



## PROJECTS REPORT September 2009

### 1. AROUNDSAMDA.COM

Andrea Thornton has been busy with training volunteers from non-profit organizations. This fall she will be focusing on marketing the site and creating interest in getting people to remember to go to the site to find out about events and upload information.

Website success story: The New Brigden Community site, coordinated by Sarah Hagens, is an example of a great use of the site! Sarah has great community information, events and current event stories. We will be formally recognizing Sarah and the New Brigden community for the GREAT WORK!

Project funders/supporters: Hanna Learning Centre & Wildrose Foundation

### 2. ALBERTA'S SPECIAL AREA (tourism marketing)

Brochures/Lure cards were distributed to all Alberta Visitor Information Centre's and other distribution routes. A ½ page ad has been placed in the Canadian Badlands Travel Guide Book. An ad was placed in the Trail of the Buffalo Guide Book. The [www.travelspecialareas.com](http://www.travelspecialareas.com) website was promoted on all marketing.

DVD & Webcasts:

The regional tourism DVD & webcasts are complete. A new button has been added to the [www.travelspecialareas.com](http://www.travelspecialareas.com) website, featuring the new webcasts. The webcasts feature some B&B's, museums, natural attractions, events, shopping etc.

We are on Facebook - currently the Travel Alberta's Special Area The growing Facebook page has 83 members.

### 3. GRANT FUNDING FOR SAMDA

We applied for AB Agriculture & Rural Development for the Return to Rural Project. We were awarded \$400,000.

### 4. KEYSTONE PIPELINE - to date

This project has provided huge opportunities for the region. We continue to support business and the contractors as needed. The project is wrapping up, approx. October 2009.

## **5. SENIORS HOUSING - Life Lease**

This new addition to the current lodge expansion will allow 9 more seniors to access housing in the region, using the Life Lease concept.

Update on progress:

- Project is moving forward and the contractor is in place
- Technical Committee Meeting was held on September 10, 2009
- Attended Acadia Foundation Meeting - September 16, 2009
- Held "Buyers" Meeting September 17, 2009
- Construction to begin once permits and approvals in place
- Awaiting signed contract from "buyers"

## **6. SIGNAGE**

District Markers for Special Areas - design concept and sign specifications are under review and development.

Billboards - 2009 billboard campaign is almost complete. The member communities were all featured in our "Get off the beaten track" campaign.

The "Cactus Corner" Billboard will be removed from its location as it infringes on the "transportation" highway signage regulations.

## **7. Return to Rural**

SAMDA Economic Partnership has been approved for \$400,000.00 for our "Return to Rural (R2R) Project". This project will allow us to mobilize mature youth (21 - 45) and develop and implement a set of strategies to attract and retain early and mid-career families to the Special Areas and MD of Acadia No.34 communities.

The main objectives of the project are as follows:

- Create local mature youth focus groups (3 will be created - 1 each centered out of the 3 Special Areas).
- Create a rural based Technology Network (will include Video Conferencing/Wireless High-speed/locations to be determined)(will work with BCALC & HLC to deliver etc)
- Provide business and technology support services to entrepreneurs, business owners and community members
- Develop a social networking site to build relationships and mine data from local & afar mature youth
- Develop municipal planning that meets the needs and facilitates attraction and retention of mature youth: housing, land-use, technology, jobs, recreation etc
- Host a Live Networking Event (conference/entertainment etc) to engage mature youth.

## **11. Business Success Stories**

This is a new initiative. We will be profiling 2 “success stories” from each member municipality. Video, an article in print and photos will be used on the web, in the paper and for other applications, including the Return to Rural project. We hope that these stories provide testimonial about the positive business climate in the region.

Completed stories:

The Town of Oyen ~ Oyen Welding & Machining and The Dragonfly Cappuccino Bar.  
The Village of Empress ~ Bill Wirch, Coyote Enterprises and Pat Donaldson, That’s Empress.

## **12. WEBSITES**

Keeping the two websites up to date is always a priority.

[www.samda.ca](http://www.samda.ca) - Economic Development Site -NEW SITE ALMOST COMPLETE -

[www.travelspecialareas.com](http://www.travelspecialareas.com) - new directory items were added as requested by local businesses. A new “Tourism Channel” or Tourism TV has been added to the site and contains 10 minute video and Webcasts.

## **13. Canadian Badlands**

The group is focusing on tourism product development and has suspended the former “Marketing Committee”. Marketing for the CBL will be done in conjunction Travel Alberta.

The CBL developed “Special areas and MD of Acadia Stories” Newsletter.

## **14. ICCAN Project - Videoconferencing**

In partnership with Big Country Adult Learning Centre we will create a Video conferencing network for the Special Areas and MD of Acadia Region. The regional video conferencing equipment will be installed at BCALC in October.