

RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



BIG heart, BIG talent, BIG future – and opportunity to grow

Joe Masi and Donna Morken, Co-chairs, Rural Economic Development Steering Committee

What do most rural Manitobans have in common? People who choose to live in rural Manitoba generally have a love for their community and a passion to keep making things better.

In June 2016, a group of rural leaders completed a rural economic development strategy. This strategy was the result of eight months of work, led by a Steering Committee and facilitated by MNP. In true rural fashion, communities were tired of

planning and wanted to get something done. The process was an update of previous consultative discussions with new information and stakeholder input.

AMM has been a long-time advocate for developing a rural strategy and partnered with other key stakeholders including the Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, Economic Developers Association of Manitoba (EDAM), Economic Development Council for Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities

(CDEM), Community Futures Manitoba and the Rural Development Institute.

These organizations came together to find common ground and look for opportunities to cooperate and collaborate.

If you ask 10 people what economic development is, you will get 10 different answers. The process of developing a stakeholder-led strategy to grow the rural economy first required a shared understanding of what economic



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"To move forward with implementation, real collaboration is needed from across the regions and from public, non-profit and private sectors, all levels of government, economic development organizations, indigenous communities, academia and the business/entrepreneurship community."

development means. The stakeholders agreed on the following definition: *Economic development is the building up of the economic capacity of a local area or region to improve its economic future and the quality of life for all. It is a process by which governments, businesses, and non-governmental organizations work collectively to create better conditions for economic growth and employment generation. It is about communities improving their investment and business environment to enhance their competitiveness, retain jobs, and improve incomes.* (Adapted from Federation of Canadian Municipalities, "Building Prosperity through Local Economic Development", 2014)


A shared vision, *Rural Manitoba: Where Business, Innovation and Communities Thrive*, was also developed that would be broadly supported by our diverse communities, entrepreneurs and businesses. The strategy identifies three 10-year goals: to increase rural population by 150,000; to grow existing rural business by 20%; and to increase the number of rural businesses by 3,000. Key strategic directions have been identified to reach these goals.


The completion of the strategy was a significant milestone to support the nearly half a million people living in rural Manitoba, representing 37% of the province's population. However, this is not the end but rather only the beginning of a long-term process to continue to make things better and to grow the rural economy. To move forward with implementation, real collaboration is needed from across the regions and from public, non-profit and private sectors, all levels of government, economic development organizations, indigenous communities, academia and the business/entrepreneurship community. This will be the focus going forward – because we have only just begun!

Look North, an economic development strategy for northern Manitoba is also underway. Co-chairs from both rural and northern strategies have met to discuss synergies and opportunities

to collaborate. The pieces are coming together for prosperous, vibrant rural and northern economies.

(Note: The rural economic development strategy is available at www.amm.mb.ca.)





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Mariette Mulaire, President & CEO, World Trade Centre Winnipeg



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A World Trade Centre has been established in Winnipeg. What does that mean for Manitoban companies? This is a question we are often asked. The World Trade Centre Winnipeg (WTC Winnipeg) was established in 2013 with a core objective of serving Manitoba companies looking to expand their services, products, and 'know-how' on the international market.

The WTC Winnipeg is a member of the World Trade Centers Association (WTCA). With its headquarters in New York, the Association serves as an 'international ecosystem' of global connections, iconic properties, and integrated trade services under the umbrella of a prestigious brand. The WTC Winnipeg is part of an extensive family of like-minded individuals stemming from over 300 WTC organizations in nearly 100 countries who work together to deliver reciprocal resources to promote local economic development and grow national and international trade.

What we do

Have you ever considered expanding your business out-of-province or even out-of-country? That's where our team of experts come in. Our team will work with you to assess the current status of your business activities and provide a walkthrough of your trade readiness according to your goals.

Which market to enter?

The analysis of market intelligence is a fundamental step in pursuing your national and international expansion objectives. Equipped with access to extensive market research databases and privileged access to market leaders through its WTCA membership, the WTC Winnipeg is the go-to for those seeking comprehensive information and guidance (e.g., key industry trends, refined analysis, partnership opportunities). Every Manitoba company receives up to one-hour of free research per year from the WTC Winnipeg.

Start with us

Through its integrated Business InfoCentre (BIC), the WTC Winnipeg also caters to Manitoba's start-up community by acting as an information portal for entrepreneurs, offering practical guidance on launching a new company in the province, and organizing over 100 free seminars per year tailored for the start-up



community. The BIC is also part of the Canada Business Network and can relay client requests to sister centres in every province.

