

Community
Futures  Winnipeg River



2016-2017 ANNUAL REPORT



Western Economic
Diversification Canada

Diversification de l'économie
de l'Ouest Canada

Canada 

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2015-2016 Annual General Meeting & Awards Banquet

CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

Community Futures Winnipeg River (CFWR) is dedicated to community economic development and our activities help build capacity at the local and regional levels strengthening the communities we live in. Our services have helped entrepreneurs start new businesses and create employment, and have helped organizations improve the economic and social conditions of their communities.

CFWR's service area is more than 13,000 square kilometers, reaching from the city outskirts to the Ontario border and from the Trans-Canada Highway to the east side of Lake Winnipeg as far north as Seymourville. It encompasses a culturally diverse population and has a varied economic base that includes agriculture, hydro-electric power, forestry, mining, tourism, retail and various service agencies.

Our organization is part of the larger network of 269 Community Futures offices operating across Canada that support community-based economic development projects, business development and training to entrepreneurs and non-profit organizations. In Manitoba, there are 16 Community Futures offices that employ 65 people and are directed by 216 Board volunteers. North eastern Manitoba is part of a national community economic development network that is working together to help strengthen Canada's economy.

CFWR is a regional development corporation that has been in existence for 29 years. Our team is comprised of a governing Board of 14 Directors and 4 full time staff members. Over the course of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, the following accomplishments were realized:

- 339 business services were provided to 116 clients and resulted in 28 new/expanded businesses.
- 11 business training sessions were delivered to 217 people.
- 10 loans were provided for a total value of \$401,956. Lending services resulted in 7 new businesses, 2 expansions, 1 business acquisition, 13 full-time jobs, 10 part-time jobs and an additional \$165,265 leveraged into the regional economy.
- The Self-Employment Program received 7 new participants and realized 9 completions.
- Our community economic development services included involvement with 30 community based projects, 24 strategic/annual plans, 56 consulting services, 4 training sessions delivered to 61 participants, and \$1,616,684 leveraged into the regional economy via successful grant applications and project revenue.
- Key projects that CFWR led or partnered on this year included the Elevate Program, Townfolio, North Forge East, Small Business Week Event, Annual Awards Program, Foreign Direct Investment Training, establishment of the Lac du Bonnet Community Development Corporation, and assistance for the development of the future Winnipeg River Heritage Centre in St. Georges.

I will take this opportunity to thank and acknowledge our staff and board members who bring expertise, energy and dedication to providing services to entrepreneurs and our communities. I will also acknowledge our ongoing partnership with Western Economic Diversification Canada and thank them for their continued support and commitment to the Community Futures program.

Bill Dowbyhuz, Chairperson

INTRODUCTION

Community Futures Winnipeg River (CFWR) is a regional non-profit corporation whose mission is to pursue continued growth and prosperity for the North Eastman region by supporting sustainable community economic development. CFWR serves a large geographic region including eleven municipalities, three Northern Affairs communities, one First Nation, and two provincial parks.

The Corporation has been in operation since 1988 and is managed by a volunteer Board of Directors comprised of representatives of our member communities and Directors at Large. The Directors bring considerable expertise to the organization. Their participation on our Board ensures that the needs of their community are reflected in our planning and the development of our programs and services.

Community economic development is what defines CFWR. The core services provided fall within the areas of business development and community development. The types of people we serve are aspiring entrepreneurs with a new business idea; existing businesses that hope to expand; a person or group with a new project idea; a community group wanting to examine their direction; and boards/businesses requiring training to enhance skills and knowledge.

Business Development Services

- Loans up to \$150,000 to develop, expand or acquire a business
- Mentoring and business plan assistance
- Accessing business resources and training
- Self Employment Program

Community Development Services

- Strategic and operational planning
- Economic development planning
- Board training and development
- Project development assistance
- Non-profit corporation development

In addition to our core services, we also host a regional resource library for the World Trade Centre Winnipeg and house a Service Canada outreach site every Thursday. J.U.S.T. Training and the Winnipeg River Arts Council hold office space within the CFWR facility as well.

