



Rural Diversification

An on-line course for rural development practitioners across western Canada

Western Canada's communities are facing major economic challenges. In light of this, rural development practitioners need tools and strategies to assist their communities in the move to a long-term sustainable future.

Rural diversification is about broadening an economic base with a variety of business types and jobs, while creating a balanced and stable economy. For this reason, students will learn strategies to build upon a community's comparative advantages and define diversification opportunities. Students will develop a rural diversification project throughout the course.

This practical 15 week, interactive on-line course includes:

- Real western Canada case studies of rural diversification
- Case studies of rural diversification projects from around the world, some that were successful and others that were not.
- Strategies to identify rural diversification opportunities.
- Rural economies and how they function.
- Working with entrepreneurs to create a diversified economy.
- Strategies for working with communities in a time of change.
- Planning and partnering for rural diversification.
- Developing rural diversification projects and writing proposals for project funding.

As a western Canada rural development practitioner, you will find this course engaging and relevant to your daily work. The course is facilitated by the Community Futures Alberta Rural Diversification Initiative Project Officers. It is interactive, with computer quizzes and games, video conference learning events, discussion forums, face-to-face interviews and culminates in a rural diversification project work plan for your communities. Throughout the course, students are encouraged to interact and learn from each other.

An added benefit of the course is the alignment with the Pan West Community Futures competencies of project management, proposal writing and community economic development.

This on-line course includes eight modules as outlined below:

Module Title	Module Description
Rural Diversification Overview	Covers the process of rural diversification and role of rural development practitioners in the diversification process.
Rural Economies and Diversification	Delves into the history of rural economies and the theories of economic development as they relate to rural diversification.
Entrepreneurship and Rural Diversification	Explores the role of entrepreneurs in the process of rural diversification and ways of supporting entrepreneurs as they drive diversification.
Talking to Communities and Change Management	Contains the strategies for engaging in diversification dialogue with community leaders and ways to support the changes taking place in western Canada's rural communities.
Planning and Readiness for Rural Diversification	Covers the steps in preparing communities for diversification and the process of planning a rural diversification project.
Partnership Development	Delves into the engagement, development and on going relationships with suitable partnership through the development and implementation of a rural diversification project.
Project Management	Defines project management tools and strategies suitable for a rural diversification project.
Proposal Writing	Contains detailed information to support the development of a project work plan and proposal for funding a rural diversification project.

Here is what past students say about the Rural Diversification On-Line Course:

- ✓ *"Even though I've worked in this industry for 25 years, I still enjoyed the approach and information in this course."*
- ✓ *"The lessons were well structured and the assignments were fun to do. I would definitely recommend this course."*
- ✓ *"This course helped me focus on my rural diversification idea and provided good background material to strengthen my project."*
- ✓ *"The Rural Diversification course helped me further my knowledge on how essential it is for communities to diversify through technology, innovation and entrepreneurs for long term sustainability and growth. I enjoyed taking the course on-line as there was minimal travel involved and it allowed me the freedom to work at my own pace and not have to take time off from work. I would strongly recommend anyone interested enroll."*
- ✓ *"The course definitely strengthened my knowledge of rural diversification. The instructors were very friendly and helpful and I appreciated the opportunity to meet and interact with economic developers from across western Canada. The lessons were well structured and the assignments were fun to do. I would definitely recommend this course. "*
- ✓ *"This course helped me focus on my rural diversification idea and provided good background material to strengthen my project."*

- Course dates:** October 17, to February 18, 2012 (15 weeks with a Christmas Break)
- Course Tuition:** Community Futures staff and board members - \$650, includes resource book
Economic development professionals and other interested community members - \$800.00, includes resource book
- Enquiries:** Contact Judy McMillan-Evans, Community Futures Network of Alberta (judy@cfna.ca or call 403-652-9664).
- Registration deadline:** October 12, 2011
- Registration process:** Payment by VISA or Mastercard only. On-line registration is available through the following link:
<http://www.cfna.ca/event-registration/index.php>
- Pre-requisites:** A thirst for knowledge

Note: Just prior to the course start date, you will receive log-in and password information to access the course on-line.

For more details on this course and rural diversification, visit:
www.ruraldiversification.com.