Seminar themes (among others):

- Exporting & Importing
- Sales & Marketing
- Human Resources
- Taxation
- Social Media

We ensure that all Manitobans have access to these seminars by offering them in-person at the WTC Winnipeg office or via webinar online. In addition, the Business InfoCentre offers an online training series of videos that anyone can access at any time. These resources are designed to assist entrepreneurs with their various daily business activities.

Bringing the world to Manitoba

Organizing Centrallia, a global business-to-business forum, gave us the platform to invite the world to Manitoba. This airport-to-airport event made it opportune for worldwide leaders to bring companies directly to Manitoban businesses. The world came to Manitoba to discover, to prosper and to connect and that's exactly what they did. Witnessing first-hand the potential that our businesses have to offer proved to have a greater direct impact on those individuals than would have otherwise been possible.

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The importance of Foreign Direct Investment training

Anna W. Mondor, Marketing Director, Beausejour Brokenhead Development Corporation

The Beausejour Brokenhead Development Corporation (BBDC) has hosted two Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) training sessions in an effort to position the organization and the North Eastman region at the forefront of foreign investment in Manitoba. During the last two years, the BBDC has trained over 35 municipalities across Manitoba and over 20 provincial government organizations.

"We never had FDI training for rural areas in Manitoba before. It is a strong need to train economic development practitioners to help them assess their regions in terms of investment attraction," said BBDC marketing director **Anna Mondor**. "It is important to know what steps each municipality should take to be investment-ready. If any community in North Eastman – be it Beausejour, Pinawa or Lac du Bonnet – gets investment for industry, we all win."

"The North Eastman Region is a perfect location for business following the closure of the Pine Falls paper mill and the recent announcement regarding the decommissioning of the former AECL labs in Pinawa and the desire to bring in new industry to the site," Mondor added.

BBDC invited a guest speaker, **Marc Beauchamp**, one of the top FDI consultants in the country and VP from CAI Global Group. His company has been involved in over \$4 billion of investment in Canada and over \$4 billion of investment internationally. "FDI is important to any economy because the foreign companies need to work to evaluate a community to see if it is the best choice of investment," Beauchamp said.

Furthermore, Foreign Direct Investment in rural communities can stem from all sectors and industries given that it aligns with the business strategy of the foreign

investor. Foreign investors consider a variety of local factors and criterions when evaluating jurisdictions. The availability of labour as well as land and building options are just a few examples that will influence the decision-making process. Consequently, rural communities need to be proactive and investment-ready to answer and meet the needs of foreign investors.

Why is FDI Strategy so important for each community? To create an FDI Strategy is to assist with facilitating the generation of new jobs and new opportunities for workers and their families by targeting the markets that matter to regional businesses, sectors and interests in those markets.

It is important to understand the dynamics of FDI, how to position your region for investors, investment readiness and how to respond to a request for information – which is recognized as the first step in community assessment.

In addition, FDI Strategy helps to identify an inventory of regional assets, industries and businesses to take an action plan to identify growth opportunities and provide a support system.

In practice, the FDI Strategy will strengthen the economy by providing access to new and expanding markets and resources that are currently lacking in the region. In addition, it will help to understand challenges and opportunities in the recognized sectors, identify target markets and effectively market the opportunities, and help set the priorities for future investment.

Each Manitoba rural community should have in place a validation and identification of economic opportunities, to be able to define a value proposition and have a set-up strategy for promotion and investment attraction.

The agriculture industry concentrates on two areas with respect to foreign

direct investment: agri-food processing and agri-product processing.

"We are currently working on FDI projects that could lead to more than \$500 million in new investment in the province over the next two years," said **Grant Carlson**, Agri-Food and Technology Transfer Division, Province of Manitoba. "We also anticipate the same amount being invested by existing Manitoba processors as they expand their operations."

