

# Access Saskatchewan

## Hella'van Idea Fashions into New Business Venture

What started as a joke between Hella MacDonald and her husband Jim, soon became a serious business venture for the Archerwill couple. Hella says, "I used to make fun of Jim because his hunting suit was pathetic, it had no pockets or zippers and he had to wear his elk caller around his neck." The idea was put into action when Hella's neighbour challenged her to "put your money where your mouth is." Little did Hella know that all the needling from her husband and neighbour would soon spur a new business venture.

Hella, a talented seamstress, accepted the challenge and produced a fleece hunting outfit complete with pockets for hunting necessities such as: keys, wallet, toilet paper, knife, whistle, string, flashlight, bullets, compass, full fly pants, belt loops and a strategically placed tube like pocket for Jim's elk caller. Her husband and neighbour praised the finished product. They liked the product so much; Hella believed there could be marketing potential with the design.

She was right. Hella contacted Newsask Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC). CFDCs are non-profit organizations run by a board of local volunteers. They are designed to encourage rural economic activity and entrepreneurship. Newsask CFDC is one of 13 across Saskatchewan that can provide a wide range of business information, counseling, training services and financing to existing businesses or potential entrepreneurs.

Entrepreneurs may get help on how to write and present a business plan, developing marketing plans or accessing business literature through the CFDCs' resource libraries. Many CFDC offices have Internet access for client use. The CFDCs can also provide small business loans.

Newsask approved Hella's project as being viable, advised and developed a business plan with her. Following the advice she received from Newsask, Hella and her husband began to "field the market." She and her husband took the specialized apparel to eight local hunting merchants to display their product. The response was positive. "Everyone was very excited with my design and interested in selling it



in their stores. In this area, there are hunters everywhere." Next, she set up a workshop to produce the outfits. After a few renovations, adding shelves and a 10-foot cutting table, half of the garage became Hella's workshop. Hella was now ready to produce her product.

She began production in the spring of 1999, under the trade name **Helmac**. Within four months, Hella had made over 200 suits, selling at \$120-\$130 each. "We were thrilled our suits were such a success," exclaims Hella.

She plans to expand Helmac into larger centres and eventually hire some help. For now, the demand keeps her busy and is making a profit. She loves making her hunting suits and will grow her business, while "keeping it fun."

If you would like more information about Helmac or the programs and services offered by WD designed to help small business, contact the CFDC office in your area. Call Western Economic Diversification at 1-888-338-WEST (9378) to find the CFDC closest to you or visit our web site at <http://www.wd.gc.ca>.

# All Aboard The Moose Jaw Trolley

The folks at **The Moose Jaw Trolley Company** are singing that old song: *"Clang, clang, clang went the trolley, ding, ding, ding went the bell,"* in their sleep. More than 5,000 people rode the organization's new trolley car, a replica of one that ran in Moose Jaw from 1911 to 1932, in its first three months of operation, July to September.

"The trolley car is a huge success," said Lee Auten, Executive Director of the umbrella tourism organization Destination Moose Jaw Discovery, Inc. "It provides us with another attraction in Moose Jaw. People can stop here at the tourist centre and are excited they can tour the tunnels and then tour the city in the trolley."

Destination Moose Jaw received \$250,000 to purchase the trolley from Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD). The contribution was made to encourage economic development and job creation, while easing the impact of reductions in operations at Canadian Forces Base 15 Wing Moose Jaw. WD has the responsibility in the West to assist communities affected by base reductions.

In May 1998, a broad cross-section of representatives from 15 Wing, economic development, tourism, education and government formed the Moose Jaw Economic Development Committee. Over six months, through a series of community meetings targeting all sectors of Moose Jaw, the organizations worked together to assess the community's needs and identify initiatives with the strongest potential to generate economic growth.



Natural Resources Minister Ralph Goodale greets Moose Jaw residents in front of the trolley car, which was purchased by The Moose Jaw Trolley Company from \$250,000 in funding to Destination Moose Jaw Discovery Inc. from Western Economic Diversification.

