



ANNUAL REPORT 2024

ANNUAL COMPANY REPORT
APRIL 2023 - MARCH 2024





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ELECTION AND BOARD APPOINTMENT

THE DIRECTORS SHALL BE ELECTED AT THE AGM, OR IN THE CASE OF APPOINTED MEMBERS, THEIR APPOINTMENT SHALL BE RATIFIED AT THE AGM.

BOARD MEMBERSHIP WILL BE AS FOLLOWS:

I) THERE SHALL BE SIX (6) DIRECTORS AT LARGE, AND THE BOARD SHALL MAKE EFFORTS TO RECRUIT DIRECTORS FROM ACROSS ITS SERVICE REGION.

II) TWO DIRECTORS TO REPRESENT FIRST NATION AND/OR MÉTIS COMMUNITIES.

III) TWO DIRECTORS MAY BE APPOINTED AS FOLLOWS:

A) ONE DIRECTOR APPOINTED BY LAC LA BICHE COUNTY.

B) ONE DIRECTOR APPOINTED BY THE LAC LA BICHE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE.





OUR BOARD OF DIRECTORS

ALLAN ROBERTSON, CHAIR
MEMBER AT LARGE, LAC LA BICHE

DOUG STEWART, VICE CHAIR
MEMBER AT LARGE, LAC LA BICHE

LORI TARRANT, SECRETARY/TREASURER
MEMBER AT LARGE, PLAMONDON

PETER CARDINAL, DIRECTOR
MEMBER AT LARGE, KIKINO MÉTIS
SETTLEMENT

JOHN MONDAL, DIRECTOR,
APPOINTED, LAC LA BICHE COUNTY

NANCY BROADBENT, DIRECTOR
MEMBER AT LARGE, LAC LA BICHE

RYAN MANCA, DIRECTOR
MEMBER AT LARGE, LAC LA BICHE

KAL POLTURAK, DIRECTOR
MEMBER AT LARGE, LAC LA BICHE

INVESTMENT REVIEW COMMITTEE:
ALLAN ROBERTSON
DOUG STEWART
RYAN MANCA

OUR MISSION

MISSION STATEMENT

SUPPORTING AND DEVELOPING ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE AND DIVERSIFY OUR BUSINESS COMMUNITY.

WHO WE ARE

WHILE THE LAC LA BICHE REGIONAL COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, OPERATING AS COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE (CFLB) WAS INCORPORATED IN 1986, ITS ROOTS DATE BACK TO THE 1970'S WHEN THE REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL WAS ESTABLISHED. WE ARE AN INDEPENDENT, LOCAL, NOT-FOR-PROFIT ORGANIZATION FUNDED PRIMARILY BY PRAIRIESCAN. FOR MORE THAN 30 YEARS, CFLB HAS BEEN FACILITATING AND PROMOTING ACTIVITIES THAT ENHANCE AND DIVERSIFY THE ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT OF THE RURAL COMMUNITIES WHERE WE LIVE, THROUGH ENTREPRENEURIAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATIVE SMALL BUSINESS INITIATIVES.

WHAT WE DO

WE ARE PASSIONATE ABOUT HELPING OUR REGION. BY PROVIDING FREE BUSINESS ADVICE AND COACHING TO BUSINESSES, AND THROUGH OUR LENDING PROGRAM, WE MAKE SURE MORE LOCAL PEOPLE OWN STRONG BUSINESSES IN OUR REGION. WE ALSO FACILITATE ENTREPRENEURIAL TRAINING, ENCOURAGE LOCAL COLLABORATIONS, AND ARE INVOLVED IN LOCAL TOURISM INITIATIVES.

WHY WE DO IT

WE CARE. WE WANT YOU TO SUCCEED. WE ARE INVESTED IN OUR COMMUNITIES, AND WE ARE COMMITTED TO A STRONG AND DIVERSE LOCAL ECONOMY.

MESSAGE FROM THE **BOARD CHAIR**



LOOKING BACK AT THE 2023-24 YEAR IN REVIEW, WE HAVE SEEN SIGNIFICANT CHANGE AND GROWTH. THE BOARD WORKED TO DEVELOP GOALS, PRIORITIZE THESE GOALS AND DEVELOP AN OPERATING PLAN. WE WELCOMED NEW FACES TO THE COMMUNITY FUTURES BUSINESS TEAM INCLUDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, SUAVEK BARTOSINSKI, ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, JOHN PELOTON, AND RAHIL SURANI, BUSINESS ADVISOR. THEY ARE STILL DEVELOPING IN THEIR NEW ROLES, BUT THE OFFICE HAS BEEN CREATING A LOT OF NEW OPPORTUNITY WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND WE ARE EXPECTING MORE TO COME. THE BOARD CONTINUED TO RE-VAMP POLICIES AND LOOK AT ENSURING OUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES MANUALS WERE BOTH CURRENT AND FORWARD LOOKING.

WHILE I HAVE BEEN IN THIS ROLE AS BOARD CHAIR FOR A YEAR, IT HAS GONE BY VERY FAST. THE BOARD IS LOOKING TO MOVE FORWARD IN A POSITIVE WAY THAT WILL CONTINUE TO PROMOTE A HEALTHY BUSINESS ATMOSPHERE FOR THE COMMUNITY. OUR BOARD CAN NOW FOCUS ON HELPING BUSINESSES TO SUCCEED. REACTING TO THE EVERCHANGING WORLD AND LOCAL EVENTS. WE WILL CONTINUE TO FOCUS ON EDUCATING AND ASSISTING BUSINESSES. THANK YOU TO OUR STAFF AND BOARD FOR YOUR TIME SPENT ON CF THIS PAST YEAR.