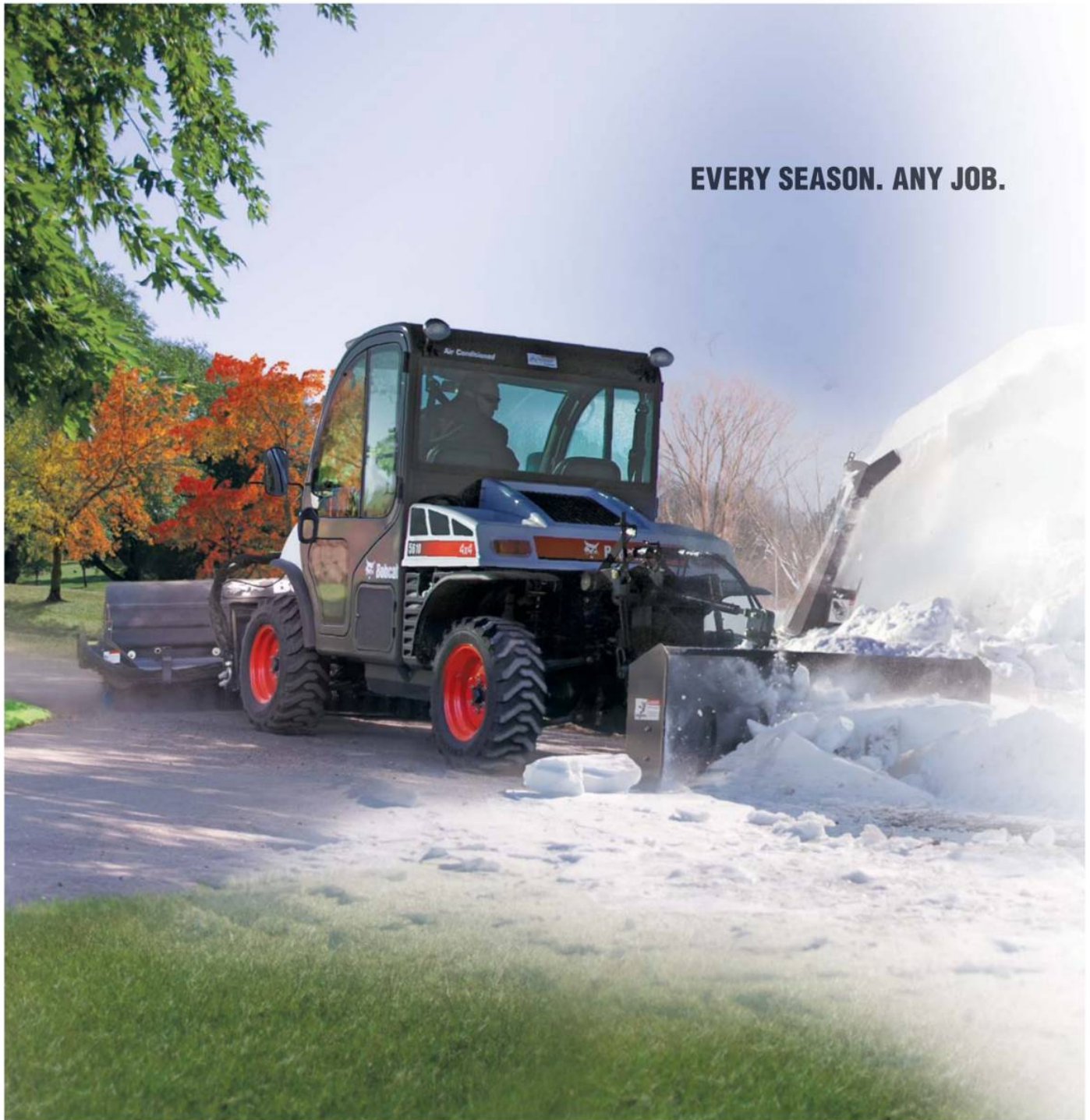
The BBDC will be hosting another FDI Training - Level 2 in June 2017 for those participants who successfully completed FDI Training - Level 1. This time, we'd like to concentrate on how to complete Requests For Information (RFI) in a competitive way to promote our communities and be noticed by site selectors.

"It will be a great experience... how to use knowledge and prepare a competitive RFI to attract investors to our area. It is a next big step to moving forward," Mondor said.



(L-R) Anna W. Mondor, Marketing Director, BBDC; Marc Beauchamp, VP Partner, The CAI Global Group; and Kevin Hurley, Consultant, The CAI Global Group

BBDC would like to thank its sponsors: the Government of Canada, the Association of Manitoba Municipalities and Community Futures Winnipeg River for financial support towards its FDI event. 🌱



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One Tough Animal.

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budget to afford most data or marketing solutions currently available for investment attraction.

