

ECONOMIC DISASTER RECOVERY PROJECT



Summary Report 2014



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PROJECT BACKGROUND AND GOAL

In response to the unprecedented flooding that impacted the province of Alberta in June 2013, Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) partnered with the British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) to develop and implement the Economic Disaster Recovery Project (EDRP). On September 23, 2013 the Insurance Bureau of Canada declared it the costliest natural disaster in Canadian history. Four people died and over 100,000 people were displaced throughout the region as a result of heavy rainfall that triggered catastrophic flooding, prompting the declaration of 32 states of local emergency and the activation of 28 emergency operations centres.

The Government of Alberta, Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education; RBC; Shell Canada Limited; the Canadian Red Cross; and the Consulate General of the United States of America, Calgary committed funding for the EDRP Project. The EDRP team also partnered with the International Economic Development Council (IEDC), based in Washington, D.C., and its Restore Your Economy team to obtain additional economic disaster recovery resources and expertise.

PROJECT ELEMENTS

The EDRP was designed as a unique blended learning opportunity to provide economic development practitioners, and those in supporting roles, with both theoretical and practical training. It consisted of the following eight elements:

WEBINARS

Immediately after the flood, EDA contacted IEDC to identify resources and tools for our members. At that time, we were directed to their Restore Your Economy portal, which houses an increasing number of Webinars, reports, and resources specific to economic recovery, post disaster.

Over the past few months we have continued to work with IEDC to provide our members with more resources and webinars to assist them in their economic recovery efforts. We will continue to do this throughout the remainder of the EDRP project, and well into the future. This resource has proven to be valuable for our members. We are firm believers that given scarce resources, it is important not to reinvent the wheel. Communities can learn from others and the Restore Your Economy portal is one example of that.

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION

Early in the project, the EDRP team worked with the Province of Alberta to identify the Alberta communities whose economies were hardest hit by the 2013 flood.

EDA contacted a number of these communities, and the following agreed to participate:

- Town of High River
- Hamlet of Bragg Creek (County of Rocky View)
- Town of Cochrane
- Town of Black Diamond
- Town of Turner Valley
- Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
- Vulcan County (Village of Arrowwood)
- Town of Sunde
- Waterton Lakes
- Town of Canmore

In addition to these communities, we hope to work with two communities from British Columbia, and two First Nations communities from Alberta from the process used with the ten communities listed above.

EDRP VOLUNTEERS

For the community consultation phase, the EDRP project required the participation of volunteers with specific types of skill sets, such as experience with business retention and expansion programs, key industries, and rural economic development.

To recruit volunteers, EDA and BCEDA sent out a request to their respective memberships. Qualified volunteers were then matched according to each community's needs and profile. Most EDRP volunteers participated in two community assignments.

The list below is an overview of the EDRP volunteers that participated in the community visits. Some volunteers traveled from as far as Ontario and British Columbia to participate:

- Mike Aiken, Economic Development Coordinator, East Prairie Metis Settlement, (High Prairie, AB)
- Emily Columbo, Economic Development Officer, District of Fort James (Fort St James, BC)
- Jodie Eckert, CED Coordinator, Community Futures Centre West (Cochrane, AB)
- Natalie Gibson, InnoVisions and Associates (Airdrie, AB)
- Deana Haley, Treasurer, Economic Developers Alberta (Calgary, AB)
- Michael Hill, Community Development Coordinator, City of Victoria (Victoria, BC)
- Kathy Lachman, Economic Development Officer, Economic Development Cowichan (Cowichan, BC)
- Heather Lalonde, CEO, Economic Developers Council of Ontario (Cornwall, ON)
- Michael Lam, Economic Development Officer,

Edmonton Economic Development Corporation (Edmonton, AB)

- Eleanor Miclette, Manager of Economic Development and Community Services, County of Northern Lights (Manning AB)
- Jennifer Moore, North Peace Economic Development (Fort St. John, BC)
- David Pattison, Senior Land Use Planner, Province of Alberta (Edmonton, AB)
- Richard Pauls, 2013-14 President, Economic Developers Alberta (Airdrie, AB)
- Kevin Poole, Manager of Economic Development and Tourism, City of Vernon (Vernon, BC)
- Ryan Rycroft, Economic Development Manager, District of Lake Country (Lake Country, BC)
- Kent Rupert, Team Lead, Airdrie Economic Development (Airdrie, AB)
- Cindy Shelford, Lakes Economic Development Association (Burns Lake, BC)

In addition to these EDRP volunteers, there was a core group of individuals that participated in all ten community assessments:

- Leann-Hackman Carty, CEO, Economic Developers Alberta (Calgary, AB)
- Dale Wheeldon, President and CEO, British Columbia Economic Development Association (Chilliwack, BC)
- Mickie Valente, President, Valente Strategic Advisers and member of IEDC (St. Petersburg, FL)
- Colleen Bond, Partner, EDCC Consulting (Kelowna, BC)



COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Once volunteers were assigned to their communities, these Economic Recovery Teams conducted site visitations and planning sessions with each of the ten participant communities.

The schedule of Community Visits:

- November 13: Municipality of Crowsnest Pass
- November 14: Waterton Lakes
- November 17: Town of High River
- November 18: Vulcan County
- November 27: Town of Bragg Creek
- November 29: Town of Cochrane
- December 1: Town of Canmore
- December 2: Town of Sundre
- December 4: Town of Black Diamond
- December 5: Town of Turner Valley

Each of the communities identified a Community Lead, which was the Economic Development Officer (EDO) in most cases. The Lead was tasked with identifying and inviting key stakeholders (e.g. elected officials, Chamber of Commerce members, business leaders, industry leaders etc.) to participate in the consultation process. Each Lead was given approximately six to ten weeks to arrange the visit, depending on when their community was booked for the consultation.

Although each consultation was slightly different in how it was organized and who participated; Community Leads were given the flexibility to customize their

individual visits. The visits included focus group discussions with staff, elected officials, and other key stakeholders; as well as a business walk survey process, where EDRP volunteers conducted interviews with individual business owners/operators and collected information specific to each business.

The focus group discussion covered a broad range of topics including economic circumstances pre-flood, as well as business challenges exacerbated by the disaster. The EDRP team took a SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses/Challenges, Opportunities and Threats) analysis approach to the impact assessment, and factored in pre-existing economic conditions when identifying post-disaster challenges and recommendations. The Community Lead also reviewed relevant community profile information in advance, including any economic development strategies, work plans or documents as background prior to the visit.

EDRP teams completed ten community consultations, and then completed an individual report for each. Each report contained strategies and actions designed to help the communities rebuild a stronger economy and better prepare for future economic disruptions. With a limited amount of time spent by the Team in each community, their impact assessments were not designed to be a formal economic analysis or economic development strategy. They were a reflection of what the Team read and heard during the consultation process. The recommendations addressed a range of issues specific to economic recovery, and were based on the Team's diverse knowledge and experience in the field. At the time of writing this Summary Report, all ten communities have approved their final reports.



BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION (BRE) LEGACY INFRASTRUCTURE

One of the key elements in moving a community forward after a disaster is to establish a robust business retention and expansion (BRE) program. Good enterprise information is critical. Businesses may not know how their customer base has been affected after a disaster; and government may not know what the real needs are (e.g. workforce, planning, financial etc.). Having a comprehensive, reliable database is an essential tool in promoting continuity planning programs, quantifying and deploying economic impact assessments, and an effective business and retention program. Good data can also be used to facilitate and educate the business community on economic and workforce development initiatives.

As part of the EDRP, each of the ten communities are eligible to receive a complimentary license to the AlbertaBusinessCounts program. This is a database program specific to economic development. Its strength lies in building and implementing a business retention and expansion program. AlbertaBusinessCounts allows the community to input information on all of the businesses in the area. It also includes contact and general company information, such as cell phone numbers, which are critical for communicating in a post-disaster situation. This type of database is an essential tool in promoting continuity planning programs; quantifying and deploying economic impact assessments; and post-disaster initial impact and long-term economic disaster impact assessments. It can also be used to facilitate and educate the business community on economic and workforce development initiatives. EDRP communities are currently in various stages of considering and signing up for this element.



TRAINING FOR ELECTED OFFICIALS

The work of elected officials is essential to economic development in their communities. Having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities is key in moving any economic recovery plans forward in their respective region. EDA currently offers a one-day specialized training module 'Economic Development for Elected Officials'. Each of the ten EDRP communities is now in the process of scheduling this training for their elected officials. Elected officials in two communities have already completed this module.

TOOLKIT

At the time of this report, a Toolkit is being developed that will identify key resources and best practices for disaster recovery in the future. We intend to launch the Toolkit later this year.

SUMMARY REPORT

This document is the 'Summary Report' designed to capture recommendations for future action. It provides an overview of the recommendations put forth to the communities in their individual reports, as well as a range of recommendations for other key stakeholders and organizations involved with economic recovery work.

Each community's response was different. This report provides a summary of the Teams' recommendations, as well as some new recommendations specifically created for other public, private and non-profit stakeholders that have the ability to help influence, and more efficiently respond to future economic disruptions.

As a region and country, if we are to become better at preparing for, responding to and recovering from economic disruptions; whether they are natural or man-made disasters; it is important that we learn from what worked, and to identify ways we could respond more effectively in the future.

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

In each of the ten communities, the EDRP team discussed a variety of challenges such as the pressing need for housing replacement, impact to business and tourism, destroyed infrastructure and flood mitigation measures. Many of these challenges will influence how quickly and effectively the community recovers. However as economic developers, EDRP team members were solely focused on identifying challenges and opportunities that were most directly related to economic development and sustaining a healthy business sector.

Each community had a slightly different list of challenges and recommendations depending on the severity of the flood's impact, the community's level of preparedness, and its ability to respond appropriately. The majority of the Teams' recommendations were related to: economic development capacity; communications; data; business retention, expansion and attraction; business assistance and training; economic development planning and resiliency.

1) Increase Economic Development Capacity

Each community's internal economic capacity was unique. Some were implementing a strategy with a full time EDO, while others had no such resources.

Recommendations

Develop An Economic Development Strategy

Economic development can be successful when a community defines what it wants to accomplish. An economic development strategy should identify the current position of a community, the future goals of the community and the best ways to achieve those goals. It is a plan that requires quantifiable research, careful analysis and thoughtful conclusion. It should be a practical, living document used to motivate people, inspire change and create conditions for success. It should also include benchmarks and accountability mechanisms to ensure positive results and the means to measure success.

Fund A Full Time Economic Development Position

For economic development to be successful in the long-term; it is important that a stable funding commitment for this position be in place. An EDO's

focus should be on developing and/or implementing a realistic economic development strategy or work plan as outlined above. While we recommended hiring an EDO, we also cautioned that an EDO was not the sole answer to all of the community's challenges. One person cannot be expected to address all of the issues.

Review And Refine The Economic Development Committee Terms Of Reference

If there was an Economic Development Committee in place, we encouraged the community to periodically review and refine its Terms of Reference. In some cases, what was designed in the past did not meet their present or future needs.

Provide Economic Development Training For Elected Officials

A common challenge facing community leaders, such as elected officials, is not fully understanding the complexities of economic development. Elected officials need to take a leadership role in the economic development efforts of a community and it begins with a comprehensive understanding how elected officials and economic development interact. EDA offers a specific course to educate elected officials about their role and responsibilities in economic development. As part of the EDRP, EDA is offering each community the opportunity to bring this training to local officials at no cost.

2) Increase The Level And Quality Of Communications

A breakdown in communication is usually cited as one of the most difficult barriers for the business community after a disaster. This was definitely a common concern with the EDRP communities we visited.

Recommendations

Create A Position For Business And Economic Development In The Emergency Operations Centre

To formalize the communications relationship between emergency responders and the business community, each community should identify an individual to represent the business community as part of its emergency management team. This representative (the EDO or other official designate), would be responsible for coordinating communication between emergency management and the private sector;

participate in all emergency management function areas (planning and preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation); identify private sector resources that can support preparedness, response and recovery activities; facilitate input from the private sector in emergency management activities; and coordinate the collaboration of businesses and other private sector participants in emergency management activities.

