

# Economic Development Resources

## A look at MAFRI, CFPM and EDAM

### MAFRI renewed and enhanced

In April 2005, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) renewed and enhanced its commitment to rural community economic development. Through the Growing Opportunities (GO) initiative, MAFRI recognized the ongoing need to support rural and northern communities in their efforts to create vibrant sustainable communities. The GO initiative also acknowledged others involved in community economic development (CED). MAFRI intends to maintain and strengthen relationships with existing regional and local Community Economic Development organizations and is prepared to assist in the coordination of CED activities.

Although the focus is on value-added and value-chain opportunities, MAFRI will work closely with communities in achieving their vision and goals. At the local level, 11 GO teams have been created with offices in 43 locations. Each of these teams has at least one of the following positions:

**Business Development Specialist:** This position focuses on business development activities and will work in cooperation on projects with individuals or groups.

**Rural Leadership Specialists:** Their focus is to build leadership and management skills and capacity within communities to lead community projects.

**Business Development Specialist-Community Development:** These staff members work with Municipal Officials and CED organizations at the community level to develop and implement their vision and strategic plans.

In addition to the staff in the GO teams, Knowledge Centres will provide support to the GO team delivery, and leadership at the provincial, national and international level. These three Knowledge Centres are closely linked to CED:

- **Economic Development Initiatives:** Main function and role is to administer some of the funding tools available. REDI, Community Enterprise Development Tax Credit, Young Entrepreneur program are only a few of the programs they are involved with.
- **Food Commercialization and Marketing:** This is a new branch focused on commercializing agriculture and food products and the market develop-

ment of value-added and diversified products. It will work closely with the Food Development Centre, located in Portage.

- **Economy and Rural Development:** The focus will be on building individual and community capacity for development and economic growth and to build business management, project management, and strategic planning skills. This branch, based in Brandon, also has a focus on youth, young farmers, women and Aboriginal people.

Since GO, we have been active in consulting with communities across the province through the Creating Opportunities initiative. At the local level, advisory committees have been struck to get community input. Community economic development starts with the community. We look forward to working closely with communities to build a vibrant sustainable rural Manitoba.

### CFPM: making a difference locally

For rural communities, both large and small, the Community Futures Program of Manitoba (CFPM) is a valuable resource and tool for positive change in the realm of economic development. Established in 1986, Community Futures is a volunteer directed, locally driven program that operates across Canada. The goal is to help rural Canadians start or expand businesses and to help communities improve their local economies.

In Manitoba there are 16 Community Futures offices. Each is led by local boards of directors who volunteer their time, energy and expertise. A team of skilled staff provides a wide range of community economic development and business services.

Some of the many services CFDCs provide include:

- Help developing business plans
- Conducting market research
- Understanding financing options
- Accessing business resources

CFDCs also provide small and medium-sized businesses with repayable loans not normally offered by financial institutions. In the last decade Community Futures has made over 3,200 loans totaling \$72 million. This has resulted in more than 13,000

jobs in rural and northern Manitoba.

Specific business loan programs for new and existing businesses include:

- General entrepreneur loans up to \$150,000
- Entrepreneurs with disabilities loans up to \$150,000

Over the years, the impact of Community Futures in rural, northern and remote communities has been remarkable. According to a 2002 Ference Weicker & Co. study on the Impact of Community Futures in Western Canada, 22% of small businesses in rural Western Canada have used one or more types of CFDC service.

But helping small businesses thrive in Manitoba is not the only role of CFDCs. They are also making a difference through their work in the area of community economic development.

Experienced CFDC staff helps rural communities expand their local economies by assisting in:

- Community economic development planning
- Strategy building
- Facilitating the implementation of community plans
- Accessing resources

Some examples of projects that CFDCs have been involved in include developing regional tourism strategies; working with communities to introduce broadband Internet services; coordinating 'green' projects like regional recycling programs; and developing and implementing a training program to help agricultural workers diversify their skills.

In Western Canada, where CFDCs now total 90, Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) provides funding and support for the program.

For more information on Community Futures or to find the CFDC in your region visit [www.cfpm.mb.ca](http://www.cfpm.mb.ca) or call toll free 1-800-665-2019.

## EDAM: just getting better

The Economic Developers Association Manitoba (EDAM) was formed in 1993 to improve communication, contact and liaison within the economic development profession. It is an independent, non-profit, incorporated association of persons directly engaged in economic development in Manitoba. EDAM is one of several regional and provincial affiliates of the Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC). Through its affiliation with other provincial associations and EDAC, EDAM provides its membership with a network and linkage with the profession across Canada.

Members of EDAM are provided access to a variety of professional services, networking and training opportunities, and are regularly exposed to new ideas and initiatives in the ever-expanding field of economic development. EDAM members have the opportunity to attend meetings and forums on topics of professional interest, receive the e-newsletter EDAMNet, as well as other special announcements on economic development events and employment opportunities. EDAM produces an annual mem-

bership directory, which is a comprehensive listing of economic development professionals in Manitoba. EDAM's website, [www.edamonline.org](http://www.edamonline.org) offers resource information presented at our various forums.

EDAM works on behalf of the profession to:

- Increase the profile and awareness of economic development practitioners and organizations
- Provide a collective voice on local, regional, provincial and national economic development issues and concerns
- Promote professionalism in the field
- Provide a vehicle for communication between economic development practitioners in Manitoba

Membership in the EDAM is open to any person working directly in the field of economic development, including staff from:

- Provincial and federal governments working in a development-related capacity
- Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC)
- Regional Development Corporations (RDC)

- Community Development Corporations (CDC)
- Other urban and rural community and economic development organizations
- Aboriginal economic development organizations
- Crown Corporations working in development
- Private sector consultants involved in economic development or related professions
- University and college students involved in community economic development or related disciplines
- Other individuals and practitioners interested or involved in rural or urban economic development

EDAM's next forum will take place on May 3-5 in Falcon Lake. The theme is "Engaging our Communities." Guests are welcome! Registration fee is \$175 for non-members or \$125 for members. Annual membership fee is \$100. For further information, contact **Shelley Morris** at 204-795-2000 or [shelley.morris@mts.net](mailto:shelley.morris@mts.net).



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