The third learning was that many economic developers lack the technical skills to try and manage their public data and digital marketing efforts, let alone keep up with the always-evolving trends of technology.

Built by EDOs for EDOs

With this research in hand, the team proudly created Townfolio based on feedback from potential clients, not assumptions.

Townfolio has developed software to automate the data collection process for municipalities collecting everything from demographic data to utility rates to the number of doctors in a community. The software keeps this data up-to-date, and most importantly presents the data in a visually appealing manner on a municipal website.

The result is a simple and flashy tool embedded on a community's website providing a range of uses. Local citizens or businesses may discover this data, government employees may use this in reporting, and potential residents or businesses may use this data in decision-making.

Launching in December 2015, Townfolio quickly grew across Saskatchewan and Alberta.

To better promote municipalities, Townfolio decided to build on the initial success of the website embedding feature and launch Townfolio as a profile network.

The network automates the community profile for municipalities and allows visitors to discover municipal data and business opportunities in municipalities across Canada.

Townfolio's Eastern expansion in Spring 2016 received a warm reception from Manitoba municipalities.

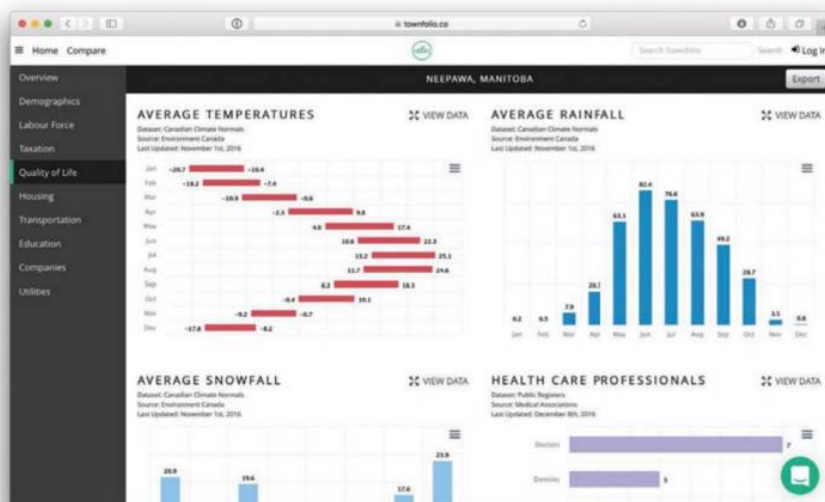
Spreading fast and producing results

To date, over 50 Manitoba municipalities are now using Townfolio's software and the network has grown coast-to-coast in over 200 municipalities in small villages to large cities.

Townfolio proudly offers a free community profile to any community with the goal to grow the network as big as possible to promote municipalities and help visitors discover local opportunities.

Townfolio has reported a visitors' base from over 100 countries with inquiries coming in from several of these countries.

A small prairie city recently reported being contacted by an expanding



business on a business opportunity they posted on Townfolio's profile network.

Along with this, the Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority was recently awarded the National Marketing Award by the Economic Developers Association of Canada for its website powered by Townfolio's website embedding software.

Expansion plans

Townfolio has big plans for 2017. Along with further growth across Canada, Townfolio plans to launch deeper data, new features,

and more business opportunities while ramping up marketing efforts to further promote the profile network in to get municipalities more attention.

Most importantly, January 2017 saw the launch of Townfolio's new Compare tool which allows users to compare Canadian municipalities on various and ever expanding datasets from population to mill rates to house starts and more.

For more info or to claim your free Townfolio visit <https://townfolio.co>.



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Nearly \$7,000 awarded at 'Big Idea' event

Vern May, Economic Development Officer, Minnedosa & Area Community Development Corp.



Marilyn Crewe (L), Economic Development Officer with the Town of Neepawa, and author Vern May (R) with the 'Big Idea' winners

Four rising entrepreneurs cleaned up at the recent 'What's the Big Idea?' entrepreneurship event in Neepawa, collectively claiming nearly \$7,000 in cash and prizes.

The event, originated last year through a partnership between Minnedosa and Neepawa, saw all-round growth all this year with more jurisdictions signing on as sponsors, increased attendance from outside the region, and more pitches than last year's debut. In all, the capacity crowd at ArtsForward heard seven pitches, with four strong pitches sweeping nine award categories to claim prize money for their efforts.