Expand The Range Of Low-Tech Communications Tools

Many of the businesses interviewed expressed concern about the poor quality and/or absence of communications infrastructure (eg. cell service, Internet availability etc.). There was also concern about the ability of the community to keep businesses and residents aware of the flood situation and how they could respond. Businesses owners also expressed frustration that their customers were unaware they were open for business, and, that the community itself was open. Many businesses and residents did not have quality Internet connections. We proposed a few low-tech solutions:

- Posting signage and bulletin boards at strategic locations around community that could be easily updated with current information on business openings/closures
- Establishing a weekly newsletter for hand distribution to businesses in the core
- Establishing and utilizing a network of business and social organizations that could receive information updates from emergency responders and local government. These could then be shared through their established communications networks
- Better use of social media including Facebook and Twitter

Develop A Cross-Sector Communications Plan

Communication of economic development and emergency management planning is vital. The goal is to identify fundamental ways elected officials, community organizations, businesses and the general public can become informed advocates for economic development. In order to actively engage diverse constituencies for economic development, essential information to demonstrate how economic development contributes to community vitality and how it relates to local government policies, business trends and market changes must be provided.

3) Provide Good Economic Development Data

In many communities, business and community leaders expressed concerns regarding the inadequacy of reliable demographic and business data to support business recruitment, business retention and disaster recovery programs. Reliable, current data is the foundation for an economic development strategy.

Recommendations

Develop An Economic Development Profile

Our team's research carried out prior to visiting EDRP communities, revealed the lack of specific economic development information about most communities. Successful economic development and growth are dependent on a community's ability to provide current, accurate data that describes its ability to support new and existing businesses, capital investment, job creation and retention. At a minimum, economic profiles should include:

- A community overview
- Demographic profile
- Labour analysis
- Description of major economic drivers
- Cost of doing business
- Transportation and infrastructure assets

Enhance Online Economic Development Content

Economic development websites are important to promote a community for business retention and expansion, tourism and investment attraction opportunities. In most cases, we recommended that the community either enhance the business component of its current website, or establish a separate website specific to economic development, with a community profile and business resources.

4) Make Business Retention and Expansion A Priority

Local businesses are an important community resource. They provide jobs, services and goods. When disaster hits, this resource needs to be re-established as quickly as possible. Getting capital into a disaster affected

area is one way to help re-establish business activity. Other ways to sustain businesses include rebuilding the support infrastructure like roads, utility systems, and social services for employees. Technical assistance is often needed to help small businesses understand new post-disaster realities. These types of support mechanisms help businesses get back on their feet and subsequently are catalysts for the community rebounding more quickly.

Business uncertainty is high when a disaster occurs. In Alberta's case, the flood and potential for future flooding, has accelerated the need for a strategy to retain and grow existing businesses.

A formal Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program helps identify challenges, issues and trends within the business community in order to be more proactive in the future. Most communities we visited did not have a formal BRE program in place.

Recommendations

Initiate a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program

The health of a community relies on strong businesses that can sustain and create jobs. Supporting the development and growth of local businesses are fundamental to growing and sustaining a community's economic viability.

A BRE program is a key component of an economic development strategy. It is a community-based economic development program that focuses on nurturing and supporting existing business, and it has the following objectives:

Short-Term Objectives:

- Build relationships with existing businesses
- Demonstrate and provide community support for local businesses
- Address urgent business concerns and issues
- Improve communication between the community and local businesses
- Retention of businesses and jobs where there is a risk of closure

Long-Term Objectives:

- Increase the competitiveness of local businesses
- Job creation and new business development

- Establish and implement strategic actions for local economic development
- Stronger viable local economy

Sign Up For The AlbertaBusinessCounts Program

As part of the EDRP, each community is eligible to receive a license to the AlbertaBusinessCounts program. This is a database specific to economic development designed to build and implement a business retention and expansion program. It will allow the community to input information on various businesses in the area. It will also include contact and general company information, including cell phone numbers, which are critical for keeping in contact in a post-disaster situation. This type of database is an essential tool in promoting continuity planning programs; quantifying and deploying economic impact assessments; and post-disaster initial impact and long-term economic disaster impact assessments. It can also be used to facilitate and educate the business community on economic and workforce development initiatives.

Workforce Development/Planning

During the business walks process; some business owners told us they were experiencing difficulties in finding employees. Given the strain the flood put on the local labour force in some communities, we recommended that these communities develop a proactive workforce strategy that would give residents a reason to stay in the community. If done well, the proposed strategy could help address major issues around the availability and retention of the local workforce for businesses, as well as address affordable housing and transportation issues.

Establish A Business Cooperative Marketing Program

Several businesses in one of the communities we visited expressed an interest in establishing a cooperative marketing program amongst local businesses. The goal of the program is to attract customers to the downtown core and attract new visitors. One way to coordinate this would be to have the economic development office work with the local Chamber of Commerce to develop a series of marketing tools that would be cost shared with local businesses.

Revisit The Community Tourism Strategy As Part Of The Overall BRE Program

We felt it would be valuable for the majority of communities to complete an updated tourism asset

inventory. This would enable them to understand where resources should be allocated in the short and long term. It could also include initiating a focus group for tourism related service providers covering issues such as challenges and opportunities related to the tourism industry going forward.

Streamline Processes

In order to nurture and grow a healthy economy, it is important to have simple, 'business friendly' processes in place to ensure businesses interested in expanding, or relocating can find the information and assistance they need. Part of this support could include updated information on infrastructure reconstruction, flood mitigation, permitting, licensing and zoning requirements. In some communities, we received feedback from businesses that processes and procedures in their community were not 'business friendly'. As a result, these communities were encouraged to examine whether their local restrictions and regulations were in fact 'unfriendly' to investors and businesses looking to locate or expand in their community.

Think Outside The Box

In some communities, commuters drive through without stopping. In those cases, we recommended a 'think outside the box' strategy. We encouraged these communities to gather data on who is driving through and to think creatively about how they can entice these commuters to stop and visit their community. Some communities have done very impressive work in becoming a 'service stop' helping foster additional business retention and expansion opportunities.

5) Encourage Business Investment and Attraction

In the vast majority of cases, communities lacked a tourism profile and marketing strategy. All of them continue to suffer from an outside perception that they are still closed for business and/or tourism. At the time of our visits, many individual businesses spoke about their lack of revenue during the normally busy summer season in 2013, and their anxiety about whether they would be able to make it through the long winter months. Some EDO's were even concerned that some of the re-opened businesses wouldn't survive without strong support, and were at high risk of permanent closure.

Today, while some communities have almost fully recovered from the misperception they are not open

for business, they would greatly benefit from work to ensure correct messages were being disseminated about the fact their community is ready and able to welcome new investment and tourists.

Recommendations

Update The Brand And Marketing Strategy For Tourism And Local Businesses

A healthy downtown core can provide a strong foundation for a community. It also contributes to a community's identity. A number of communities would benefit from a revitalization initiative; some had empty buildings or buildings that needed rehabilitation. As part of this strategy, we encouraged many of them to incorporate a signage/way finding program to enhance the look and feel of the downtown, and to update policies to help encourage development.

Participate In The Hotel Operators/Investment Conference In BC

Some communities need to attract new accommodations in order to keep tourists and business visitors in the community. We recommended that they consider attending the Western Canadian Hotel and Resort Investment Conference held annually in October in Vancouver, BC. This conference provides a year-end perspective on resort and urban lodging, with a western focus. Those involved in the development and/or operation of recreational/resort real estate or active in the hotel and urban-based investment market benefit from interactive sessions and timely insights into investment activity and the potential within the Western Canadian market. The conference also provides an opportunity to meet with those involved in hotel and resort development, including developers, hospitality consultants and representatives from almost every hotel/motel chain. The community can attend as a delegate or as trade show participant. If they were going to attend as a trade show participant, we suggested they consider partnering with other communities. Communities were also encouraged to develop a business case for accommodations. This would help them clarify the type of operator/investor that would be best suited to their community.

Implement An "Open For Business" Campaign

Last fall, most communities had either organized their own 'open for business' campaign or participated in a regional one put together by Calgary Economic Development. There is still an overwhelming perception that the communities are closed for

business, we felt there still needs to be a strong public outreach campaign to inform key audiences this is not the case. We also recommended the campaign include a significant social media component and include new events.

Complete An Investment Readiness Self-Assessment

The majority of communities want to attract investment but are not sure how to do it, or whether they are even ready. We encouraged these communities to complete a self-assessment in order to: identify investment readiness gaps; determine the effectiveness of existing planning and economic development processes; and identify ways to add value to those processes.

Identify Sources Of Economic Recovery Resources And Funds For Operational Financing

We determined the need for local leadership to help identify and organize financial resources that could assist businesses in both the short and long-term economic recovery. We recommended communities create a comprehensive list of the types of financial resources that were available such as capital and operating resources, technical assistance and insurance.

Re-Evaluate Their Event Strategy

We encouraged communities to re-evaluate their existing event strategy. This includes looking at their unique assets and thinking about how new events could support their brand, bring visitors and tourists to their community; while highlighting business and investment opportunities in the region.

6) Provide Business Assistance and Training

Most of the business owners and operators in the communities visited by the EDRP team did not have business continuity plans and many did not have insurance policies that covered overland flooding or business interruption. Many businesses owners were unaware that they were eligible to purchase overland flood insurance; others had decided not to purchase the insurance because of the premium expense or high deductibles.

Recommendations

Hold Insurance Information Workshops

The federal and provincial governments share the

regulation of the insurance industry in Canada; however, there was a lot of confusion in the community with respect to coverage. Communities should convene local leaders, business representatives, local insurance agents and brokers and insurance industry and broker representatives for a workshop that explains the types of insurance available to businesses and discusses the challenges of selecting and purchasing the insurance coverage appropriate for an individual business. This workshop could be held at the regional level in areas that were impacted by the 2013 flood, setting the stage for regions to develop annual resiliency workshops. Such a workshop would be a major step in clarifying the apparent confusion that exists in the marketplace regarding insurance products.

Initiate A Business Continuity Planning Program

The federal government should fund the development of a business continuity program that could be delivered by organizations such as: the Business Link, a Community Futures organization, local or regional economic development entity or Chamber of Commerce, to help businesses mitigate risk. There are a number of existing templates for business continuity planning that could be used as a starting point for developing this program. Experience across the continent suggests that the key to successfully increasing the number of small businesses that develop and maintain business continuity plans is enlisting partners that can give hands-on assistance to write and exercise the plans. A business continuity planning program could solicit support from other government agencies; business and non-profit organizations. In addition, campaigns to increase the number of businesses with continuity planning might engage students in post-secondary programs related to business risk management, emergency management and other related disciplines.

Support Procurement And Matchmaking Workshops

Federal and provincial governments should partner with industry leaders to develop a series of procurement and matchmaking workshops to educate businesses on how to engage in government and business-to-business procurement programs. The value of such workshops would be greater if they were combined with matchmaking opportunities with diverse businesses, potential government and industry buyers, and prime contractors who regularly seek smaller businesses to partner as subcontractors on projects.

Property And Casualty Forum

The federal and provincial governments should convene a forum with the Insurance Bureau of Canada and other appropriate industry, agent and broker organizations to examine the current state of property and casualty insurance coverage in Canada, with an emphasis on the availability, affordability and accessibility for homeowners and businesses (particularly small businesses). This forum could assist in establishing the essential element appropriate insurance coverage plays in the resiliency and continuity planning for homeowners and businesses.

Identify Sources Of Gap And Long-Term Financial Assistance To Small Businesses

The federal government should work with the Canadian Chamber of Commerce, the Canadian Bankers Association, community and corporate foundations and other relevant organizations to identify financial resources to support business assistance and economic recovery following a major economic disruption. The partner organizations could look to other communities in which private foundations, business organizations and government agencies have provided gap financing and long-term financial assistance to businesses impacted by a major disaster.

7) Support Economic Development Planning And Resiliency

All communities would benefit from a more comprehensive emergency management plan that includes various vulnerabilities, mitigation measures, disaster preparedness planning, recovery resources associated with economic resiliency and greater involvement from the business community.

