

Grande
Alberta
ECONOMIC REGION

GRANDE IDEAS

News from the Grande Alberta Economic Region

The **Grande Alberta Economic Region (GAER)** is an economic development partnership consisting of:

- Brazeau County
- Woodlands County
- Yellowhead County
- The Town of Drayton Valley
- The Town of Edson
- The Town of Fox Creek
- The Town of Grande Cache
- The Town of Hinton
- The Town of Mayerthorpe
- The Town of Onoway
- The Town of Whitecourt
- The Municipality of Jasper
- Jasper National Park

GAER People

Dennis Egyedy has managed businesses, municipalities and a college in some of Canada's most remote regions, from the Maritimes to the Northwest Territories. He started as the CAO of Fox Creek on May 12.

What's your background?

After graduating university, I started as a municipal inspector in the Northwest Territories in 1981. From there I went on to become area superintendent for Norman Wells, and served as vice president of the union. While up north I met my wife and we moved to Nova Scotia, where she was from. There, I owned and ran two successful Baskin Robbins franchises while still working on the side as a municipal consultant. I did that for ten years and then got hired as the CAO for Sackville, New Brunswick. After that, I took a teaching position at

A Grande Idea

The Town of Edson has come up with an innovative way to present its annual financial report. While complying with Municipal Government Act requirements to publish year-end financial information, the 2008 Community Report is a showcase for the town. It provides details on important municipal initiatives, major events and contacts for local resources and facilities. "In municipal government, quite often you only communicate with the public when they have a problem," explains Ann Dechambeau, director of legislative services with the town. "This is a way for us to get positive, helpful information to the community." The Town circulates reports to residents and supplies copies to businesses and people interested in relocating to Edson. "It's very useful as an economic development tool," says Dechambeau. The 2008 report is available on the town website, www.townofedson.ca.

AGM Celebration of Success

On June 18, GAER hosted its annual general meeting and fourth annual Celebration of Success in Drayton Valley. (See the full list of award winners below.) At the AGM, GAER members elected the executive for the coming year, returning Glenn Taylor (chair) and Greg Pasychny (vice-chair), and welcoming board member Glen Wilcox as the new secretary-treasurer.

Congratulations to our award winners!

Brazeau County: The Flower Farm, Terry and Darlyne Gavigan
 Drayton Valley: Drayton Valley Bakery and Café, Jack and Trish Wiersma
 Edson: Diana's Pets and Trophies, Donna and Cliff Anderson
 Fox Creek: 3 Boys Tank & Vac Trucks Ltd, Chris and James McKennitt
 Grande Cache: Noelle's Café, James Miles
 Hinton: Kal-Tire, Riley Johnson
 Jasper: Extex Enterprises, Doug McPhee
 Mayerthorpe: Connor Creek Collection, Troy and Tara Fischer
 Onoway: Davlyn's Restaurant, Lynette Robertson
 Whitecourt: Scott Safety Supply Services, Brett Scott
 Woodlands County: Trigon Construction, Don Jones

GAER People Continued

Nunavut Arctic College. After stints as CAO for the Municipal District of Argyle, Nova Scotia, and city clerk for the City of Ikaluit, I returned to the college as executive director of finance and administration. But the cost of living is quite high up there and the weather is harsh and I was looking to return south, so I accepted a position with the Town of Fox Creek.

How do you think your experience has prepared you for your current position?

I always look for challenges and I feel I have been able to bring something new to each community, with the perspective I have on all sides of administration. One of the things that has really helped me in my career is understanding the business perspective.

If government sets too many rules it can stifle business. You don't really understand it until you've been a business owner.

You said you look for challenges in your work.

What intrigued you about Fox Creek?

Having worked in different provinces, I know that challenges are the same for many municipalities. Fox Creek is a growing community. The residential area is filling up, there's a need for more homes. The challenges are to purchase new land for development, to provide services – recreational, commercial – and to establish a good working relationship with the municipal district.

How do you plan to tackle these challenges?

When I arrived here, there was no business plan. That was one of my first orders of business. Another priority for me was to find out what projects are happening. Development is one of our major challenges. To accommodate more retail and industrial growth, we need to plan out the facilities and access to highways. Some people say five year plans aren't realistic, but I disagree because time goes by fast. I'm looking to do projections for the next five years.

With his well-travelled resume, Dennis says he is comfortable in new places and adjusts easily. In his spare time he enjoys swimming, a pursuit he took up while working in the Northwest Territories.

Around the Region

The Mayerthorpe location of the Barrhead and Districts Co-op is undergoing a major expansion to enhance service to residents. Construction began in May and is scheduled for completion by early September, says Janet Jabusch, vice-president of the Mayerthorpe Co-op board. The expansion will increase warehouse space and the size of the meat and dairy sections, as well as adding more retail space and a new customer service desk. The Co-op is also assessing the feasibility of a new cardlock fuel centre, which could be in place by 2009. The Mayerthorpe location has seen significant changes over the past few months, beginning with its amalgamation with the Barrhead and Districts Co-op in February 2008. The local cooperative celebrated a major milestone recently with the purchase of the Co-op building (formerly owned by the Federated Co-op). For more information, contact general manager Allan Coté at 780.674.2201.

Word is spreading about Grande Cache, with recent visits from Country Music Television and Edmonton radio station K-Rock. This August long weekend, the town hosts the second annual Deathfest, with concerts, family activities and of course, the Death Race, a 125-kilometre run over mountain peaks and numerous obstacles. In support of continued growth, the Town has completed a new economic development strategy addressing issues like business retention and expansion and community gap analysis. The federal Community Investment Support Program matched town funding to assist development of the new strategy. The town has also launched a new "Play and Stay" partnership program with local tour operators, offering discounts on activities for visitors who stay at the Grande Cache Municipal Campground. For more information on all events and activities, see the town website at www.grandecache.ca.

Jasper has a busy fall ahead. In September the municipality hosts the Board of Directors meeting of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and later this fall it will welcome a delegation from Hakone, Jasper's sister city in Japan. Over 150 people are expected to attend the FCM event, which runs September 3-7, 2008. Highlights include feature sessions with guest speakers and arranged activities for visitors in the National Park. Shortly after, a delegation of business people from Hakone will arrive in Jasper to honour the sisterly affiliations between the two cities, a bond that was formed on July 4, 1972. Every few years a delegation from Jasper visits Hakone, and vice versa. This occasion will mark the 10th visit from Hakone. For more information on these events, contact Beryl Cahill at 780.852.3356 or bcahill@town.jasper.ab.ca.

Workshops

Oil and gas industry representatives can recruit prospective employees when Drayton Valley hosts the Pathways Career Fair on September 18, 2008. The one-day event takes place at the Drayton Valley Omniplex, with high school students attending from throughout the region. Interested businesses can contact Cindi Allaby at 780.542.3770 extension 31 or cindi_allaby@keyera.com for more information.