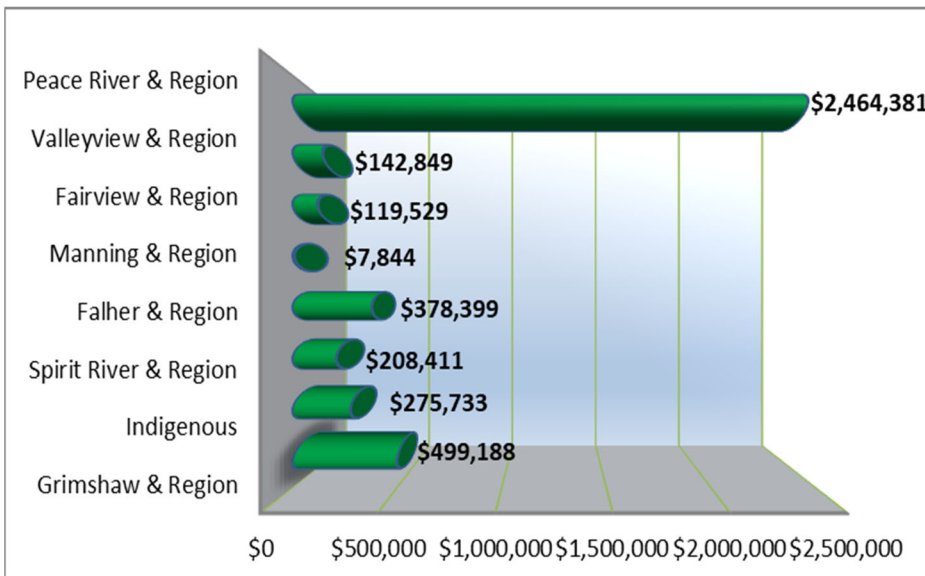
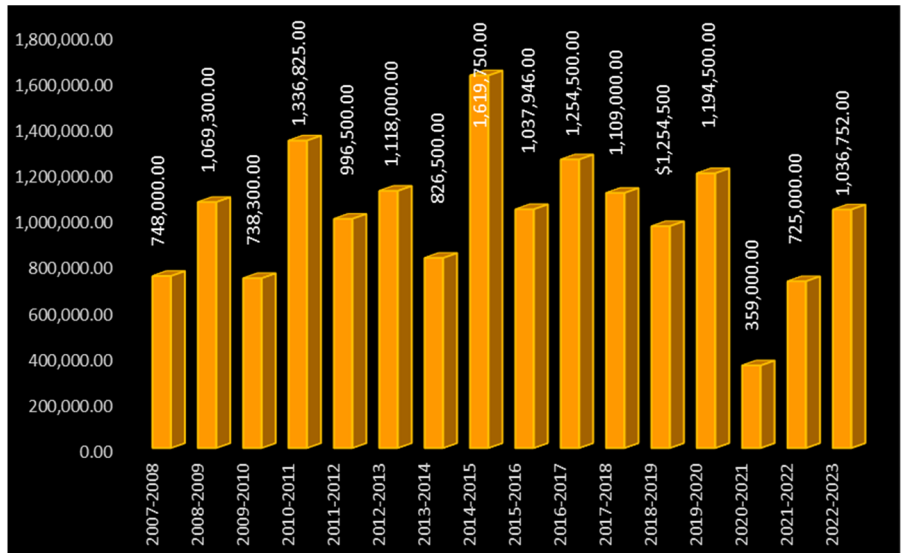
**Vanessa Burns**  
WIN/RRRF Coordinator

# BUSINESS LOAN STATS



NUMBER OF LOANS BY YEAR

DOLLAR VALUE OF LOANS BY YEAR



VALUE OF LOANS BY REGION

## CLIENT'S CORNER

### Coulee Creek Safety Training - Peace River, AB | Gary, Elaine & Nate Ayre



OFFERING THE HIGHEST QUALITY OF INSTRUCTION IN THE INDUSTRY

Gary & Elaine, along with son Nate, own & operate Coulee Creek Safety Training. Their diverse courses allow students to experience "hands-on" learning activities, focusing on personal safety in the workplace and at home. They pride themselves on employing instructors with the workplace experience related to the courses they teach. At Coulee Creek Safety Training, they believe that time spent on training is valuable to both the employer and employee. "Safety Training means investing in your organization, that directly affects your bottom line". Beyond their training facility in Peace River, they offer mobile services, traveling as far as the Northwest and Yukon Territories and British Columbia.

First Aid, WHMIS, H2S Alive, Oilfield Safety, Farm Safety, Ground Disturbance, Confined Space, Babysitter Training, Equipment Safety Awareness, Online Safety and Awareness, and more. CF Peace Country is proud to support Coulee Creek Safety Training.