Recommendations

Develop An Economic Resiliency Plan

The federal and provincial governments should take the post-flood recovery period as an opportunity to effectively integrate the private sector into future emergency management planning and exercises. Economic issues are inextricably connected to all aspects of community vulnerabilities and disaster resiliency. No community survives or thrives without commercial transactions, job creation and retention. Incorporating individual businesses, trade organizations, economic and workforce support services into emergency planning creates a community that is better prepared for, and resilient to major natural

disasters, and other economic disruptions. While it may be cost-prohibitive to develop a pre-disaster or resiliency plan in every community that faces high-level risks, the federal and provincial governments could develop a pilot program that would support several select communities to develop post-disaster recovery and resiliency plans that engage a wide cross-sector of government, business and social services and other non-profit organizations. The plans produced from this pilot program could serve as models for other communities across the country. At a minimum, a pilot program should produce plans that include cross-sector vulnerability assessments and address communications and information sharing as well as the roles and responsibilities of key partners.

Establish A Permanent Position For Economic Response And Recovery In The Emergency Operations Centre

To formalize communications between emergency responders and the businesses, communities should include economic recovery as one of its official functions and entrust the economic development office or other appropriate organization with that position. The position could provide the mechanism for coordinating communication between emergency management and the private sector; participating in all emergency management function areas (planning and preparedness, response, recovery and mitigation); identifying private sector resources that can support preparedness, response and recovery activities; facilitating the input of the private sector in emergency management activities and coordinating the collaboration of businesses and other private sector participants in emergency management activities.

Support Training For Members Of A Business Emergency Response/Recovery Team (BERT)

Communities should form a Business Emergency Response/Recovery Team (BERT). The BERT can be integrated into emergency management planning and exercises in the same manner as a more commonly known Community Emergency Response Team, which engages individual citizens to support emergency responders. Among the initiatives that can be undertaken by BERTs are engagement in emergency management exercises; developing business evacuation and re-entry plans and economic damage assessment following a disaster. For example, a BERT could focus on establishing a tiered re-entry system that would pre-determine which businesses would receive priority re-entry in the event of a future evacuation or disaster. While this can be very challenging to develop, communicating in advance with

local businesses is essential as they provide a good understanding of their unique business challenges in the event of a disaster. A BERT can also help businesses identify what their needs might be in case of a disaster and determine how to best prepare for disasters. For instance, during our business walks survey, the EDRP team met with one large employer that lost a significant amount of inventory because he was unable to go to his facility (due to an evacuation order) and turn on the backup generator. Had this issue been identified in advance, perhaps this situation could have been avoided by having an authorized representative turn it on for him.

Participate In Updating The Community's Various Plans

Many communities have plans that impact future development and disaster preparedness (eg. Sustainability Plans, Municipal Development Plan, Community Plan, Area Structure Plan etc.). It is therefore important that the EDO understands what their administration is doing to mitigate future flood risk, specifically any proposed development or zoning plans for these areas. Including the EDO in this process will also help bring a valuable business perspective to the table.

Complete A Vulnerability Assessment

A vulnerability assessment highlights unique risks to hazards and vulnerabilities. It identifies ways to strengthen the area's ability to withstand and recover from future disasters such as fire, floods and compromised highway access.

A typical community vulnerability assessment includes:

- Hazard identification and prioritization
- Hazard analysis
- Critical facilities analysis
- Social analysis
- Economic analysis
- Mitigation opportunities analysis

The assessment should also include an overview of potential business vulnerabilities. For example, which industries/major employers are most vulnerable to disasters? What historical resources need to be protected?



ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

In addition to the range of specific recommendations provided to the various communities, there were a number of issues raised that should be addressed by other groups and organizations.

This section provides a brief summary of where we think government, corporations, and non-profit groups can have more significant roles, whether it is in the preparedness, response, recovery or rebuilding phases in a community experiencing an economic disruption.

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

In Canada 'every disaster is a local disaster'. Different levels of organizations respond progressively as an emergency escalates and their resources are needed. The first ones to respond are closest to the emergency.

Local fire, police, paramedic, and search and rescue teams are normally the first to respond to an emergency. As part of the municipal emergency plan, first responders are responsible for managing most local emergencies and assessing the impact. If an event goes beyond the capabilities of a municipal government, they seek assistance from the provincial government. Most emergencies do not extend beyond the provincial level; however, when they do the provincial government submits a Request for Federal Assistance.

As we saw firsthand in our EDRP community consultations, each local response was unique, based on the severity of impact, and the resources it had available at the time.

Recommendations

There are a number of initiatives local government could consider to support the economic recovery process of disaster-impacted communities, and to help existing small businesses quickly recover and prosper.

Local communities need to incorporate principles of economic resiliency strategies into their regional planning activities, including educating local government officials, business leaders and non-profit organizations about the important issues associated with all hazard mitigation planning. Where feasible, they should also educate staff members to enable them

to support disaster resiliency planning before an event and post-disaster economic recovery following an event.

We saw in all cases, local government and their staff responsible for the economic development portfolio had the potential for an important role in recovery. But we also saw that there is much more this group can do if empowered and included in basic planning processes.

EDO's can be key to establishing a long-term economic recovery coordinating organization long before a disaster occurs. The International Economic Development Council states there are a number of practical reasons communities need to engage economic developers in their recovery efforts:

- Intimate knowledge and relationship with the business community and key affiliates
- Understanding the need to protect critical economic assets
- Providing one communication channel for accurate and frequent information exchange
- Knowledge of resources (local, provincial, federal) for effective business recovery and rebuilding efforts
- Effective at building a coalition of private sector leaders to prioritize critical ED projects¹

Review existing disaster recovery plans and policies to ensure the economic development function is involved in the process.

After a disaster, the local channels of communication are disrupted due to the breakdown of physical and social infrastructure. Depending on the magnitude of the disaster, media may put the community in the spotlight, highlighting the disaster's devastation. We saw this firsthand in our consultations with the EDRP communities. Rumours and misinformation may spread quickly and cause significant harm to the rebuilding/ recovery process. There is a real need for local government, non-profit organizations and the private sector to effectively communicate with each other and to have an effective communication

strategy for the public. Business owners may be unsure whether to rebuild locally or move to a new community, particularly if they are receiving mixed messages about when and if they will receive a permit to rebuild. Economic development organizations can serve as trusted sources of recovery information to their business networks but they are often dealing with limited staff and funds. A proactive crisis communications strategy should be a priority for all communities.

Develop a communication strategy outlining protocols of how to communicate in a disaster.

Although local government is somewhat limited in what it can provide for funding instruments, it can consider things like implementing a property tax program to forgive taxes owed by residents and businesses that own destroyed or uninhabitable property.

Review existing policies or initiate new policies to assist businesses in the event of a disaster.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

When an event goes beyond the capabilities of a local government they seek assistance from its provincial or territorial government. It is therefore critical that both parties clearly understand their roles and responsibilities with respect to economic recovery.

In the United States there are established federal Inter-Agency Agreements (IAA) between groups like the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) and the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). These IAA's include state and local governments; designate major partners up front; and clarify roles and responsibilities. By including state and local counterparts, the federal government can better ensure alignment of recovery efforts, reduce duplication in economic recovery efforts, and clearly understand who does what.

ALBERTA EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT AGENCY (AEMA)

Every province and territory has an emergency management organization (EMO), which manages large-scale emergencies and provides assistance to municipal or community response teams as required. EMOs fulfill an important role in support of first

responders and municipalities. Federal departments and agencies support provincial or territorial EMOs as requested. They also manage emergencies that involve areas of federal jurisdiction, such as nuclear safety, national defence and border security.

The Alberta Emergency Management Agency (AEMA) leads the coordination, collaboration and co-operation of all organizations involved in the prevention, preparedness and response to disasters and emergencies. This ensures the delivery of vital services during a crisis. These organizations include government, industry, municipalities and first responders. AEMA is accountable and responsible to the Provincial Government, communities and industry for the protection of people, their property and the environment from the effects of emergency events.

The Government of Alberta provides disaster recovery funding for eligible residents, small businesses, agricultural producers and municipalities after events like overland flooding that cause uninsurable damage and loss. Municipalities can also apply for disaster recovery programs (DRPs) on behalf of their residents. Disaster recovery programs provide financial assistance for municipalities and their citizens who incur uninsurable loss and damage as a result of a disastrous event. These programs are an effective way of assisting municipalities by ensuring that the costs of disasters are shared by all Albertans, and whenever possible, by all Canadians through cost sharing arrangements with the federal government. A state of local emergency does not have to be declared in order to receive financial assistance under a disaster recovery program.

The Disaster Recovery Program (DRP) is administered by AEMA, which is part of Alberta Municipal Affairs. The Alberta Emergency Management Act allows the province to provide disaster recovery assistance to residents, small business, agriculture operations, and provincial and municipal governments if the event meets the following criteria as outlined in the regulation:

- The event is considered extraordinary
- Insurance is not reasonably or readily available
- There is evidence that the event is wide-spread
- If the rainfall has been at least at a one in 25 year level in urban areas or a one in 50 year level in rural areas, it is considered extraordinary

- If the flooding is caused by a waterway, and the stream flow exceeds a one in 100 year level, it is considered extraordinary
- Each ice jam is reviewed on an individual basis. Data, collected by Alberta Environment on general winter and ice conditions and extraordinary conditions (colder winter, rapid melt, thick and strong ice) that prevailed at the breakup in the vicinity of the site will be reviewed

Alberta Disaster Assistance Guidelines were published by AEMA in 2012. In the event of a disaster, the Government of Alberta can provide financial assistance to individuals, small businesses (including farming operations), not-for-profit organizations (including not-for-profit cooperatives), municipalities and government departments through a DRP administered by the AEMA. The Guidelines were developed by the AEMA in collaboration with provincial departments and agencies, as well as federal and non-government partners. They support the administration of the province's DRP, which is designed, developed and delivered to provide financial assistance for uninsurable loss and damage caused by disasters and emergencies. These guidelines are intended to assist and guide the AEMA in the development, delivery and administration of DRPs as they are the coordinating agency for all DRPs.²

LESSONS FROM LESSER SLAVE LAKE

Prior to the Lesser Slave Lake regional wildfires, the Government of Alberta had not deployed significant disaster recovery support. As a result, many of the processes required to transition from emergency response to recovery had to be built and some were seen to have been more efficient than others.³ In the case of Lesser Slave Lake, a number of structures were created to provide leadership to the recovery effort:

- A cross-ministry Task Force structure was established to coordinate Government of Alberta resources and make decisions
- Locally, a Tri-Council governance structure was established between the Town, the Municipal District and Sawridge First Nation
- A Regional Recovery Coordination Group was established to support recovery efforts in the

region. One challenge was that the handoff from AEMA to the Task Force was perceived as abrupt, and while the Task Force worked to build capacity and engage additional resources, recovery efforts were perceived to be protracted

Accessible housing emerged as a critical factor in attracting people to help maintain an economic base. Originally housing was to be focused on 'essential workers' such as those in the health care profession; however, it became clear that without staff for the daycare, the grocery stores and other businesses, and without the customer base for these, the economy would begin to degrade. It is therefore essential to ensure adequate availability of housing in order to stabilize a community's economic base.

Recommendations

The Alberta government does not have one department that is responsible to lead coordinated 'economic recovery' efforts. In the case of Lesser Slave Lake, the community experienced a number of coordination challenges because Alberta had not fully implemented the Incident Command System and trained all relevant parties on their roles in the new incident command model. The Slave Lake event demonstrated the importance of empowering people at all levels of the provincial emergency response system to make decisions based on their experience, expertise and commitment to helping the people affected.

Following the 2013 flood in Alberta, while Municipal Affairs led overall recovery efforts, it was still unclear to the affected communities which provincial department they should turn to for assistance with 'economic recovery'.

Designation of this responsibility is key for economic recovery following major disasters or significant economic disruptions in the future. As part of the EDRP process, EDA and its partners conducted both primary and secondary research to better understand the roles and responsibilities of provincial government agencies in the area of economic recovery. We still find the current system somewhat confusing. For example, members of the EDRP team met with three separate Provincial flood recovery groups, and could not determine how they differed from one another.

