

# RURAL

**COMMUNITIES AT WORK**

ISSUE 1 FALL 2005



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Saskatchewan  
Rural  
Development



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**Minister of Rural Development**

**September 2005**

**Welcome to Communities at Work, Saskatchewan Rural Development's new quarterly magazine.** In this and in future editions, you will find important information about the new Department of Rural Development and the programs and services it provides. You will find stories about how people and communities in every corner of the province are creating prosperity in their own back yards. Rural Saskatchewan is full of opportunities for entrepreneurs – including youth – and there are many examples of people who have seized those opportunities.

The Department of Rural Development was formed on April 1, 2005 in direct response to the Action Committee on the Rural Economy's (ACRE) request that Government create an organization able to champion rural issues and initiatives. With that in mind, the Department took on the mandate: "To work with individuals, businesses, co-operatives, communities and government departments to promote and enhance rural development."

The Department has three main thrusts: policy and planning, investment programs, and program development and support – and we've brought together the expertise and the resources necessary to help rural residents build local economies and services.

This year marks Saskatchewan's 100th birthday, and as we celebrate the heritage and the communities that built this province, we'll help those communities create a new century of prosperity.

Rural Development staff are enthusiastic, knowledgeable people, who are there to help you with your ideas about starting and growing a business in rural Saskatchewan. Located throughout the province, they provide counselling, assessment, information, pathfinding and referral services to support and encourage entrepreneurship, business development, retention and expansion. In addition, the province's network of Small Business Loan Associations and co-operative sector can provide financing and program support options for fledgling entrepreneurs and co-ops.

Further information on the above programs and services can be found by visiting [www.rd.gov.sk.ca](http://www.rd.gov.sk.ca) or by contacting one of our regional offices, listed on the back cover of this newsletter.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Clay Serby'.

**Clay Serby**

# BUILDING RURAL COMMUNITIES

Rural Development provides direct support to encourage business and economic development. The small business sector is a major force for Saskatchewan. In fact, there are more than 40,000 small businesses operating in all sectors of the province's economy.

*Rural Development administers the following key rural programs and services:*

## **Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) Program**

Since 1989, SBLAs have provided loans of up to \$15,000, totalling \$50.5 million, to more than 9,200 applicants, creating nearly 21,000 jobs. Over 90 per cent of loan activity takes place outside of Regina and Saskatoon.

## **Youth Opportunities Unleashed (YOU)**

As a component of the SBLA Program, YOU targets entrepreneurs aged 18 to 30, providing mentoring and training programs in addition to SBLA loan access.

## **Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs)**

Saskatchewan's 26 REDAs are involved in over 150 projects in 2005-06. The REDA Enhancement Fund provides further funding for special projects undertaken by REDAs, with 209 projects undertaken since 2003-04.

In addition, over 124 employment opportunities for youth have been created within 23 REDA regions through the REDA Youth Employment Program, which provides REDAs with funding to hire business students or recent graduates.

## **Co-operatives**

Saskatchewan has a strong co-operative sector made up of approximately 1,200 co-operatives and credit unions, which range from small community service organizations to some of Saskatchewan's largest businesses. Programming supports and promotes the development of potential and existing co-operatives.

## **Saskatchewan Made Program**

The Department is also responsible for the Saskatchewan Made Program, which assists Saskatchewan manufacturers in marketing by identifying their products as "Saskatchewan Made."

## **Action Committee on the Rural Economy (ACRE)**

Rural Development provides direction and leadership in the analysis, development and design of rural economic policies and programs. Along with policy analysis and development, the Department supports ACRE's ongoing work and provides leadership to the Inter-departmental Rural Working Group.

ACRE, through its Phase II recommendations, has set the stage for government to engage in policy changes relating to business development, employment and skills training, infrastructure and Crown land administration. Rural Development will be working with Departments, Crowns and agencies to assess the committee's recommendations and to identify potential actions.

Watch for highlights and further information on Department programming in future newsletters.