Mayor Ray Boughen agrees that the trolley car has had one of the most visible impacts of the WD-funded projects. "It's garnered a lot of support in the community as one of the many aspects of our burgeoning tourism industry," he explained.

Thanks to WD's contribution, Boughen says that, while there

will still be some short-term adjustments due to the base closure, there is a lot of optimism in the community. "We've had good retail growth, tourism is strong and Bombardier and NATO Flying Training in Canada (NFTC) are coming on-stream."

Boughen is also pleased with the railway underpass project that will improve traffic flow after the construction of Canadian Pacific Railway's new high speed refueling centre in Moose Jaw, one of only three in Canada. The \$2.1 million underpass project received \$400,000 from WD. Once it is built, the refueling centre will create more than 50 jobs over the next five years.

Minister Goodale announced a \$4 million contribution from WD to organizations representing several sectors of the Moose Jaw economy in July 1999. The contribution was made to encourage economic development and job creation, while easing the impact of reductions in operations at Canadian Forces Base 15 Wing Moose Jaw. The 15 Wing is in transition to the centre for NFTC operations.

# Finding that Special Gift with a Prairie Twist?

You're about to jet off to see relatives overseas or in the United States and want to take them something that says Saskatchewan. You want to take business clients something unique, but with a prairie twist; you're coming home from a trip and want to pick up something for your partner or children? But, you can't think of anything. Sound familiar, what can you do? Just ask Marilyn Goldsmith.

Marilyn opened **Handmade Gifts to Go** at the Regina airport in July 1997 to fulfill these needs for travelers. The idea for an airport gift shop arose partly through the sales of her husband's (David) scrimshaw work.

"David sells his work through several galleries and handcraft stores, one of which is located in the Saskatoon airport," explained Marilyn. "We talked with the owner of that store and decided to try one in the Regina airport." For market research, the couple obtained the historical and projected numbers of departures from the airport and then spent several days watching the ebb and flow of travelers.

"One of the decisions we made very early was that we would not be a consignment store, but rather would purchase all of the stock outright on a wholesale basis, directly from each craftsperson," says Goldsmith. "This has been one of the best decisions we made. The amount of bookwork is minimized and the artisans who supply our store get all of their money right away making re-ordering from them easier."

But in order to do this, Goldsmith required capital to purchase stock. Their banking officer told them about services at Women Entrepreneurs (W.E.) of Saskatchewan, especially regarding financing options the bank couldn't provide.

Women Entrepreneurs, with offices in Saskatoon and Regina and six provincial chapters in Humboldt, Yorkton, Swift Current, Arborfield, the Battlefords and Prince Albert, can provide business advisory services, entrepreneurship training and mentoring, access to loans, resource information and networking opportunities throughout Saskatchewan for businesses like Handmade Gifts to Go.

W.E. provided Goldsmith with a loan for purchasing stock and moveable assets such as the cash register and computer. W.E. officers also provided advice on her business plan and proposal, making recommendations to strengthen the plan. The organization continues to support Marilyn through invitations to programming and networking functions.

"W.E. officers have always been there to talk to when I've needed some re-assurance or support along the way," she added.

Goldsmith's connections and hard work have paid off. The store opened with a staff of three carrying work from 60 artisans. Staff numbers have increased to seven and they now carry work from more than 100 artisans. The store is open seven days a week, 12 hours a day. On occasion, she has been asked by businesses and the provincial government to put together gifts for dignitaries.

Handmade Gifts to Go started with a three-year lease in the Regina airport with Transport Canada. The airport is now operated by the Regina Airport Authority, which recently agreed to a new five-year lease with the business.

"Seeing the success of a business like Handmade Gifts to Go, and the people that we assist is what motivates and excites the staff at W.E. Knowing that we have made a difference is so tremendously rewarding," says Laura Small, Executive Director of W.E.