ALLAN ROBERTSON
CHAIR

MESSAGE FROM THE **EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**

OUR STEADFAST SUPPORT OF THE REGION THROUGH A CHALLENGING ECONOMIC DOWNTURN PERSISTS, NECESSITATING ADAPTABILITY AKIN TO LOCAL INDIVIDUALS AND BUSINESSES. WHILE OUR COMMITMENT TO PROVIDING ADVICE AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE TO EXISTING BUSINESSES REMAINS UNWAVERING, WE HAVE INTENSIFIED OUR EFFORTS TO AID STRUGGLING ENTERPRISES. DESPITE THE CURRENT ECONOMIC CLIMATE POSING CHALLENGES FOR MANY BUSINESS PLANS, WE TAKE PRIDE IN THE INCREASED SUPPORT EXTENDED TO NEW VENTURES, THEREBY DIVERSIFYING OUR ECONOMY. WE CELEBRATE THESE SUCCESSES AND EAGERLY ANTICIPATE FURTHER ACHIEVEMENTS.



IN ADDITION TO OUR ONGOING REGIONAL SUPPORT, WE ACTIVELY CONTRIBUTE TO OUR LOCAL ECONOMY BY PARTICIPATING IN INITIATIVES SUCH AS CONNECT FOR FOOD AND OPEN FARM DAYS. FURTHERMORE, OUR FOCUS ON COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT HAS STRENGTHENED, EVIDENCED BY PROJECTS LIKE OUR LABOUR MARKET AND BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY SURVEY STRATEGY, ADVOCACY FOR THE POWER UP NORTH! ENTREPRENEUR'S CONFERENCE, AND COLLABORATION ON VARIOUS ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ENDEAVORS.

LOOKING AHEAD, OUR AGENDA FOR THE UPCOMING YEAR INCLUDES EVENTS SUCH AS "CLIENT & PARTNER APPRECIATION NETWORKING," "POWERUP NORTH 2024," AND "LEMONADE DAY," ALONGSIDE AN EXPANDED ARRAY OF TRAINING SERVICES AND WORKSHOPS. WE INVITE YOU TO JOIN US FOR A COFFEE AND SHARE HOW WE CAN ASSIST YOU IN TURNING YOUR IDEAS INTO REALITY.

SUAVEK BARTOSINSKI
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

MESSAGE FROM THE **BUSINESS ADVISOR**

THIS PAST FISCAL YEAR HAS BEEN CHALLENGING FOR BOTH SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS AND COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE STAFF. WITH THE TIMES SUCH AS THEY ARE, COLLATERAL AND CAPITAL HAVE PROVEN TO BE PROBLEMATIC, AND CLIENT FINANCING HAS BEEN MUCH MORE DIFFICULT. DESPITE THIS, WE ARE PLEASED THAT WE HAVE MANAGED TO SUPPORT SEVERAL SMALL AND MEDIUM-SIZED BUSINESSES.

COMMUNITY FUTURES HAS BEEN ACTIVELY ENGAGED IN FOSTERING ECONOMIC GROWTH AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN THE COMMUNITY. WE CONTINUE TO INVITE LOCAL BUSINESS OWNERS TO NETWORKING BREAKFAST EVENTS. THESE GATHERINGS PROVIDE A PLATFORM FOR DISCUSSING NEW IDEAS, DIVERSIFYING THE LOCAL ECONOMY, AND SUPPORTING EXISTING BUSINESSES. ADDITIONALLY, WE'VE EXTENDED INVITATIONS TO BRANCH MANAGERS FROM FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS FOR OUR LUNCH NETWORKING EVENT. STRENGTHENING RELATIONSHIPS WITH THESE INSTITUTIONS ENHANCES THE QUALITY OF SERVICES AVAILABLE TO RESIDENTS AND SURROUNDING AREAS.

THE REGIONAL RELIEF AND RECOVERY FUND (RRRF) HAS PLAYED A CRUCIAL ROLE IN ASSISTING BUSINESSES AND COMMUNITIES DURING THE PANDEMIC. MANY OF OUR CLIENTS HAVE BENEFITED FROM THIS SUPPORT, HELPING THEM COPE WITH CHALLENGES AND RECOVER EFFECTIVELY. EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS IS A PRIORITY. THE CGI WOMEN'S LOAN PROGRAM HAS FACILITATED POSITIVE CHANGE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY BY SUPPORTING WOMEN-LED BUSINESSES.



LOOKING AHEAD, WE PLAN TO INTRODUCE INTEREST-FREE MICROLOANS FOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT. THIS INITIATIVE AIMS TO ENHANCE LOCAL BUSINESSES AND CONTRIBUTE TO THE COUNTY'S ECONOMIC GROWTH. OUR COMMITMENT EXTENDS TO BOTH NEW AND EXISTING CLIENTS. WE ACTIVELY REACH OUT, ENGAGE, AND EDUCATE SMALL BUSINESS OWNERS. WHETHER IT'S BUSINESS PLAN WRITING, COACHING, FINANCING, OR TRAINING, WE'RE DEDICATED TO SUPPORTING OUR CLIENTS AND THE COMMUNITY. WE LOOK FORWARD TO ANOTHER PRODUCTIVE YEAR OF COLLABORATION AND PROGRESS. THANK YOU FOR BEING PART OF OUR JOURNEY.

RAHIL SURANI
BUSINESS ADVISOR

MESSAGE FROM THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR

AS THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT COORDINATOR, I'M THRILLED TO SHARE OUR ORGANIZATION'S ACHIEVEMENTS OVER THE PAST FISCAL YEAR DESPITE THE ECONOMIC CHALLENGES WE FACED. WE SUCCESSFULLY EXECUTED 36 COMMUNITY-BASED PROJECTS, DEMONSTRATING OUR UNWAVERING COMMITMENT TO FOSTERING ECONOMIC RESILIENCE AND INNOVATION IN OUR REGION.

NOTEWORTHY AMONG THESE INITIATIVES ARE LEMONADE DAY AND POWER UP NORTH. LEMONADE DAY FOCUSES ON NURTURING ENTREPRENEURIAL SKILLS AMONG OUR YOUTH BY PROVIDING THEM WITH RESOURCES AND GUIDANCE TO START THEIR OWN LEMONADE STANDS. POWER UP NORTH BRINGS BUSINESSES AND ENTREPRENEURS FROM THE NORTH EAST ALBERTA REGION TOGETHER TO EXCHANGE IDEAS, NETWORK, AND LEARN HOW TO SUPPORT OUR REGION'S ECONOMY.