We would like to acknowledge and thank **Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD)** for their continued commitment to the Community Futures Program. We are also fortunate for the continued partnership with **Manitoba Education and Training** for the Self Employment Program. Community Futures Manitoba initiated a new program called **Elevate** to provide additional supports to entrepreneurs with disabilities. CFWR administered this pilot program for our region which was funded by **Employment and Social Development Canada**.

Valuable alliances formed with provincial and federal government departments, various sectors, local governments, Chambers of Commerce, Community Development Corporations and other local organizations have contributed significantly to the work of advancing community economic development in our region.

Community Futures exist to strengthen the capacity of businesses, volunteer groups, communities, and the region as a whole to improve the economic and social conditions of their communities. Our region is as strong as its people and the combined efforts of all sectors. This Annual Report highlights the major activities and accomplishments of Community Futures Winnipeg River over the past year.

BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND STAFF

BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Board Directors provide the direction and leadership that is instrumental to the success of the Community Futures Program in the region. They are to be commended for their dedication to the Corporation. During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, they contributed 322 hours of volunteer time to promote and advance community and business development for the betterment of the region.

We would like to acknowledge the contributions of the following Board Directors who have worked with CFWR over the course of the 2016-2017 year:

Bill Dowbyhuz, Chairperson	RM of Whitemouth
Florence Campbell, Vice-Chairperson	Director at Large
Cathie Brereton, Secretary-Treasurer	Director at Large
Ken Lodge	Town of Lac du Bonnet
Frank Terra	RM of Lac du Bonnet
Bob Bodnaruk	RM of Springfield
De-Ann Holmes	RM of Reynolds
Garry Berthelette	Town of Powerview-Pine Falls
Hermann Saxler	Director at Large
Rhonda Henschell	LGD of Pinawa
Debbie Litke	RM of Brokenhead
Art Berry	Town of Beausejour
Mac Kinghorn	RM of Alexander
Rick Johnston	Community of Seymourville
Vacant	Community of Manigotagan
Vacant	Community of Bissett
Vacant	Sagkeeng First Nation
Vacant	Whiteshell Provincial Park

We would like to extend a special recognition to Hermann Saxler who has left our Board after working with CFWR since December 2010. Hermann embraced the Community Futures program and ensured that groups and entrepreneurs from his area benefited from the services. Hermann also represented CFWR on the provincial Community Futures Board. We thank Hermann for his long standing belief in the program and for his 6 years of service.

STAFF

CFWR employs four full time staff members that together are responsible for carrying out the services, programs and organizational operations.

Sharalyn Reitlo	Executive Director
Lindsey Otto	Business Development and Self Employment Coordinator
Kandace Nagy	Financial and Self Employment Administrator
Pam Habing	Community Development and Marketing Coordinator

PARTNERSHIPS

Collaboration is vital to advancing community economic development within the region and much of what we have accomplished this year was possible because of the support and involvement of many agencies, including:

- Western Economic Diversification Canada
- Manitoba Education and Training
- Employment and Social Development Canada
- Community Futures Manitoba
- 15 Community Futures offices in MB
- The World Trade Centre Winnipeg
- Indigenous Business Development Services
- Manitoba Agriculture
- MB4youth
- Manitoba Education and Training
- Manitoba Growth, Enterprise and Trade
- Entrepreneurship Manitoba
- J.U.S.T. Training Corporation
- Women's Enterprise Centre
- Tribal Wi-Chi-Way-Win Capital Corporation
- First Peoples Economic Growth Fund
- Louis Riel Capital Corporation
- Business Development Bank Of Canada
- Sunova Credit Union
- Royal Bank Of Canada
- Futurpreneur Canada
- Manitoba Indigenous and Municipal Relations
- Manitoba Sport, Culture and Heritage
- Manitoba Innovation, Energy & Mines
- Community Connections
- Service Canada
- Manitoba Model Forest
- Winnipeg River Learning Centre
- Fillmore Riley
- Sunrise School Division
- School District of Whiteshell
- AIM For Work
- Winnipeg River Arts Council
- Interlake-Eastman Regional Health Authority
- Eastman Tourism Association
- Partnership of the Manitoba Capital Region
- Local Governments within our Region
- North Forge East
- Society for Manitobans with Disabilities
- Literacy Partners of Manitoba
- Beausejour Brokenhead Development Corporation
- Pinawa Community Development Corporation
- St-Georges Community Development Corporation
- Grand Beach and Area Development Corporation
- Seymourville Community Development Corporation
- Whitemouth Community Development Corporation
- Lac du Bonnet Community Development Corporation
- Odibayndan Development Corporation
- Beausejour & District Chamber of Commerce
- Lac Du Bonnet & District Chamber of Commerce
- Falcon, West Hawk & Caddy Lakes Chamber of Commerce
- Pinawa Chamber of Commerce
- Springfield Chamber of Commerce
- Blue Water Chamber of Commerce
- Whitemouth Chamber of Commerce
- Eastman Regional Assessment Committee
- Conseil De Developpement Economique Des Municipalites Bilingues Du Manitoba (CDEM)
- Canadian Community Economic Development Network
- Economic Developers Association of Manitoba (EDAM)
- Manitoba Marketing Network
- Volunteer Manitoba