Loan Loss  
under 5%

### Just the Facts:

(June 1995 - March 2023)

Loans disbursed in the region: 534 Loans

Value of loans disbursed in the region: \$24,702,000

### Simard Butcher Ltd. - Falher, AB | Stephane Simard



Stephane Simard is the owner/operator of Simard Butcher Ltd. retail meat store in Falher, Alberta. Stephane has always had a passion for hunting, growing up outdoors and testing his hunter skills with friends and family. He grew up around McLennan and deep family roots make the Peace Region home. Stephane is a loving husband to his wife, Nichole, and adoring father to their two young boys. Stephane graduated with Honors from the Meat Processing course at Olds College in 2021. Now he brings his skill, creativity, and industry-leading technique to you. The retail location boasts a variety of fresh, smoked, cured, and other beef and pork options.

The Simards are proud to make these available locally! The business also further supports their local producers by offering Custom Cutting of farm direct animals. Stephane and his family give back to the community through support of local 4H Beef programs and donations of edibles to local Animal Shelters. CF Peace Country is proud to support Simard Butcher Ltd.

**Local. Diverse. Delicious.**

Your choice of cuts from local producers.

Custom Cut + Wrap Available

# SMALL BUSINESS WEEK RECAP Oct 16 - 22

It was an eventful week providing valuable information and appreciation to our local small business community. We hosted two Lunch & Learns in collaboration with the Peace River & District Chamber. Hug an Entrepreneur Day was back to in person visits! And we celebrated!



This year we partnered with the Peace River & District Chamber of Commerce to host two in-person Lunch & Learns. The Chamber organized the speakers and looked after registrations, while we provided the space in the Board Room and paid for the lunch on Tuesday. We had eleven people in attendance on the 18th and nine on the 20th.

We chose Spirit River & Rycroft for Hug an Entrepreneur Day as we are really making an effort to have more of a presence in that region. Sherry spent the day handing out bags full of CF information, swag and homemade cookies from Janet Sinkwich of Burnt Offerings in Rycroft. Petrina Beale from South Peace Rural Community Learning toured main street with Sherry, introducing her to businesses and chatting about what's happening in the town of Rycroft. Then it was off to Spirit River, where Sherry teamed up with Mayor Tammy Yaremko. The day finished off with quick stops in Falher & Nampa!



We finished off the week with a celebration of Small Business Week. BDC created SBW 43 years ago, so we thought it would be fun to take a trip down memory lane! The event was in partnership with the PR & District Chamber of Commerce and was held at the Belle Centre. Ticket sales were low, however, the 60 or so people that were in attendance had a lot of fun dancing to live music of classic rock and county tunes provided by two local bands. The food was amazing, the décor was stellar, and a streaming video of retro music videos kept everyone entertained!

## THE PICTURES TELL THE STORY!



# 14th ANNUAL WOMEN IN THE NORTH CONFERENCE 2022



**SUMMARY** — This year, CFPC hosted the 14th Annual Women in the North Conference in five communities rather than one regional event as per previous years. When beginning to plan the conference, we, like the rest of the province, were unsure of what the nature of the pandemic would be in the spring. Therefore, CFPC

decided to host smaller events in several communities to ensure the safety of participants and to be better able to adhere to any possible provincial gathering restrictions. We scheduled six conferences in the communities of Peace River, Fairview, Falher, Manning, Valleyview, and Spirit River, however, due to low registrations in Falher, we canceled that event. 180 participants attended over the five locations. Sherry Crawford, CFPC Business Analyst was the emcee for all events and the conference agenda was duplicated in each community. The conferences were opened up with the high energy of Dr. Emily Marshall who spoke of the value of making courageous connections, believing in oneself, and first impressions. Dr. Emily Marshall is an experienced motivational speaker and an Elite Trainer with Sidecar. The second keynote was focused on disaster planning and was delivered in a virtual format by Leann Hackman-Carty, CEO for the Economic Developers Alberta. Leann is recognized as one of Canada's most powerful women and has received several awards for her community resilience work. After a delicious catered lunch, attendees enjoyed hearing from local peers and women in business through the popular "Talk Show" portion of the conference. The "Table Talk Show" features local women in business who discuss their challenges and success in a relaxed setting. Having the conference in multiple locations allowed CFPC to highlight many women in business from several communities and is truly a highlight of the conferences. Next on the agenda was a World Café Networking session where attendees shared their challenges, training needs, and solutions in the areas of marketing, staff and customers, and money and planning. The World Café session gave participants the opportunity to share, brainstorm and interact with each other and the data collected from the session was used to inform the training in CFPC's WINspiration Training Series that ran until March of 2023.

