

Group taking action for business

Entrepreneurs, there is a new initiative underway! Are you ready to join the movement?

With a focus on existing and developing businesses, and a changing landscape to employment, our region is facing a shift in how we view economic diversity. A newly-formed consortium of business, governments, and service agencies called Invest Southeast Alberta is launching this exciting new strategy.

Today at 4 p.m. the movement begins! Please join us for the public information sessions taking place. The evening will include an opportunity to network with like-minded business owners, the leadership team and learn more about how you can become involved in making this project a great success.

The BREWD project encompasses Medicine Hat, Redcliff, Bow Island, Cypress County and County of Forty Mile. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to support what makes southeast Alberta the place to be in business.

What is in this project, for business?

1. An opportunity to have a unified voice;
2. A project where challenges/opportunities are identified and prioritized;
3. This will be a business-directed plan of action;
4. Service providers and business will be aligned and committed to work together and take action; and
5. The attraction and retention of a skilled, productive workforce for a strong competitive business environment where business can grow and succeed.

What is business retention and expansion?

Business retention and expansion (BRE) is a proven, systematic economic development model applied internationally for more than 35 years. Information derived from research completed by Blane, Canada Ltd. found that 70-80% of new jobs come from existing employers. BRE strategies also show that it is easier and less expensive to retain existing businesses than it is to invite new businesses into the region.

Through a comprehensive survey, where businesses will have an opportunity to share

their needs and goals, it will allow us to better understand the state of the current business environment. Understanding, identifying and addressing barriers that might prevent business from growing or taking advantage of opportunity in the region is an important goal of this project.

The project will also have an important workforce development component where we will identify challenges employers might be facing in attracting and retaining labour. The data will then be analyzed to develop strategies and implement projects to address common workforce issues.

This project will work towards helping facilitate business growth and increase the benefits of a collaborative business environment. It is important that we consider new and existing businesses in southeastern Alberta and how we can build a support system so that they can grow and succeed.

Investing in our regional businesses is essential as they are the foundation of our economy and are the reason for the level of success we see today.

The first phase of the project starts with informing the business community about the benefits of this initiative and how to get involved, public information sessions are scheduled for June 19 and 20 at the Cypress Club, 218 Sixth Ave. SE, in Medicine Hat.

Anyone interested in participating can reach out to Elizabeth Blair at 403-528-2824 or by email at info@InvestSoutheastAlberta.ca. Seating is limited so do not delay.

Our leadership team hopes to see you there!

For more information on Invest Southeast Alberta and the BREWD project, please visit InvestSoutheastAlberta.ca

Elizabeth Blair is the regional innovation network coordinator for APEX Alberta. APEX Alberta supports the growth of innovative and technologically-oriented businesses in Southeast Alberta. APEX Alberta is a collaborative initiative between three core service providers: Community Futures Entre-Corp, Medicine Hat College and Alberta Innovates.



Elizabeth Blair