² Alberta Disaster Assistance Guidelines, 2012

³ Lesser Slave lake Regional Urban Interface Wildfire - Lessons Learned, Final Report, November 6, 2012

Designate one department to lead economic recovery efforts and activities following a disaster.

One of the recommendations from Lesser Slave Lake was the need to provide greater clarity around what qualifies as restoration and recovery, and how far the provincial government will go to help communities recover and to position them for future growth. Clarity around purpose of the support is essential and recognition that support may be required at different operational levels.

In Slave Lake, there were many pressing municipal needs that required assistance; however, resources focused on larger issues related to rebuilding. From our experience in the EDRP communities, it appears there still needs to be greater clarity particularly around the province's role in housing and stimulating the local economy.

Review current policies and procedures to ensure there is clarity around the Province's role in housing and stimulating the local economy after a disaster.

During the EDRP community consultation process we learned many businesses did not want loans with interest because taking on additional debt would place them in an even more precarious position. For them, providing interest free loans or grants would have been the most beneficial. Access to capital without having to go through a rigorous, time-consuming application process, even for very small grants or loans, can often mean the difference between success and failure.

During the flood of 2013, while many Alberta businesses waited for decisions on their insurance claims or DRP applications, they were unable to generate revenue. Communities that experience a disaster of this scale require significant, coordinated financial support not only to respond to the emergency situation, but also to make long-term recovery possible.

We understand the provincial government did respond to this need by offering low interest/ interest-free loans through the Agriculture Financial Services Corporation (AFSC) however, this program had not been launched at the time of our EDRP visits so we cannot comment on the overall success of the program. All of these programs were designed to assist new or existing business owners to continue, re-establish, or expand as they recovered from the disaster.

The Alberta Flood Recovery Loan Guarantee Program was created to ensure capital was consistently available to those Alberta businesses directly affected by the flood to recover, rebuild and re-establish their business operations. Lenders could apply to AFSC for a Specific Guarantee on loans up to \$1,000,000 for affected businesses.

The Alberta Flood Recovery Interest Rebate Program provided financial relief to Alberta businesses that were directly affected and damaged by the June 2013 flood through an interest rebate. Rebates were remitted directly to the applicant to assist with the recovery, rebuilding and re-establishing their business operations.

The AFSC Alberta Flood Recovery Loan Program provided an alternate, consistent and reasonable source of loan capital to those viable Alberta businesses that were directly affected by the June 2013 flood to recover, rebuild and re-establish their business operations.

Evaluate success of current AFSC programs for business, and explore other flexible funding instruments that could be offered as part of a provincial economic recovery fund.

One innovative model the province may want to replicate is currently operating in British Columbia. The Northern Development Initiative (www.northerndevelopment.bc.ca) was established through provincial legislation in 2004, with an infusion of \$185 million over a period of two years.

Today the Initiative is a very successful economic development funding corporation for central and northern British Columbia. It operates independently from government and provides both funding and the ability to identify and pursue new opportunities for stimulating economic growth and job creation within the region. In the specific area of disaster recovery, the Initiative has been able to help communities with business facade improvements, a competitive consulting rebate program and an intern program to name a few. It is a model that could easily be replicated in Alberta, but would ultimately require both political will and leadership to enact this type of legislation.

Establish a special fund for post-disaster economic recovery, to be accessed by local communities. These funds should be set aside for immediate post-disaster grants/loans essential to the survival of local businesses.

There is a need to provide local officials, business leaders and other community leaders with access to regional demographic, economic and hazard vulnerability data. There is also a need to identify regional demographic and economic data that can serve as common measures or benchmarks of economic recovery progress (e.g. tax revenues, housing units rebuilt etc.).

Identify regional demographic and economic data that can serve as common measures or benchmarks of economic recovery progress.

There is also a need to develop technical expertise and economic analysis impact tools for conducting initial disaster impact assessments and long-term economic impact analysis. For example, there may be grant writing expertise or technical assistance within the province to help with pre-disaster resiliency initiatives as well as post-disaster recovery efforts.

Include economic impact assessments as an eligible expense in the economic recovery fund.

In our discussions, there was a clear gap for many communities with respect to traditional economic and community recovery funding sources, including resources for business development assistance programs as well as private, non-profit and philanthropic resources. It would be helpful for the province to develop a resource overview for these communities to refer to in the future.

The Provincial government website lists the following small business support initiatives designed to get businesses back up and operational as soon as possible; however, similar to the federal government, they do not appear to be comprehensive:

Financial Assistance and Support

- Disaster Recovery Program funds to cover uninsurable damage and loss to essential property
- Small Business Rebuilding Program mirrors the Disaster Recovery Program for businesses with 21 to 50 full time employees

- Hand-up Plan low interest loans partially guaranteed by the province and interest rebates
- Banks, Insurance and Lending Agencies
- Government of Canada Resources
- Community Supports

Taxes

- Penalties and interest may be waived if your small business is unable to file Alberta tax on time due to flooding

Develop a comprehensive, guide of provincial resources that can assist local communities and businesses with their economic recovery efforts. There should also be an internal communications strategy developed to educate key provincial staff about these resources so they can relay timely, accurate information effectively to external audiences.

With Lesser Slave Lake and the 2013 Flood, there was frustration with the absence of a clear process for cost recovery from the Government of Alberta. The time to design the process is prior to the disaster, not during. The process should be clear up front for communities so they know exactly what costs can and cannot be covered, as well as how they will be reimbursed or processed. A clear explanation of the process can also enable companies to get back to business as quickly as possible following a disaster.

Develop a 'quick fact' sheet on how the cost recovery process works including what is covered, who is eligible and general timing of payments.

Supporting local businesses after a disaster is critical. As other jurisdictions have illustrated, the risk of failure by local businesses greatly increases when a disaster strikes. In addition to providing innovative funding programs, government procurement can be another way to support local businesses. For example, there may be a way to facilitate more opportunities for local businesses to supply products and services required for community rebuilding and recovery.

Some communities that have experienced major or multiple disasters have engaged businesses in recovery by encouraging them to be prepared to participate as prime or subcontractors for disaster recovery efforts.

The Louisiana Business Emergency Operations Center (www.labeoc.org) has successfully engaged businesses in preparedness and recovery efforts by providing opportunities for businesses to register as vendors and attend procurement training.

Review how procurement opportunities are marketed to the business community in relation to disaster response to make sure local businesses are identified as preferred suppliers.

The Government of Alberta has adopted the Incident Command System (ICS), a standardized, all-hazards incident management system that integrates facilities, personnel and procedures. Many local governments in Alberta are adopting this common, integrated emergency management system. As a result, this provides AEMA with an opportunity to offer training to industry, economic development and volunteer organizations and to engage various private sector organizations in emergency management exercises intended to test plans and procedures.

Support training and engagement of private sector organizations in emergency management operations.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

We have included the list of federal programs related to disaster assistance in Appendix 1; however, it is still not clear to the EDRP team who is responsible for 'economic recovery' at the federal level.

PUBLIC SAFETY CANADA

Public Safety Canada is the federal government department responsible for helping Canadians and their communities protect themselves from emergencies and disasters related to all kinds of hazards - natural, human-induced and technological - through national leadership in the development and implementation of policies, plans and a range of programs⁴

It also maintains partnerships with other federal government institutions, provincial and territorial emergency management organizations, first responders and volunteer organizations, and other stakeholders and communities, supporting a collaborative approach to emergency management

that leverages resources and capacities at all levels across the country.

As stated previously, emergencies are managed first at the local level by first responders such as medical professionals and hospitals, fire departments, the police and municipalities. Local authorities that need additional assistance request it from provincial or territorial governments. If an emergency escalates beyond their capabilities, the province or territory may seek assistance from the federal government. Public Safety Canada led the development of the National Emergency Response System (NERS) with provincial and territorial officials, which was approved by Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers in January 2011. It enables coordinated efforts in responding to emergencies.

The Government Operations Centre (GOC) is the primary means by which the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness establishes an integrated approach to emergency response. Housed at Public Safety Canada, the GOC supports response coordination of events affecting the national interest by bringing together partners to synchronize their collective actions. The GOC operates 24/7 to provide watch, warning, analysis, planning, logistics support and coordination across the federal government and with its partners, including provincial and territorial governments, non-governmental organizations, the private sector, and international partners.⁵

In the event of a large-scale natural disaster, the Government of Canada provides financial assistance to provincial and territorial governments through the Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA), administered by Public Safety Canada. When response and recovery costs exceed what individual provinces or territories could reasonably be expected to bear on their own, the DFAA provides the Government of Canada with a fair and equitable means of assisting provincial and territorial governments.

The provincial or territorial governments design, develop and deliver disaster financial assistance, determining the amounts and types of assistance that will be provided to those who have experienced losses.

According to the Public Safety website, they deliver the following programs for disaster recovery:

- Financial Support to Provinces and Territories for 2011 Flood Mitigation Investments

⁴ www.publicsafety.gc.ca
⁵ www.publicsafety.gc.ca

- Disaster Assistance Programs
- Disaster Financial Assistance Arrangements (DFAA)
- Federal Disaster Assistance Initiative (FDAI)
- Chemical, Biological, Radiological, Nuclear and Explosives Resilience Strategy and Action Plan for Canada

A province or territory may request Government of Canada disaster financial assistance when eligible expenditures exceed \$1 per capita (based on provincial or territorial population). Eligible expenses include, but are not limited to, evacuation operations, restoring public works and infrastructure to their pre-disaster condition, as well as replacing or repairing basic, essential personal property of individuals, small businesses and farmsteads.

Through the DFAA, assistance is paid to the province or territory – not directly to affected individuals, small businesses or communities. Federal auditors process a request for reimbursement under the DFAA immediately following receipt of the required documentation of provincial/territorial expenditures and a review.

The Government of Canada may provide advance and interim payments to provincial and territorial governments as funds are expended under the provincial/territorial disaster assistance program. All provincial or territorial requests for DFAA cost sharing are subject to federal audit to ensure that cost sharing is provided according to the DFAA guidelines. Each request for cost sharing under the DFAA is processed immediately once the affected province or territory provides the required documentation of expenditures. For information on new guidelines for the DFAA, they can be viewed at: www.publicsafety.gc.ca/cnt/rsrscs/pblctns/gdlns-dsstr-ssstnc/index-eng.aspx.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT ACT

Canada's *Emergency Management Act* recognizes the roles of all stakeholders in its emergency management system. It sets out the leadership role and responsibilities of the Minister of Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness, including coordinating emergency management activities among government institutions and in cooperation with the provinces and other entities. Responsibilities of other federal ministers are also set out in the Act.

The federal government works collaboratively with provinces and territories to support communities when disasters strike. In 2011, *An Emergency Management Framework for Canada* was revised and approved by Federal/Provincial/Territorial Ministers. This framework creates a common approach for a range of collaborative emergency management initiatives in support of safe and resilient communities.⁶

There is a legitimate role and urgent need for federal leadership in Canada's post-disaster economic recovery efforts. Although we know Public Safety is mandated to assist in recovery; from what we observed in our community consultation process and stakeholder discussions, we were unable to identify which federal agency is actually responsible for 'economic recovery' following a disaster. As it currently stands, local economic development organizations, chambers of commerce, business assistance organizations, and other economic development stakeholders have to navigate through a number of programs in order to address the recovery needs of their businesses. There is no clear communication about which agencies offer what support. It is clear that in Canada, no federal agency takes responsibility for economic recovery—which means, it doesn't get the attention it requires.

NATIONAL DISASTER MITIGATION STRATEGY

On January 9, 2008 The Government of Canada, together with provincial and territorial governments, launched Canada's National Disaster Mitigation Strategy. It is based on the recognition by federal, provincial, and territorial governments that mitigation is an important part of an effective emergency management framework, and that all stakeholders are committed to working together to support disaster mitigation in Canada.

It sets out a common vision for disaster mitigation activities; promotes mitigation through a transparent National Strategy that integrates disaster mitigation into Canada's emergency management framework; and identifies primary actions that will be undertaken by Federal, Provincial and Territorial partners to support implementation. It also recognizes that full implementation of the National Strategy will be a long-term effort.