WE FACED SEVERAL CHALLENGES, INCLUDING A MAJOR ORGANIZATIONAL CHANGE THAT REQUIRED US TO QUICKLY ADAPT TO BETTER MEET OUR CLIENTS' NEEDS. THIS TRANSITION INVOLVED A STEEP LEARNING CURVE, BUT OUR TEAM DEMONSTRATED REMARKABLE RESILIENCE AND ADAPTABILITY.

GOING FORWARD, WE'RE EXCITED ABOUT THE OPPORTUNITIES THAT LIE AHEAD. OUR UPCOMING PROJECTS AIM TO FURTHER STIMULATE ECONOMIC GROWTH AND PROSPERITY IN OUR COMMUNITY. THESE INCLUDE NETWORKING EVENTS, FREE WORKSHOPS, AND THE LAUNCH OF A BUSINESS BOOTCAMP.

OUR SUCCESS WOULDN'T HAVE BEEN POSSIBLE WITHOUT THE ACTIVE INVOLVEMENT AND COLLABORATION OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS, INCLUDING LOCAL BUSINESSES, GOVERNMENT AGENCIES, AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS. THEIR SUPPORT AND PARTNERSHIP HAVE BEEN INSTRUMENTAL IN DRIVING OUR INITIATIVES FORWARD.

AS WE EMBARK ON THE NEXT CHAPTER OF OUR JOURNEY, WE REMAIN STEADFAST IN OUR COMMITMENT TO DRIVING ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT THAT BENEFITS EVERYONE IN OUR COMMUNITY. WE'RE GRATEFUL FOR THE CONTINUED SUPPORT OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS AND LOOK FORWARD TO ANOTHER YEAR OF GROWTH AND SUCCESS.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TRUST AND PARTNERSHIP.



JOHN PELOTON
EC. DEV. COORDINATOR



PROJECTS

- CAPITAL GROWTH INITIATIVE PROGRAM
- ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK
ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

EMPOWERING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS THROUGH THE CGI PROGRAM

THE CGI LOAN PROGRAM STANDS OUT AS A BEACON OF SUPPORT FOR WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS, OFFERING UNIQUE OPPORTUNITIES TAILORED TO THEIR SPECIFIC NEEDS. WITH A FOCUS ON EMPOWERMENT AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE, THIS INITIATIVE PROVIDES UNSECURED, CONDITIONALLY REPAYABLE LOANS RANGING FROM \$10,000 TO \$75,000, AIMED AT FOSTERING GROWTH AND INNOVATION WITHIN OUR COMMUNITY. CENTRAL TO THE CGI LOAN PROGRAM'S APPEAL ARE ITS FEATURES DESIGNED TO MEET THE DIVERSE NEEDS OF WOMEN-LED ENTERPRISES.

WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS BENEFIT FROM AN INTEREST RATE SET AT PRIME + 2% FOR A 5-YEAR TERM, PROVIDING A COMPETITIVE FINANCING OPTION CONDUCIVE TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT. FURTHERMORE, THE PROGRAM OFFERS A UNIQUE FLEXIBILITY WITH 6 MONTHS OF INTEREST-ONLY PAYMENTS AT THE START OF THE LOAN, EASING THE INITIAL FINANCIAL BURDEN FOR ENTREPRENEURS AS THEY EMBARK ON THEIR BUSINESS VENTURES. ONE STANDOUT FEATURE IS ITS FORGIVABLE PORTION, WHEREIN 25% OF THE LOAN BECOMES FORGIVABLE IF 75% IS REPAID WITHIN THE 5-YEAR TERM. THIS APPROACH INCENTIVIZES TIMELY REPAYMENT WHILE REWARDING ENTREPRENEURIAL SUCCESS, ALIGNING WITH THE PROGRAM'S GOAL OF FOSTERING SUSTAINABLE BUSINESS GROWTH. FLEXIBILITY IS A CORNERSTONE OF THE CGI LOAN PROGRAM, OFFERING ENTREPRENEURS THE FREEDOM TO MANAGE REPAYMENTS ACCORDING TO THEIR BUSINESS'S UNIQUE CIRCUMSTANCES. WITH NO PENALTIES FOR EARLY OR LUMP-SUM PAYMENTS, ENTREPRENEURS CAN NAVIGATE THEIR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS CONFIDENTLY.



IN 2023, COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE PROUDLY ALLOCATED ALL CGI FUNDS, UNDERSCORING ITS COMMITMENT TO SUPPORTING WOMEN ENTREPRENEURS. AS A TESTAMENT TO ITS SUCCESS, THE OFFICE WAS AWARDED AN ADDITIONAL FEDERAL GRANT OF \$26,000, INCREASING THE TOTAL LOAN POOL TO \$133,333.33, REAFFIRMING COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE'S DEDICATION TO ECONOMIC GROWTH WITHIN THE COMMUNITY.



Chantal (left) received support for her business from the program. Read her story under Success Stories

ORGANIZATIONAL FRAMEWORK ENHANCEMENT PROJECT

THE FOLLOWING WORKING DOCUMENTS AND POLICIES HAVE BEEN REVAMPED DURING 2023-2024:

- **GOVERNANCE POLICY:** UPDATED TO REFLECT CURRENT BEST PRACTICES AND ENSURE ROBUST OVERSIGHT AND ACCOUNTABILITY.
- **GENERAL LENDING PROCEDURES & GUIDELINES:** REFINED TO STREAMLINE PROCESSES AND ENHANCE TRANSPARENCY IN LENDING ACTIVITIES.
- **GOVERNANCE ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES:** CLARIFIED ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES TO IMPROVE ORGANIZATIONAL EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS.
- **SUSTAINABILITY PLAN:** DEVELOPED TO ENSURE LONG-TERM FINANCIAL HEALTH AND ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP.
- **ARTICLES OF INCORPORATION:** REVISED TO ALIGN WITH OUR STRATEGIC GOALS AND REGULATORY REQUIREMENTS.
- **JOB DESCRIPTIONS:** MODERNIZED TO ACCURATELY REPRESENT CURRENT ROLES AND ATTRACT TOP TALENT.
- **WAGES & SALARIES:** ADJUSTED TO MAINTAIN COMPETITIVE AND FAIR COMPENSATION STRUCTURES.
- **WEBSITE:** REDESIGNED TO IMPROVE USER EXPERIENCE AND ACCESSIBILITY.