The big winner of the day was **Tim Wiebe**, of Eden's Avion Harvest production plant. The small pulse marketing outfit, which just opened its doors under the current ownership in January has seen an incredible debut year, securing deals for market placement of their product in 23 Co-op stores and recently signed a deal with Save-On Foods out west for distribution into those major supermarkets in Alberta and British Columbia. Laying claim to the awards sponsors by NADCO, the RM of Rosedale and the Neepawa Chamber of

Commerce, Wiebe emerged from the event with \$4,300 toward the continued growth of their operation.

The name called most at award time, though was Minnedosa's **Kim Burgess**. Burgess, who has aspirations to open an Art Therapy practice in Minnedosa, delivered a powerful and compelling pitch that saw her name called in four prize categories. She took home \$1300 in awards sponsored by the RM of Minto-Odanah, the Minnedosa Chamber of Commerce and a voucher for digital marketing services courtesy of Trend Lab Marketing. Burgess' pitch was also awarded the RBC 'Pitch of the Day.'

Kelly Spurway, via a concise and punchy pitch by **Lianne Christie**, secured a \$1,000 award for the Queens Eatery in Rapid City. The new operator of the community restaurant will apply the prize money toward upgrades to the commercial kitchen equipment to better serve patrons to the historic dining spot.

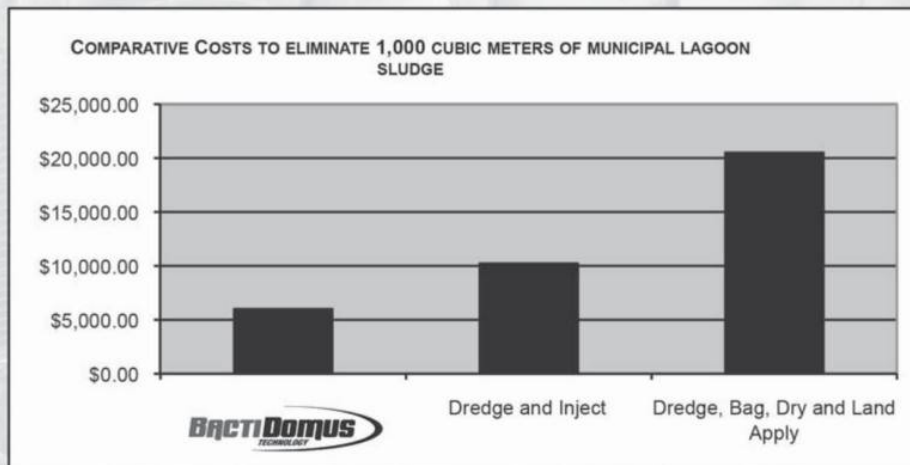
The youngest presenter of the day was Neepawa's **Kennedy Baker**. The enterprising 16-year-old, whose artistic skills as a creator of hand-painted footwear has already secured the

attention of the Winnipeg Jets NHL franchise after designing a pair of shoes featuring the team's logo. While only developed as a prototype, Baker has received a letter to request a meeting with the team's marketing department about carrying her designs in the official Jets store as well as an offer to connect her to other NHL franchises and CFL teams. Baker was awarded the Minnedosa Credit Union / Beautiful Plains Credit Union 'Best Overall Idea' award, valued at \$300.


In addition to the pitches presented, attendees were treated to a line up of industry and small business speakers that kept the packed house riveted throughout the day. The event was attended by patrons not only from Minnedosa and Neepawa, but also by guests from as far away as Kipling, Saskatchewan, attending to learn more about the event and to possibly adopt a similar approach in their own community. The 2015 debut saw the opening of three new businesses and the expansion of a fourth, resulting in increased interest from private and public business agencies this year including the Business Development Bank of Canada and World Trade Centre Winnipeg. 🍀



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The lure of big trout: opening up economic development opportunities in the Parkland

Ben Brodeur, Economic Development Officer, Roblin Economic Development

Generally speaking, community events provide an economic injection. They can generate funds for organizers and cause spike sales in a scope of commercial sectors, including food, gas, retail, and accommodations. They're also a lot of fun and can bring people together. However, unless the event directly supports growth of an industry or market by promoting the availability of an ongoing product or service, economic effects beyond an event don't translate well, meaning they're hard to measure and aren't always clearly linked.

Take a normal event with a decent draw, such as a demolition derby. Economic effects beyond the event aren't easy to measure if people don't come back on weekends to smash up their own vehicles on Main Street inciting growth in local automotive businesses! Even if there were an increase of traffic accidents after the derby, the correlation to the event would be arguable at best.