"I want to congratulate W.E. on celebrating three years in Regina and area," said Goldsmith. "I strongly recommend that other women, who wish to start a business or who already own a business but are uncertain about any aspect of it, contact W.E. for the help and support it offers. I also appreciate how W.E. has included David in all aspects of the business relationship that we have had with it."

For more information on W.E. programs and services, call 1-800-879-6331 or (306) 477-7173, or visit the W.E. web site at <http://womenentrepreneurs.sk.ca/>



# Building a Business Out of a Vision



Change isn't necessarily progress, says Dan Danielson, whose new business, **FutureScope Management Group** guides its clients through some of the problems caused by change in business, government, non-profit sectors and on the family farm.

The company is a "virtual corporation," which means his associates don't work together in one office. Through FutureScope, Danielson links together a network of two human resource consulting companies, two economic development organizations, an agrologist and an occupational health and safety consulting firm which he calls on to solve organizational problems. The company offers clients access to professionals with the expertise to help them through the business challenges they are facing.

"FutureScope coordinates the wealth or reservoir of people with technical expertise, possibly retirees wanting some form of employment, with the need that exists among organizations," explains Danielson.

FutureScope Management Group offers its clients three different services:

1. business development (value-added, expansion or diversification),
2. farm debt settlement (counselling farm families, working with creditors and providing mediation services) and,
3. human resources management or workplace enhancement services, including training and development, redesigning organizational structures, performance appraisals and recruiting.

Although Danielson felt confident with his eight years of experience assisting people and organizations with everything from writing business plans to implementing new programs, Danielson went to the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre (CSBSC) in Saskatoon to ensure his knowledge was up-to-date.

Danielson says the CSBSC provided advice in many ways. Information officers at the centre guided him through the process of registering the business name and trademark and understanding tax and payroll laws; they provided information on ownership structure; guided him on preparing business plans and provided market research advice. The Centre provided lists of contacts and other consultants.

"The officers also helped me get the company profile into the provincial government directory for professional consultants," he adds. "The officers have been very helpful. I've helped other companies set up before, but it's different setting up a business for yourself."

"In talking with the client, we act as a sounding board for their ideas and are then able to make objective suggestions as to possible sources of business information and marketing," says Carol Tanner, Senior Information Officer at the CSBSC. "Marketing is a big concern for many clients who visit our Centre. Good marketing information can be found in our many directories and library materials, our business fact sheet collection, and our series of business and marketing videos."

"The real benefit of the CSBSC is when you go in with just a vision or idea," added Danielson. "That is when you would really want to work with these people. If I didn't know the things I did, I would really have needed their help."

He went as far as to introduce his associates to the CSBSC officers, "so that they don't have to go so far to do their research. If you're doing a business plan for someone in Rosetown, for example, you can do it without travelling very far; because, the centre has the information you need, electronically."

The CSBSC was established in 1994 as a joint partnership between the federal and provincial government to consolidate business information services into one central area. Its mandate is to serve small business by making available the information needed to succeed in today's business environment. Western Economic Diversification Canada and Saskatchewan Economic and Cooperative Development are managing partners of the CSBSC.

Information resources include the latest on federal and provincial government programs and services details about government regulations and taxes a full business resource library with Business Plan Handbooks the Entrepreneurial Manual series "How To" reference materials statistical information and directories (such as the: Complete Canadian Franchise Guide, Provincial Business Directory and Small Business Source book). Also available is information on business start-ups, financing for start-up and existing businesses, exporting and importing, Aboriginal programs and services, market statistics and small business profiles.

Call the centre's toll-free phone number to reach information officers, use the Internet or its Info-FAX system, to order document catalogues or information sheets. On-site, public computer workstations provide Internet access for research, along with a wide variety of databases and CD-ROM information products. These are free services.

For more information, call the Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre at 1-800-667-4374 or (306) 956-2323. The Info-FAX number is 1-800-667-9433 or (306) 956-2310. You can e-mail the centre at [saskatooncsbsc@cbsc.ic.gc.ca](mailto:saskatooncsbsc@cbsc.ic.gc.ca) or visit its web site <http://www.cbsc.org/sask>.