PLEASE FIND BELOW A SUMMARY OF OUR BOARD-APPROVED SUSTAINABILITY OUTCOMES (TO BE ACCOMPLISHED WITHIN A TWO-YEAR TIMEFRAME).

SUSTAINABILITY PLAN 2023 - 2025

CUSTOMERS

1. Our website and our social media platforms are up to date and easily advertise our services.
2. Current and prospective customers are educated on benefits of Community Futures Lac La Biche engagement and are fully aware of the expectations.
3. An effective customer engagement plan exists and is implemented/evaluated.
4. Exit interviews are conducted with customers no longer using our services to determine the tangible benefits they received. Termination trends are monitored and acted upon.
5. Opportunities to benefit customers and our business community are sought out and successfully implemented.

FINANCIAL

1. Board member Director Liability insurance is in place and up to date.
2. Expenditure plan & Authorization is in place/followed.
3. Capital replacement & maintenance plan exists and is followed regularly.

ORGANIZATION

1. Organizational by-laws, policies exist, comply with all required legislation, and are reviewed at least bi-annually.
2. Organizational (staff thru to board) culture is positive and productive.
3. Compensation is competitive (to industry and geographic location) & fair across organization, and grids exist or all positions.
4. Staff roles and responsibilities are clearly detailed.
5. Staff are clearly aware of sustainability outcomes and their respective role towards meeting them.
6. All staff are actively engaged in the successful operations and initiatives of the Community Futures Lac La Biche.
7. Performance of all staff are evaluated annually against sustainability and positional-specific outcomes and a culture of accountability exists.
8. A risk assessment and mitigation plan exists and is easily implementable.

COMMUNITY/ PARTNERSHIPS

1. Relationships with local/regional representatives of all levels of government are positive and collaborative.
2. Positive relationships exist with all community groups and provide additional benefit to our customers.
3. Positive relationships exist and information is regularly shared with other local economic and business partners in the surrounding area and province.
4. Executive Director is aware of all major community news that affect the Community Futures Lac La Biche and apprises the Board on a timely fashion.

MASTERY

1. An employee development plan exists, is implemented, is renewed annually and meets the needs of our customers and the Community Futures Lac La Biche office.
2. Skills of our staff/advisors are effectively meeting the business development needs of our customers.
3. The Board completes an annual self assessment of its functionality and performance.

SUCCESS STORIES

TREE DE LA VIE MIDWIFERY B&B

My name is Chantal Gauthier-Vaillancourt. I have been a Registered Midwife since 2012 and established a Midwifery practice with Marianne King in November of 2015. At the time there was only 1 practicing midwife in the North zone and she was located in High Level. In our humble beginnings we rented a small little office from the ACFA at the Philip Menard Cultural Centre. In fact, we ended up having our first unplanned, 'out of hospital' vaginal birth after caesarean happen spontaneously in that tiny office right next to our computer. This mama was traveling from Athabasca county to have her baby at the Lac La Biche Hospital with her midwives...at least that was the plan. However her labour kicked in in a fierce way and there was no way she was going to make it to Lac La Biche. Instead of having a stressful Highway birth, I advised them to stop in at our office for an assessment and we could call EMS services as needed. As they arrived, her waters broke and she started to push. She ended up delivering her baby in our office while a French summer camp was in full swing. It was in that moment that we knew we needed an 'in between' birthing option in our county besides hospital birth & planned homebirth.



It is from this need that the 'Tree de la Vie Midwifery B&B (Birth & Breakfast) aka Birth House was BORN (pun intended). My husband & I purchased a home in a cul-de-sac in Plamondon over looking a field with amazing sunsets and right next to a huge patch of red raspberry bushes and wild nettle (both ideal herbs for a pregnant woman's uterus) - it was a sign. We had the home rezoned by the county as a commercial/ residential property and transformed the main floor into a clinic space, galley kitchen and birthing room fully equipped for low-risk water birth. Since we opened our doors in March 2017, our cozy little B&B birthing house has welcomed hundreds of babies from all over Northern Alberta including: several from Lac La Biche County of course and well beyond with folks traveling as far as 6-8 hours away from Peace River Area, Fort McMurray, Slave Lake, Two Hills, Cold Lake, St Paul, Bonnyville and of course Athabasca & Boyle. What an exhilarating adventure it has been.



When owning and running a business, clearly there are unexpected expenses that can pop up but also regular maintenance from wear & tear that needs to be addressed. We found out through a couple of friends that Community Futures Lac La Biche Capital Growth Initiative Loan for women. I felt like this was a good opportunity to make some little improvements and the CGI loan incentives made that easier for us. When owning and running a business, clearly there are unexpected expenses that can pop up but also regular maintenance from wear & tear that needs to be addressed. We found out through a couple of friends that Community Futures Lac La Biche Capital Growth Initiative Loan for women. I felt like this was a good opportunity to make some little improvements and the CGI loan incentives made that easier for us. Our experience dealing with CFLLB was quite seamless. It was a very positive and encouraging experience. We were always greeted with a friendly face and helpful advice on how to proceed with the loan application process. We definitely felt well supported throughout it all, every step of the way.



I chose to offer midwife services because I have a deep passion for birth. I truly feel that if we want to change the world, we need to start with birth.