## CELEBRATING CO-OPERATIVES WEEK 2005

### **Jason Freeman sees a bright future for Farmer Direct Co-operative.**

From October 16-22, co-ops across Canada will celebrate Co-operatives Week 2005. This being our province's Centennial year, Saskatchewan's co-ops have an extra reason to celebrate – and they will. At the provincial level, a co-operative flag raising ceremony and luncheon will be held at the Legislature starting at 11:45 a.m. and running over the noon hour on October 17. That evening, the 26th annual Saskatchewan Co-operative Merit Awards banquet will be held in Regina, sponsored by the Saskatchewan Co-operative Association and Saskatchewan Rural Development. Credit Union Day will be celebrated on October 20.

The history of co-ops in our province actually pre-dates the creation of Saskatchewan. People began using the co-operative model to address economic and social challenges facing their communities and the province as a whole more than 100 years ago. Since then, the movement has evolved and grown to include approximately 1,200 co-operatives, owned and controlled by over half a million members. Today, co-operatives operate in almost every economic and social

sector, providing markets for agricultural production, access to consumer goods, financial, health and a range of other services.

New co-ops continue to spring up to meet new needs: 80 of them in the last four years. The First Nations Wholesale Co-operative was formed in 2004 and is already operating stores in two First Nations communities. Farmer Direct Co-operative, which markets produce from 60 organic farms, has experienced dramatic sales increases since it was established in 2003.

“When we were setting up Farmer Direct, we looked for the most democratic form of governance, and the co-op was the best,” says Sales and Marketing Manager Jason Freeman. “We’ve attracted organic farmers who want to work together, who can see the challenges beyond the farm gate. Our customers like buying from a farmer’s co-op because they know it’s going to be fair to farmers.”

### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Contact the Co-operative Development office at 787-0190; or
- E-mail [wthrasher@rd.gov.sk.ca](mailto:wthrasher@rd.gov.sk.ca).

## SMALL BUSINESSES GENERATE IMPRESSIVE RESULTS

Small businesses are what keep the Saskatchewan economy humming. To recognize their contribution, the province is celebrating Small Business Week from October 16 to 22.

“Small business is vital to the growth of the Saskatchewan economy,” said Rural Development Minister Clay Serby. “Looking into the future, there is little doubt that small business will play an increasingly important role in shaping a thriving rural economy.”

Saskatchewan is very much a province of small business. Most of these small businesses are started and operated by a local owner-manager or entrepreneur. In recent years, these small, local, independent operations have been major contributors to growth in the province.

Rural Development programs play an important role in building on that success. From the Small Business Loans Association (SBLA) Program to partnerships with Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs) and communities, the Department is helping to put in place the resources that entrepreneurs need.

Nearly 75 per cent of new jobs come from new and growing small businesses. Across the province, small businesses account for



**Danielle VanDenBossche works at Star Embroidery in Radville.**

36 per cent of the province’s total private sector employment.

Within the provincial economy, there are more than 41,000 firms operating and another 100,000 people who would like to operate a firm, or are potential entrepreneurs.

With those types of numbers, it’s easy to see why recognizing Saskatchewan businesses is so important.

“Small Business Week gives us the opportunity to celebrate our entrepreneurial spirit and to refocus our efforts to build prosperity throughout Saskatchewan,” added Serby.

Additional information on Small Business Week events will be announced when it is available.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Rural Development toll free at 1-800-265-2001; or
- Call your local regional office, listed on the back of this publication.



## LEAN MANUFACTURING

**Doepker Industries has had great success in adopting lean manufacturing.**

Recently, the Department of Rural Development examined the area of lean manufacturing. “Lean” manufacturing is a production process and a philosophy developed by Toyota, and increasingly adopted by other manufacturing sectors all over the world, including here in Saskatchewan.

The concept of “lean” is to meet customers’ requirements by providing them with what they want, how they want it, when they want it, at the lowest possible production cost. “Lean” accomplishes this by identifying and eliminating waste from the manufacturing process. Waste is defined as activities that don’t add value for the customer. In the average company, over 95 per cent of the total production time can be occupied by waste – with only five per cent of production time left for actual production.