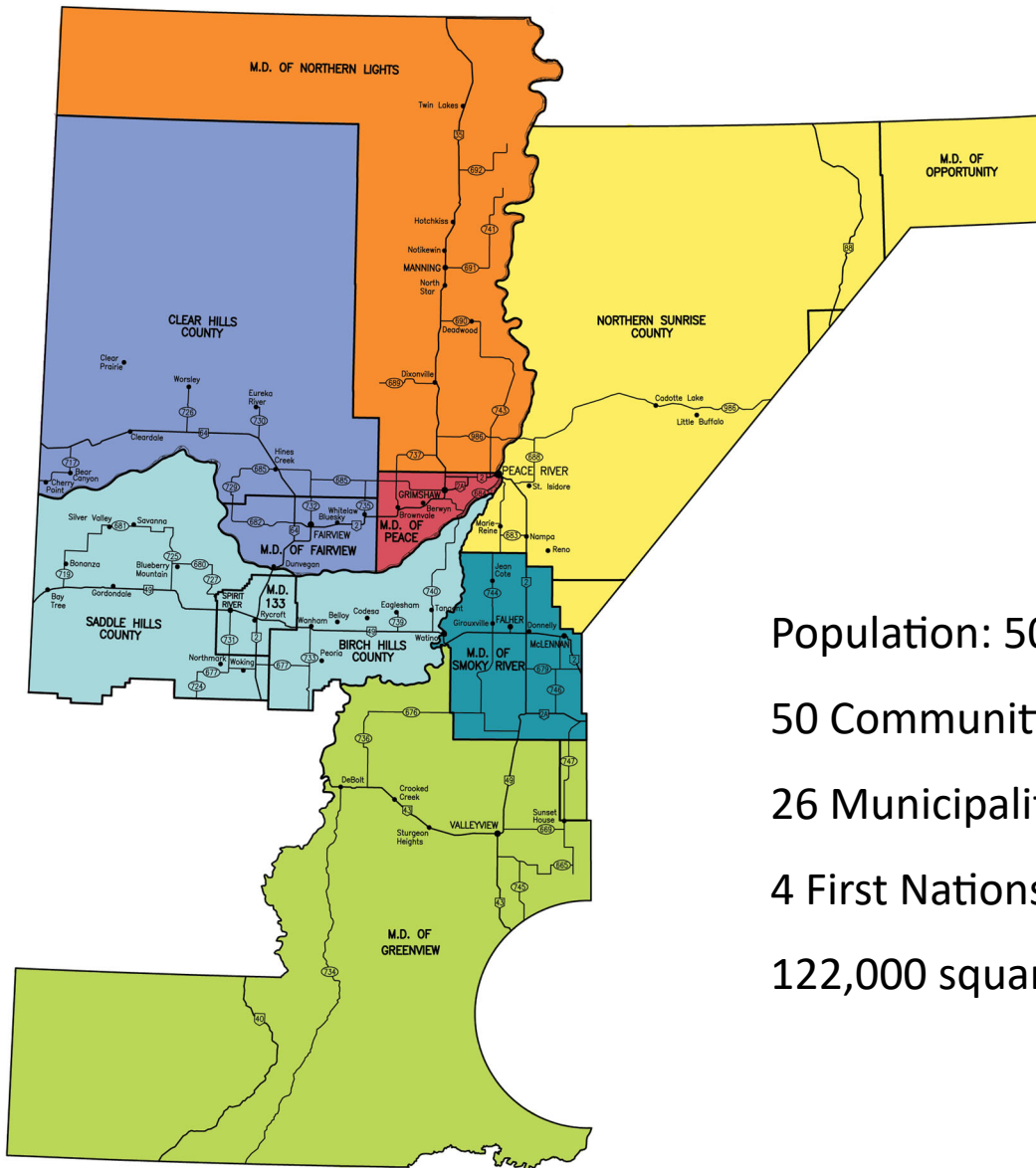


Dr. Emily Marshall then closed the conference with inspiring last words, and door prizes were drawn. Throughout the day, a slideshow was running that recognized conference sponsors and donors, the Steering Committee, and the CFPC Board of Directors. In addition a presentation was made outlining the services and supports available through Community Futures and a video highlighting GPRIN services was played. The CF banners were on display and CF promotional items and information were included in the participant gift bags. CF Peace Country staff worked hard to make this 1st Road Trip a huge success and a special thank you to Vanessa Burns, WIN Project Coordinator, for bringing it all together.

*" Very informative and uplifting!*

*Glad I joined today. I would recommend this to everyone"*

# CFPC MAP



Population: 50,000

50 Communities

26 Municipalities

4 First Nations

122,000 square kms



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## MISSION STATEMENT

To facilitate rural diversification through business and community economic development

