

Performance Results for 2014-15 Community Futures Stuart Nechako

Community Futures (CF) is a program that supports community economic development and builds the capacity of communities to realize their full sustainable potential. The purpose of the CF Program is to help communities develop and implement *local solutions to local problems*.

| Community Futures Performance Results | Results as of X |
|--|------------------------|
| <i>Strong rural community strategic planning and implementation</i> | |
| 1. Total number of community based projects: | 28 |
| <i>Rural access to business development services</i> | |
| 2. Number of jobs created/ maintained/ expanded through business services | 4 |
| 3. Number of business training session participants | 92 |
| 4. Number of business advisory services | 124 |
| <i>Rural access to capital and leveraged capital</i> | |
| 5. Dollar value of loans | \$348,696 |
| 6. Number of loans | 9 |
| Provide additional Information (e.g. Success stories, Links to priorities, leveraging work, communication events, etc...) | |
| <p>The past year has been a year of transition for CFSN with two new Board Members and a new CED Coordinator. Training for new Board Members was not conducted due to conflicting schedules of the volunteers. CFSN sees Board Training as a priority for the new year and will take advantage of training modules provided by Pan West. Staff training consisted of the completion of the CED for Professionals course by the BA and Social Media training for the CED Coordinator which improved CFSN capacity to serve the CED and business services needs of our region. CFSN has participated in the Revitalization process led by WD and has completed the requirements as presented including enacting the policy limiting Board and Business Loans Committee appointees to a nine year term and revising our appeal process to include an outside peer review utilizing the Northern BC Trade and Finance Group platform. CFSN is awaiting the development of an appeal process by the BC Association which will be adopted once available.</p> <p>CFSN experienced low loan volumes for the year due to uncertainty in the local economy. The uncertainty has been in part caused by delays in major resource projects (New Gold Mine), temporary closure of the Endako Mine and concerns expressed within the region regarding forestry. The region is trying to address the consequences of the Pine Beetle epidemic and how the increased harvesting levels in the past will now lead to reduced allocation of the allowable cut. A reduction in the allowable cut will impact the local sawmills as further industry consolidation could take place as the major players seek to secure their fibre supply.</p> <p>Another consequence of a reduced fibre supply is the availability of wood residue for the wood pellet producers. At present the majority of the fibre used in pellet production comes from mill residue. With new energy systems attached to sawmills coming on stream, there will be less residue available for the pellet producers. The pellet industry may have to seek alternative sources for their feedstock, but these sources require more effort than processing mill waste and would result in higher operating costs. Higher priced inputs for the pellet industry may</p> | |

require these organizations to revise their business plans to adjust to a new economic reality.

CFSN has taken the view that there is little the organization can do to move the resource sector projects along other than our work with local businesses to prepare them to take advantage of procurement requests from major industry.

CFSN has focused its attention on the development of the non-resource sector with initiatives introducing new technologies such as 3D Printing and creating an entrepreneurial culture in the region. CFSN will continue with its project to establish innovation centres in Fort St. James and Vanderhoof in the interests of developing internet based business activities using new practises. An example of this would be encouraging the establishment of social media managers for local business and government.

CFSN has also developed a Youth strategy using Junior Achievement programs to expose Youth to entrepreneurialism. CFSN would like to see starting a business considered a viable career path. CFSN became a community partner for the Futurepreneur program to support young adults and provide some continuity as individuals transition from Junior Achievement programs to business start up.

The region's communities continue to experience significant leakage of cash to the region's major centre of Prince George. The effect of Box Store pricing and other Prince George attractions (such as a pool) negatively impact the revenues and margins of local shopkeepers. CFSN continues to support Shop Local Campaigns as well as Beyond the Market, a program that promotes farm gate sales and Farmer's Markets.