

*For immediate release*

### **GAER Supports Drayton Valley**

*Edson, July 8, 2008...* The Grande Alberta Economic Region (GAER) supports the Town of Drayton Valley as it strives to diversify its local economy.

Upon Weyerhaeuser's announcement today of permanent closure of the Drayton Valley Oriented Strand Board (OSB) plant, GAER maintains its support of the Town of Drayton Valley as it searches for ways to broaden its economic base.

As a Regional Economic Development Alliance comprised of many forest-based communities, GAER understands first hand the challenges faced by the industry and the communities which rely on them. "As these continued downward economic pressures affect the forest industry, we have seen the effects on our communities," says Glenn Taylor, Chair of GAER and Mayor of the Town of Hinton.

In 2007 GAER developed a public planning model designed to work with communities that are dependant on forestry. The model is to be used for creating diversification plans at the community level. A series of round-table discussions were held in forest dependant communities throughout the region to develop this model. Taylor explains: "What we learned from these sessions is that each community and its citizens want the opportunity to shape and influence what our communities will look like in the future. While we want to assist the provincial and federal governments in finding solutions, we believe that the solutions need to be created for the communities by the communities."

GAER continues to seek funding to build on the developed model so that it can be implemented. "Drayton Valley could be the first community to implement the model on a full scale to develop a diversification plan and implement it," said Taylor.

For more information on GAER, please visit [www.grandealberta.com](http://www.grandealberta.com).

Direct media enquiries to:  
Glenn Taylor  
Chair, Grande Alberta Economic Region  
Phone: 780-817-8950  
E-mail: [info@grandealberta.com](mailto:info@grandealberta.com)

GAER develops collective economic strategies and have the capability to engage local organizations in its implementation. In doing so, GAER builds collaborative relationships between communities with common interests, for the sole purpose of enhancing the long-term prosperity of the entire region.

Our member municipalities include Onoway in the east to Grande Cache, Municipality of Jasper and Jasper National Park in the west. The municipalities in the south include Brazeau County, Drayton Valley, Edson, Hinton and Yellowhead County while its northern counterparts include Mayerthorpe, Woodlands County, Whitecourt and Fox Creek.



For more information on GAER, please visit [www.grandealberta.com](http://www.grandealberta.com).