The goal of the National Disaster Mitigation Strategy is: **To protect lives and maintain resilient, sustainable communities by fostering disaster risk reduction as a way of life.**

Its principles are:

- Preserve Life – Protect lives through prevention
- Safeguard Communities – Enhance economic and social viability by reducing disaster impacts
- Fairness – Consider equity and consistency in implementation
- Sustainable – Balance long-term economic, social and environmental considerations
- Flexible – Be responsive to regional, local, national and international perspectives
- Shared – Ensure shared ownership and accountability through partnership and collaboration

Disaster prevention and mitigation measures are important in order to reduce impacts and hazards before an emergency or disaster; however, it is important to understand that in addition to physical mitigation measures, there is a critical need for businesses and communities to mitigate their economic risk. Steps taken in advance to prepare and mitigate will enable them to recover more effectively.

Recommendations

To help support the economic recovery process of disaster-impacted communities, as well as to help existing small businesses quickly recover and prosper, we have developed a number of recommendations. These potential solutions will help create a more coordinated approach between all agencies in the economic recovery process.

It is our understanding that the Government of Canada does not have one federal department to lead coordinated economic recovery efforts. Public Safety is the first response agency for disasters but there is a clear gap with respect to which department is responsible for economic development and recovery. Canada should consider having a designated lead department to coordinate federal resources for the recovery phase. This department would need to execute agreements in advance with other federal agencies and organize inter-agency collaboration to effectively deliver recovery resources – including economic recovery resources. The inter-agency approach could allow agencies with specific expertise in economic and workforce development in other

disciplines (e.g. housing and social services) to collaborate and leverage their financial and technical resources to support more effective community recovery. Agencies designated to support economic recovery resources would ideally have a proven track record of partnering with the private sector, and understand the unique needs of businesses. One model the federal government may want to consider is the National Disaster Recovery Framework (<http://www.fema.gov/national-disaster-recovery-framework>); coordinated by the FEMA. This model was developed as a result of a similar need for coordination at the federal level.

Designate one department to coordinate the Government of Canada's economic recovery efforts.

There are also ways to enact federal policy changes to support post-disaster economic recovery, some of these may or may not exist:

- Reducing the cost of doing business through federal tax write-offs
- Considering tax incentives that benefit small businesses
- Increasing the flow of capital for small business recovery and growth
- Helping businesses borrow capital at a reduced rate
- Encouraging small and medium-sized businesses to reinvest
- Encouraging real estate investors and others to invest in disaster-impacted areas

When a significant disaster happens, the federal government should be able to direct targeted funds for a province or territory to put towards immediate and longer term economic recovery efforts.

Establish an Economic Recovery Fund, housed within the designated lead department, to be accessed by provinces and territories for post-disaster economic recovery work.

This Economic Recovery Fund should be replenished as necessary to maintain a minimum balance. For example, in the United States, this is \$100 million. This Fund would also enable the timely deployment of flexible financing for businesses such as bridge/emergency loans or grants. Experience in other

disaster-impacted communities has proven that grants for businesses need to be distributed within the first few weeks after a disaster.

The Fund could also be used to expand needed technical assistance through business recovery centres and other non-profit organizations ready to respond to disaster related business needs.

Communities that experience a disaster are also impacted by the negative publicity that is generated as a result. Once the disaster has been reported in the media, there can be a lingering perception that the affected community is recovering at a slower rate than it actually is. This perception further damages a community's ability to recover. Many lack the necessary financial resources required to let external audiences know they are back open for business. This was an issue for all of the EDRP communities we visited.

The federal government can help communities enhance their post-disaster regional marketing and branding initiatives by making funds available for this specific purpose. Funding should be flexible to enable economic development organizations to finance marketing/media campaigns that help encourage business development from inside and outside the community. This can also be an effective strategy for retaining and attracting businesses and workers back to the community.

Regional marketing and branding initiatives are eligible expenses under the Economic Recovery Fund.

After a disaster, new opportunities and challenges emerge. For example, many organizations face shortfalls in financial and human resources. Smaller jurisdictions are particularly vulnerable to this given their limited budgets. Economic recovery plans and strategies have limited effect if there is no operational capacity to implement them.

In order to address this issue, the federal government may need to help cover overtime pay of provincial and local public employees, or pay for additional temporary public employees in areas impacted by disasters. This need could continue for months or years, depending on the severity of the disaster.

In our EDRP community visits, we observed a great need for increased economic development capacity. In some cases this meant hiring a full time EDO, in others

it meant creating and implementing a BRE program. When disaster strikes, business turn to their local economic development groups and chambers for information, advice and support. Unfortunately, many times these organizations are also dealing with their own financial or operational challenges. One potential way to use federal funds for business recovery is to fund additional personnel for a business recovery centre.

Costs related to hiring additional support staff are included as eligible expenses under the Economic Recovery Fund.

Disasters fundamentally change a community. It is therefore important for communities to understand how a disaster has impacted the local, regional and sometimes national economy. In order to do this, they need resources to fund economic impact assessments. These assessments help identify resources needed to rebuild their economy, as well as provide an estimate of direct and indirect losses to economies. Economic impact assessments enable communities to address economic challenges by leveraging available public and private sector resources. Understanding how their community has been impacted by the disaster enables them to make more informed decisions on how to best facilitate and encourage future economic recovery.

Costs for economic impact assessments are included as eligible expenses under the Economic Recovery Fund.

After a disaster like the 2013 flood, it was apparent many businesses needed access to capital in order to rebuild and restore damaged or destroyed property, machinery and inventory. While many waited for decisions on their insurance claims or DRP applications, they were unable to generate revenue. Obviously, the longer it takes them to receive the necessary capital to re-open their doors and rebuild their business base, the greater the chance their doors will never re-open and rebuilding will not occur.

Traditional loans are considered high-risk for small businesses in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Small businesses need access to grants, low-interest terms and/or forgivable loans, particularly during risky economic times.

There are a number of flexible funding instruments the federal government could explore as alternatives to

a traditional loan program. For example, listed below are a few examples that have been used in the United States:

- Equity financing and loan loss to leverage private resources for immediate small business recovery needs
- A revolving loan fund (RLF) that allows the non-profit administering the fund to take an equity position in the business in exchange for the business receiving a low-interest or forgivable loan. This equity stake provides an incentive for the small business owner to repay the loan, so funds continue to circulate in the local economy
- Bank of America developed a \$25 million small-business rebuilding program for locally owned businesses. Local businesses suffering physical damage from riots received up to \$100,000 in loans at below-market interest rates in exchange for Bank of America entering into equity partnerships with these merchants. These loans provided terms specifically for destroyed businesses, and the underwriting and credit analysis was flexible to distribute money quickly. The loans required repayment in five years or the business had to give up equity. The bank had a high repayment rate because small business owners did not want to lose equity in their businesses
- Industrial development bonds (IDB) provide a guarantee by the federal government to provide further assistance to small businesses. Local economic development organizations and chambers pool projects for small businesses to take advantage of this funding source
- Emergency bridge loan programs, such as the Florida Small Business Emergency Bridge Loan Program (<http://www.floridadisasterloan.org/>), can provide a timely source of cash to small businesses impacted by a disaster. These short-term, interest-free working capital loans are intended to “bridge the gap” between the initial disaster and longer term recovery resources, such as renewed profits, insurance payments or federal/state disaster assistance. It is not a grant. It is expected that the loan will be repaid

Research and develop flexible funding instruments for businesses to be implemented under the Economic Recovery Fund.

The federal government needs to help disaster-

impacted communities retain workers and/or attract a workforce. Job training that matches employment opportunities in a disaster-impacted community is necessary for economic recovery. For example, wage subsidies or temporary jobs related to recovery help promote workforce retention even though businesses may be temporarily closed or operating below capacity.

Ensuring temporary rental or other workforce housing solutions is also essential. Local and federal agencies need to recognize that workers will be retained if there are physical, environmental and financially appropriate places to live. Housing is often a critical factor in being able to keep and bring back people to maintain the economic base. Traditionally, temporary housing is focused on essential workers (eg. health care); however, without staff for daycares, the grocery store and other businesses; and without a customer base for these businesses, the economy is further impacted negatively. Housing can help stabilize the community's economic base.

Develop and implement post-disaster workforce and housing programs through the Economic Recovery Fund.

Effective communication before, during and after a disaster is important. However, it is even more critical during a disaster when emotions are running high and communities are in a state of chaos. The need for accurate, timely communication was a consistent theme in all of our community consultations. Improved communication, collaboration and cooperation amongst various levels of government can help foster economic recovery while ensuring public funds are used efficiently.

Review existing communication protocols with provinces and territories to ensure they are able to provide accurate, timely information both during and after a disaster.

Due to the size and complexity of the federal civil service, it is understandable that many federal staff members lack an understanding of services and programs available from other departments. This impacts their ability to effectively leverage recovery resources. Furthermore, most federal agencies do not have the technical expertise or an effective delivery mechanism to provide economic development-related resources to a community.

As part of the EDRP process, we used primary and secondary research to better understand the roles and responsibilities of federal government agencies in the area of economic recovery. While the federal Public Safety website states they are leading the development of the Federal Disaster Assistance Initiative (FDAI); we were advised the webpage is dormant and has not been updated in some time. While this is a good attempt at providing a 'one stop shop' for federal programs, there is a need to ensure it is current and reliable.

Another potential information portal could be the main Government of Canada website (www.canada.ca). Once again, having simple, up to date, accessible information is key in a somewhat chaotic environment.

Develop a comprehensive, guide of federal resources that can assist other levels of government, communities and businesses with their economic recovery efforts. There should also be an internal communications strategy developed to educate key federal staff about these resources so they can relay timely, accurate information effectively to key external audiences.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ALBERTA

Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) is Alberta's only professional organization for economic developers. Its broad and varied membership base includes: municipalities; towns; regions; tourism groups; financial institutions; Crown Corporations; businesses; Regional Economic Development Authorities; Community Futures Development Corporations; federal, provincial, regional and municipal government agencies; students; NGO's; and other groups and individuals that are either involved or interested in economic development.

EDA is Alberta's economic development network. It connects its members to its local, national and international networks by providing a range of events and seminars throughout the year. Its annual conference enables delegates to network with other economic development professionals, learn about new trends and advances in the field, hear best practices, and develop their professional skill sets.

EDA also creates awareness and understanding of the entire spectrum of community economic development issues. In order to do this, it provides members and key stakeholders with a range of valuable information,

tools and resources on an ongoing basis. This includes sharing best practices; providing access to established tools that help communities grow and maintain a strong, diverse economy; identifying emerging issues and trends in the field; distributing regular and timely information bulletins; and delivering relevant content on EDA's website. EDA's affiliations with other local, national and international groups enable them to access a wealth of other information, resources and professional contacts.

When EDA developed the EDRP project in June 2013, it was a direct response to member needs.

EDA has proven its ability to bring together stakeholders from the public, private, non-profit and charitable sector to address important economic issues. It will continue this role as it grows in the future.

Recommendations

There are a number of considerations for EDA to help support the economic recovery process of disaster-impacted communities, as well as help existing small businesses quickly recover and prosper.

EDA should encourage emergency management agencies to include local economic development organizations as a recognized part of the emergency response and recovery team for their communities. EDA can assist with outreach, volunteer assistance, communication and education of EDO's regarding emergency management planning, preparedness, response and recovery. It can also help Alberta Innovation and Advanced Education with the delivery of federal and provincial programs supporting economic preparedness; response and recovery; economic analysis and assessment of impact to primary economic drivers across the province.

Encourage the integration of EDO's into emergency management processes.

EDA can partner with the provincial government (AEMA) on initiatives related to economic preparedness/ resiliency planning, post-disaster business response and assistance, and long-term economic recovery following a major disaster event.

Work with AEMA to develop a defined role for EDA.

It was apparent from those involved as volunteers on the EDRP community assessment teams, that this type

of activity provides a unique personal and professional development opportunity. EDA members are able to share their knowledge and expertise with peers facing post disaster economic recovery.

Continue to promote peer learning and sharing opportunities for EDA members both within and outside of the province.

EDA could be a valuable addition to the Non-Government Organization Council as there really is no organization focused on economic recovery. As a result, it should identify opportunities to engage and collaborate with them to support future business and economic preparedness, response and recovery.

Participate on the Non-government Organization Council (NGO Council).