Birth is literally something that touches every single one of us. Birth is not a women's issue, it is a community issue. Birth & death are universal and they are the only two things that connects us all no matter which language we speak, what country we live in, what colour our skin is. Birthing is seriously the hardest thing we ever do. It is the biggest most intense transition we will ever go through in life. When that transition can be done in a safe, welcoming and gentle environment that puts trust in the process, in the baby, the birthing parent with well trained professionals who are prepared to step in should things go sideways but to not intervene if things are going well. This is the backbone of my 'WHY' and this is what has fuelled me to create this kind of space for people to feel safe and supported to do one of the MOST important things they will ever do in their lifetime... bring another human being Earth-side.

BAD MOON COMICS AND GAMES

Last fall, Joseph Bourassa faced a significant career and life transition. Downsized from their position in the oil fields, they soon discovered that they were expecting a child with his partner Destiny Rayko. This momentous change presented a perfect opportunity to shift careers and pursue a long-held passion: opening a comics and games store in a community that had never had one.

The journey began with a family member's suggestion to reach out to Community Futures Lac La Biche (CFLLB). Another relative had successfully utilized CFLLB's services in the past, which inspired confidence. Initially, Joseph attempted to secure funding through a bank. However, without a job and with only severance money on hand, it wasn't enough to start the business independently.



Driven by a deep passion for comics and games, Joseph aimed to create a unique space for the community. The vision was to offer products and services that had been unavailable in Lac La Biche County, catering to a diverse group of enthusiasts and hobbyists. This passion fueled their determination to overcome the initial hurdles and bring their dream to life.

Although CFLLB offered additional services, Joseph has yet to utilize them but recognizes their potential value for future business growth. Since officially opening on April 1st, Bad Moon Comics and Games has employed two people and is already receiving resumes from potential staff members. The store attracts a wide range of clients with various interests in comics and games, reflecting the community's diverse hobbies.



Working with CFLLB proved to be a straightforward and efficient process. Setting up the initial meeting, filling out the necessary paperwork, and attending a few follow-up meetings quickly led to securing the funds needed to move forward. Having already prepared business plans and forms for the bank, Joseph found the transition to CFLLB relatively seamless, requiring only minor adjustments.

The period between submitting paperwork and obtaining the necessary licenses, insurance, and permits posed a significant challenge. Joseph encountered delays of almost a month due to waiting on various organizations to process their requests. This experience underscored the importance of early planning and proactive communication with all parties involved in the business setup process.



Looking ahead, Joseph envisions expanding Bad Moon Comics and Games into a larger facility. This expansion would accommodate gaming tables and a broader range of products, enhancing the store's appeal and service offerings. With new products arriving weekly, the store's selection continues to evolve based on customer interests and feedback. Additionally, Bad Moon Comics and Games actively engages with the community through its Facebook page, fostering a strong connection with its clientele.

Bad Moon Comics and Games stands as a testament to the power of passion and community support. With the help of CFLLB, Joseph transformed a challenging situation into a thriving business that brings joy and entertainment to Lac La Biche County. As the store continues to grow and serve the local community, its future looks incredibly promising.

KUPRIAN & SONS

In 1974, Kuprian Gostevskyh and his family immigrated to Canada, seeking new opportunities and a better life. Little did he know that this journey would eventually lead him down the path of entrepreneurship. Over the years, Kuprian dabbled in various ventures, from farming to upholstery, each experience adding to his knowledge and skills.

However, it was in 1993 that Kuprian made a significant leap into the world of logging. With his sons by his side, they ventured into this new sector, driven by the demand for logging services in their community. The arrival of Alpac further solidified the need for such services, presenting them with an opportunity to fill that gap.

As with any business endeavor, financing was crucial. It was during this time that Kuprian discovered Community Futures Lac La Biche (CFLLB). Borrowing money from CFLLB was instrumental in getting their logging business off the ground. Their support was not just financial; it was a partnership that provided guidance and encouragement every step of the way.

Reflecting on his experience with CFLLB, Kuprian can confidently say that it has been nothing short of pleasant. Their team has always been helpful and responsive, making the process of accessing funds smooth and efficient. More than just a lending institution, CFLLB has been a trusted ally in their journey towards business success.

For aspiring entrepreneurs, Kuprian emphasizes the importance of hard work and determination. Building a business from the ground up is no easy feat. It requires long hours, dedication, and a willingness to persevere through challenges. But with the right mindset and support, it is possible to turn dreams into reality.

Looking ahead, the vision for Kuprian's logging business is one of continued growth and prosperity. With 15 employees and a diverse client base, including Alpac and private wood owners, they are committed to providing employment opportunities for family members and contributing to the economic vitality of their community.

Kuprian's entrepreneurial journey is a testament to the transformative power of determination and support. From immigrant beginnings to establishing a successful logging business, he is grateful for the partnership and assistance provided by Community Futures LLB. Together, they have built a legacy of success that will endure for generations to come.

KUPRIAN & Sons

381102 Alberta Ltd.

Box 1 Atmore, AB T0A 2C0

H: (780) 525-2156 F: (780) 525-2730

Kuprian (780) 212-1905

Kenny (780) 404-1963

Alexy (780) 623-0943



- Slashing
- Selsmic Mulching
- Lease Right-of-Ways
- Leases
- Road Right-of-Ways
- Bunching
- Skidding and Cat Work
- Delimbing
- Picker Trucking
- Low Bed Services
- Loading and Hauling

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DIGITAL SERVICE SQUAD

THE DIGITAL SERVICE SQUAD (DSS) IS DESIGNED TO HELP SMALL BUSINESSES TAKE THEIR BUSINESSES ONLINE. THIS PROGRAM, A PARTNERSHIP BETWEEN BUSINESS LINK AND DIGITAL MAIN STREET, WILL HELP SMALL BUSINESSES IN ALBERTA UNDERGO DIGITAL TRANSFORMATIONS AND ADOPT ECOMMERCE PRACTICES. DSS IS OPEN TO HOME-BASED OR COMMERCIAL SMALL BUSINESSES REGISTERED IN ALBERTA WITH LESS THAN 50 EMPLOYEES.

THE PROGRAM IS OFFICIALLY ENDING ITS RUN ON SEPTEMBER 2024. DURING ITS RUN, THE PROGRAM ASSISTED A LOT OF BUSINESS OWNERS GROW THEIR ONLINE PRESENCE AND EXPAND INTO ECOMMERCE. THESE BUSINESS OWNERS SUBMITTED THEIR TESTIMONIES TO SHARE THE WAYS THE PROGRAM HELPED THEM

Patricia Coulter

I have really appreciated the assistance you have given me from the Digital Squad. You were extremely patient with my questions and you often offered helpful suggestions. Having a one-on-one was a huge boost. It is one thing to watch someone click through a digital program but it was more helpful to have your assistance as I stumbled along. You were always kind and patient.

Being free was a definite boost as I felt I could reach out to you often.

Personalized service and free = totally a win!

On a scale of 10, a definite 10.

Apidae Compassion Care

As a new business owner, one thing I found very helpful with the program was the ease on which it was to access the program and the professionalism. Lise was very knowledgeable in helping me navigate the in's and out of marketing my business.

Starting a new business can be costly so not having to pay for the service was such a huge help because marketing is probably one of the most important parts of growing any new business. I am beyond grateful for this opportunity.

It was great to work with Lise who is local to the community because she understands the challenges we face rurally and the demographic.

10 out of 10 for sure! Lise was easy to work with, very knowledgeable and listened to my ideas and had great suggestions. She was easy to contact, flexible and had great communication.

John Ritchie

As a business owner over the age of 50 my social media skills were limited, now that Digital Service Squad has been assisting me in my specific needs, not a generic social media program for everyone. The guidance has given me the confidence to create a new website using my text and images and now exploring with more confidence taking my business online to provide services and information. Thank you.

Digital
Economy
Program

Solene Lamoureux

My name is Solene Lamoureux and I'm a small business owner. I create and sell all kinds of art as well as teach others my skills. DSS was very helpful in helping me find information on marketing for my art and helping build my business platforms on social media and the web. The DSS team is friendly and patient, doing their very best to find any information that could be helpful for me and my business. They find affordable and even free ways to advertise my art. My web page looks neat, beautiful and professional and has increased my customer and viewer numbers greatly. The best part about DSS support is that it is totally free, which is very important for any business owners who try to save money as much as possible and better their business at the same time. I strongly suggest any business owner, big or small, to get in touch with the DSS team and strategize new and affordable ways to promote and better their businesses

Blake Dornstauber

The Digital Service Squad program arrived at a crucial time for our business. With inflation and rising interest rates, this program has become invaluable for small businesses striving to succeed in a challenging economy. Many businesses, like ours, would not have been able to afford these services otherwise.

As a brand-new family-owned eye clinic, we greatly benefited from the boost provided by this program. Competing against larger corporations in our field was daunting, but Mel, our CDAP advisor, offered essential assistance. She helped us optimize our online presence, elevating our Google search rankings and streamlining our website to be faster, more efficient, and visually appealing.

Other businesses should undoubtedly use the Digital Service Squad. The service is free and provides substantial value, which would otherwise cost thousands of dollars out-of-pocket. The increase in digital traffic to our website and social media has significantly boosted our profits by converting online visitors into in-store customers.

Northern Lights RV Resort

We have used an online company to set up our Facebook, website, and other social media affiliates, but it has proven to be extremely costly and has not delivered effectively. Once our website was set up it was not updated and now it has been shut down for months. Although we have no experience in these areas we have decided to do everything in house believing a basic site that can be updated regularly would be more advantageous.

I am responding to let you know we have greatly benefited from the service Melissa has been providing. She has been professional, task orientated, and in a systematic way able to guide us through setting up our Facebook page as well as getting our website organized. With her patience and understanding she has led us in the direction of understanding our online image. By no means have we reached a comfort stage yet.

I understand this program might be coming to an end in the near future so if our voice makes a difference, we will vote to keep these services available to companies that are just starting out and do not have the resources or knowledgeable manpower for an online presence.

With only seventy members out of our projected eight hundred over the next few years we believe it is important to keep pace with our online presence. Our members are committing to our resort for the next thirty-five years which will provide long term visitors and income for the community. We certainly appreciate the time and knowledge Melissa has been able to provide to date and are looking forward to continuing a great working relationship with her.

LOAN PORTFOLIO PERFORMANCE

LOAN PORTFOLIO MIX AS OF MARCH 31, 2024
TOTAL LOAN PRINCIPAL: \$5,302,122.58



| | |
|---|------------------------|
| AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY, FISHING, & HUNTING: | \$1,343,325 25.3% |
| ACCOMMODATION AND FOOD SERVICES: | \$629,786.66 11.9% |
| CONSTRUCTION: | \$542,816.06 10.2% |
| MANUFACTURING: | \$118,869.62 2.2% |
| REAL ESTATE, RENTAL, AND LEASING: | \$60,000.00 1.1% |
| RETAIL TRADE: | \$175,916.03 3.3% |
| TRANSPORTATION & WAREHOUSE: | \$532,465.01 10% |
| PROFESSIONAL, SCIENTIFIC, AND TECHNICAL SERVICES: | \$74,907.27 1.4% |
| SERVICES(OIL & GAS EXTRACTION): | \$543,136.93 10.2% |
| OTHER SERVICES: | \$1,280,900.00 24.2% |

LOAN PORTFOLIO MIX CHANGE



QUICK FACTS

13 LOANS TOTALING OF \$1.02M WAS DISBURSED

- 9 TO NEW BUSINESSES
- 4 TO EXISTING BUSINESSES



35 BUSINESSES WERE SUPPORTED THOROUGH BUSINESS SERVICES



39 FULL TIME JOBS AND 2 PART TIME JOBS WERE CREATED/MAINTAINED THROUGH LENDING



PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE PERFORMANCE RESULTS 2023 - 2024

