

NEWS RELEASE

May 5, 2010



RADF Invests Another \$5.3M in Rural Projects

Edmonton –Rural Alberta’s Development Fund (RADF) announced today that it has invested another \$5.3M in seven new rural projects ranging from volunteerism to business development. Today’s announcement includes:

- \$1M to develop a bio-economy in the Drayton Valley area
- \$1.2M to help establish Alberta as a world leader in wind energy
- \$993,160 to bring online career development to rural students
- \$881,125 to build more leadership and community capacity in rural Alberta
- \$577,676 to train rural health professionals in critical care and transport medicine
- \$380,000 to create an online education program for rural Alberta coaches
- \$235,000 to develop a composite train grading and optimized custom grain shipping operation in east-central Alberta

“These seven projects are a wonderful example of rural Albertan’s desire to improve all aspects of their quality of life, from business and education to health and recreation. RADF is proud to partner with these diverse groups to help each of them achieve their goals,” said Brad Ferguson, RADF Chair.

“RADF helps to advance innovative projects in rural areas by directly addressing the needs of the communities,” said Minister of Agriculture and Rural Development, Jack Hayden. “Through RADF, we invest in rural initiatives such as leadership training, career development and economic diversification, reinforcing government’s commitment to rural Alberta.”

Rural Alberta’s Development Fund is a not-for-profit company that inspires innovation, collaboration and growth across rural Alberta. Since 2007, it has invested \$74M in 67 rural Alberta projects and programs.

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Encl: Backgrounder

BACKGROUND

Summary of Approved Projects

May 5, 2010



RURAL WIND ENERGY CAPACITY DEVELOPMENT

Fund contribution is \$1.2 million

Lethbridge College will use \$1.2 million in RADF funding to establish southern Alberta as a world leader in the wind energy sector. This will be done by developing long term, durable training programs, educational products and stakeholder coalitions. Residents in the region will have opportunities to gain quality employment, diversify their incomes and support the emerging wind energy sector.

This project is being developed by Lethbridge College with partnership support from several Canadian and international energy companies.

Expected results include:

- Retention of regional residents through access to high quality employment
- Increased diversity in rural incomes and rural economic sustainability
- Development of educational programming that can be adopted by other regional industries across Alberta

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BIO-ECONOMY INCUBATOR INITIATIVE

Fund contribution is \$1 million

Funding from RADF will support the needs of bio-industries being attracted to the Drayton Valley area. A 'Bio-Mile' Centre of Excellence will foster the development of new technologies by providing skills development and training, business incubation and applied research on the commercialization of bio-based products. The project will be the first bio-economy and applied research consortium in Alberta.

This project is led by the Town of Drayton Valley and includes partners like the Northern Alberta Institute of Technology, Tekle Technical Services Inc., Otoka Energy Inc (USA), Weyerhaeuser Canada, Cluster Industrielle Biotechnologie 2021 (Germany), the University of Alberta and many local businesses.

Expected results include:

- Development of a specialized knowledge resource for bio-industry and Alberta
- Development of an innovative business incubation model that can be adapted by other communities in Alberta
- Increased employment in the Drayton Valley region

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NEXTGEN ONLINE

Fund contribution is \$993,160

Funds from RADF will enable rural students to step inside industry and explore careers using innovative interactive portals and social media. This province-wide program targeting rural junior and senior high school students will use Alberta's SuperNet as the platform for accessing this information.

This project is being developed by a provincial organization based in Edmonton called CAREERS: The Next Generation. Implementation partners include Axia NetMedia Corporation, the Alberta Distance Learning Centre, the Alberta Regional Professional Development Regional Consortia, 2learn.ca Education Society, Athabasca University, Chinook's Edge School Division and the First Nations (Alberta) Technical Services Advisory Group.

Expected results include:

- More educational, career and internship opportunities made available to rural youth in their own communities
- Connecting employers, educators and rural youth on an enhanced level via the Alberta SuperNet
- Development of a program that can be expanded beyond employment to other areas

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RURAL VOLUNTEER LEADERSHIP

Fund contribution is \$881,125

RADF funding will assist in facilitating leadership and skills development training for rural Alberta's non-profit and voluntary sector organizations. This project will help develop strong leaders and managers who have the capabilities, competencies and creativity to ensure that rural communities and organizations can continue to be sustainable while providing key services to Albertans.

This project is a partnership between Volunteer Alberta and Alberta Culture and Community Spirit Community Development Branch, with support from the Community Learning Network, the Alberta Association of Agricultural Societies, and volunteer centres across the province.

Expected results include:

- Increased community capacity through a stronger rural non-profit and voluntary sector
- Increased use of distance learning technologies to enhance access to skills, professional development and leadership training.
- Increased collaboration between the non-profit, public and private sectors to better meet the needs of rural Alberta

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STARS CRITICAL CARE & TRANSPORT MEDICINE ACADEMY

Fund contribution is \$577,676

As a further support to the Government of Alberta's commitment to STARS, RADF has provided funding to aid in the development of an innovative model of delivering provincial educational opportunities to rural health professionals. Rural paramedics, nurses, physicians, respiratory therapists and others will be able to access advanced skills training in critical care and transport medicine.

This project is being developed by the Alberta Shock Trauma Air Rescue Society (STARS) with support from TransCanada, Grande Prairie Regional College, Alberta Health Services, TST Canada and Alberta's Aboriginal communities.

Expected results include:

- Expanded skills development opportunities for rural health professionals
- Increased community capacity and quality of life for rural Albertans through increased access to state of the art medical services
- Enhanced rural health delivery

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SPORTS COACHING DEVELOPMENT

Fund contribution is \$380,000

Funding from RADF will develop an online/blended coaching education program for rural Alberta school and sport athletic coaches. The program will address the needs of rural coaches by providing affordable, accessible and relevant educational experiences and preparing interscholastic coaches for their roles in sports and athletics in an educational setting. This will be the first program of its kind in Canada.

This project will be headed by the Alberta Schools' Athletic Association (ASAA) with assistance from its 276 rural member schools. The National Federation of State High School Associations (NFHS-United States) has provided in kind support to the ASAA to adapt NFHS-United States programming for Alberta's schools.

Expected results include:

- Increased quality of coaching in rural schools
- Enhanced school sports and recreation opportunities for rural youth
- Increased quality of life in rural Alberta through access to skills development training

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COMPOSITE TRAIN GRADING PROJECT

Fund contribution is \$235,000

Funds from RADF will enable the Forestburg-based Battle River Railway (BRR) to bring improved marketing opportunities through new technology and advanced programming in composite train grading, identity preservation and tracking. Composite train grading will allow regional farmers to customize grain shipments to best meet customer requirements, thereby optimizing the grain's value.

The BRR rail line runs through Camrose, Kelsey, Rosalind, Heisler, Forestburg, Galahad and Alliance. Project partners include regional seed cleaning plants, the Canadian Wheat Board, the Canadian Grain Commission, CN Rail, West Central Road and Rail, and the Prince Rupert Rail Terminal.

Expected results include:

- Increased economic prosperity for local producers and communities
- Increased economic opportunities for non-producers due to local ownership and management
- Development of a business model that can be adapted province-wide

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