



Backgrounder

Economic Disaster Recovery Project (EDRP)

What is the EDRP? -The Economic Disaster Recovery Project (EDRP) is a grassroots project to help flood-impacted communities rebuild, recover and re-establish their economic competitiveness. It was created by Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) in response to the 2013 flood in Southern Alberta and includes the British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) and the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). Economic developers provide leadership in their community's economic rebuilding efforts and the EDRP provides them with tools and resources to shorten their economic recovery time while building local capacity should this type of response be required in the future. #afterthestorm13

Background- In June 2013 Southern Alberta experienced the worst flood in its history. According to Environment Canada, three major storms, a week apart, drenched the region, generating record high water levels, inundating many southern Alberta towns and forcing thousands to evacuate. Although the community of Slave Lake, Alberta and Burns Lake, BC are examples of how communities can rebuild after a disaster, in those two cases there was really only a single community involved. In the June 2013 floods, it was reported that about 40 municipalities identified infrastructure damage, a total of 33 Alberta communities, including First Nations, declared local states of emergency. This is unprecedented. In addition, four people were confirmed dead as a direct result of the flooding and over 100,000 people were displaced throughout the region.

As many communities around the world know, when disaster strikes, services of first responders are absolutely essential. In the 2013 flood, police, fire, emergency, and military personnel arrived on the scene immediately to bring order and critical resources to the crisis at hand.

However, when all the first responders leave and communities start to "get back to normal," questions remain. How do community leaders create and implement effective economic recovery efforts? How do they best support their local business community? How can communities start work to advance trade and investment opportunities globally?

Our Response-Economic Developers of Alberta (EDA) and the British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) realize their members must play a lead role in their respective region's economic rebuilding efforts. Economic development organizations are a critical component of economic recovery efforts. However, many of our members have never had to build up their economies after a major disaster like the 2013 flood. They truly lack both the practical and theoretical knowledge of what to do in a situation like this. EDA and BCEDA want to equip our members with key resources and information in order to shorten their community's economic recovery time. We also want to help build local capacity should the need for this type of response be required again in the future.



In order to address this need, EDA and BCEDA developed an Economic Disaster Recovery Project (EDRP).

Elements of the ERDP- The EDRP is a unique blended learning opportunity that will provide economic development practitioners, and those in supporting roles, with both theoretical and practical training. It consists of the following elements:

1. *Webinars:* to deliver best practices of economic recovery after a disaster
2. *Confirming Communities-* the EDRP team identified Alberta communities whose economies were hardest hit by the 2013 flood. These communities were contacted and agreed to take part in this project:
 - 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, Town of Sundre, Waterton Lakes and Canmore.
 - Additional flood impacted communities may be included should the need for additional participant interest arise.
3. *Call for Volunteers:* The Community Consultation process requires the participation of volunteers with specific types of skill sets. For example; experience with business retention & expansion programs, key industries, rural economic development, etc. Through a call for volunteers, EDRP established a network of experts; economic development coaches and mentors to work with identified individuals from the project participant communities. EDA will coordinate and match up these mentors based on the needs of the community.
4. *Training for Elected Officials-* Elected officials have a key role to play in moving their communities forward. Having a clear understanding of their roles and responsibilities is key in moving any economic recovery plans forward in their respective region. EDA/BCEDA currently offers a one-day specialized training module “Economic Development for Elected Officials
5. *Community Consultations-* An Economic Recovery Team consisting of volunteer mentors/experts will conduct site visitations and planning sessions with the participant community, work with them to complete a SWOT analysis and discuss a range of recommendations for consideration. To prepare for the site visit, the community lead contact will identify a cross section of key economic development stakeholders that will participate in the SWOT process. This process will enable the EDO to bring in key stakeholders (e.g. elected officials, Chamber, business leaders, industry leaders, resources etc.) to help develop and implement their plan, thus building additional capacity within their region. A summary report and Action Plan will be furnished to community participants after completion of the SWOT that will include recommendations for future action.

Schedule of Community Visits:

- November 13: 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: Turner Valley
6. *Summary of Findings/Recommendations*- A summary report would be compiled with high level recommendations for future action. For example, issues could include resumption/retention of major employers, small business assistance, workforce retention, tourism renewal, physical economic redevelopment projects, future diversification.
7. *Business Retention & Expansion (BR&E) Legacy Infrastructure*- One of the key elements in moving a community forward after a disaster is through a robust business retention and expansion (BR&E) program. Good company 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 & Retention program. Good data can also be used to facilitate and educate the business community on economic and workforce development initiatives.
8. *Toolkit*- A Toolkit would be developed that would identify key resources, best practices etc. for disaster recovery in the future.

Organizational Partners:

Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) is the only professional organization for economic developers in Alberta. It is dedicated to advancing the economic development profession by providing information, networking and educational opportunities. It is a not-for-profit organization governed by a volunteer board of directors who represent the interests of its membership as a whole. www.edaalberta.ca

British Columbia Economic Development Association (BCEDA) is the leading professional association of economic development practitioners in the Province of BC. BCEDA currently has over 280 members from communities throughout the Province. BCEDA provides services that help member communities grow and expand new and



existing businesses, attract new business investments, and work towards strategic infrastructure investment, land use planning, and community enhancement.
www.edabc.com

The International Economic Development Council (IEDC) is a non-profit membership organization dedicated to helping economic developers do their job more effectively and raising the profile of the profession. When we succeed, our members create more high-quality jobs, develop more vibrant communities, and generally improve the quality of life in their regions. www.iedconline.org

Funding Partners:

The Government of Alberta, Ministry of Enterprise and Advanced Education -
<http://eae.alberta.ca>

RBC Royal Bank- www.rbc.com/community-sustainability/community/index.html

Shell Canada Ltd.- www.shell.ca

Consulate General of the United States of America, Calgary-
<http://calgary.usconsulate.gov/index.html>

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