

March 2025

Networking event brings business community together



Community Futures Peace Country recently hosted its first-ever business mixer “Business Bites” at Peace River Brewing with 45 people registered and plenty of valuable connections made. The one-hour gathering was designed to bring together business owners and professionals in a casual, welcoming setting. Led by Business Analyst, Heidi Dubé, participants took part in structured activities that encouraged conversation, collaboration, and greater awareness of local resources and services. A referral wall was also available for sharing business cards and contact information. Thank you to everyone who attended and helped make the event a success. We’d love to hear your feedback—let us know if you’d be interested in attending something like this again in the future.

NEW Business Support Program

Northern Sunrise County has a new program Sunstone Strategic Wayfinder Program designed to help local entrepreneurs, startups, and existing businesses that are facing barriers or looking to grow and diversify. The program offers free one-on-one advisory sessions, business advice, marketing and branding support, peer networking, and access to helpful resources. If you’re a current or aspiring business owner, you can book a free session to explore your goals and determine if this program is the right fit: <https://calendly.com/sunstonestrategic/wayfinder-advisory-session?month=2025-03>. For more information, contact Jason at jason@sunstonestrategic.com. This program is available to anyone located within Community Futures Peace Country boundaries. See page four of this newsletter to see the listing of communities we serve.

SUNSTONE STRATEGIC
SUNSTONE STRATEGIC WAYFINDER PROGRAM
 BUSINESS SUPPORT INITIATIVE

- Expert business advice
- Marketing and branding
- Networking, Peer Support and resources
- Recognize the barriers and develop strategies to eliminate all of them
- Register by following the link above.

For more information contact Jason at jason@sunstonestrategic.com

Full House for Artificial Intelligence Workshop



We had a full house for our March Lunch and Learn with Jason Bacon from Sunstone Strategic. Jason led an engaging one-hour workshop on Artificial Intelligence. Thanks so much to the 25 in-person and online attendees. It was an informative session, and we're thrilled that Jason is presenting at the upcoming Women in the North Conferences.

Lemonade Day 2025 Update

More Than Just a Day.



Plans for Lemonade Day in Peace River and Fairview are well underway, and we're pleased to share that registrations are now open. Youth participants will begin training in May, where they'll develop a business plan, receive a business license, and work with local businesses to secure a stand location for the big day. A heartfelt thank you to Pauline Lyman and Jenna Armstrong for helping coordinate the Fairview event, and to all those supporting this initiative. We are grateful to our sponsors whose contributions make this event possible: Town of Peace River, Town of Fairview, Fairview & District Chamber of Commerce, Northern Sunrise County, Peace River & District Chamber of Commerce, Mighty Peace Chevrolet Buick GMC Ltd., Dollar Store Peace River, Mad Dog Cresting, Shorty's Pet Supplies, Gillett Lawn and Snow, and Heart & Soul Photography. If you're a local business interested in hosting a stand on June 14, please contact us to register as a Lemonade Day Sweet Spot at eventspsc@albertacf.com or call 780-624-1161. Mark your calendars for Friday, June 14, and plan to visit lemonade stands in Peace River and Fairview - it's a rain or shine event! Learn more and register at lemonadeday.org/northernalberta.

Women in the North Conferences Quickly Approaching

The Women in the North Conferences are just over a month away, and we're excited to share that ticket sales are going strong! The Peace River event happening May 8 at the Chateau Nova is nearly sold out with a maximum capacity of 120. Manning's event is set for May 6 at the Battle River Agriculture Hall, with lots of room—and ticket sales are coming in earlier than usual this year. We've seen such a positive early response and strong buy-in from communities, businesses, and organizations who are sending staff and team members to take part. This year's theme, "Building a Stronger Team in One Day," really seems to be resonating and is a great opportunity to step away from daily routines, build connections, and return to the workplace inspired and recharged. Both events will feature four engaging workshops, a delicious catered lunch, gift bags, and door prizes. These conferences are made possible through grant funding from the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada, along with the incredible generosity of our sponsors and supporters - we're so grateful for their continued support. Get your tickets at womeinthenorth.ca - teams of 3 or more get a 20% discount and we've got conference hoodies on sale on the site as well. We can't wait to connect, learn, and grow with you in Manning on May 6 and Peace River on May 8. Follow Women in the North on Facebook and Instagram for updates and visit womeinthenorth.ca for more information.

COMING TO GRIMSHAW OCT 2025!

Proudly hosted by
Community Futures Peace Country

SONGRISE
2025 MUSIC CONFERENCE

TWO DAYS OF MUSIC BUSINESS
LEARNING, PEER NETWORKING,
SONGWRITING AND PERFORMANCE
PLUS A LIVE CONCERT OPEN TO
THE PUBLIC

Attention Grade 12 Students

Do you want to start a business
when you are finished high school?