STRONG RURAL COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLANNING AND IMPLEMENTATION

| | |
|---|----|
| TOTAL NUMBER OF COMMUNITY-BASED PORJECTS (NEW & ON-GOING) | 36 |
|---|----|

| | |
|---|---|
| TOTAL NUMBER OF LOCAL AND REGIONALLY-BASED COMMUNITY STRATEGIC PLANS DEVELOPED AND/OR UPDATED | 4 |
|---|---|

RURAL ACCESS TO BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

| | |
|--|----|
| TOTAL NUMBER OF BUSINESS TRAINING SESSION PARTICIPANTS | 68 |
|--|----|

| | |
|--|-----|
| TOTAL NUMBER OF BUSINESS ADVISORY SERVICES | 180 |
|--|-----|

RURAL ACCESS TO CAPITAL AND LEVERAGED CAPITAL

| | |
|-----------------------|--------------|
| DOLLAR VALUE OF LOANS | 1,020,294.85 |
|-----------------------|--------------|

| | |
|-----------------------|----|
| TOTAL NUMBER OF LOANS | 13 |
|-----------------------|----|

| | |
|--|----|
| NUMBER OF JOBS CREATED/MAINTAINED/EXPANDED THROUGH LENDING | 41 |
|--|----|

LAC LA BICHE REGIONAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(O/A - COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE)

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

MARCH 31, 2024

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LAC LA BICHE REGIONAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(O/A - COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE)
BALANCE SHEET
AS AT MARCH 31, 2024

ASSETS

| | GENERAL FUNDS | LOAN INVESTMENT FUNDS FUNDS | REPAYABLE | TOTAL 2024 | TOTAL 2023 |
|---|-------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| CASH AND TERM DEPOSITS | \$ 253,521 | \$2,551,328 | \$ 715,937 | \$ 3,520,786 | \$2,504,643 |
| INVESTMENTS (Note 2) | 3,583 | - | - | 3,583 | 2,886 |
| ACCOUNTS RECEIVABLE | 10,958 | | - | 10,958 | 2,059 |
| INVESTMENT LOANS RECEIVABLE (Note 4) | - | 3,539,697 | 379,949 | 3,919,646 | 4,686,925 |
| COMMUNITY FUTURE NETWORK FUND (Note 10) | - | 2,435,234 | - | 2,435,234 | 2,343,393 |
| DUE FROM (TO) INVESTMENT FUNDS | (3,628) | (572,444) | 576,072 | - | - |
| PROPERTY, EQUIPMENT (Notes 2, 3) | 138,533 | - | - | 138,533 | 139,995 |
| | <u>\$ 402,967</u> | <u>\$7,953,815</u> | <u>\$1,671,958</u> | <u>\$10,028,740</u> | <u>\$9,679,901</u> |

LIABILITIES

| | | | | | |
|--|---------------|----------|------------------|------------------|------------------|
| ACCOUNTS PAYABLE AND ACCRUED LIABILITIES | 17,969 | \$ - | \$ - | \$ 17,969 | \$ 22,774 |
| OTHER PAYABLES (Note 6) | - | - | 1,002,033 | 1,002,033 | 1,237,200 |
| DEFERRED REVENUES (Note 11) | 10,330 | - | - | 10,330 | 36,377 |
| ADVANCES FROM WESTERN ECONOMIC DIVERSIFICATION (Note 5) | - | - | 500,262 | 500,262 | 499,324 |
| | <u>28,299</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>1,502,295</u> | <u>1,530,594</u> | <u>1,795,675</u> |

FUND BALANCES

| | | | | | |
|---------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------|--------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| INVESTMENT IN LONG LIVED ASSETS | 138,533 | - | - | 138,533 | 139,995 |
| RESTRICTED FUNDS | - | 7,953,815 | 169,663 | 8,123,478 | 7,559,559 |
| UNRESTRICTED FUNDS | <u>236,135</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>236,135</u> | <u>184,672</u> |
| | <u>374,668</u> | <u>7,953,815</u> | <u>169,663</u> | <u>8,498,146</u> | <u>7,884,226</u> |
| | <u>\$ 402,967</u> | <u>\$7,953,815</u> | <u>\$1,671,958</u> | <u>\$10,028,740</u> | <u>\$9,679,901</u> |

APPROVED BY THE BOARD:

Director

Director

LAC LA BICHE REGIONAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(O/A - COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE)
INCOME AND EXPENDITURES
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

| | <u>GENERAL</u> | <u>LOAN FUNDS</u> | <u>TOTAL 2024</u> | <u>TOTAL 2023</u> |
|---|------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| REVENUE | | | | |
| Prairie's Economic Development Canada grant\$ | 294,963 | \$ - | \$ 294,963 | \$ 294,963 |
| Transfer from loan investment funds | - | - | - | - |
| Loan interest | - | 309,124 | 309,124 | 278,824 |
| Investment income | 13,974 | 246,215 | 260,189 | 143,111 |
| Other income (Note 7) | 96,149 | - | 96,149 | 126,541 |
| | <u>405,086</u> | <u>555,339</u> | <u>960,425</u> | <u>843,439</u> |
| EXPENDITURES | | | | |
| Salaries and employee benefits | 252,785 | - | 252,785 | 327,968 |
| Professional expenses | | | | |
| Accounting, audit, legal fees | 6,500 | - | 6,500 | 6,250 |
| Training and education | 6,782 | - | 6,782 | 1,783 |
| Legal, credit bureau | 5,048 | - | 5,048 | 9,467 |
| Administration | | | | |
| Building occupancy costs (Note 9) | 23,888 | - | 23,888 | 28,472 |
| Advertising and promotion | 11,685 | - | 11,685 | 2,304 |
| Cyber security costs | 8,311 | - | 8,311 | 7,599 |
| Computer hardware and software costs | 7,866 | - | 7,866 | 8,581 |
| Travel | 6,555 | - | 6,555 | 2,891 |
| Contract services | 6,359 | - | 6,359 | 25,800 |
| Board expenses | 4,906 | - | 4,906 | 5,549 |
| Office | 3,180 | - | 3,180 | 4,390 |
| Telephone and communications | 2,677 | - | 2,677 | 4,349 |
| Project expenditures (Note 12) | 1,520 | - | 1,520 | 55,308 |
| Insurance | 1,225 | - | 1,225 | 1,370 |
| Marketing and visibility | 995 | - | 995 | 882 |
| Bank charges and interest | 722 | - | 722 | 1,202 |
| GST expense - non rebate portion (Note 2) | 595 | - | 595 | 2,381 |
| Memberships, licenses, dues, subscriptions | 325 | - | 325 | 355 |
| Postage, delivery | 204 | - | 204 | 195 |
| Loan receivable recoveries | - | (8,580) | (8,580) | - |
| Bad debts | - | - | - | 85,080 |
| | <u>352,128</u> | <u>(8,580)</u> | <u>343,548</u> | <u>630,216</u> |
| NET INCOME FROM OPERATIONS | 52,958 | 563,919 | 616,877 | 213,223 |
| AMORTIZATION (Note 2) | <u>(2,957)</u> | - | <u>(2,957)</u> | <u>(17,128)</u> |
| NET INCOME (LOSS) | <u>\$ 50,001</u> | <u>563,919</u> | <u>\$ 613,920</u> | <u>\$ 196,095</u> |