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

Community Futures Winnipeg River provides business assistance to entrepreneurs interested in starting or expanding a business. Our staff has extensive background and experience in market research, business planning, financial forecasting and analysis, and business counselling. This expertise allows our staff to work one-on-one with clients so that their specific needs are met. They put particular emphasis on monitoring and aftercare to ensure success of new business ventures. During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, we provided 339 business development services to 116 clients, including informational resources, planning assistance, referrals, and advisory services. Our business services contributed to the creation/maintenance/expansion of 28 businesses. 217 people attended 11 business training sessions that were delivered on the topics of Junior Achievement, marketing, social media, customer service, foreign direct investment and professional networking.

Community Futures Winnipeg River administers the Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program, and during the fiscal year we assisted one client in the preparation and submission of their business plan for a grant application through the MarketAbilities Program. The client was successful in their application and received \$2000.

Our staff continue to serve as an information and pathfinding resource for clients, and as such several clients were able to access services and/or funding through Manitoba Education and Training, Manitoba Agriculture, World Trade Centre Winnipeg, Business Development Bank of Canada, Entrepreneurship Manitoba, Society for Manitobans with Disabilities, Indigenous Business Development Services, Futurpreneur Canada, First Peoples Economic Growth Fund and Louis Riel Capital Corporation.

INVESTMENT FUNDS

The Corporation also manages investment funds that are used to provide business loans to help finance business start-ups or expansions. During the 2016-2017 Fiscal Year, 10 loan applications were received and approved which totaled \$401,956 resulting in 7 new businesses, 2 expansions, and 1 acquisition. An additional \$165,265 was leveraged through financial institutions, owner equity and other government programs. Funds borrowed from the Corporation over the past year helped to create or maintain 13 full-time and 10 part-time jobs in the region.

Our Loans Program operates as a revolving fund, with repayments on loans being reinvested for other entrepreneurs to start or expand their business. The total principal and interest received and reinvested in the loan fund was \$260,025 this fiscal year. A total of \$357,517 was disbursed from the loan fund as investment for new and existing loans. As a result of these financial activities, the loan fund made a negative net cash change of (\$97,492) this year.

Since its inception, Community Futures Winnipeg River has approved 285 loans valued at \$10,412,763 that helped to create or maintain 823.5 jobs.

BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

REGIONAL DISTRIBUTION OF INVESTMENT FUNDS

INCEPTION TO MARCH 31, 2017

LOCATION	DOLLARS LENT	OTHER FUNDS LEVERAGED	JOBS CREATED/ MAINTAINED
Alexander/Powerview-Pine Falls	\$895,520	\$1,163,398	76.5
Beausejour/Brokenhead	\$1,944,929	\$4,842,674	139.0
Lac du Bonnet (Town & RM)	\$2,584,388	\$2,491,033	153.5
Manigotagan/Seymourville/Bissett	\$171,295	\$230,003	25.5
Pinawa	\$1,192,606	\$1,317,509	99.0
Reynolds	\$595,228	\$624,450	60.5
Sagkeeng First Nation	\$121,000	\$140,900	13.5
Springfield	\$1,014,290	\$1,498,800	84.5
Victoria Beach	\$194,375	\$208,610	26.0
Whitemouth	\$933,912	\$1,898,440	73.0
Whiteshell Provincial Park	\$587,080	\$1,715,466	55.5
Other	\$163,000	\$621,575	17.0
Total	\$10,412,763	\$16,744,858	823.5

SELF EMPLOYMENT PROGRAM (SE)

CFWR administers the Self Employment Program (SE) for the North Eastman region on behalf of Manitoba Education and Training. The program provides an opportunity for unemployed individuals who are EI-eligible to start their own business while still being able to collect their employment insurance benefits. SE clients work with our Business Development Coordinator who assists them with business plan development, marketing, and financial analysis, and provides counselling and monitoring for the full term they are on the program.