Local communities should not re-invent the wheel with initiatives and strategies around economic recovery. Instead, they should be aware of the best practices in other communities to avoid repeating past mistakes.

Information about best practices should be readily available and disseminated quickly in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. As part of the EDRP, EDA has committed to developing a toolkit that includes best practices in economic recovery for local communities. EDA can also assist with providing best practices in economic recovery by collaborating with other provincial associations and IEDC's Restore Your Economy group. The toolkit will be available on the EDA website.

Complete a toolkit of best practices.

EDA has a Donor Advised Fund at the Calgary Foundation, and a 'Raising the Bar' program that it has been launched. EDA's goal is to further develop and expand the program.

EDA should work with the Calgary Foundation to determine how this Fund can be better utilized to support economic recovery work in the future.

Re-think how EDA's Donor Advised Fund can support future economic recovery.

A valuable role for EDA is to provide its members with resiliency and recovery resources on an ongoing basis:

- Webinars on key topics/issues related to restoring

an economy

- Training on how to develop post-disaster economic recovery plans
- Providing key messages on the role of EDO's in pre-disaster and post-disaster mitigation and recovery strategies and implementation
- Sharing best practices
- Providing relevant resources on EDA's website and linking to other groups like IEDC's Restore your Economy
- Convening stakeholders and facilitating discussion and planning initiatives around the issues of economic resiliency preparedness and recovery

Continue to offer economic recovery resources to members.

Providing innovative, responsive financing programs for economic and small business recovery is a significant issue for communities post-disaster. A number of programs have been developed to address the issue; however, it would be worthwhile to convene stakeholders to discuss programs both inside and outside of Canada to ensure that our current and future funding options are comprehensive and effective.

Convene public, private and non-profit stakeholders to discuss alternatives for economic and small business recovery financing.

It was brought to our attention that in Lesser Slave Lake, while they completed a SWOT analysis and had recommendations put forth, they would have greatly benefited in having additional resources available in order to complete their strategic economic recovery plan in the months and years following the fire. Given this experience, EDA may want to consider designing a second phase to the EDRP that would enable teams to revisit each community in order to explore what has happened since the initial community report and provide additional support and resources for economic recovery, like disaster preparation or planning. Support of this nature would definitely help smaller communities that may not have a full time dedicated EDO, or strong leadership with economic knowledge.

Determine whether there is a need for a Phase 2 EDRP.

CORPORATIONS

Businesses should be more engaged in a community's disaster planning, response and economic recovery efforts. Many corporations have developed significant internal technical expertise and knowledge of how to prepare for, manage, and recover from disasters; however, this knowledge is rarely shared with civic leadership or integrated into their disaster planning activities.

Historically, communities and governments have not partnered very well with the private sector. In order to be successful, it is important that all parties understand the unique resources and assets, what their real needs are, and how they can best work together to achieve mutually beneficial results.

In the United States, many states and local jurisdictions are actively entering into public-private partnerships to improve their capabilities in emergency management. The National Partnership-Business Operations Center Alliance (www.njbf-beoc.com) was formed to help strengthen the capacity of the public sector, private sector and Department of Defense to prevent, prepare for, respond to, and recover from disasters. This is done through effective education, scientific research, and organizational partnerships to include but not be limited to private sector, public sector, and federal agency partnerships.

Partnerships between public and private sector organizations can help increase a community's preparedness in other ways. Some examples of public-private partnerships that have been successful include:

- Safeguard Iowa Partnership (<https://safeguardiowa.wildapricot.org>)
- Chicago FIRST (<https://www.chicagofirst.org>)
- Citizen Corps (USA) (www.citizencorps.gov)
- Ready Campaign (<http://www.ready.gov>)
- All Hazards Consortium (<http://www.ahcusa.org>)

Some of the most obvious benefits of increased public-private sector collaboration include:

- Improved decision-making
- Increased access to resources and technical capabilities
- Expanded reach and access for disaster preparedness and relief communications
- Improved coordination
- Increased effectiveness of emergency management efforts
- Stronger relationships built on mutual understanding
- More resilient communities
- Increased capacity to prevent, protect against, respond to and recover from major incidents

Emergency management is a discipline many corporations integrate into their daily operations. For many, developing an emergency plan is a cyclical process that is common to many risk management disciplines like Business Continuity and Security Risk Management. In order to avoid or reduce significant losses to a business, emergency managers are trained to identify and anticipate risks in advance, and then to try to reduce their probability of it actually occurring.

They identify procedures to determine whether an emergency situation has occurred and at what point an emergency management plan should be activated. For example, Shell Canada Limited engages in 'situational awareness planning' which helps them create action plans for what to do when certain thresholds are crossed. If an emergency does occur, these managers have a plan in place to mitigate risks and ensure business continuity of critical operations.

Communities can learn from corporations in the areas of emergency preparedness, risk identification and mitigation, as well as recovery. A corporation like Shell Canada Limited has technical expertise and resources that could be very valuable for communities both before, during and after a disaster. The challenge is how to best match this asset with a community's need.

The issue of resilience is also quickly emerging as an increasingly critical priority for the private sector.

Resilience is about anticipating, managing, and responding to sudden change with agility, speed, and resourcefulness. Resilience is important for everyone: employees, suppliers, businesses and communities.

In a crisis situation, responders from different organizations may find their priorities and goals in conflict with each other. By engaging corporations, government leaders and economic developers in preparedness drills and exercises on a regular basis, those involved in response and recovery efforts begin to develop a shared understanding of basic principles and processes, should the need for activation occur. It can also help create and nurture organizational relationships; promote a mentoring environment allowing inexperienced participants to build competency and expertise; and meet portions of contingency plan readiness requirements.

Recommendations

The private sector can bring significant resources and expertise to the economic recovery process of disaster-impacted communities. We believe significant benefits will result if communities are able to enhance the level of public-private sector collaboration in their economic recovery efforts. For example, the private sector can:

- Provide technical support services or in-kind donations of goods or services for the preparedness and emergency response phases of disaster management
- Improve disaster consciousness of the general population and local business community through participation in awareness initiatives
- Contribute time, products, and money
- Make a commitment to stay in the community, to rebuild, retain employees, even expand and reinvest. This helps build community confidence which is critical to recovery
- Identify issues for post-disaster business re-entry and help develop a tiered system for business re-entry
- Identify contracting and procurement opportunities for economic recovery services for local businesses
- Help find solutions for workforce housing

- Organize capital availability for businesses
- Review plans and preparedness tactics- many large corporations have emergency response planners on staff
- Provide security personnel
- Help identify other financial resources
- Identify local resources for technical assistance to businesses

Work with the local community and/or economic development group to identify the best method for involvement.

Corporations identify functions, not people, in their response and recovery plans. Given potential staff turnover between disasters, this practice helps ensure the right functional role is at the table, not necessarily a specific person. This practice is something government should also consider given recent cutbacks and restructuring within departments. Unfortunately, many times corporate knowledge and experience gained in previous disasters leaves when a person retires or changes jobs.

Provide advice to non-profits and government on how to design effective response and recovery plans.

During our EDRP visit to Sundre, we met with representatives of the Sundre Petroleum Owners Group (SPOG) a mutual aid group, consisting of representatives from industry, government and non-profits. In Alberta, there are currently 16 mutual aid emergency response groups. Some have been in place for over 20 years, and some are in the beginning stages. Their purpose ultimately relates to mitigating risks in their area. Membership usually consists of those who have a role in emergency response management; however, membership varies, and usually falls under one of the following types:

- Municipal only
- Industry only
- Municipal/industry combined

Since 2009, mutual aid groups in Alberta have been brought together on a voluntary basis to discuss best practices, common challenges and solutions as a

collective. Mutual Aid Alberta (www.mutualaidalberta) is trying to build a provincial network to support emergency management; it is something Alberta government, industry, community groups and organizations should support.

As part of its disaster preparedness planning, it has been recommended that communities establish a local Public-Private Partnership (PPP) or Business Emergency Response/Recovery Team (BERT) that identifies roles and responsibilities for the economic development organization; other business, trade and professional organizations; individual business owners and operators; and non-profit organizations that can support economic resiliency. Local teams would both support the local emergency management mission and direct local business assistance and economic recovery initiatives. They could also address a number of community objectives including: eliminating duplicate efforts with limited resources; acting as a force multiplier by securing and deploying resources from local businesses; matching local and regional private sector resources to specific capabilities; deploying assistance to local businesses and addressing business and workforce retention challenges.

Get involved where possible, fostering mutual aid organizations where they do business.

If a corporation provides financial services, like a bank, it has a key role in providing timely, flexible financing solutions for small businesses. It can also play an important role in educating its clients on the topic of financial literacy as it relates to insurance payouts. For example, in the Gulf Coast, some business owners took the insurance money and did not invest it wisely.

Develop financial literacy programs to assist small businesses with insurance payouts.

NON-PROFITS

There are also a number of non-government organizations (NGOs) that get involved in emergency management, including disaster prevention/mitigation, preparedness, response and recovery efforts. A large majority focus their efforts on the initial disaster response phase, while others tend to get involved with the recovery and rebuilding phases. There are dozens of non-profits we could cite in this report but we chose to highlight only a few organizations due to their mandate, and potential impact on and involvement with economic recovery efforts.

INSURANCE BUREAU OF CANADA

During our community consultation process, every community raised insurance issues. Very rarely were these comments positive. The insurance industry is, and can be an important stakeholder in responding to and recovering from any disaster. As a result, we think it is important to engage them more effectively in the economic recovery process.

The Insurance Bureau of Canada is the trade association representing a large number of Canada's private property and casualty (P&C) insurance companies. Unlike the United States and several other major countries, Canada does not have a flood insurance program.

The 2013 flood should be used an opportunity to examine existing flood programs in other countries and examine whether the current property coverage system can be enhanced in any way to increase the resiliency of homes, farms and businesses.

In preparation for the next disaster, it would be worthwhile for the Government of Alberta and the Insurance Bureau of Canada to develop a more seamless, collaborative response based on experiences from the Alberta flood and the Lesser Slave Lake fire.

Australia provides an example of this level of coordination between government and insurance. Their Insurance Disaster Response Organization provides a single point of contact for both government and citizens that helps to streamline and address insurance issues.

In the case of Lesser Slave Lake, while some of this collaborative work started to take place, two recommendations specific to the insurance industry were made that are worth reiterating:

Develop a closer working relationship between the insurance industry and the Government of Alberta in order to manage shared issues related to demolition, debris removal and rebuilding.

Appoint a provincial liaison to help facilitate earlier access to qualified claims adjusters, more timely processing of claims and representation of insurance personnel at reception or business

recovery centres to address questions anxieties about insurance coverage.

RELIEF AGENCIES

Relief agencies usually get involved during the emergency response phase. However, they need to consider relief with an eye toward recovery. Actions that provide initial relief can sometimes hinder the recovery. For example, giving out free food might discourage people from buying food from local stores. Providing temporary housing for extended time frames hurts the real estate market. Relief agencies must consider how their decisions will ultimately affect economic recovery efforts.

THE CANADIAN RED CROSS

We are pleased to have the Canadian Red Cross as one of our EDRP Partners. They understood the vision behind the concept when some other logical partners could not. As a result, it is conceivable that they could become an even more significant partner for groups like EDA as they continue to carry out economic recovery work in the future.

Historically, the Canadian Red Cross helps support both evacuees with basic needs and government authorities by managing registrations and inquiries. Volunteers are deployed to a disaster area in order to register families through face-to-face interviews and develop a list of displaced residents. When families are separated during a disaster, there is a central place they can go to inquire about their loved ones in hopes of being reunited. The Canadian Red Cross also utilizes this service to inform government authorities about basic family needs, and work with them in order to help address these needs. Currently, the Canadian Red Cross has an expanded role as it includes supports to shelter and reception centres and implements recovery and long term programming initiatives to fulfill the spectrum of components in the Emergency Management Framework (Prevention, Preparedness, Relief and Recovery).

