



# The Pelican

Your Best Source for Local Business News and Information | December 2020

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The Pelican is a community initiative made possible with funding and support from Community Futures Lac La Biche. Please forward comments or story ideas to [contact@cfllb.com](mailto:contact@cfllb.com)



Gene Wesley, General Manager, Community Futures Lac La Biche



Does this look familiar to anyone?

## Is there ANY good news?

Given our current state of affairs, it's relatively easy for small businesses and rural communities to think of their glass as half empty. I frequently have people asking me for good news because they really NEED to hear some. Although I'm not sure how we've been able to hold on for so long, there may be a few reasons that we've been able to cope. Below are just a couple of things that come to mind.

### Firstly – we must admit and recognize that we are survivors by nature.

Whether it be our experience with overcoming hardship or that we have some mystery gene that keeps us going, during hard times, rural communities and rural folks are

a hardy lot. It used to be the oil boom and bust, and now it just seems to be a bust with nobody holding their breath for a boom; a breath we are now holding behind masks. Yet, so many businesses have been able to hold on that we have to give credit where credit is due. Change is often slow, uncomfortable, and challenging, but our communities have tenacity.

Perhaps, once we make up our mind, it's easier to get everyone on-board than it is in the big city? Remember the Fort McMurray fires? We certainly can rally, and we mustn't forget that.

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## GENE'S COLUMN (CONT.)

### Many businesses have started, maintained and expanded despite the hard times.

I love my job because we are able to help so many people. Here's some good news by the numbers. Since Jan 1, 2014, Community Futures Lac La Biche has provided:

- 226 Loans totaling \$17.5M
- 155 of these loans were to new local businesses
- 217 Businesses were created, maintained or expanded through our lending
- 289 Jobs created or maintained
- 8 (Only 8) businesses that we have supported during that time did not make it.

There is plenty of good happening. Sometimes it just doesn't make the headlines.

### Supports for small businesses are available.

While we usually think of large corporations and urban centres as targets for government bailouts during these tough times, we have been fortunate to receive many small business supports, including the *Regional Relief and Recovery Fund* administered by Community Futures. This initiative provided \$560,000 in deferred

payment loans to local small businesses that fell through the gaps of CERB and were left out of other supports. On that note: Another round of RRRF funding is on its way to the Lac La Biche Region. Watch for announcements at [www.cflb.com](http://www.cflb.com).

### Regional projects are being developed to support local Businesses.

Our Community Futures network is working hard to support businesses throughout Northeastern Alberta. One initiative is aimed at anyone selling regional food or agri-food products. Another is an online e-commerce marketplace for local businesses, with one-on-one assistance provided to business owners at a nominal fee. And another project is the further development of a multi-use Mobile App to support rural communities. All of these initiatives will be up and running early in the new year, encouraging shoppers to engage with your business online and in person, ultimately helping to increase revenue and support the bottom-line.

### Vaccines are on the horizon.

It may not be tomorrow, but by next year, all of us who want to be vaccinated against Covid-19 should be well looked after.

### We have a new appreciation for front-line and healthcare workers.

It's so easy to take the every day things that people do for granted. From the cashier at the grocery store to the truck driver who makes sure we have the essentials we need from one day to the next, to our tireless healthcare workers who save the lives of our loved ones; if Covid-19 has done nothing else, it's brought to light the value of so many people and occupations in our community.

So now, that there is a little bit of light on the horizon. There is hope. When all is said and done, we'll have a better appreciation of our neighbours, local businesses, and healthcare system. Maybe more importantly, all of us will realize that the success of our community and every small business depends on each of us taking part by working together, shopping local, and being thankful.



Although things may be a bit different for many of you this year, Community Futures wishes you the best-possible Christmas and New Year! ■



*Being able to remain focused can even be more important when working from home...*

## Didja KNOW?



During the 1800s at Hudson's Bay posts like the one that existed in Lac la Biche, New Year's Day included a tribute to the officer in charge. Guns would be fired, people would run up the flag, and that officer was expected to reciprocate. A mixture of brandy milk and various spices – called 'Old Man's Milk' was handed out to everybody who was part of the celebration.

### Old Man's Milk Recipe

Beat whites and yolks of six eggs separately. Add sugar and a quart of new milk, or thin sweet cream to the beat yolks. Add to this rum, whiskey, or brandy to taste (about half a pint). Slip in the whipped whites and give the whole a gentle stir up in the china punch-bowl, in which it should be mixed. Flavor with nutmeg and lemon-zest. ■

## CHAMBER OF COMMERCE SURVEYS LOCAL BUSINESSES

The Lac La Biche & District Chamber of Commerce recently conducted an extensive business survey. The survey asked more than 20 questions to businesses in the Lac La Biche Region. Businesses suggested that if the COVID crisis continues for an extended period of time, 62% acknowledged they would require help through Government subsidies and programs in order to remain viable. Here are the biggest challenges that businesses identified in order:

- Reduction in business
- Supply chain issues
- Keeping up with COVID rules (imposed by AHS, Province, Municipal etc.)
- Staffing
- Access to supply of PPE and other safety supplies
- Getting clear information on available financial programs
- Dealing with banks and creditors

In regards to the possibility of a second lock down, 44% of respondents supported no lock down, 38% supported a targeted lock down, and 18% supported a full lock down. Additional data will be tracked and collected by the Chamber in the coming months. The next survey will take place in February 2021, following the holidays and seasonal spending.