Over the past year services were provided to SE clients in the areas of business planning, monitoring, and counselling. In addition, SE clients participated in the 3-day Manitoba Business Start Program, the food handler's safety course and entrepreneurial training sessions via webinars.

During the 2016-2017 fiscal year, there were seven new clients accepted onto the program and nine successful completions. As a result of the Self Employment Program, 7 full-time jobs were created through new business enterprises. Since we began delivering the SE Program, 292 people have participated in the program.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

Community Futures Winnipeg River provides assistance to local governments, Chambers of Commerce, Community Development Corporations, and other community groups located in the region to build strong organizations and to help ensure that community projects are realized and sustained. Our staff help with planning and funding of community projects; facilitate strategic and operational planning sessions; and deliver training to strengthen knowledge and skills within boards, volunteers and staff members in various local agencies. We also act as a regional liaison and connecting agency to bring communities, various levels of government, and local groups together to address common challenges and opportunities. Our office also has current information available on various funding programs and resources that may be of benefit to community groups working on specific projects or aiming to increase their capacity.

Over the past year, Community Futures Winnipeg River has:

- Participated and provided various support to 30 community-based projects in the region, of which 26 were new in the fiscal year and 4 were carried over from the previous year.
- Provided 56 consultation and/or resource services to aid groups with various organization improvement activities and development projects. Consultations were provided in the areas of constitution and bylaws, marketing, strategic planning, project planning and strengthening funding applications for projects.
- Facilitated or assisted 24 local groups with strategic/annual planning.
- Participated in 5 regional committees and made numerous connections among groups to help advance regional partnerships and initiatives.
- Delivered 4 community development workshops/presentations to build skills and knowledge within social, economic and other non-profit groups. 61 participants attended the workshops delivered on the topics of Effective Boards, Chairing with Confidence and Proposal Writing.
- Developed many new resources to assist businesses and non-profit organizations to better market their agencies through website development and various forms of social media.
- Provided assistance in developing and administering 5 surveys in the region.
- Helped to leverage \$1,616,684.25 for community based projects in the region.

CFWR PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

Over the course of the 2016-2017 fiscal year, staff have been involved with numerous projects throughout the region. The following section provides some of the project highlights from the past year.

REGIONAL CONNECTIONS – A SUCCESSFUL MODEL

Small rural communities do not always have the capacity to address larger issues and opportunities so for common goals it is strategic to move forward as a region. CFWR plays an active role in regional networking by facilitating various regional gatherings throughout the year and to help develop plans that address common issues and opportunities for growth. Since 2011, CFWR has initiated regular formal gatherings between various groups involved in local governments which include the North Eastern Municipal Forum, Chief Administrative Officer meetings, and Public Works Manager meetings. From these initiatives, the following ad hoc committees have been formed to conduct work in specific areas – a) North Eastman Lobby Committee; b) North Eastman Health Committee; c) Whiteshell Laboratories Partnership Committee; and most recently d) North Eastman Economic Development Committee. Successes from working together have come in the form of projects, lobbying activities, group training, resource/information sharing, regional feasibility studies, regional plans and group buying.

TOWNFOLIO

Townfolio is a Saskatchewan based business working to build an online **Canadian Community Profile Network**. On the network site selectors and business owners can identify potential future business locations and communities can promote business needs for their area. Townfolio presented at the North Eastern Municipal Forum in September showing the customizable community profile website and explaining its benefits for community marketing and connecting with potential investors.

