

RABC ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

Rocky Mountain House

2015



SUSTAINABLE
ECONOMIC
FUTURES

RABC ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT PROJECT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After three successful years, RABC Rocky Mountain House was rewarded an Entrepreneurial Development (ED) program. The Rural Alberta Business Centre (RABC) Program is a partnership between the Government of Alberta and The Town of Rocky Mountain House. RABCs provide advice and information services to entrepreneurs and small businesses to assist them in making informed business decisions. Each rural business centre is staffed by a small business advisor who assists in providing one-on-one business advice, seminars, workshops, and access to relevant information about small businesses and business opportunities.

In May of 2015, a SEF Canada Economic Development (ED) project was implemented at the RABC Rocky Mountain House, as a tool to improve on its success and effectiveness. The RABC business advisor engaged as Facilitator. The project covers and supports businesses and entrepreneurs existing in West Central Alberta

In its first seven months of operation, the RABC ED project has had great success

- **9 New Businesses, 3 expanded and 1 retained**
- **23 Jobs Created**
- **Directly responsible for \$242,500 direct investment**
- **Estimated gross sales of \$557,900 (according to business plans)**
- **62 Clients Assisted**
- **191 Personal Contacts made**

Business Creation			Job Creation	
New Businesses Started	9		Jobs Created	21.5
Businesses Expanded	3		Jobs Retained	1.5
Businesses Retained	1			
Total Business Creation	12		Total Jobs	23
Enterprise Type	#	%	Est New Sales	\$ 557,900
Private	60	97%	New Capital	\$ 242,500
Social	2	3%		
Total Enterprise Type	62	100%		

Other RMH RABC achievements include:

- The Project Management Team is dedicated to ensuring that the success of this valuable community economic development initiative continues.
- The Resource Team has volunteered for the past 7 months; in this time, three resource meetings were held, followed by participation in an online “forum” for the past four months.
- Resource team meetings providing important outreach to the community, can be valued at approximately **\$12,000** for the first three months (2 hour per person per month, assuming the average wage of \$50/hour) and approximately **\$8000** for the following four months (assuming 1 hour per person per month valued at \$50/hour), with a resource team of **30** members. This accounts for a total of approximately **\$18,000 in vested time** over the past 7 months.
- None of the business reported under the new SEF ED methodology have closed

Overview

- The Rural Alberta Business Centre (RABC) Program is a partnership between the Government of Alberta and the Town of Rocky Mountain House
- RABC Rocky Mountain House was rewarded a SEF Canada ED project to improve on its success and provide direct outputs
- RABC Rocky Mountain House is a name chosen for this project
- SEF trains and supports the RABC small business advisor as Facilitator, and a team of citizens to support would-be entrepreneurs and small businesses in the region.
- The previous “Advisory Board” for RABC Rocky Mountain House was trained as the Project Management team.
- The Project covers West Central Alberta.
- There is one paid position, the Facilitator, who at present is contracted by the government of Alberta and the town of Rocky Mountain House. The entity is responsible for fiscal and management of the Project.
- The Project Management team is comprised of 7 individuals: Val Murray—New Image Paint & Interiors; Karen Knoblich—Cougar Ridge Bookkeeping; Dale Shipplet;; Jackie Stratton – Rimbey Chamber of Commerce and business owner Scratchin The Surface; Jennifer McDougall – Wehub, Darryl Park-Summit Video; Brad Dollevoet – the Facilitator’s supervisor.
- The Facilitator continues to outreach and make community contacts
- **A total of 62 clients** are or have been in the facilitation process.

Of Interest

- The present Community Resource Team consists of **approximately 30 volunteers** and covers a diversified variety of interests, demographics and psychographics.
- A total of **161 introductions** have been made into the community
- The Facilitator has set up an online forum in place of the month resource meeting, in order to efficiently outreach Resource team members in a real-time manner.
- The Government of Alberta and the Town of Rocky Mountain House, who have provided the following resources, fund RABC Rocky Mountain house: funding, facilities and infrastructure- as well as people.
- Of the existing clients, 48% are female.

BACKGROUND

Rocky Mountain House, Alberta

The majority of businesses in Alberta are small businesses, defined as having fewer than 50 employees. For the last decade, Alberta has led Canada in the number of new small businesses created. Small businesses are a vital part of Alberta's economy, making up 96 per cent of all businesses in the province. They provide about 37 per cent of all private sector jobs in Alberta and contribute an estimated 29 per cent to Alberta's gross domestic product.

They are a driving force of the economy accounting for almost 30 per cent of our GDP. There are about 39 small businesses in the province for every 1,000 people, far exceeding the Canadian average of 31.

RABC Rocky Mountain House | Economic Development project for the communities

The RABC Pilot Program was developed in 2011 and launched as a three-year trial operating from January 2012 to December 2014.

The RABC Pilot Program was established to provide direct information and support services to small businesses in rural Alberta communities in an efficient and cost-effective manner, providing advice and information services to entrepreneurs and small business owners at all stages of their business life cycles. The RABC Pilot Program directly supported the economic development strategies establish

by the Government of Alberta's June 2012 mandate stating "Education and Entrepreneurship [are] the cornerstones of a dynamic economy, which Albertans build through knowledge, adaptability and an entrepreneurial spirit [and with the goal of] increase business start-ups and the commercialization of technology.

Offering a broad range of services, in cooperation with other partner organizations, the RABC Program aims to establish itself as a vital contributor to enhance Alberta's innovation capacity, its skilled workforce and its economy. Eight Alberta communities were selected to participate in the RABC Pilot Program initiative, and were equipped with access to a closed wall office and telephone, meeting space for clients, administrative support and technical capabilities such as internet and IT support.

The following four communities are presently participating in the RABC program: Camrose, Cold Lake, Hanna and Rocky Mountain House. RABC Rocky Mountain House was rewarded an ED project with SEF Canada Ltd in May of 2015 in order to ensure its ongoing success. The SEF team came in as a technical advisor to integrate SEF's principles and practices into the RABC service.

SEF Canada Ltd.

Our SEF team has over 30 years of personal business experience and we have been intimately involved in the development, launch and implementation of economic development initiatives world-wide since 1997. The Entrepreneurial Development Program, or ED, is a community based economic development tool. The power of ED comes from a community's willingness to support the dreams and aspirations of its citizens.

RABC Rocky Mountain House

RABC is a partnership between the Government of Alberta and the Town of Rocky Mountain House.

RABC Rocky Mountain House provides access to information, advice, business training and research services to entrepreneurs and business owners. The program supports local entrepreneurs in realising their business dreams. The program is a free and confidential service that is offered within project areas to anyone who wishes to open or operate a new or existing business. The Facilitator assists clients in providing the necessary tools and resources in the community.

RABC Rocky Mountain House works with community organizations by introducing clients to traditional economic development partners when they are ready and in need of those services. A Facilitator (sometimes referred to as Small Business Advisor), Project Management Team (Advisory Board), and Community Resource Team work with entrepreneurs to create, expand, or maintain their business

ventures. The program is funded by the Government of Alberta and the town of Rocky Mountain House.

The goal of RABC Rocky Mountain House is to encourage and support attraction, retention and growth of small business, to encourage and support entrepreneurship, to identify and communicate business opportunities, and to facilitate regional cooperation and collaboration among small business service providers.

RABC Rocky Mountain House services West Central Alberta with a focus on Rocky Mountain House & Clearwater County Region. The population of Rocky Mountain House & Clearwater County is approximately 21,000.

Entrepreneurial Development model

The Entrepreneurial Development (ED) model that has been integrated into the former RABC Rocky Mountain House project is based on the belief that "an empowered and engaged community will create a sustainable economy". The program works bottom-up and top-down to optimize new and existing local economic development programs and infrastructure. The entrepreneur must be the one who reaches out to the program, signifying they are ready to use these resources. Small businesses are products of innovation and passion, but the statistics surrounding business failure rates are staggering— recent Industry Canada study concluded that 30 per cent of small businesses won't survive longer than two years, and only half make it to five years. Conversely, more than 80% of businesses in over 300 communities that have participated in ED programs are successful. The Facilitator, Project Management Team, and Community Resource Team are integral to ensuring the success of an ED program.

THE PROCESS

The sponsorship of the program came from the Government of Alberta. The process is built on the passion, creativity and commitment of the people in the local area, encouraging small business growth from within the community

Project Management Team

The Management Team is comprised of a group of volunteers that are tasked with managing the ED program. This becomes a level playing field for the mine personnel and creates the continuum of social chain custody throughout the project.

Project Team Members

Val Murray New Image Paint & Interiors

Karen Knoblich Cougar Ridge Bookkeeping

Dale Shipplet - multi-business owner

Darryl Park – Summit Video

Jackie Stratton – Rimbey Chamber of Commerce and business owner Scratchin The Surface

Jennifer McDougall - WeHub

Brad Dollevoet – The Facilitator's supervisor

Resource Members

The Community Resource Team works to help integrate the Facilitator into the community. The 30+ volunteers are comprised of local community members that are willing to introduce the Facilitator to their large networks and take part in the online forum. Buy-in and commitment to the program are important to create a “core group” of Resource Team members. The network and resources provided in the online forum for the entrepreneur is principle to the success of the business.

A list of members is attached in Appendix A

The Facilitator

The Facilitator operates in a highly visible, accessible and intensive support role, and spends as much time as necessary with each client, serving as a switchboard to route a multitude of resources to individual entrepreneurs. The Facilitator operates from the RABC facility and also sees clients both in their own setting and in coffee shops or businesses in the community. This approach creates a neutral, less intimidating setting for the client, which helps to develop a trusting relationship between the Facilitator and the client.

Facilitators test the personal motivation and skill of the client, developing in the client their capacity to assess their own management strengths and weaknesses.

The Facilitator provides intensive, one-on-one assistance, which includes, but is not limited to, the following:

- Linking clients to programs and resources offered by development organizations and professionals;
- Providing guidance to clients on how to assess their business ideas;

- Providing information and guidance on how and where to perform research and/or analysis;
- Assisting entrepreneurs with the preparation of their business plans and marketing strategies;
- Assisting entrepreneurs with their search for suitable space;
- Assisting entrepreneurs in securing financing;
- Assisting entrepreneurs in navigating the system of municipal regulations (i.e. business licenses, sign permits, etc.) and working to have their applications “fast-tracked” at City Hall;
- Providing entrepreneurs with contacts and “mentoring” with existing businesses in the area operating in the same field
- Providing as much ongoing assistance as necessary after business opening.

Daily activities of the Facilitator also include:

- Answering calls from clients and potential clients and directing them to resources when possible;
- Formalizing and expanding relationships with citizens and businesses;
- Quarterly reporting, including information on the number of contacts made, businesses established and the status of businesses previously assisted by Facilitation;
- Providing information, both one on one and in-group settings, on Facilitation for the purpose of fund raising, general knowledge to third parties and increasing awareness in the community;
- Attending and/or hosting various seminars and information sessions;
- Giving presentations at meetings on their community project;
- Researching resources and contacts on behalf of clients according to their specific needs.

SUCCESSSES

The successes from the Entrepreneurial Development Program can be measured in about of contacts made, amount of new, expanded and retained business, the amount of jobs created and retained.

OUTCOMES

Economic Contribution

The multiplier effect is the boost to your local economy that results from locally-owned independent businesses, owners, and employees spending business revenue within the region.

Total economic impact is determined by measuring three components -- the direct, indirect, and induced impacts.

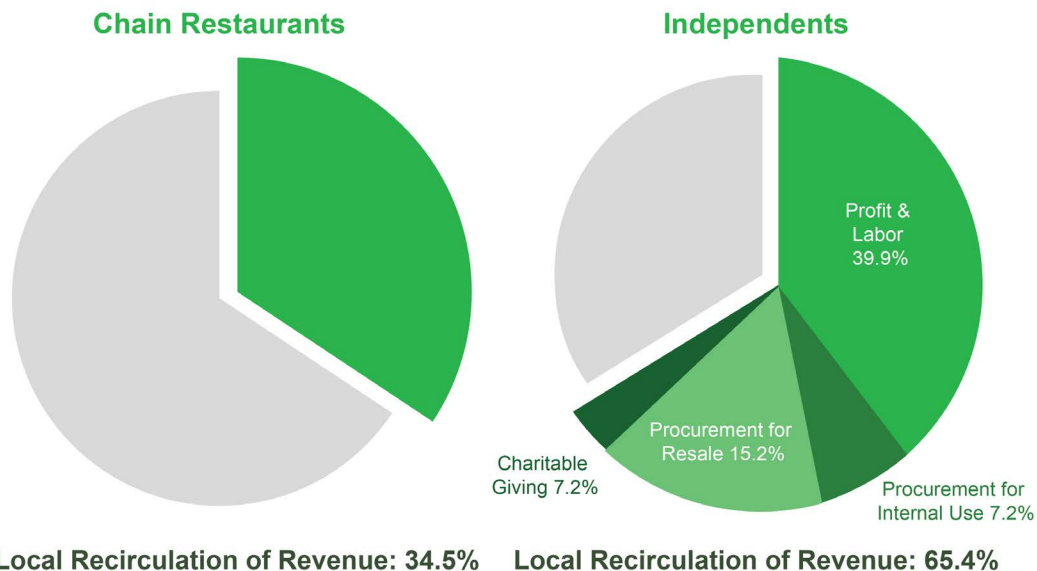
- Direct impact is spending done by a business in the local economy to operate the business, including inventory, utilities, equipment and pay to employees.
- Indirect impact refers to the conventional multiplier that happens as dollars the local business spends at other area businesses re-circulate.
- Induced impact refers to the additional consumer spending that happens as employees, business owners and others spend their income in the local economy.

If each business and job contributes \$10,000 annually to the local economy, the contribution from the past 7 months is \$360,000.

With regard to economic impact, one study finds that, for every \$1,000,000 in sales, independent retail stores generate \$450,000 in local economic activity. RABC Rocky Mountain House has almost contributed to over \$250,000 in the past seven months.

On average, 40 percent of each purchase at local independent businesses was recirculated locally, creating almost \$225,000 being recirculated in the past seven months.

Local Benefit of Indie v. Chain Restaurants



*Compiled results from nine studies by Civic Economics, 2012: www.civiceconomics.com
Graph by American Independent Business Alliance: AMIBA.net

Case:

**EFFECTIVE
MARKETING
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CONTACT THE [E.M.S.](#) TEAM TODAY!

Theresa 403-844-6479 Darryl 403-418-5131

EMAIL: emsrmh1@gmail.com

EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES
TO INCREASE



“ Michelle was the catalyst that started my business. We go to the same gym, and I overheard her talking to the owner about doing her social media, and Michelle mentioned that someone in town should start up a business doing social media. I thought to myself – ‘I can do that’ so I told Michelle I was interested in social media. She booked me an appointment right then and there.

Since then, Michelle has taken me step by step in how to start up a business. We will meet and discuss each step and why each step is crucial to my success. Each time she will give me ‘homework’ to do for the next meeting, which she promptly schedules for a couple of weeks later. She will always follow up at the next appointment and give me feedback and tips to improve or change. Michelle is always positive, encouraging, and supportive with various resources to assist in my learning.

The value of Michelle’s advice, support and mentorship is priceless, I don’t know how I would have done this on my own and be successful. She has put me on the right track by assisting me in building a plan for my business so that I know where I’m going and how I’m going to get there. The fact that it was free is an added bonus, as start-up costs for a small business can easily eat up the little bit of money you make in the beginning.

Having Michelle on my team has allowed me to realize that having my own business is possible, and that it can be successful. The networking groups she has started have allowed me to meet other women in the area to share ideas, collaborate and meet prospective clients.

I have recommended Michelle and her services to many others who are thinking of starting a business or who already own a business but need advice. She is a valuable part of our business community and not only promotes small businesses in the area, but she brings business partners from outside our area into our community. The conferences and events she organizes have given our community economic growth and recognition for a community 'in the know'.



Theresa Buck
Effective Marketing Solutions
Rocky Mountain House, AB
403.844.6479

Estimated sales for 2016: \$54,000
Capital costs: \$3500.00



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living legacy.**

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“ The RABC program has meant a tremendous amount to the success of my business. Having a local resource to go to for help for the many start up issues has played a pivotal role in the establishment and growth of my business. Knowing there is an online resource team at our disposal to help small businesses provides me with a strong sense of entrepreneurial security; it is a priceless resource to assist in my success.”

Darryl A Park
Summit Video
403-418-5131

Local activities

RABC Rocky Mountain House works with community organizations by introducing clients to traditional economic development partners when they are ready and in need of those services. Getting involved with indirect activities, which enhance both RABC Rocky Mountain House project and the community of Rocky Mountain House and surrounding areas. Some examples are:

Rocky Chamber of Commerce
Red Deer Chamber of Commerce
Rimbey Chamber of Commerce
Access Prosperity
Central Alberta Economic Partnership (CAEP)
ATB Financial

The Town of Rocky Mountain House – Economic Development Department.

Clearwater County

Government of Alberta – Jobs, Skills, Training and Labour

University of Alberta

AFSC

ATB Financial

Business Link

Rocky Rural Electrical Association

Community Futures – Central Alberta

Community Futures – East Parkland

Rocky Community Learning Centre

Olds College

West Central High School

Rocky Credit Union

Lacombe Employment Centre

Diversified Staffing – Red Deer

Lacombe Chamber of Commerce

Blackfalds Chamber of Commerce

Town of Blackfalds – EDO

Alberta Innovates – Technology Futures

Rocky Native Friendship Centre



“ I am happy to be a part of the RABC Advisory Committee and Advisory Team that assists small business in Central Alberta. I have put my business through the system and received some great ideas/networking opportunities! Networking/brainstorming with other business owners and caring people in our communities is invaluable. They understand small town dynamics along with geographical challenges and you only have this understanding when you actually live in it! Thank you for all your hard work and tireless dedication to developing small business in Central Alberta. From someone who can't swim (me) - you are literally a lighthouse in an ocean of information and services.”



Jackie Stratton - Project Management Team Member
 Scratchin' the Surface Laser Engraving & Artistry
 RR#4, 4937 – 50 Ave, Rimbey, AB T0C 2J0

APPENDIX A

List of Volunteers Resource Team Members

Karen Knoblich	Rocky Mountain House	Bookkeeper
Jennifer McDougall	Rocky Mountain House	Web Designer
Gerhard Doege	Caroline	Eatery - Waffle Stop
Sandra Browning	Rocky Mountain House	The Old Barn Retail
Dean Schweder	Rocky Mountain House	EDO
Sheila Mizera	Rocky Mountain House	Town Councillor
Colleen Dwyer	Rocky Mountain House	GM Walking Eagle
Mona Crocker	Rocky Mountain House	Rocky Community Learning Council ED
Jo Hallahan	Rocky Mountain House	Owner Rocky Mountain Safety Services Ltd
Crystal Mossing	Caroline	Owner Art on The Range
Kelly Spongberg	Rocky Mountain House	Self-employed
Dan Burger	Rocky Mountain House	Commercial Lender
Ryan Brandl	Rocky Mountain House	Commercial Lender
Murray Berezowski	Red Deer	Community Futures ED
Jackie Stratton	Rimbey	Business Owner Scratchin the Surface
Dale Shippelt	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner
Erin Fillingier	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner - Child Care
Michelle Meatheringham	Rocky Mountain House	Advertising Consultant
Tammy Cote	Rocky Mountain House	ATB Branch Manager
Lori Sunde-Cooper	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner -Oilfield Consulting
Emily Rowe	Rocky Mountain House	ED- Confluence Heritage Society
Brad Dollevoet	Rocky Mountain House	Director Planning & Community Dev. Town
Dianna Poynter	Rocky Mountain House	Event Planner
Val Murray	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner -New Image Paint & Interiors
Darren Murray	Rocky Mountain House	Asst. Manager - West Fraser Mills
Doug MacDormand	Red Deer	RDC School of Business Professor
Trevor Thomas	Red Deer	RDC School of Business Professor
Randall Sugden	Rocky Mountain House	VP Finance Rocky Credit Union
Alexander Bowers	Rocky Mountain House	Store Manager-Peavy Mart
Tana Humphrey	Rocky Mountain House	Accountant/Business Owner
Leslie Jesen	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner -Leslie's Footcare
Deb Wynn	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner - Mary Kay
Deb Baich	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner - Home Hardware
Chiara Feder	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner -IT Works

Dean Anderson	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner - Pure High Speed
Colinda Pitts	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner - Thrive
Michelle Narang	Rocky Mountain House	ED West Country Family Services
Shelly Siitala	Rocky Mountain House	Business Owner - Pebble Ridge Coffee House

RABC Impacts

RABCs organize, host, and participate in several community - based business events and workshops throughout the year. These activities promote relationship building across the communities, showcase local business expertise, and often engage local organizations and other small business support agencies as co - hosts, sponsors, contributors, and participants.

This provides access to business advice, opportunities for company promotion, linkages to companies, access to funding, facilitation of relationships with customers, suppliers, or other companies access to facilities.

The Evidence Network reports

Our findings show that in 2012, for the 163 companies that participated in the impact assessment survey, the RABC Pilot Program conservatively contributed a total of \$122K to companies' revenues. In 2013, it was found that for the 313 companies that participated in the impact assessment survey, the RABC Pilot Program conservatively contributed a total of \$1.1 million to companies' revenues, \$1.2 million to investments received by companies, and to the creation of 22 jobs.

Among the core center activities, RABC is a large and successful promoter of events.

Events have direct and indirect impacts on communities. They provide opportunities for participation, skills development, volunteering and social, cultural economic and environmental developments.

Community events and festivals can make a significant contribution for rural development with strategic planning, well-defined goals, local level partnerships and funding. However, rural communities often organize tourism events to inject cash into their economies. This cash is not enough to achieve comprehensive rural economic development.

"Rural Development Division Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development Impacts of community events and festivals on rural places"

Conclusion SEF and the RABC Model

Adding the SEF methodology with the Entrepreneurial Development (ED) program adds direct benefit to the RABC model. The outcomes contribute jobs, new business capital investment, multiplier effects and the building of local capacity to act together for mutual benefit. The businesses assisted through the SEF propriety systems have a better than 80% chance of survival providing the community continued sustainable direct and indirect outcomes.