“Lean” manufacturing reduces several kinds of waste. For example, companies may find that one of their products is not requested by customers or does not meet customers’ needs.

Others may find their production process includes more steps than are actually needed, uses unnecessary movement of workers and products or requires workers to wait for products or information. Through “lean” concepts, manufacturers can significantly reduce waiting and traveling time.

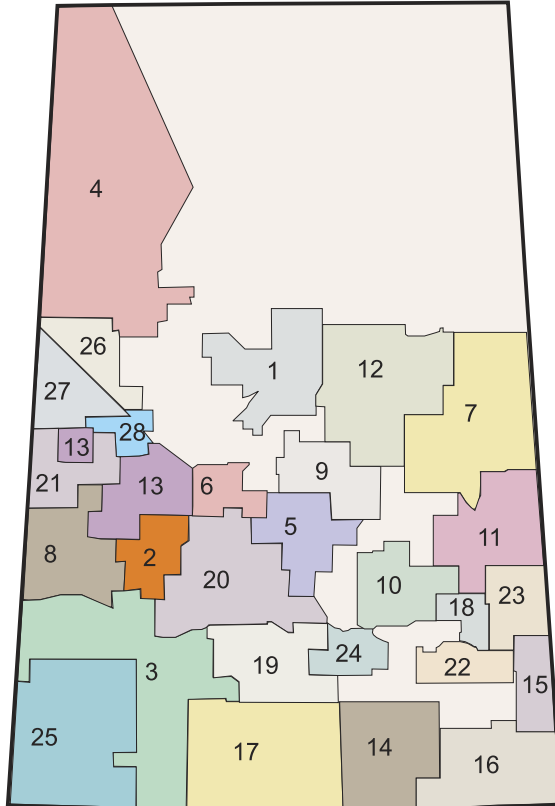
Doepker Industries in Annaheim, one of Canada’s top trailer manufacturers, has had great success in adopting “lean” manufacturing. After the company sent 200 of its 300 employees for “lean” training, it was able to introduce changes that allowed it to reduce its inventory by 47 per cent. Once several changes were made to its production process, Doepker was able to paint five extra trailers each week without hiring additional labour.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Rural Development Policy and Planning Branch at 787-4483.
- Visit [www.doepker.com](http://www.doepker.com).

# FEATURE

## REDA LOCATIONS



1. Prince Albert	953-4388	15. Gateway	435-3177
2. Entrepreneurs 2000	882-1300	16. Cornerstone	453-6097
3. Southwest	778-4240	17. Red Coat	648-3525
4. Northwest	236-2407	18. South Parkland	728-6878
5. Long Lake	946-2223	19. Moose Jaw	693-7335
6. Saskatoon	664-0723	20. Mid Sask	867-9553
7. Etomami	278-2262	21. Border	843-2692
8. West Central	463-1997	22. Mainline	696-2550
9. Carlton Trail	682-2631	23. Yellowhead	743-5177
10. Touchwood	723-4688	24. Regina	522-0227
11. Good Spirit	783-7332	25. Cypress Hills	662-4299
12. North East	862-6732	26. Prairie to Pine	892-2544
13. Midwest	948-2295	27. Big Gully	893-2391
14. South East	842-8001	28. Battlefords	446-7506

## REDAs LEADING THE WAY

Economic development requires strategic and sophisticated approaches to creating wealth and jobs and to attracting new investment. Regional Economic Development Authorities are leading the way in this regard. They have pooled their community resources, engaged in strategic partnerships with key economic stakeholders and developed action plans to capitalize on their strengths, resources and talents.

Ultimately, no one knows a region better than the people who live there. REDAs are about community stakeholders taking ownership and responsibility for their own regional economies. Who better to do it?