One of the issues identified during the EDRP visits was that many small and large businesses needed access to capital in order to rebuild and restore their damaged or destroyed property, machinery and inventory. While many waited for decisions on their insurance claims or DRP applications, they were unable to generate revenue. Obviously, the longer it takes for them to

receive the necessary capital to re-open their doors and rebuild their business base, the greater the chance their doors will never re-open and rebuilding will not occur. Traditional loans are considered high-risk for small businesses in the immediate aftermath of a disaster. Small businesses need access to low-interest terms and/or forgivable loans, particularly during risky economic times. There are a number of flexible funding instruments that could be explored as an alternative to traditional loans, including a 'Red Cross for Business' concept.

Investigate the opportunity to provide small businesses with interest free loans or grants as an interim financing mechanism.

In our discussions with the Canadian Red Cross, we were advised that they have a livelihood response that they are currently working to expand and build upon. This is certainly something that EDA, its members and network of economic development associations could assist with.

Work with EDA to further develop and expand on its livelihood response, particularly where it relates to economic recovery.

THE NGO COUNCIL OF ALBERTA

The *Alberta Emergency Plan* states that "non-government organizations should participate in the NGO Council with the capacity to respond to the needs of disaster victims in any community in Alberta". It is also tasked to provide a Consequence Management Officer and alternate to the AEMA as requested. Membership on the NGO Council is open to any not-for-profit Non-Government organization that subscribes to the following guidelines:

- Local Governments in Alberta are first responders to an emergency or disaster and they manage the disaster response within their jurisdiction, for its duration
- Any NGO participating in the Council must be capable of responding to the needs of disaster victims in any community anywhere in Alberta
- The Council provides a forum for the open and free flow of non-confidential information and includes available resources to aid disaster

victims, planned or developing programs in disaster response and recovery and general information on the mandate and purpose of an NGO's disaster response role

- NGO's are only required to share disaster resource information, not information about their day to day operations or clients unless they so choose
- The Council provides a structure for sharing information and cooperation in meeting the needs of specific victims and evacuees. NGO's who subscribe to these guidelines agree that information on specific individuals, families or other persons is not for public knowledge
- NGO's will not use disaster events to compete with other NGO Council members for client or donor recognition or for proselytizing victims of a disaster to any organization, religion, and form of belief or cause
- In instances of prolonged victim distress arising from a disaster, NGO's agree to cooperate fully in the assessment, provision of resources, and meeting victim needs; however, no NGO is required to share resources they do not normally provide or have

Members of the Council include groups such as:

- The Canadian Convention of Southern Baptist Disaster Relief
- Canadian Red Cross
- Christian Reformed World Relief Committee (CRWRC)
- Mennonite Disaster Service
- St. John Ambulance Alberta Council
- The Salvation Army Emergency Disaster Services

Members of the NGO Council provide services such as:

- Child care
- Community needs survey
- Counseling
- Emergency food and clothing

- First aid
- Grief support
- In-kind and financial donations management
- Property cleanup and restoration
- Provision of temporary shelter
- Rebuilding of homes
- Victim and evacuee identification and location

In Lesser Slave Lake, the NGO Council's Chair and Co-Chair took the lead in helping with the response effort. However, the Alberta Emergency Plan does not identify specific tasks the NGO Council is expected to undertake.

In our consultations with the EDRP communities, there was no mention of the NGO Council. We found out about this organization during our research after our consultations. As a result, we are not clear whether the NGO Council was involved with the Alberta Flood Response. If it was, none of the affected communities or organizations we spoke with knew about it. Perhaps this was because they have not historically been involved with economic recovery, only response.

Our research shows the current NGO Council mandate is vague, and does not define specific responsibilities for its members.

Clarify mandate and membership in NGO Council.

With a clear mandate, the Council could be a valuable in facilitating collaboration among organizations; maximize recovery resources; and support business and economic preparedness, response and recovery.

Add EDA to the NGO Council in order to assist with economic recovery issues.

DONATION MANAGEMENT

Advance planning and preparation can help manage the outpouring of donations for those affected by a disaster.

From what we know from other jurisdictions, there is no simple solution for donation management. It is very

complicated when no one is in charge.

However, there are some issues to consider that make it easier:

- Cash donations are the most flexible in terms of how it is managed
- Identify in advance which organizations will manage donations in the event of a major disaster and how they will allocate and report on donations received
- The message must be consistent about how to donate, and how donations will be used
- People prefer to donate to charities rather than governments, and may donate to a specific charity even if it isn't identified as leading the donation management

In Alberta, the Emergency Management Act provides guidance around administering disaster relief funds at the provincial level. However, there are no guidelines around the responsibility of local authorities.

In Lesser Slave Lake there were no pre-existing protocols, or procedures to guide decisions around the collection, management or allocation of donations. Furthermore, there was no policy or communications strategy to explain to the public what was needed and how the donations would be used. Eventually, a Community Donation Allocation Committee was established whose mandate was to coordinate all uncommitted monetary recovery donations (excluding donations made to the Canadian Red Cross), and provide recommendations on how to disperse funds where no donor direction was provided. Charitable local non-profit community groups applied directly to the Committee for funding.

Donations are an integral part of recovery planning and decision making after a disaster. During the Alberta flood, an overwhelming volume of money and physical donations were received to help residents and communities respond. While this generosity was commendable, it became a challenge to manage because no coordination had been done in advance.

Develop and implement a province-wide approach to managing donations following a disaster.

After a disaster, it is common for various non-profit, faith based, and charitable groups to create funding proposals for government and foundations to assist in the immediate and short-term response effort. However, funding for economic recovery isn't the same as disaster response.

There needs to be recognition by groups collecting public donations for disaster recovery, and government departments responsible for funding economic recovery initiatives those non-profit professional associations of economic developers are uniquely positioned to assist with economic recovery work. Specifically, organizations such as: EDA (Alberta), BCEDA (BC), SEDA (Saskatchewan) and EDCO (Ontario). Their ability to mobilize peer networks in order to apply technical expertise can assist regions and local communities with post-disaster recovery initiatives and explore opportunities to incorporate economic disaster resiliency strategies during blue-sky times. The EDRP is an example of EDA's ability to work quickly and collaboratively with its partners in providing timely and relevant economic recovery assistance.

Unfortunately, while millions of dollars were being raised for the Alberta flood response, EDA was unable to acquire funding from the United Way or the Calgary Foundation for its proposed economic recovery work. As a non-profit it did not qualify. What these funders and perhaps CRA fails to appreciate is that economic recovery work is not traditionally carried out by charities. Non-profits and publicly funded economic development groups do the vast majority of economic recovery work. In Canmore, frustration with the donation management system resulted in private citizens becoming involved with the local Rotary in collecting and managing their own donations.

Those managing donations for flood recovery should establish a mechanism to fund economic development organizations in order to carry out economic recovery work.

CONCLUSION

Economic recovery after a disaster is a long, complex process that becomes even more challenging when impacted communities experience a shortage of resources and capacity. A delayed response in addressing the immediate issues of businesses, particularly small businesses, can result in long-lasting

negative consequences for the economic recovery of a community.

While no two economic disasters are the same, the experience with the Alberta Flood, as well as experiences in jurisdictions in Canada and the United States show there are some similarities when implementing post-disaster economic recovery.

For example:

- Every disaster and every recovery process is unique
- Major disasters exacerbate pre-existing economic conditions of affected communities
- Communities that take the lead by having a post-disaster plan and an economic recovery team are better equipped to respond and recover
- The federal and provincial post-disaster recovery process is not well understood, specifically when it comes to economic recovery
- A comprehensive approach to post-disaster economic recovery - with agencies at the local, provincial and federal levels working in concert with the private and non-profit sectors - is essential
- Economic development professionals need to be integrated into the emergency response system in order to ensure effective and efficient economic recovery
- Money spent in preparation can save money in response
- Urgent need to have a plan in place that will coordinate communications, government, various organizations, donations and business assistance programs prior to a disaster
- Everyone has a role in recovery, but someone has to take the lead
- There is an overall lack of funding for communities to focus on post-disaster and specific economic recovery planning
- Need to more effectively engage the insurance industry in innovative responses to economic disasters, particularly where it relates to business

The long-term economic impact of the 2013 flood in Southern Alberta will not be known for several months and perhaps years to come. As federal, provincial and local officials look to the future, and provide residents with the confidence Alberta communities are ready and prepared for future economic disruptions, our EDRP team encourages them to focus their efforts on identifying new opportunities to achieve economic recovery; diversification and resiliency by:

- Improving the current disaster response system
- Integrating economic developers into the recovery process
- Clarifying roles and responsibilities
- Being innovative in their responses to policy, funding and program delivery.

By doing so, we think Alberta and Canada will be much better positioned to respond to future economic disruptions; man-made or natural disasters. We can and should learn from others then apply sound, proven principles and models.

The EDRP team sincerely wishes to thank its funders: The Government of Alberta, Ministry of Innovation and Advanced Education; RBC; Shell Canada Limited; the Canadian Red Cross; and the Consulate General of the United States of America, Calgary.

We also want to thank BCEDA and IEDC's Restore Your Economy team for providing additional economic disaster recovery resources and expertise.

Finally we want to thank all the EDO's in the ten communities we visited for participating in this initiative and for working with us. We commend each of you on the important response and recovery work you have done to date, and encourage you as you continue your efforts on the road to complete economic recovery.

We trust that the grassroots work completed by the EDRP teams, and the recommendations made in this report will help all of us become stronger, more resilient individuals, organizations, and communities in the future.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Federal Disaster Assistance Programs

The following federal disaster assistance programs are listed on the Public Safety website:

Animal Disease Surveillance (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) - Data and information for the agricultural sector and scientific community from the Canadian Animal Health Surveillance Network to help trace sources of livestock disease outbreaks and to provide updates on surveillance of identified high-risk diseases.

AgriRecovery (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada) - AgriRecovery is a disaster relief framework which provides a coordinated process for federal, provincial and territorial governments to respond rapidly when disasters strike, filling gaps not covered by existing programs.

AgriStability (Agriculture and Agri-food Canada) - AgriStability provides support when a producer experiences larger farm income losses.

Canada Small Business Financing Program (Industry Canada) - Loan guarantee program to secure small business loans against inadvertent non-compliance with payment terms a range of reasons, including disasters. Assets guaranteed include real property improvements, leasehold improvements or the purchase of equipment.

Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response (Public Health Agency of Canada) - The Centre for Emergency Preparedness and Response (CEPR) is Canada's central coordinating point for public health security issues. Among its many responsibilities, CEPR: develops and maintains national emergency response plans for the Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada; monitors outbreaks and global disease events; assesses public health risks during emergencies; contributes to keeping Canada's health and emergency policies in line with threats to public health security and general security for Canadians in collaboration with other federal and international health and security agencies.

The Office of Emergency Response Services (OERS) is responsible for supporting emergency health and social services in the provinces, territories or abroad. It manages the National Emergency Stockpile System (NESS), which includes medical, pharmaceutical and related emergency supplies. The Office is responsible for the federal response to emergencies that have health repercussions; this includes the deployment of health emergency response teams.

Compensation Program for Destroyed Animals (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) - Awards compensation to the owners of animals that are ordered destroyed by the federal government in order to control the spread of animal disease. Amounts are based on market values, subject to the maximum levels set out in the Compensation for Destroyed Animals Regulations.

Disaster Assistance Response Team (Canadian Forces) - The DART is a task of the Canadian Forces to quickly mount a humanitarian assistance team in the exceptional circumstance that the Government of Canada requires a military contribution in responding to a natural or human-made disaster. The DART focuses on fulfilling the four critical needs in emergency situations, namely: primary medical care; production of purified drinking water; limited engineering capability etc.

Employment Insurance Work Sharing Program (Service Canada) - Measures to help employers avert temporary lay-offs by providing income support to workers who are willing to work a temporary reduced work-week when there is a reduction in business activity beyond the control of the employer. The program includes special criteria to allowing easier access to the Work Sharing Program for business affected by major disasters or public threats.

Environmental Damages Fund (Environment Canada) - Provides financial awards to community groups, academic organizations and local governments to support projects aimed at remediation or restoration of the environment and natural resources. The trust fund serves as a mechanism for redistributing funds received by polluters through voluntary or liability payments.

Food and Emergency Response System (Canadian Food Inspection Agency) - Provides information and guides for the food production industry on responding to food recalls that pose a serious health risk and may provide support with undertaking risk management actions and response.