Townfolio would address four key needs identified in the **Regional Economic Development Strategy** – local data collection, community profiles, greater internet presence of our communities and lead generation for potential business attraction. CFWR facilitated regional pricing with Townfolio which resulted in a total cost saving of \$21,192. Nine local governments participated in the group buying project and now have internet presence to increase exposure of our communities to potential investors.

NORTH FORGE EAST

North Forge is Manitoba's largest business incubator program and has existed in Winnipeg for four years working with technology and innovative based start-up businesses. North Forge has a Fabrication Lab for rapid prototyping; and ICT Lab for prototyping and commercialization; and an Event & Collision Space for networking and meet-up events. Mentorship is a big part of the member based program. Experts in specific subject matter are matched with participants to help in both product and company development in areas of business planning, market research, grant writing, finding investors and marketing.

In late 2016, North Forge announced a partnership with Pinawa Community Development Corporation, and in January 2017, **North Forge East** opened its doors to aspiring entrepreneurs in the W.B. Lewis Centre in Pinawa. CFWR is proud to work with North Forge East to promote their services and events; to make client referrals; to provide an expedited loan application review process; and to help new businesses find permanent homes in North Eastern Manitoba. To date, 4 entrepreneurs are participating in the North Forge East program and two open events have been hosted in Pinawa.

CFWR PROJECT HIGHLIGHTS

SMALL BUSINESS WEEK EVENT

CFWR hosted a Small Business Week Wine & Cheese Networking Event on October 19th at the Beausejour Brokenhead Community Hall with 32 people in attendance. Sponsorship for the event was provided by Sunova Credit Union and Business Network International (BNI) Manitoba. Guest speaker, Dennis Hamel, Executive Director from BNI spoke about the importance of networking for your small business or nonprofit agency and the positive impacts it can have when done effectively. Accompanying Dennis was Orest Serwylo who shared his story of how being part of a BNI Chapter aided in his business success through making good connections and strategic networking.

ELEVATE PROGRAM

CFWR administered the Elevate Program for clients in the North Eastman region. Elevate is a Community Futures pilot program designed to support adults and youth with a disability or health condition who wish to start a business. Elevate is offered in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba and is funded in part by the Government of Canada's Opportunities Fund for Persons with Disabilities Program. During the past year 5 participants were approved for the Elevate program through CFWR and staff worked with the clients to assist with business start-up activities, business planning, training and monitoring.

LAC DU BONNET COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

In July 2016, the RM of Lac du Bonnet and Town of Lac du Bonnet incorporated a local Community Development Corporation (CDC) to respond to opportunities and challenges related to local economic development. Five First Directors that represented stakeholders and economic development related agencies were appointed and worked with CFWR to develop and frame the governance and operations of the CDC. The group worked to develop corporate bylaws; gather local data and input; design a local economic development strategy; and develop an annual plan and budget for the CDC. In May, 2017 the first Annual Shareholders Meeting took place where a full slate of 10 Directors were elected to the Board to oversee and manage the activities of the CDC. With funding support from both the Town and RM, the CDC hopes to employ a part time Economic Development Officer by fall.

WINNIPEG RIVER HERITAGE CENTRE

In 2015, CFWR conducted strategic planning with the St-Georges Historical Society Inc. in part to determine how to address the loss of the St. Georges Museum which was tragically lost to fire. In 2016, CFWR provided assistance with their Canada Cultural Spaces Fund grant application and supporting feasibility study and business plan. Our combined efforts were successful and resulted in an award of \$1.4 million in funding from the Government of Canada for the construction of the future Winnipeg River Heritage Museum (WRHM). With the federal government's substantial investment in the project secured, the St-Georges Historical Society Inc. has undertaken an important fundraising campaign to raise the remaining funds required. Phase 1 of the project started in the early spring with an expected completion date of spring/summer of 2018.

2016-2017 AWARD WINNERS

Each year, Community Futures Winnipeg River honors outstanding business clients, community initiatives and volunteers.

The **Business of the Year** is given annually to a client of the Corporation who has demonstrated success in the development of their business, and who has shown initiative and commitment to the community. This award recognizes the outstanding efforts of local businesspeople and award recipients embody the positive attributes of an entrepreneur such as determination, passion, and commitment not only for the development of their business, but to their community as well.

