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Rural development fund ready to roll out to communities

Alberta government transfers \$100 million destined for rural initiatives

Edmonton... Rural communities have access to \$100 million in rural development funding after the Alberta government transferred financial support to Rural Alberta's Development Fund for distribution to rural initiatives across the province.

Rural Alberta's Development Fund is an arm's-length, not-for-profit corporation that is administering the \$100 million in funding announced in Budget 2006 as the next step in the delivery of the Rural Development Strategy.

Doug Horner, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development said this funding emphasizes the government's commitment to ensuring Alberta's rural communities remain prosperous. "Rural Albertans have an incredible amount of innovative ideas and community commitment," said Horner. "This fund will provide the necessary financial backing to get those ideas off the ground and into real projects that will mean a real difference for rural communities."

Clint Dunford, Minister of Economic Development, said: "We believe this Fund is the right mechanism for community partnerships to drive rural economic development," said Dunford. "The government is the catalyst that has made these funds available, and the board of directors has the knowledge and authority to make decisions that support growth, revitalization and sustainability in rural Alberta."

Fred Estlin, Fund co-chair and Grande Prairie resident said: "We're very pleased to have this level of support from government. We encourage rural organizations and groups to look at the program criteria and submit their Expressions of Interest to us."

Project criteria, guidelines and forms are available at www.ruralalbertasfund.com or by calling Rural Alberta's Development Fund toll-free at 1-877-940-7233.

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