Entrepreneurship Bursary



peacecountry.albertacf.com



We asked Herbert Coles, owner of Kita North Restaurant in Peace River to share some insights about being a business owner.

Q: What made you get into the restaurant business and buy Kita North?

A: I never really imagined I would one day own Kita North. At first, it was just a wish—a dream—to have my own restaurant. I learned so much from my previous bosses, Bob and Serina Kwan from TJ's Restaurant. They taught me how to run a restaurant, but I never thought I would actually own one. Then came Shan Su, the original owner of Kita North, who gave me the opportunity to take that step. And all praise to the Most High God—He turned that dream into reality.

Q: What do you enjoy most about being in business?

A: I'm still learning what it means to be in the business world. Right now, I can't say what I enjoy the most because running a business is very hard work. I'm just starting to understand it all.

Q: What are the biggest challenges you face as a business owner?

A: Every day brings new challenges. It's not like you fix one thing and then everything is done—there's always something new to face. But I'm thankful—our team works hard and we overcome those challenges together.

Q: What advice would you give someone wanting to start their own business?

A: I'm not great at giving advice—I still have so much to learn. But one thing I've come to understand is how important it is to have a good team. You need people you can trust, and it's even better if your family is part of it. For me, I'm doing it on my own. But just like the body has many parts that work together—the head, arms, feet, and heart—it's the heart that keeps everything going. For me, the heart is the Most High.

Q: What do you love most about living in the North?

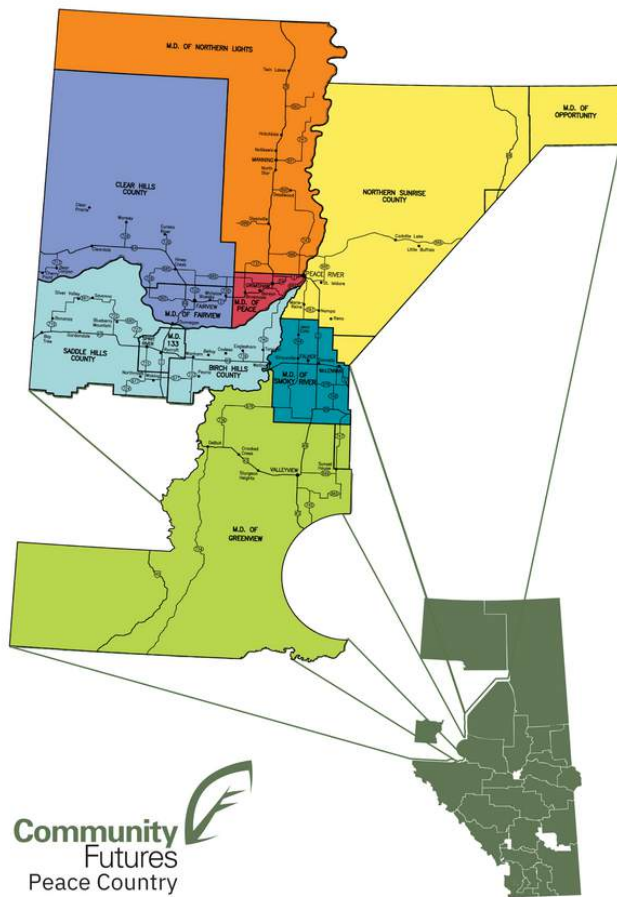
A: It's not just that I live in the North—I truly love the North. I love this place where I am right now. I don't need to travel the world to find beauty. I already have it, right here in one place.



About Community Futures

Community Futures Peace Country is a community driven, non-profit organization staffed by business professionals and guided by a volunteer Board of Directors. We provide a wide range of small business services, developmental lending (up to \$150,000) and business management tools for people wanting to start, expand, franchise or sell a business. We also run a number of specialized business programs, organize exciting business events, and actively work with community and business leaders to foster rural economic growth.

OUR REGION



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We help entrepreneurs and small business owners throughout the Peace region, including: Bay Tree, Bear Canyon, Berwyn, Blueberry Mountain, Bluesky, Bonanza, Brownvale, Cadotte Lake, Calais, Carcajou, Cherry Point, Chinook Valley, Cleardale, Crooked Creek, Deadwood, DeBolt, Dixonville, Donnelly, Dunvegan, Eaglesham, Eureka River, Fairview, Falher, Girouxville, Gordondale, Grimshaw, Guy, Hines Creek, Hotchkiss, Jean Cote, Kathleen, Little Buffalo, Manning, Marie-Reine, McLennan, Nampa, North Star, Notikewin, Peace River, Reno, Rycroft, Silver Valley, Spirit River, St. Isidore, Tangent, Twin Lakes, Valleyview, Wanham, Watino, Whitelaw, Woking and Worsley

POPULATION: 50,000
50 COMMUNITIES
26 MUNICIPALITIES
4 FIRST NATIONS
122,000 SQUARE KMS

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