LAC LA BICHE REGIONAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(O/A - COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE)
CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - OPERATING
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

| | INVESTED IN LONG LIVED | | TOTAL | TOTAL |
|-------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------|-------------------|-------------------|
| | <u>ASSETS</u> | <u>UNRESTRICTED</u> | <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> |
| BALANCE, OPENING | \$ 139,995 | \$ 184,672 | \$ 324,667 | \$ 331,236 |
| NET INCOME | - | 50,001 | 50,001 | (6,569) |
| AMORTIZATION EXP. | (2,957) | 2,957 | - | - |
| PURCHASE OF CAPITAL ASSETS | <u>1,495</u> | <u>(1,495)</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| BALANCE CLOSING | <u>\$ 138,533</u> | <u>\$ 236,135</u> | <u>\$ 374,668</u> | <u>\$ 324,667</u> |

LAC LA BICHE REGIONAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(O/A - COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE)
CHANGES IN FUND BALANCES - INVESTMENT
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

| | LOAN INVESTMENT FUNDS | | TOTAL | TOTAL |
|--|-----------------------|-------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| | <u>FUNDS</u> | <u>REPAYABLE</u> | <u>2024</u> | <u>2023</u> |
| REVENUE | | | | |
| Loan interest | \$ 308,185 | \$ 1,877 | \$ 310,062 | \$ 280,521 |
| Investment income | <u>246,215</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>246,215</u> | <u>130,051</u> |
| | <u>554,400</u> | <u>1,877</u> | <u>565,261</u> | <u>410,572</u> |
| EXPENSES | | | | |
| Legal costs | - | - | - | 5,355 |
| Transfers to general fund operations | - | - | - | 67,736 |
| Loan receivable recovery costs | (8,580) | - | (8,580) | - |
| To investment repayable fund | - | 938 | 938 | 1,697 |
| Provision for investment losses (Note 6) | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>85,080</u> |
| | <u>(8,580)</u> | <u>938</u> | <u>(7,642)</u> | <u>159,868</u> |
| NET INCOME | 562,980 | 939 | 563,919 | 250,704 |
| FUND BALANCES, Beginning of year | <u>7,390,835</u> | <u>168,724</u> | <u>7,559,559</u> | <u>7,308,855</u> |
| FUND BALANCES, End of year | <u>\$ 7,953,815</u> | <u>\$ 169,663</u> | <u>\$ 8,123,478</u> | <u>\$ 7,559,559</u> |

LAC LA BICHE REGIONAL COMMUNITY
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
(O/A - COMMUNITY FUTURES LAC LA BICHE)
CASH FLOWS
FOR THE YEAR ENDED MARCH 31, 2024

| | GENERAL FUNDS | LOAN INVESTMENT FUNDS | TOTAL 2024 | TOTAL 2023 |
|---------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------------------|---------------------|---------------------|
| CASH PROVIDED BY (USES) FOR: | | | | |
| OPERATING | | | | |
| Prairie's Canada | \$ 294,963 | \$ - | \$ 294,963 | \$ 294,963 |
| Other income and grants | 61,203 | 8,580 | 69,783 | 122,306 |
| Investment loan advances | - | (1,125,285) | (1,125,285) | (1,091,948) |
| Investment loan repayments | - | 1,661,568 | 1,661,568 | 1,596,999 |
| Rural relief funds advanced/forgiven | - | 272,633 | 272,633 | 75,000 |
| Rural relief funds repaid | - | (261,380) | (261,380) | (20,000) |
| Interest income from investment loans | 13,974 | 540,958 | 554,932 | 436,030 |
| Salaries and benefits | (252,785) | - | (252,785) | (327,968) |
| Materials and services | (103,533) | (720) | (104,253) | (165,113) |
| | <u>13,822</u> | <u>1,096,354</u> | <u>1,110,176</u> | <u>920,269</u> |
| INVESTING | | | | |
| CFLIP investment advance | - | (91,841) | (91,841) | 423,762 |
| Investments | (697) | - | (697) | - |
| Purchase of capital assets | (1,495) | - | (1,495) | - |
| | <u>(2,192)</u> | <u>(91,841)</u> | <u>(94,033)</u> | <u>423,762</u> |
| FINANCING | | | | |
| Interfund transfers | <u>3,628</u> | <u>(3,628)</u> | <u>-</u> | <u>-</u> |
| NET INCREASE (DECREASE) IN CASH | 15,258 | 1,000,885 | 1,016,143 | 1,344,031 |
| CASH, Beginning of year | <u>238,263</u> | <u>2,266,380</u> | <u>2,504,643</u> | <u>1,160,612</u> |
| CASH, End of year | <u>\$ 253,521</u> | <u>\$ 3,267,265</u> | <u>\$ 3,520,786</u> | <u>\$ 2,504,643</u> |