



STRENGTHENING RURAL CANADA

Community Plan for Rosetown, Saskatchewan

Completed: June 2016

The Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce was fortunate to receive a grant from Strengthening Rural Canada for the Rosetown community in 2015. This grant was to fund the creation of a plan for the community to help strengthen it through literacy and skills development.

The People

The task group was comprised of nine individuals from various organizations in Rosetown and area.

- Six from Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce
- One from the West Central Literacy Committee
- One from the Age Friendly Committee
- One from the local newspaper

The group also included concerned community members. Throughout the project, key stakeholders were identified and included in the community discussions. These individuals were from the following organizations and groups:

- Sun West School Division
- Great Plains College
- Town of Rosetown
- Downtown Revitalization Committee
- Business owners
- New immigrants
- Senior citizens

The Process

The process for the plan started in October 2015, when Rosetown was informed that they were chosen to receive the grant from Strengthening Rural Canada. At that time, we had a meeting with our key stakeholders and created a task force group.

In November 2015, members from the Strengthening Rural Canada Committee, attended a community revitalization meeting that featured the speaker, Royce Pettyjohn. Mr. Pettyjohn is the Manager of Community and Economic Development in Maple Creek, Saskatchewan. He was a major player in the revitalization of that community, and so his presentation provided us with insight into their process, discussed the struggles they faced and what the outcome has been.

Our committee would meet approximately once per month. At these meetings, we worked on laying out a process for the development of the community plan and working on organizing our first community meeting in January 2016. The first community meeting was held January 26, 2016. Leona Gadsby and Maureen Kehler from Decoda Literacy Solutions were in attendance as facilitators for this meeting. Karen Danielson from the Saskatchewan Literacy Network was also in attendance. Various community members attended the meeting either representing certain organizations or attended as concerned citizens of Rosetown. This meeting provided ideas and feedback to the task group and provided them with ideas for the plan. Ms. Danielson had also conducted interviews with key individuals from the community and was able to provide her findings to the group.

The following meetings were then held:

- presentation and discussion at the English as a Second Language class at the regional college
- presentation to the Age-Friendly Committee which resulted in a partnership
- presentation at the Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce's Annual General Meeting
- surveys with the senior citizens population
- surveys with the youth population

The local media (newspaper and radio) was utilized throughout the process to ensure that community members stayed well informed and knew who to contact with questions and/or to get involved in the process. The local paper kept in touch with April Rusling regarding what was going on and reported it regularly.

In May 2016, the plan was created and in June 2016, the plan was finalized and will hopefully be rolled out to the community in the near future.

The Community

Rosetown is a small rural community in West Central Saskatchewan, located one hour away from the closest urban centre. The population of the community is 2,500. The community continues to become more and more culturally diverse, as immigrants are moving to the area. The median age is also lowering due to more and younger families moving to the community; however, there is still a large seniors' population, most of which are active and want to be involved in Rosetown.

The primary industry for the area is agriculture; however, the oil industry continues to move into the region. Rosetown has a strong rural health care system with a hospital that has emergency services, a long term care facility, assisted living care home and medical clinics. The community also has an elementary school, high school and a campus for the regional college. There is a fantastic library in the community that is able to provide resources to everyone. Rosetown also has numerous retail and service businesses that offer their goods and services to the residents. Lastly, there are numerous organizations and service groups for individuals to get involved in, and like many small towns, the majority of these groups are volunteer-run.

There have been many changes in the community over the past few years, some positive and some negative. Please find a list below:

- Main street businesses closing due to increased operating expenses and shortage of staff
- Fewer post-secondary classes being offered at the Rosetown campus of the regional college
- Growth in the automotive dealership area
- Increase in the number of houses, condos and dwellings being built
- Increase in the number of individuals moving to the community
- Shortage of rental properties
- Opening of a new long-term care facility
- Opening of a new assisted living care facility
- Opening of a new medical clinic
- Businesses are facing skilled staffing shortages
- Increase in immigrants
- Strong agriculture economy over the past few years
- Oil industry moving into the area

There are many things that are working well in our community that we could build from with our plan. These include: a great volunteer base and partnerships amongst organizations, a diverse population (i.e. culturally, in age), and great education and healthcare resources. All of these assets have helped us to build a community plan to strengthen Rosetown and area.

Community Development & Literacy Collaboration

The West Central Literacy Committee is an essential collaboration that already exists to support literacy and skills development. This committee is comprised of individuals that represent the community, the regional college, school division and health region.

There are many other collaborations that can be created in order to support literacy and skills development even further in the community. The groups that should be included in these collaborations are: Town of Rosetown, Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce, Age Friendly Committee of Rosetown, Downtown Revitalization Committee, West Central Literacy Committee and their stakeholders, local media, and the Wheatland Regional Library in Rosetown. Our current task force is comprised of many of these individuals, so this collaboration is a good start to help carry through on our goals and actions.

Goals and Actions

The areas of concern that most affect the community's ability to support literacy and skills development are fewer classes being offered at the regional college, increase in immigrants and the fact that businesses are facing skilled staffing shortages. There are big things to do that need to be considered. These require funding and time and will be addressed in the future.

Many ideas were generated from the interviews, small group meetings and the community forum. These were:

- Creation of more businesses in the downtown core
- Training and mentoring related to business management as many retired community members have considerable business experience
- Human resource management support for existing and new businesses
- Support for marginalized youth in the community, particularly through the new youth centre
- A welcome package for newcomers to the community
- A process to introduce immigrants to the basic driving laws and rules of the road in Saskatchewan,
- A formalized system made available to residents seeking assistance with job

In the end, community members felt that the most important overall goal for the Rosetown Strengthening Rural Canada plan is to support marginalized members of the Rosetown community so they can cultivate the tools they need to become contributing and fulfilled members of the community. The plan will provide us with a formalized structure towards the accomplishment of our goals. We expect it will evolve as the community changes.

Because of the short time line and limited funds, the community decided to focus on 3 main actions that could be done in the short term. These are:

- a welcome package for newcomers to the community;

- a process to introduce immigrants to the basic driving laws and rules of the road in Saskatchewan; and
- a formalized system made available to residents seeking assistance with job attainment skills and resources.

Welcome Package for Newcomers

Partners: Rosetown and District Chamber of Commerce and the Town of Rosetown

Actions:

- Update the Services Directory booklet to include contact information for service groups, health region departments, and government agencies.
- Collect welcome package items from businesses and organizations in Rosetown and area.
- Create a form for newcomers to give permission to contact them.
- Distribute and collect the permission form at the Town Office when people sign up for water service.

Outcomes:

- Community organizations will have information about newcomer families, in particular immigrant families who may need more support.
- Newcomers to the community, including immigrants, will know about available services.
- Newcomers will be introduced to local businesses and local shopping will be encouraged to shop.

Introduce Immigrants to Driving Laws

Partners:

- Rosetown & District Chamber of Commerce, West Central Literacy Committee, Age Friendly Committee

Actions:

- Obtain information from SGI – Saskatchewan’s Driver’s Licensing and Vehicle Registration Company - to see if they have any documents written in different languages that could be passed on to immigrants who are looking to obtain their driver’s license
- If documents already exist, ensure that they are ordered for the Rosetown community and are made available to individuals who require them.
- If documents do not exist, look for options to create the required documents.
- Find a volunteer who can assist people to find driving information and get driver’s licenses.

Outcomes:

- Immigrants will find it easier to get their driver's license which will make them more available to the workforce.
- They will be practicing their English skills more which will also help them in the workforce.

Job Seeking Assistance and Document Use

Actions:

- Establish a place where assistance with filling out forms, creating a resume and applying for jobs is available.
- Hire a staff person or utilize volunteers to provide assistance.

Outcomes:

- This will help to increase literacy and skills development which will make it easier for them to enter the workforce and supply local businesses with the skilled labour that they need.

Indicators of Success

We will know that our plan is strengthening Rosetown and is making a difference by seeing the marginalized population becoming more involved in the community and feeling more fulfilled.

A follow-up document will also be created, which will allow for the Strengthening Rural Canada committee to check in with the organizations involved to see if the action items are working and/or if the action items need to be tweaked to be more effective.

Planning Process Makes a Difference

We have felt that the planning process has made a difference to our community thus far. It has brought together various individuals and organizations to create new collaborations in Rosetown. These newly formed partnerships will help to make a better community, as combined skill sets can be put to better use. Communication will become stronger and new projects will be developed.