Health Emergency Response Services (Public Health Agency of Canada) - Provides a series of free guides on what communities and local authorities can do during and following a major disaster on subjects such as Emergency Lodging, Food for Emergencies, and Victim Registration and Enquiry Service.

Homeowner Emergency Tips (Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation) - Helpful guides and checklists for homeowners on what can be done during after and power outages and floods to reduce the impact on their homes and families.

Housing Emergency Repair Program / Homeowner Residential Rehabilitation Program (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) - Ongoing programs that may be used to assist disaster recovery by low-income households by providing financial contributions or forgivable loans for making urgent repairs to unsafe dwellings or substandard property.

Life Events Guides (Canada Revenue Agency) - Guides and forms for employers on measures that can be taken and business tax implications in responding to major events affecting their employees including illness, injury and special payments, such as wage-loss replacement.

Loan Assistance (Farm Credit Canada) - Flexible payment arrangements and government-backed loan guarantees may be available to agricultural producers to support recovery from disasters.

National Emergency Stockpile System (Public Health Agency of Canada) - Provides emergency supplies for use during a major disaster or national emergency which can be set up in existing buildings or temporary shelters. The system consists of a central depot in Ottawa and regional warehouses located across Canada which contain hospital supplies, such as pharmaceutical drugs, folding beds, blankets, generators, mini medical clinics, mobile quarantine units and water decontamination facilities.

Psycho-social Emergency Preparedness and Response Program (Health Canada) - Guides and other information resources for Public Service managers and supervisors for helping employees who experience a traumatic workplace event, including a public disaster or emergency.

Shelter Enhancement Program (Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation) - Ongoing program that provides capital contributions for repair, rehabilitation or improvement to homelessness shelters or building new shelters. Following a major disaster that results in increased demand for emergency accommodation, funding can be directed towards increasing shelter capacity.

Ship-source Oil Pollution Fund (Administrator of the Ship-source Oil Pollution Fund) - The Fund may be liable to pay claims by any person who has incurred costs or clean-up expenses due to damages to property caused by an oil spill from a ship, as well as compensation to workers in the Canadian fishing industry for loss of income.

Taxpayer Relief Provisions (Canada Revenue Agency) - Taxpayer relief provisions give the CRA common-sense ways to help taxpayers who, because of extraordinary circumstances, are unable to meet their tax obligations. As a result, we believe it would be prudent to further clarify government roles and responsibilities in the economic recovery process. This includes greater clarity on departmental requirements and deadlines. It should also include information on procurement opportunities for rebuilding; and have this information readily available for dissemination at all post-disaster business assistance/recovery centres. Much of this information should be shared with local communities before a disaster to assist with pre-disaster preparation.

Appendix 2- Role of Economic Development Practitioner

	TRADITIONAL ROLE	POST DISASTER ROLE
Analyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand community's strengths and weakness, comparative advantage of local economy • Provide qualitative/ quantitative info to decision makers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understand current conditions and damage to critical infrastructure, property and anchor businesses • How these impacts with affect long-term viability of businesses/industries
Catalyst	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote community assets to prospects • Provide incentives to leverage investment/ involvement of actors • Invoke enthusiasm for support of ED initiatives • Design programs that work 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish Business Recovery Task Force: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - short term, immediate needs - long-term recovery efforts • Garner input and support for critical economic recovery initiatives • Update strategic plans to match current realities
Advocate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Speak out for well being of community • Protect interests of existing businesses • Move the strategic planning process along by supporting visions and mission 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Seek funding opportunities for recovery purposes and initiatives • Communicate priorities and need for policy changes to state leaders • Advocate for mitigation and preparedness efforts (tiered re-entry, business continuity) in event of next disaster
Educator	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Teach general public about costs and benefits of economic development initiatives • Promote community assets to businesses 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Critical communication role to facilitate the flow of correct info to businesses • Communication - "Open for business" and "We need help and resources" messages • Provide cost/benefit understanding of recovery projects • Develop and distribute a disaster recovery guide
Gap Filler	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide assistance where the markets and institutions cannot (financial, mgmt, technical) • Recognize when private sector resources should be used 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Concerted BRE outreach to reconnect with businesses and identify at risk companies • Provide business recovery assistance and services for short term • Bridge financing till SBA loan approved • Develop critical programs and initiatives to support long-term growth and recovery
Visionary	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Able to peer over economic horizon to see what is likely or could happen in a community • Understand if the community's spirit and resources are directed at catalyst projects • Entails some degree of risk taking for change to occur 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sees how the community can build back stronger, more resilient with resources from private and public sector

Source: IEDC, Restore Your Economy, www.restoreyoureconomy.org

Appendix 3- Summary of Recommendations

COMMUNITY RECOMMENDATIONS

- **Increase economic development capacity**
 - Develop an economic development strategy
 - Fund a full time Economic Development position
 - Review and refine the Economic Development Committee Terms of Reference
 - Provide economic development training for elected officials
- **Increase the level and quality of communications**
 - Create a position for business and economic development in the Emergency Operations Centre
 - Expand the range of low-tech communications tools
 - Develop a Cross-Sector Communications Plan
- **Provide good economic development data**
 - Develop an economic development profile
 - Enhance online economic development content
- **Make business retention and expansion a priority**
 - Initiate a Business Retention and Expansion (BRE) program
 - Sign up for the AlbertaBusinessCounts program
 - Workforce Development/Planning
 - Establish a Business Cooperative Marketing Program
 - Revisit the community tourism strategy as part of the overall BRE program
 - Streamline processes
 - Think outside the box
- **Encourage business investment and attraction**
 - Update the brand and marketing strategy for tourism and local businesses
 - Participate in the hotel operators/investment conference in BC
 - Implement an 'Open for Business' campaign
 - Complete an Investment Readiness Self-Assessment
 - Identify sources of economic recovery resources and funds for operational financing
 - Re-evaluate their event strategy
- **Provide business assistance and training**
 - Hold insurance information workshops
 - Initiate a business continuity planning program
 - Support procurement and matchmaking workshops
 - Property and Casualty Forum
 - Identify sources of gap and long-term financial assistance to small businesses
- **Support economic development planning and resiliency**
 - Develop an Economic Resiliency Plan
 - Establish a Permanent Position for Economic Response and Recovery in the Emergency Operations Centre
 - Support Training for Members of a Business Emergency Response/Recovery Team (BERT)
 - Participate in updating the community's various plans
 - Complete a vulnerability assessment

ORGANIZATIONAL RECOMMENDATIONS

LOCAL GOVERNMENT

- Review existing disaster recovery plans and policies to ensure the economic development function is involved in the process.
- Develop a communication strategy outlining protocols of how to communicate in a disaster.
- Review existing policies or initiate new policies to assist businesses in the event of a disaster.

PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT

- Designate one department to lead economic recovery efforts and activities following a disaster.
- Review current policies and procedures to ensure there is clarity around the Province's role in housing and stimulating the local economy after a disaster.
- Establish a special fund for post-disaster economic recovery, to be accessed by local communities. These funds should be set aside for immediate post-disaster grants/loans essential to the survival of local businesses.
- Evaluate success of current AFSC programs for business, and explore other flexible funding instruments that could be offered as part of a provincial economic recovery fund.
- Identify regional demographic and economic data that can serve as common measures or benchmarks of economic recovery progress.
- Include economic impact assessments as an eligible expense in its economic recovery fund.
- Develop a comprehensive, guide of provincial resources that can assist local communities and businesses with their economic recovery efforts. There should also be an internal communications strategy developed to educate key provincial staff about these resources so they can relay timely, accurate information effectively to external audiences.
- Develop a 'quick fact' sheet on how the cost recovery process works including what is covered, who is eligible and general timing of payments.
- Review how procurement opportunities are marketed to the business community in relation to disaster response to make sure local businesses are identified as preferred suppliers.
- Support training and engagement of private sector organizations in emergency management operations.

FEDERAL GOVERNMENT

- Designate one department to coordinate the Government of Canada's economic recovery efforts.
- Establish an Economic Recovery Fund, housed within the designated lead department, to be accessed by provinces and territories for post-disaster economic recovery work.
- Regional marketing and branding initiatives are eligible expenses under the Economic Recovery Fund.
- Costs related to hiring additional support staff are included as eligible expenses under the Economic Recovery Fund.
- Costs for economic impact assessments are included as eligible expenses under the Economic Recovery Fund.
- Research and develop flexible funding instruments for businesses to be implemented under the Economic Recovery Fund.
- Develop and implement post-disaster workforce and housing programs through the Economic Recovery Fund.
- Review existing communication protocols with provinces and territories to ensure they are able to provide accurate, timely information both during and after a disaster.
- Develop a comprehensive, guide of federal resources that can assist other levels of government, communities and businesses with their economic recovery efforts. There should also be an internal communications strategy developed to educate key federal staff about these resources so they can relay timely, accurate information effectively to key external audiences.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPERS ALBERTA

- Encourage the integration of EDO's into emergency management processes.
- Work with AEMA to develop a defined role for EDA.
- Continue to promote peer learning and sharing opportunities both within and outside of the province.
- Participate on the Non-government Organization Council (NGO Council).
- Complete a toolkit of best practices.
- Re-think how EDA's Donor Advised Fund can support future economic recovery.
- Continue to offer economic recovery resources to members.
- Determine whether there is a need for a Phase 2 EDRP.

CORPORATIONS

- Work with the local community and/or economic development group to identify the best method for involvement.
- Provide advice to non-profits and government on how to design effective response and recovery plans.
- Get involved where possible, fostering mutual aid organizations where they do business.
- Develop financial literacy programs to assist small businesses with insurance payouts.

NON-PROFITS

- The 2013 flood should be used an opportunity to examine existing flood programs in other countries and examine whether the current property coverage system can be enhanced in any way to increase the resiliency of homes, farms and businesses.
- Develop a closer working relationship between the insurance industry and the Government of Alberta in order to manage shared issues related to demolition, debris removal and rebuilding.
- Appoint a provincial liaison to help facilitate earlier access to qualified claims adjusters, more timely processing of claims and representation of insurance personnel at reception or business recovery centres to address questions and anxieties about insurance coverage.

THE CANADIAN RED CROSS

- Investigate the opportunity to provide small businesses with interest free loans or grants as an interim financing mechanism.
- Work with EDA to further develop and expand on its livelihood response, particularly where it relates to economic recovery.

THE NGO COUNCIL OF ALBERTA

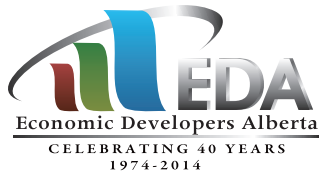
- Clarify mandate and membership in NGO Council.
- Add EDA to the NGO Council in order to assist with economic recovery issues.

DONATION MANAGEMENT

- Develop and implement a province-wide approach to managing donations following a disaster.
- Those managing donations for flood recovery should establish a mechanism to fund economic development organizations in order to carry out economic recovery work.

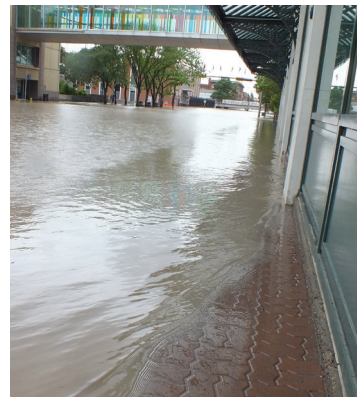
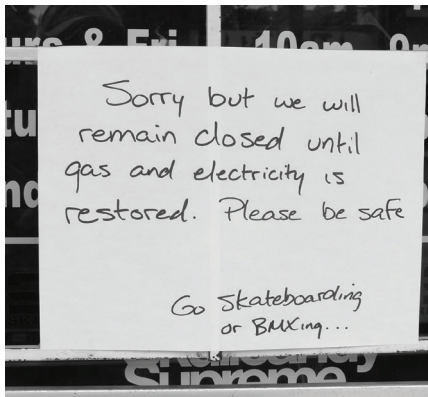
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

We would like to acknowledge the Organizational Partners for their research and development on this project:



We would also like to acknowledge the Funding Partners for their support on this project:





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