Take a different kind of event, like an annual fall apple festival. With a bit of marketing, clearly linked, measurable effects beyond the event may be gained by having visitors come at leisure in the spring to see the blossoms. Those are just simplified examples of what I mean by an event's economic translation; the certainty of related effects beyond the actual event.

So what does it mean to host an Olympic-style event such as a Fly Fishing National Championship, and how does it translate today? Having hosted the first ever Canadian National Fly Fishing



Championship sanctioned by Fly Fishing Canada in 2003, we know it means a few things:

- Securing close to \$50,000 in identical boats and equipment to ensure equality for the competitors;
- Accommodating, feeding and transporting upwards of 60 participants to fly fish five lakes over three days, plus opening and closing ceremonies;
- Hauling equipment to three other, different lakes so participants can practice for two days before the real deal; and
- Opening your door to serious sportsmen who are fanatics about trout, so your game has to be good.

The last part has never been a problem for us. Thanks to municipal commitments, partnership investments and Manitoba Fisheries stock, Parkland has the

province's best rainbow, brown and tiger trout game. The boats and equipment were bought and auctioned off after the event to recoup costs.

That being said, we certainly had to work for the money; it wasn't just handed to us. The organizing stress is enough to make a person say, "Well, that was fun." Then it's forgotten and only the glory of accomplishing it lives on.

So, we did it again in 2010, hosting the 8th Nationals and generated close to \$30,000. Following that success, in 2012, Roblin organized an annual fly fishing competition for amateurs to promote sport development called the Bug Chucker Cup. A few years later, the Bug Chucker Cup draws participation from across Canada and is experiencing some serious growth pains.

The Bug Chucker Cup promotes growth in the sport of fly-fishing at one

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of Canada's best trout grounds and is a fine example of an event which translates well through clear visibility of participants coming back to fly fish; causing measurable economic impacts in food, gas, accommodations and retail throughout the season.

When it came time to host our third Fly Fishing Nationals' this spring, you can imagine the variety of responses when we decided to include our regional competitors. With the national market on our doorstep, we define ourselves through their experience of our product and innovations. This also gives us an opportunity to redefine ourselves into something bigger. And by including our Parkland competitors, the battle to gain market share from our neighbour ends, and the regional opportunity to compete with the world market begins. As possible economic game changers, these are opportunities you don't pass up.

This is where the Municipality of Roblin's dedication towards bringing western Parkland together has really come into play. Allocating resources to up our game so we can better compete for national market share within Canada and the US, and also draw more visitors from Europe, has been in our sights for a few years.

Learning our region's fly fishing history, one which has been drawing North American visitors seeking world-class trout for over 15 years, pushed Roblin Economic Development to look more into the fly fishing market, the lure of big trout, and aerated lakes. Much like the North American landscape, we found a variety of factors that make opportunities for some, and obstacles for others.

We started with some simple lake improvements which visitors suggested, including better graveled access roads, boat launches and parking lots. We also cleaned up the signs, added recycle bins and new docks. Then we moved towards initiating positive dialogues among regional and provincial stakeholders. Through these conversations we've been able to support regional strategic planning. Our first partnership solidified a six-year non-competitive regional agreement to include co-hosting Nationals and produced external funding to assist with purchasing competition boats. And rather than auctioning them off, our region now retains them and offers two locations where mobile fishing boats for our top seven aerated trout lakes can be rented from.

We've also been able to secure outside financing to launch a regional brand through various platforms, giving us better marketing reach into the global market. And with aims of quality standards much like any franchise outlet, we plan to adopt aerated lake management policies to ensure all branded lakes are consistent and on par with national excellence.

For the Parkland, these advancements apply reasonable pressures on our local economies to

adapt and cultivate entrepreneurial opportunities for those willing. They also support capacity to increase economic translations from fly fishing events and create a foundation for us to transition from a niche fly fishing market to a year round trout market. As a trout fishery stakeholder, this means we don't really compete amongst each other anymore.

Instead, we support a longstanding provincial branch deeply rooted in Manitoba's sustainability by leading together in one direction. 🌲

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HyLife riding wave of success invests back into Manitoba

HyLife



HyLife C.O.O. Foods Division, Guy Baudry pictured with popular Japanese Food Bloggers at the HyLife Pork Table Grand Opening in Daikanyama Tokyo, Japan.

What's on Japanese consumers' forks this fall? Manitoba pork and in a big way! HyLife continues to be a growing success story at home in Manitoba and around the world. Founded in 1994 as a joint venture, HyLife has quickly grown to become one of Canada's leading pork producers, raising in excess of 1.93 million hogs and processing 1.69 million hogs annually in Neepawa, Manitoba. This fall, HyLife Foods has taken its success to some exciting new heights and is growing its share in the burgeoning Asian markets.

In September, HyLife opened its first ever restaurant in the trendy district of Daikanyama, Tokyo, Japan. The *HyLife Pork Table* is a place to showcase a variety of pork dishes sourced from hogs bred and grown in Canada. Japanese consumers know their pork and have a wide range of top-of-the-line pork

products to choose from. Breaking into the premium market in Japan is no small feat. HyLife has invested time and resources discerning what the Japanese consumer is looking for. Teaming up with Manitoba's outstanding primary hog producers, HyLife set out to produce a pork product that so closely matches the quality and taste of the pork produced in Japan, that Japanese customers would be willing to pay top dollar. The investment has paid off. Food bloggers and customer reviews of the HyLife Pork Table Restaurant in Daikanyama are already sending customers back into grocery stores in search of HyLife pork.

HyLife has its sights set on other exciting new markets beyond Japan. This fall, HyLife President **Claude Vielfaure** travelled to Shanghai, China to join Prime Minister **Justin Trudeau** and other Canadian businesses looking to sign

business deals with Chinese companies. While there, HyLife announced a deal with the Chinese e-commerce store www.JD.com to sell pork product online. www.JD.com is the 'Amazon.com' of China. It is the second largest online retailer and has the potential to reach 280 million people every year. Since breaking into the Chinese



Claude Vielfaure, President of HyLife, with Prime Minister Justin Trudeau and Clark Meng, Product Development Manager at www.JD.com

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market in 2008, HyLife sees \$80 million in sales annually. Taking the business digital gives HyLife exciting new access to one of the world's largest markets.

HyLife's international success has translated into the need for growth here at home to match the demand that has been nurtured for this distinctly Manitoba product. HyLife has announced it is looking to invest \$125 million into its facilities to significantly expand its farm to fork production model. The majority of that investment will take place across rural Manitoba, with a focus on expanding the processing capability and efficiency of its Neepawa, Manitoba plant. HyLife plans to build new square footage for cutting, packaging and distribution space as well as increase its chilling areas. The expansion plans include investments in new innovative equipment to help improve productivity and shelf life of its high-quality pork product. The investments will also include the construction of new finishing barns and a state of the art feed mill in order to launch a full second shift and will result in the creation of 165 new jobs, bringing the company's total number of team members up to 2,000 employees across all its sites.

This expansion is a major investment back into rural Manitoba that will boost both local communities as well as the broader pork and agriculture sector that HyLife operates in. HyLife has been proud to partner with Manitoba's rural communities like Neepawa, La Broquerie, among others as well as the many players along the pork value-chain that have made the HyLife venture such a success.

For the company founders, it is immensely rewarding to see their home province continue to reap the economic benefit of this vision where the spin-off effects of serving as home base to a global company means steady, high-quality jobs, tax benefits, and major demand for goods and services for the province of Manitoba. This results in stability for other Manitoba businesses and serves as impetus for the creation of new ones.

HyLife looks forward to embarking on this next phase of growth and expansion for the company in Manitoba. While the core of the expansion project has been firmly set, the scope of the project will be in part guided by the responsiveness of the municipal, provincial and federal governments on the various investments planned.

HyLife understands that with the freedom to operate from a regulatory perspective, comes the obligation to run the business in a sustainable way. This includes environmental, labour and social responsibilities as well considerations for economic welfare of all those involved in the HyLife value-chain. For HyLife this means investing in state of the art equipment to ensure more products are captured and less waste generated. It means investing in energy and water efficiency and a total-process best-in-class food safety system. Finally, it means attention to worker safety and comfort through investments like ergonomically designed work processes among many other innovative ideas.

HyLife is committed to continually thinking critically and innovatively when designing its businesses with the aim of ensuring long-term sustainability – economically, environmentally and socially. With these goals in mind, HyLife's partnership with rural Manitoba will deliver long-term rewards for the company and the communities it operates in. 🌱



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