

# What's the Scoop?

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## What's the Scoop?

is published by Community Futures Lac La Biche. Please forward any comments, suggestions, or story ideas by e-mail to [contact@cfllb.com](mailto:contact@cfllb.com) or call 780-623-2662.



Photo courtesy of Travel Alberta | Experience Essentials Workshop



Gene Wesley,  
General Manager,  
Community Futures  
Lac La Biche

*Retailers in traditional “brick and mortar” stores that focus on just the right mix of specialized products and personalized service will continue to thrive...*

Businesses in Lac La Biche and small communities across the country have been affected by the success of on-line shopping and the pull of big-box stores in larger centres. While some businesses have shut their doors as a result of the competition, others are thriving by leveraging the Internet, social media, and by targeting specialized, niche market products and services. Many successful retail businesses in this new era of customer-retailer relationships have focused on

the experience of shopping rather than just the product or service they are providing. When local shopping becomes an experience rather than just a chore, then locals and tourist alike not only drop by to be curious, but come back again and again. And to be clear, on-line can be considered shopping local as well. A great example of this in Lac La Biche is Britton's Independent Grocer. Growing numbers of local grocery shoppers are turning to shopping at Britton's on-line by preparing their grocery order whenever it is convenient, and then submitting the order for pick-up without ever setting foot in the store. (Cont. p2)

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# ALBERTA OPEN FARM DAYS PROVES TO BE A HIT IN LAC LA BICHE COUNTY

Alberta Open Farm Days and the celebration of agriculture in Lac La Biche County was a huge success from all accounts. From farm visits to Macor Farms and Christie Creek Honey Farm, to a trade show and sold-right-out culinary event, August 17th and 18th had something for everyone. Agriculture is a critical part of our regional economy and organizers are already looking forward to next year's event. ■



Gene Wesley (from p1)

Retailers in traditional “brick and mortar” stores that focus on just the right mix of specialized products and personalized service will continue to thrive, while routine “chore” shopping will continue to grow on-line. **Is your business ready for today's marketplace? ■**



## TRAVEL ALBERTA BRINGS EXPERIENCE ESSENTIALS WORKSHOP TO LLB



What does it take to turn a product or an activity into a memorable and remarkable experience? If you're ready to raise the bar on your visitor experience and meet the growing demand for more immersive, local and authentic experiences, Travel Alberta's new Experience Essentials workshop can help.

This introductory session explores the fundamental elements of experience development and shows you where opportunities exist to grow your business, enhance your competitive appeal and respond to what travelers are looking for. In this full-day session you'll be introduced to experience examples, learn through group and individual exercises, and receive a comprehensive workbook to spark new ideas now and in the future.

**The Experience Essentials Workshop is set for Lac La Biche on Friday November 8th. For more information contact Community Futures at 780-623-2662.**

## Didja KNOW?

Did you know Community Futures Lac La Biche has office space for you to help get your new business off to a running start? More commonly called business incubators, Community Futures offers office space, access to the Internet, phone lines, photocopying, meeting rooms, and advice in a professional business-like atmosphere.

Although there is a charge for the space and services, the cost is very reasonable and will help to get your new business up and running while you are getting ready for a larger commercial property. “Pay-as-you-go” arrangements are available. For more information, contact Gene Wesley at 780-623-2662. ■

# Gearing Up for POWER UP



**Power Up north - The Entrepreneurs Conference** takes place October 8th and 9th at Portage College in Lac La Biche. The conference is geared for entrepreneurs of all ages, stages and phases of business. If you have an idea for a new start-up whether home-based, on-line, a side-gig to your current occupation, or if you are a business veteran looking at selling or retirement. There is something for you at this year's conference!

Get ideas, find out about supports, hear success stories, and get energized at Power Up North! ■

To Register and find out more visit:  
[www.powerupnorth.com](http://www.powerupnorth.com)



mark  
your **CALENDAR**



**World Archery 3D Championships** Sept 2-6, 2019

**Experience Essentials Workshop**  
Nov 8 - Location TBA, Call 780-623-2662 for info.

**Business Leaders Breakfast 2.0**  
Sept 26, 2019 8:00 AM Almac Hotel  
(Breakfast available for purchase)

**Secrets to Success**  
(give your business a head start)  
Dates and Locations to be announced.

**Power Up North Conference**  
Oct. 8 & 9, 2019 Portage College LLB Campus  
[www.eventbrite.ca/e/power-up-north-the-entrepreneurs-conference-tickets-68196679103?ref=eios](http://www.eventbrite.ca/e/power-up-north-the-entrepreneurs-conference-tickets-68196679103?ref=eios)

## SEPTEMBER BUSINESS BREAKFAST IS ALL ABOUT RURAL vs. URBAN

The next Business Leaders Breakfast is a safe bet to include a lively discussion, with a focus on how our rural businesses can improve their competitive position against their big city neighbours.

The event will take place at a new location- the **Almac Hotel on Thursday, September 26th**. Get your tickets at:  
<http://bit.ly/349s8Hb> ■



## GOOD CUSTOMER SERVICE MEANS ACTIVELY LISTENING TO YOUR CLIENTS

In business, being an actively listener is more than just hearing what someone else has to say. It means demonstrating that you hear the other person by asking questions, clarifying, and rephrasing what they say. In addition, showing empathy, especially with unsatisfied or anxious customers by using phrases like, "I'm sorry" or "I understand why this is a problem" is very important. When you are an active listener, you should maintain eye contact with your customer, letting them know that they have your full attention.



By developing good listening skills, you will also enhance your ability to make strong connections with your clients; and strong connections lead to increased sales and long term business relationships. ■

# Most Common Business Mistakes #2

Mistakes? We all make them; even the most experienced business people. The trick is to know when you've slipped-up and to learn from your error. Over the next several months, Community Futures will highlight the most common mistakes in business made by new entrepreneurs and veterans alike.

## Mistake #2: IGNORING THE COMPETITION

When you've got a great business idea, it's easy to let your enthusiasm blind you from the obvious. No matter how unique you might think your business idea might be, you are still not insulated from competition. When you are considering the competition, don't just think of businesses offering the same thing. You will also need to analyze alternative products or services. Even if you are the only fast-food chicken outlet in town, your competition includes all other types of fast-food available, from hamburgers to donairs that compete for your share of the market. The cost of living in your community and the competition for every dollar earned is always a factor when you analyze the viability of your business.

So what should you do? Focus what makes your service or product just a little bit different. Consider where money might be spent if your business didn't exist. Think about how the marketplace is changing and how your business will grow with it. A good understanding of these and similar issues will help you to understand your client and market more effectively. ■

## Remote Jobs Through Technology Can Sustain Rural Communities

As the gig-economy continues to grow, a greater portion of today's workforce works remotely from home. Although the idea of this type of work has caught on in larger urban centres, working remotely can provide several solutions to jobs and workforce issues in rural communities as well.

### Living Rural Working Urban

If you live or want to live in a small community, you do so, because you love the lifestyle that only a rural setting can offer. Unfortunately, finding work that aligns with previous work experience or educational background in that same place is not always easy. Employers in larger urban centres that are willing to tap into this often under-employed rural labour pool through remote work opportunities can gain access to potential employees that would not typically apply for jobs in the city. If you live in a small community, don't overlook opportunities in larger centres by selling your ability to work remotely from home through technology.

### Living Urban Working Rural

Businesses in smaller rural communities often lament the fact that they can't get the right

people for the job in town. This is especially true for a variety of professional positions, like accountants, marketing/PR, instructors/teachers, IT professionals, human resource experts, or graphic designers, just to name a few.



Rural and small town businesses can expand their labour pool too, by re-thinking the workplace and providing remote work opportunities for those that may live in the city, or anyone that is unable to commute.

### Sustaining Jobs, Businesses, and Communities

For years, it has been common place for many workers to move away from rural settings to find work in larger centres. Today, through the use of technology, it is possible to find employment opportunities that will enable you to stay at home while working for a business located somewhere else.

From a business perspective, the lack of a skilled labour pool is a top reason for business closures or moving operations to a larger centre. Creating remote employment opportunities in your rural business will not only expand the pool of skilled workers available, it will help to sustain the economy, social fabric, and population of your town by keeping your small business viable. ■