The **Self Employment Award** is entrepreneurial recognition given to a participant of the Self Employment Program who has demonstrated above average effort and success during their year on the program. Success is not only based on financial bottom line, but more importantly on achievement of set goals, and innovation, judgement and skill used in dealing with obstacles along the way.

The **Community Initiative Award** is given annually to a community organization in recognition of their outstanding efforts in the area of community development, and which has shown initiative and commitment to the community. The recipients of this award portray dedication and cooperation throughout the work they do to advance a project or cause that improves the social and economic well-being of our region.

The **Volunteer of the Year Award** recognizes and celebrates the outstanding volunteer contributions made by a resident of the region that impact economic growth and social wellbeing in their community. The CFWR Board of Directors selects the award recipient from nominations that are received from groups and residents of the region. Recipients of this award demonstrate initiative and leadership and have contributed significant service to their community on a volunteer basis.

Community Futures Winnipeg River is very pleased to acknowledge the winners of this year's awards!

- **Community Initiative:** Beausejour Brokenhead Development Corporation (BBDC)
- **Business of the Year:** We All Have Cravings Etc. (Cassandra McConnell), RM of Springfield
- **Self-Employment Award:** Derek Kasprzak (Silver Falls Lawn and Yard Care), RM of Alexander
- **Volunteer of the Year:** Ray Schirle, RM of Brokenhead

BEAUSEJOUR BROKENHEAD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION (BBDC)

BBDC was selected as the award winner because their team exemplifies the type of success a small rural community can have when economic development is made a priority and people work together on focused strategic efforts. In 2012, CFWR helped BBDC develop a strategic plan with four key steps and related activities. The four steps included gathering local data and information on assets; training and resource identification; exploring opportunities and determining strategies for economic growth; and execution.

Over the past 5 years, BBDC has accomplished a number of important tasks and initiatives that display many ways that rural communities can enhance their local economy. Most notably, they:

- Developed a full set of investment marketing tools including a Community Video, Community Profile, the www.BBDCbiz.ca website and Industry Fact Sheets to promote the local area.

2016-2017 AWARD WINNERS

- Launched BIZPAL services in 2014, making it easy for individuals to register a business by providing license and permit information online and available 24/7.
- Conducted a Regional Economic Assessment Process (REAP) in partnership with MAFRD to identify opportunities for future business development.
- Prepared a municipal infrastructure inventory and an Economic Development Plan for Tyndall/Garson and Town of Beausejour through U of M, City Planning Department to provide direction to councils for infrastructure improvements.
- Developed an Action Plan to attract more tourists to the area.
- Coordinated and hosted training for aspiring entrepreneurs including the three-day Business Start Workshop.
- Brought Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) Training to rural Manitoba to increase knowledge on attracting outside businesses and working with potential investors.
- Hosted a Business Forum and participated in the Centralia Trade Show to promote the community specifically to attract investors resulting in numerous leads to follow up.
- Assisted local organizations to identify grants for development projects, bringing in excess of \$500,000 to benefit the area.
- Lent support to advance projects such as the Park Crossing Centre, Tim Hortons, and housing development in the area.
- Designed a new strategic plan to outline their vision and direction for the next 5 years.

WE ALL HAVE CRAVINGS ETC., CASSANDRA MCCONNELL, RM OF SPRINGFIELD

Cassandra McConnell established the business in Oakbank in 2015 with assistance from CFWR. The business offers take home food items such as perogies, lumpias, soups, meatballs, cabbage rolls and various other food items such as ice cream, milkshakes, fries, etc. served in-store. Cassandra also offers catering for small events and rents out her commercial kitchen space to other entrepreneurs. Recently Cassandra has also partnered with L's Cheesecakes to offer their delectable desserts available for purchase in-store. Other local bakers and artisans also sell some of their items in-store.

Prior to opening a retail location, Cassandra operated the business as a hobby for a number of years. She established a customer base, and saw the need for a retail location in Oakbank. When Cassandra started her Facebook page for the business early in 2015 she had 589 likes which has now grown to 2,078 likes. Her business has become well known and her products are much loved. She has farmer's markets wanting her to attend and stores have contacted her wanting to carry her products. Unfortunately Cassandra can't make product fast enough or store enough product to be everywhere she is wanted.