For a detailed report on the survey along with participant comments, please contact Karen Collins, Executive Director Lac La Biche & District Chamber of Commerce  
Ph: 780-623-2818 or email: [manager@llbchamber.ca](mailto:manager@llbchamber.ca) ■



## Recruiting for Customers? Leverage Your Customer Service 'Kindness'!

Contributor: Shirley Leonard

There is little doubt that independently and collectively, we are living through what may well be the most challenging period of our work and personal lives. Business has experienced a high volume of energy required to pivot, set a new direction, and build momentum. What do we mean by momentum? Momentum synonyms include 'boost,' 'excitement,' 'motivation,' 'encouragement,' and 'impetus' – conjuring up visuals of positive energy moving in a forward or upward motion. And each of these concepts requires people – our employees and ourselves as leaders and owners – to create that energy and buzz to attract our former and future customers into our businesses, be they physical, virtual or a hybrid model!

Easier said than done?

I think the difference is intention. While our business and work lives are affected by external factors that we have little control over, we do control how we orient and train our staff to engage with our customers during these unsettling times. What never goes out of fashion is kindness: kindness towards our customers, our co-workers, and ourselves. Be known as a business which, despite hard times, has an attitude of encouragement and kindness ingrained in customer service. Watch the energy and buzz it creates to bring your customers back and refer your business to others! Your team creates the momentum and your future success from the kindness you extend today!

## Upcoming Events and Webinars

**TREX Art Exhibit –  
The Rush and Roar!**  
**Stuart MacPherson Public Library**  
On Display December 17-20th, 2020  
Go to [www.llbevents.com](http://www.llbevents.com) for details.

**Human Rights 105:  
Anti-Oppression and  
Human Rights**  
**Portage College**  
December 10th, 2020 1-3PM  
FREE to the public  
Register online: <https://www.eventbrite.ca/e/human-rights-105-anti-oppression-and-human-rights-tickets-111355254564>

**Kids Christmas Paint Night**  
**Portage College**  
December 10th, 2020  
Go to [www.llbevents.com](http://www.llbevents.com) for details.



Visit: [www.llbevents.com](http://www.llbevents.com) to see what else is happening in the LLB Region. To include your own event, choose EVENTS, ADD EVENTS and enter your info. It's free!



Shirley Leonard is the Owner of Pinnacle Organizational Performance Solutions (Edmonton, Alberta), offering Human Resources and Organizational Effectiveness consulting, coaching and facilitation services. Pinnacle provides leadership and team development, employee engagement and strategic change management planning to business, leaders and managers. She can be reached via: [Shirley@pinnacleperformance.ca](mailto:Shirley@pinnacleperformance.ca), (cell) 587-982-3314, or visit her website: [www.pinnacleperformance.ca](http://www.pinnacleperformance.ca) ■

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# The Alberta Hemp Alliance Targets Diversification in Agriculture and Industry



As we look to grow Alberta's economy and diversify industry throughout the province, hemp offers multifaceted opportunities including, farming, processing, manufacturing, and real investment and export options to support, grow, and enhance Alberta's economy in the 21st century. The Alberta Hemp Alliance includes membership from industry, municipalities, and economic agencies, acknowledging the potential of this burgeoning sector. Their mandate is to promote the industry, connect and support those directly involved, and educate Albertans about hemp's potential.

The hemp industry in northern Alberta recently moved forward with the arrival of a decorticator this past September, installed at the BioComposites Group facilities in Drayton Valley. This equipment will lead the way for growth in one of the most promising new sectors of the regional economy. Drayton Valley and northern Alberta have all the components to become a

hemp fibre hub, including fibre processing, manufacturing and value added manufacturing. The decorticator operates by removing the outer fibre layers of the hemp stalk from the inner core material so they can be used separately. The outer fibres are referred to as "fibre;" the inner core as "hurd." The decorticator can also carry out some preliminary processing in regards to separation and sizing. The decorticator is capable of processing up to five tons of hemp a day sourced locally from Alberta farmers. The BioComposites Group produces a range of products including, grow mats for short-rotation crops, fibre blankets from agricultural fibres for erosion control and lightweight paneling for the automotive industry.



The decorticator installed at the BioComposites Group facility

For more information, visit:  
[www.albertahempalliance.com](http://www.albertahempalliance.com), and  
[www.biocompositeshop.com](http://www.biocompositeshop.com) ■



## A new round of Rural Regional Relief Funding up to 40,000 is available for local businesses.

If you did not qualify for CERB or the previous round of RRRF, or if you didn't receive the full \$40,000 from either program, you may be eligible for funding.

*Not sure?* This funding is time-sensitive, so APPLY NOW. If you're eligible you will receive funding. If you aren't the right fit, there is no harm in finding out.

Find more details at: [www.ruralbusinesssupport.ca/](http://www.ruralbusinesssupport.ca/)

**Apply NOW!** <https://bit.ly/funds4>



Put your business on the map and be part of the App by registering it on the Lac La Biche Region Business Directory at: [www.llbbusiness.com](http://www.llbbusiness.com)

Download the phone App on iTunes or Google Play. Search "Lac La Biche Region."

## FUNNY Things You Hear...

One day, a customer placed a huge order for a bunch of goods. Unfortunately, the supplier receiving the order realized the customer hadn't paid for their previous order. Immediately, they left a message on the customer's answering machine saying the new order could not be placed until the last bill has been paid. The next morning, the supplier opened their emails to find a reply from the customer, 'We would like to cancel our order, we just can't wait that long'. ■

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**[www.cfllb.com](http://www.cfllb.com)**