

Business Owners Invited to Help Shape Central Alberta's Economic Future

Olds, Alberta – November 14, 2024:

Business owners across Central Alberta are invited to participate in a collaborative new initiative designed to foster local business growth and build a vibrant, sustainable business region – BREWD (Business Retention Expansion and Workforce Development). BREWD is being driven by a new coalition of businesses, governments, and service agencies identified as Central Alberta First (CAF). CAF is calling on business owners and entrepreneurs to share their perspectives, voice their concerns, and contribute ideas that will help shape the region's future.

"BREWD is phase 1 of a broader strategy called the Next Generation Economy Initiative" said Sandra Blyth, Economic Development Manager for Invest Olds/Town of Olds. She emphasizes the importance of business participation: "It's really important that business owners have the chance to be heard and play a meaningful role in shaping how we grow our economy. Your input is essential in making sure that the decisions we make and the plans we develop reflect the realities you experience every day in your businesses."

A Collaborative Approach to Growth

CAF brings together representatives from several municipalities, counties, learning institutions, and other key stakeholders to ensure regional collaboration. A website has also been launched to explain the work and all those who are involved at www.centralalbertafirst.ca. Partnering communities include the Town of Olds, Town of Innisfail, Town of Penhold, City of Red Deer, Red Deer County, Kneehill County, and Mountain View County.

The goal of the BREWD initiative is to create a thriving business environment that supports existing enterprises while attracting investment and talent. Central Alberta First will gather insights directly from business owners and entrepreneurs across the region to better understand the challenges they face and the opportunities they see.

"This is a chance to create solutions that reflect the unique needs of Central Alberta," said Mayor Mike Yargeau for the Town of Penhold. "By bringing together perspectives from across the region, we can develop a practical plan that helps businesses of all sizes grow and succeed."

Building a Plan with Local Input

CAF takes a local business-first approach, recognizing that the people running businesses every day are the ones best positioned to identify the region's strengths and challenges. Participating business owners will contribute to discussions about key topics such as workforce development, rising operational costs, accessing capital, emerging market trends, and more.



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Dedicated Support for Regional Success

Businesses participating in the initiative will play an active role not only in shaping the plan but also in overseeing its implementation. Central Alberta First partners are committed to ensuring that the solutions identified through this collaboration are backed by practical support and resources. This includes access to workforce development programs, funding opportunities, and business support networks.

"Our focus is on making sure the ideas generated by our business community are supported by action," Blyth said. "We're forming partnerships now that will ensure the solutions we develop are sustainable and effective."

Who Should Get Involved

This initiative is open to business owners, managers, and entrepreneurs from all sectors and industries. Whether you run a small local shop or manage a larger enterprise, your input matters. Central Alberta First encourages participation from businesses of all sizes and stages, as the plan will reflect the diverse perspectives and needs of the entire region.

"This is your opportunity to influence how our economy grows and evolves," said Reeve Kenneth King of Kneehill County. "We want to hear about the challenges you're facing, the opportunities you see, and what kind of support would make a difference for your business. Together, we can build a plan that works for everyone."

For more information about Central Alberta First and how to get involved, visit www.centralalbertafirst.ca.

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