Cassandra is very community minded and loves helping charitable organizations. She offered her business as a drop-off location for supplies to go into purses and backpacks that were distributed around Siloam Mission and she also coordinated donations for people affected by the Fort McMurray wildfires. As well Cassandra is dedicated to youth in her community and tries to do a children's activity every month such as craft and a snack, cookie baking and decorating or make your own pizza day. She also has high school lifeworks students come work in the shop to get experience.

The most recent and exciting venture is the new meal service which Cassandra delivers to Winnipeg and surrounding towns. Meals are available in four different sizes that are perfect for everyone. They are great for seniors, busy families, lunches and events. The menu is different each month and includes vegan and gluten free options.

2016-2017 AWARD WINNERS

Recently Cassandra has also become a part of Local Frequency which is a point system that encourages customers to shop local and earn cash back on all purchases. She also offers a free in-store mini library for her customers. Cassandra is pleased with the business and looks forward to continuing serving Oakbank and the surrounding areas.

DEREK KASPRZAK, SILVER FALLS LAWN AND YARD CARE, RM OF ALEXANDER

Derek Kasprzak established Silver Falls Lawn and Yard Care in 2015 and completed his participation on the Self Employment Program in May 2016. The business is based in the RM of Alexander. Silver Falls Lawn and Yard Care provides mowing and trimming of grass, seeding, pesticide and fertilizer treatment, spring and fall cleanup, minor repairs (fences/decks/etc.) and snow clearing in the winter.

Derek has a diploma in agriculture which he received in Poland. He worked for 3 years with a landscaping company in Germany which gave him a lot of experience and inspired him to start his own similar business in Manitoba. He has experience operating a large number of power tools and all types of lawn equipment.

Derek's first year in business was quite busy. He completed the 3 Day Business Planning Workshop as a component of the Self Employment Program and always maintained regular contact with CFWR during his time on the program. To promote the business, Derek put up flyers throughout the area, advertised in the local newspapers, and displayed his business logo via a magnet on his company truck. So far he has found the best marketing comes from word of mouth as he has received many repeat customers this way and it goes to show that his customers are extremely satisfied with his work.

The biggest factor in Derek's business is the weather which is out of his control, but he is satisfied with Silver Falls Lawn and Yard Care so far and is determined to make it a success.

RAY SCHIRLE, RM OF BROKENHEAD

Ray resides in the RM of Brokenhead and is truly dedicated to seeing the area grow to its full potential. As an entrepreneur himself, Ray understands the value of a strong economy and business community. He is a member of the Beausejour and District Chamber of Commerce as values the opportunity to connect and collaborate with fellow business owners.

Ray has been a Board Member for the Beausejour Brokenhead Development Corporation (BBDC) since 2007 and has been the Chairperson for many years. He is an excellent liaison for the wants and needs of the community business people and what the BBDC can offer them in terms of assistance. His volunteer work with the BBDC has been for the purpose of attracting more investors, residents and visitors to the community.

Ray takes an active role in BBDC projects and activities. Ray facilitated meetings to determine housing needs and an Affordable Seniors Housing Project resulted, starting with the BBDC and then being turned over to the Knights of Columbus. Ray assisted in advancing the Eastman Vocational Training Project to the current point of conducting a feasibility study. When new businesses open in Beausejour and Brokenhead, Ray personally welcomes the new owner with a visit and plaque.

2016-2017 AWARD WINNERS

Aside from the BBDC, Ray volunteers with the Canadian Power Toboggan Championship and has been volunteering since 1994. This event has brought thousands of spectators from Canada and the U.S. to the Town of Beausejour to witness the greatest show on snow. Spectators and racers stay in local hotels, eat in local restaurants, and fuel at local gas stations increasing local economic activity. Ray has worked tirelessly with the Double B Agricultural Festival and the Brokenhead River Game and Fish Association events in much the same way realizing that tourism is a key economic driver for the area.

Ray's contributions and accomplishments have benefited the Beausejour-Brokenhead community greatly. Ray is very helpful and approachable, making him well respected among his peers. His dedication and willingness to do whatever it takes to benefit the area is truly inspirational.

APPENDIX A

2016-2017 AUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS