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## **RECIPIENTS OF 2009 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE ANNOUNCED**

*Saskatoon* – The Saskatchewan Economic Development Association (SEDA) was pleased to present its **2009 Economic Development Awards of Excellence** on March 24, 2009 in Saskatoon. Attended by over 170 community leaders, government officials and economic development practitioners from across the province, the Awards Banquet and Presentations provided recognition of the outstanding initiatives and contributions to community economic development in Saskatchewan.

The annual awards were expanded to feature thirteen new categories this year reflecting the growth and evolution of community economic development over the past twenty years.

### **2009 Partnership Award Recipients**

#### **Public Private Partnership Award - *Moosomin & District Health Care Foundation***

The recipient of this award took the lead on a project to bring the Southeast Integrated Care Center into being. There were many aspects of this initiative that the awards jury felt were unique – including a very diverse list of fundraising initiatives implemented by schools, hockey teams, tradespeople and farmers. With the province contributing only 65% of the funds for the facility - this project clearly fostered broad participation and partnerships between 10 municipal and rural municipal governments along with numerous residents, service clubs, community groups and the Government of Saskatchewan.

#### **Partnership with an Educational Institution – *Town of Coronach***

The winning initiative was conceived when 8 citizens of Coronach decided that equitable access to education, social services and technology was a fundamental element of a sustainable economic development plan. The Prairie Literacy Awareness Network - PLAN for short - rapidly began to reach out for partners in response to a needs assessment that was conducted with the residents of Coronach.

A core partnership between the community of Coronach, the Prairie South School Division, South East Regional College and Coronach School was formed. It later engaged others including the community's major employer - Sask Power - as well as the local library and several ministries within the provincial government. An example of some of the tangible outcomes of this project include direct job creation at the local library, a mobile library service, enhanced and relevant training and a new day care facility at the local school.

### **Regionalism and Cross Jurisdictional Collaboration - *Lake Diefenbaker Tourism Destination Area Plan.***

The award recipient is a collaboration between Tourism Saskatchewan, the Dakota Whitecap First Nation, Midsask REDA, Community Futures Midsask and Lake Diefenbaker Tourism. These partners provided financial resources and key leadership on a broader regional planning committee to identify tourism issues and opportunities to the communities of the Lake Diefenbaker region and recommend specific strategies and actions to deal with them.

There were 43 final signatories to the Plan including villages, resort villages and rural municipalities. Widespread awareness for the plan was created to all municipalities and area residents which provided the opportunity for real input and collaboration. Over the three year term of this initiative to date, 16 projects have been implemented to capitalize on the major assets of this region – the South Saskatchewan River and Lake Diefenbaker.

## **2009 Economic Initiative Award Recipients**

### **Community Development Initiative - *Little Black Bear Band***

The 2009 recipient is a self pronounced “community in transition”. The Little Black Bear Band – located on a 17,000 km reserve west of Goodeve – has used the Land Claim process as a catalyst for a holistic and comprehensive community development initiative that started in 2007 and will still be taking place for many years to come.

A strategic plan for the band resulted from the development process and it identified a number of sector based goals and objectives. Successful projects to date include: cluster development with other First Nations in the File Hills area, hospitality, retail and agriculture development projects – to name only a few. Band governance is also an area of focus in their ongoing efforts to become a sustainable and contributing member of our provincial fabric.

### **Responding to Globalization – *Action Southwest***

This award focuses on projects that Respond or Address the Globalization phenomena. The 2009 award goes to the coalition of partners who spearheaded the Southwest Regional Economic Performance Framework.

The Action Southwest Coalition developed a comprehensive framework to assist in benchmarking and measuring the economic performance of a regional economy. It includes an assessment of GDP per capita, socio-economic profiling, competitiveness indicators and other regional economic data intelligence measures and tools.

### **Business Retention & Expansion - *Nipawin & Region Economic Development***

The recipient of this year's award is an example of a true public private-partnership and major retention of infrastructure in north east Saskatchewan. Nipawin & Region Economic Development successfully created Saskatchewan's newest short line railway – the Torch River Rail Inc by purchasing almost 45 km of rail line from Nipawin to Choiceland. Together with 43 other stakeholders, the short line was formed and purchased from Canadian Pacific.

Torch River Rail has a 5 member board of directors to manage operations and to date has hauled over 300 cars – double their original forecast. In the first 8 months of operations, income and savings to producers as a result of this project exceeds \$1 million.

### **Human Capital Initiative - *Southeast Community Settlement Committee***

The Southeast Community Settlement Committee was initiated in 2007 in response to the increasing need for foreign workers to assist in meeting labour shortages in southeast Saskatchewan. This diverse and inclusive committee includes 19 community and government partners and 70 active volunteers across the region. Its mandate includes assisting businesses and communities to attract immigrants; assisting newcomers in their transition and various other resource provision and developmental activities. Tangible outcomes of this project are have been many and include a website, sensitivity training for employees and a cultural showcase.

### **Sustainability & Green Development Initiative - *Town of Mossbank***

The Sustainability and Green Development Award was presented to a community that has made eco-tourism a mainstay in its multi year economic strategy.

The Town of Mossbank and its economic development office established the Old Wives Nature Area as an eco-tourism destination - promoting conservation education of environmental and historical significance. This initiative includes 2.4 km of trail and interpretative facilities – and it also features partnerships between a number of regional municipal and non profit organizations.

Eco-tourism is one of the fastest growing tourism industries and Mossbank has a strategic advantage with its proximity to Old Wives Lake - the 4<sup>th</sup> largest saline lake in North America and a designated migratory bird sanctuary.

## **2009 Leadership Award Recipients**

### **Citizen Achievement Award – *Ed Plumb, Red Coat REDA***

The award is designed to celebrate the achievements of volunteers actively involved in economic development. This year's recipient made a significant contribution to making change on a regional basis as Chairperson for the Red Coat Reda from 2001 to 2008. Ed Plumb played a pivotal role in fostering a climate of collaboration amongst the communities and economic development offices within this south central Saskatchewan region.

### **Community Economic Developer of the Year - *Colleen Christopherson Cote, Town of Coronach***

This year's recipient has made a significant impact on her community during her first 3 year term as a community economic developer. The awards jury was impressed with her ability to bring various communities of interest together to work on new initiatives as well as demonstrated success in both job and wealth generation for Coronach Saskatchewan.

## **2009 Marketing Award Recipients**

### **Special Event Marketing (population area under 60,000) – *Red Coat REDA***

The event itself – called the *Amazing Red Coat Race* was designed to raise awareness and thus future prospects for the broad and diverse south central area of Saskatchewan. The project proponents – the four economic development offices within the Red Coat REDA - came together to design and implement a 5 hour experiential tour that encouraged participants to see the landscape, meet the people and understand the economy of the Red Coat region. Visitor referrals and repeat business has been evident at designated 'pit stops' on the race. And we understand the Race may resurface this summer as a regional tourism initiative in its own right.

**General Purpose Marketing(population area under 60,000) – Town of Gravelbourg**

The community marketing program which captured the majority of jury points featured a newly designed brochure, print advertisement and electronic media. The creative elements and messaging - representing the natural environment of the community as well as its culture and spirituality - were used consistently in all vehicles. The Town of Gravelbourg's marketing objective was to generate interest in tourism as well as investment attraction. However it also focused on building pride in the community and providing a tool to assist local residents in accessing their community resources in an effective manner.

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