Every successful organization needs vision and strong leadership. REDAs across the province are led by knowledgeable, committed people. Municipal leaders are the backbone of REDAs. They understand that, through enhanced collaboration and co-ordination and a regional approach, they can achieve real economic growth in their regions.

Saskatchewan Rural Development has been a key partner of REDAs and will continue to enhance this relationship. The Department is committed to being an active partner in facilitating economic growth in rural Saskatchewan.

# FEATURE



**An expanded meat processing industry can make a significant contribution to the rural economy.**

In June of this year, the Government of Saskatchewan announced a multi-million dollar package to drive development of the meat processing sector in the province.

Premier Lorne Calvert said the three-year, \$37.3 million package of incentives and investment is designed to grow the entire industry from the ground up.

“We announced a six-point plan earlier this year that will enable our industry to process more of the livestock we produce,” Calvert said. “Meat processing has the potential to create new jobs and wealth through our entire economy. This new package will help capture those opportunities through strong, competitive programs and infrastructure that build on what we already have in Saskatchewan, and will attract new investment from beyond our borders.”

**Meat processing has the potential to create new jobs and wealth through our entire economy.**

**-Premier Lorne Calvert**

## MEAT STRATEGY CREATES NEW OPPORTUNITIES FOR RURAL BUSINESSES

The province will invest approximately \$1.2 million in the Saskatchewan Food Industry Development Centre in Saskatoon to encourage increased development of new products for test or niche markets, \$3.3 million to establish toll processing capacity in the province (custom processing for new or expanding firms) and \$32.8 million in a new Meat Processing Investment Rebate program.

“We want to provide an environment that encourages more investment in agriculture and specifically, in Saskatchewan’s meat processing industry,” Agriculture and Food Minister Mark Wartman said. “Our livestock production levels exceeded the province’s processing capacity even before the borders closed to live beef exports two years ago. We now have 29 per cent of Canada’s cow herd and only six per cent of the nation’s processing capacity. The situation is much the same in hogs, but on a different scale. We have more than doubled production in the past eight years, to 2.3 million hogs, but we continue to process at the same levels we always have.

“The new investment in agriculture will secure Saskatchewan’s position as a world-class producer and take us to a new level as a world-class processor,” Wartman concluded.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food at 787-4031.



### MELFORT REGION INVESTIGATING NEW-STYLE PROCESSING

One of the challenges facing slaughter-processors is staff turnover. Working the slaughter line can be demanding. Many processors across North America expect 100 per cent staff turnover each year, as a matter of routine. A group in the Melfort area is planning to address the turnover challenge with ideas and technology borrowed from half a world away, while giving a boost to the local economy.

NESCO Meats Inc. is a producer association seeking to establish a federally inspected, multi-species slaughter-processing facility in the Melfort area. The proposed plant will be highly mechanized and flexible, using equipment developed in New Zealand, which is regarded as the world leader in slaughterhouse technology.

“They use trolleys and lifts that move the carcass,” explains Dillon Shewchuk, the Community Development Manager for the City of Melfort and an affiliate with the North East Regional Economic Development Authority. “The workers don’t handle the carcass as much, or with as much effort,” he adds. “The technology has revolutionized the entire industry in New Zealand and Australia, and we think it will help us keep people for the long-term.”

The NESCO Board of Directors and a consultant are currently completing a feasibility study on the proposed plant, examining aspects such as supply, markets, engineering,



**NESCO’s Board of Directors plans the next steps for the Melfort project.**

locations, regulations and costs. Shewchuk said the plant’s backers chose a multi-species facility to fill any possible supply gaps and to offer a new long-term market for producers, including special and organic livestock producers.

The proposed plant will process about 50,000 head per year, including cattle, bison, wild boar, domestic pigs and possibly elk. Besides meeting all Canadian Food Inspection Agency standards, the plant will meet organic and other specialized requirements, including Halal ritual and Kosher slaughter conditions.

Shewchuk says the feasibility study will be finished near the end of September 2005, with further planning and capital fund-raising to follow. If the plant is a “go,” construction will begin next year, with plant start-up expected near the end of 2006.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Prince Albert Regional Office at 953-2275.

### THE LAST CATTLE FRONTIER

A century ago, Western Canada was touted to potential settlers as “The Last, Best West.” Today, a group of local ambassadors is promoting their area, East Central Saskatchewan, as the Last Cattle Frontier.

Over the past four years, folks representing the Last Cattle Frontier have given informational seminars to beef producers in the Drumheller, Rocky Mountain House, Westlock, Strathmore, Ponoka and Red Deer areas, to encourage them to come to East Central Saskatchewan. The Last Cattle Frontier is an ongoing regional project involving Good Spirit, South Parkland and Yellowhead Regional Economic Development Authorities, which encompass the areas around Yorkton, Melville and Langenburg. The project also receives financial and in-kind support from Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food and Saskatchewan Rural Development.

“The soil, climate and demographics are very similar,” explains Jenay Werle, Regional Development Co-ordinator for Saskatchewan Rural Development. “However, the land is more costly in Alberta, and they’re running out of land for cattle production.”

The meetings, which provide technical, lifestyle and economic information, have attracted more than 300 beef producers. But the promotion doesn’t stop there. Billboards proclaiming “Discover East Central Saskatchewan: The Last Cattle Frontier” have been

placed in livestock auction barns across Alberta. The group also has a toll-free phone line and a website where interested ranchers can get more information. Prospects have also received invitations to attend informal visits or events such as rodeos and field days.

The idea is working. Although there are no official tallies, approximately 100 families, many with young children, have moved to the East Central region.

“Because they are taking a risk, they are innovative people, and generally community-minded,” Werle says. “They are willing to try new management methods and share information, so they are a real benefit to have in the community.”

The Last Cattle Frontier is currently planning its next steps, with more visits to Alberta, and possibly Ontario, planned for 2006.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Rural Development Yorkton Regional Office at 786-1415; or
- Visit [www.lastcattlefrontier.com](http://www.lastcattlefrontier.com).

**The Last Cattle Frontier has brought nearly 100 families to east-central Saskatchewan.**



### SHARING BEGINNING TO PAY OFF

Patience, the old saying goes, is a virtue. The proverb might also serve as a motto for the Long Lake REDA Agriculture Initiative, which covers Watrous and area.

The Ag Initiative is a unique tax revenue sharing agreement, which currently involves the Rural Municipalities of Morris, Wood Creek and Wreford. Participating RMs pay a membership fee to the Long Lake Regional Economic Development Authority and an additional \$3,500 to have two representatives sit on the Ag Initiative Steering Committee. The provincial government provides matching funding up to \$60,000 to the REDA, some of which is used to support the Ag Initiative. The Long Lake REDA then provides research, facilitation and other services to scope out potential projects identified by the committee. If a value-added business results from the spadework done by the Agriculture Initiative, the RM where the business is located receives half the tax revenue, with the remainder divided among other participating RMs.

“The Initiative was established back in 2000,” says Mark Knuttila, the Agriculture Development Officer for Long Lake REDA. “About three years ago, we conducted a feasibility study on pulse processing, which ultimately showed the proposal was not right for this area. While that was disappointing,” Knuttila adds, “the committee was happy to make the decision at that stage, rather than invest more money into a business that was unfeasible for the region at the time.”

Investigations into pork production, begun by the REDA in 2001, seem to offer more promise. After looking at six different

production models, the REDA narrowed it down to two based on input from the RMs and producers, and began looking for possible locations in the area and a pork production company that would be interested. Rather than wait four years for consideration by one company, Knuttila approached the Provista Agriculture Group from Steinbach, Manitoba with the help of Saskatchewan Agriculture and Food.

“We’ve developed a good relationship, and it looks like there will be construction in the spring,” says Knuttila. “If so, this will be the biggest project so far, and the first tax revenue sharing arrangement. People see that it takes a while to bring a project to fruition, but we have more on the way.”

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Regina Regional Office at 787-2201.



**Mark Knuttila is working hard to make the Long Lake REDA Agriculture Initiative a success.**

To really attract and keep people here, we need to look at home-grown businesses that we can create ourselves.

- Radville Economic Development Officer Teresa Whiteman

## NEW RADVILLE BUSINESSES CREATING GROWTH

When a major business left town, the people of Radville got down to business.

When financial services company TWC Financial merged with another company and left Radville, the people of the town could have viewed it as a major blow. Instead, they viewed it as an opportunity.

“The majority of operations moved to Ontario, and we lost a lot of families,” says Radville’s Economic Development Officer Teresa Whiteman, who was hired after the merger. The Town originally formed an Economic Development Committee (Radville EDC) in 2002 to promote the community as an attractive place to live and do business. Since then, the EDC has launched several initiatives, including a new website listing available jobs, a Small Business Loans Program, a Sarcan recycling program, a business retention survey, a tax concession policy, a community trade show and free business workshops. The nearby South East Regional Economic Development Authority was instrumental in assisting the Radville EDC with many of these projects, and also provided funding to hire an economic development intern – Whiteman – in the summer of 2004.

“We’ve seen a wide range of new small businesses open in Radville and area, including a couple from British

Columbia who bought an existing greenhouse and established an apiary, which is now producing honey. But to really attract and keep people here, I think we need to look at home-grown businesses that we can create ourselves, rather than looking for a saviour from outside,” Whiteman states. “That said, I think there’s some interest in the TWC building as a call centre, and the former school where my office is located would attract extra funding if it were attached to the proposed new \$7 million health care centre,” she adds. “This space would be excellent for doctors’ offices and the like.”

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Rural Development Estevan Regional Office at 637-4505; or
- Visit [www.radville.ca](http://www.radville.ca).



**George Hay, owner of the Radville Star, recently expanded to add new sign-making and embroidery businesses.**

# REGION

## NITP OFFERS “HOME TEAM” TRAINING

### NORTH BATTLEFORD REGION

NITP, or Northwest Industrial Training Program, is a unique partnership that offers trades training for local young people, right where they live. The program began in 2000 as a four-year pilot project. Buoyed by its successes, NITP is continuing to train apprentices, many of whom will find jobs with industries in the area.

“One of the key things that makes NITP work so well is the strong support of our industry partners,” explains Kristin Carlson, who handles the day-to-day administration of the program from her Northwest REDA office in Meadow Lake. “They fully believe in it, and are dedicated to make it work.”

Applicants to the program are recruited locally, and must meet the minimum requirements for apprenticeship set out by the province’s Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission. Successful applicants are hired and paid by NITP, with industry partners cost-sharing their salaries. Trainees receive educational and workplace experience, with an industry partner and a journeyman supervising their work placement.

“We offer as much training in or near Meadow Lake as possible,” says Carlson, “because our trainees have strong family ties. Some have families of their own, just starting out. People can get discouraged when they’re away from home for eight weeks,” she adds.

Since the program began, four journeypersons have graduated from NITP and are working in their trade. Nine apprentices in four trades are currently enrolled in the program, which is a partnership of local industries, provincial and federal funding agencies, and Aboriginal communities. Overall direction for NITP is provided by a Board of Directors/Operating Committee, which includes a representative from each industry partner. There is also an Advisory Committee that meets annually to review the operation of the program and make recommendations to the Board.

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the North Battleford Regional Office at 446-7444; or
- Visit [www.nwreda.ca/nitp/nitp.shtml](http://www.nwreda.ca/nitp/nitp.shtml).



**Left to right:  
Elizabeth Aldous (Level 2 Welding Apprentice;  
Bill Perry (Journeyman – NITP Supervisor) ; and  
Tyler Ogilvie (Level 2 Industrial Mechanic  
Apprentice).**

## SWIFT CURRENT REGION

### YOUNG PROFESSIONALS BUILDING NETWORKS

In the face of growing labour shortages, the Young Professionals Network has real potential.

The rationale for such a network came about as a result of a potential shortfall in the working population, as retiring baby boomers are replaced by a much smaller younger generation. With as many as two people leaving the workforce for every one entering, the spectre of an employee shortage is very real.

Rural Development staff in Swift Current recognized how a young professionals organization could help retain and attract people in the critical 21 to 45 age bracket to the community. With the backing of Action Swift Current, the first meeting of the Young Professionals Network was held in June 2005, and work on attracting and retaining businesses and professionals to the city commenced.

Aside from filling a need in the community, the network also fills a need for young professionals,

in that it serves as a setting to connect young professionals in a social environment; to engage their talent and energy towards community building initiatives; and to create a community environment. Furthermore, it creates an opportunity for professional development, helping them to learn the skills necessary to take on leadership roles in the community.

Membership in the network is all-inclusive. Individuals from 21 to 45 years of age – and the young at heart – are encouraged to join. Part of the appeal is that the term “professional” is flexible: any employed person is welcome, from members of the “creative class,” such as artists and musicians, to doctors, lawyers, accountants and everything in between. The only condition is that you care about your community!

#### FOR MORE INFORMATION

- Contact the Swift Current Regional Office at 778-8415.

Left to right: Dallas Gislason (Southwest Community Futures), Joe Maia (Enterprise Rent-a-Car), Linda Wanner (Meyers Norris Penny LLP), Carla Congdon (Golden West Radio), Mark Frison (Cypress Hills Regional College) and Carol Andrews (Southwest TV News).



### SOUTH CENTRAL CLUSTER SHOWCASES SUCCESSSES

A one-day Manufacturers Showcase held in November 2004 is already paying dividends for several companies that have banded together as the South Central Manufacturing Cluster. The Showcase, held in Moose Jaw, allowed companies from Moose Jaw, Mortlach, Lafleche, Gravelbourg, Assiniboia, Ogema and other communities to display their capabilities to each other, the three levels of government and other potential customers, such as the NATO Flying Training program.

As a direct result of the Showcase, a plastics manufacturing plant in Moose Jaw is now the preferred supplier of sheeting for another manufacturer in Moose Jaw, and an agricultural equipment repair and fabrication shop in Lafleche, Creative Enterprises, has developed a beneficial relationship with a large manufacturer of heavy haul truck trailers.

“Doepker Industries sends us the parts from their plant in Moose Jaw, and we weld them together,” says Wayne Engel, co-owner of Creative Enterprises, which has operated in Lafleche for the past 20 years. “The relationship with Doepker evens out the work flow throughout the year. That gives our company more stability and makes it easier to retain our workforce.”

While the Showcase is the most visible sign of the success achieved by the cluster, it’s just one result from nearly two years of organizational work and meetings, meetings, meetings. In early 2003, the Moose Jaw Regional Economic Development Authority was looking for a way to encourage manufacturers in the South Central



**Wayne and Geri Engel of Creative Industries, Lafleche**

region to discuss common issues and share their best practices. Invitations were sent to manufacturers in the regions served by the Moose Jaw and Red Coat REDAs, a process that has matured from that first get-acquainted meeting. Over the past two years, companies from the communities have met quarterly to work on issues and opportunities to increase productivity and overall business activity, with the Business Resource Centre based in Moose Jaw providing support. Many of the companies share their best practices on subjects such as personnel, lean manufacturing and sourcing inputs or components.

“It took a while for some companies to get comfortable with the cluster, but the concept has really opened up in the last year,” says Engel.

#### **FOR MORE INFORMATION**

- Contact the Moose Jaw Regional Office at 694-3623.



## COMING EVENTS

**October 20 -21, 2005**

**Bringing Your Business Home: Home-Based Business Conference**

Days Inn, Swift Current

Open to home-based business owners and those interested in starting a home-based business from across the province. Key-note speaker Monica Coney.

For more information, contact the Southwest REDA at 773-0900.



**Saskatchewan  
Rural  
Development**

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