

FOCUSING ON THE FUTURE

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Seminars Available by Video Conferencing	2
Staff Changes	2
Upcoming Events	2
Breezy Bags . . . A New Business	3
Broadband Project Update . . .	4

RRFDC'S BOARD OF DIRECTORS 2008-2009

Russ Fortier, Chair
Tony Marinaro, Vice-Chair
George Emes, Secretary
Janice Beazley, Treasurer
Martin Dufresne
Eugene McPherson
Ken McKinnon
Gord Armstrong
Freeda Carmody



RRFDC Continues to Pursue Opportunities in BIO-ENERGY . . . Agricultural Bio-Fuel Three Year Trial

The RRFDC continues to pursue alternative energy opportunities with local partners including a three year trial to collect data on two types of grasses that could be grown, harvested and mixed in with wood waste to fuel the new AbitibiBowater biomass boiler in Fort Frances.

Partnering with AbitibiBowater, the Emo Agricultural Research Station, Rainy River District Soil and Crop Improvement Association and OMAFRA, RRFDC will try to determine whether reed canary and switch grass can be economically grown by agricultural producers in the district to provide sustainable yields over the period of the trial project.

This three year trial project currently has seven district producers involved in providing 100 acres of each variety of grass. The seed, fertilizer, and funding support for loss of land production for the trial is being provided by AbitibiBowater and the RRFDC rural agricultural initiative.

RRFDC believes that large tracts of land devoted to growing reed canary and switch grass could produce new opportunities for agricultural production and generate a needed alternative for revenue growth in the local farming community across the district without displacing current crop production.

2008-09 Update to Bio-Fuel Trial

The first year of the trial began with a challenge. The heavy amount of rainfall experienced in the District during the spring and summer of 2008 made it difficult for the participating producers to get on their fields to plant the seed. Given these circumstances the producers were told by the committee to get the seed in when they could. Therefore, a unique opportunity was had to view how the seed grows when sewn at different intervals during the growing season. We were able to see how different methods of planting helped or hindered the young seed. Given the lack of crop heat units that the District experienced in 2008, the growth the trial plots have seen was encouraging.



Rural Agriculture Coordinator
Jeannette Cawston
Emo Office: 807-482-3983
Cell: 807-275-8743
Fax: 807-274-6989
jeannette@rrfdc.on.ca
www.rrfdc.on.ca



WATCH FOR OUR UPCOMING SEMINARS ON:

E-COMMERCE

CUSTOMER SERVICE

*TIPS AND TOOLS FOR
STARTING A
BUSINESS*

Phone RRFDC at
274-3276

for more information or
check the website for the
latest updates

at:

www.rfdc.on.ca

The RRFDC is a membership driven, non-profit, community based corporation governed by a Board of Directors, working to create jobs and improve the commercial and industrial base of the Rainy River District. We offer a variety of services to the community. We can help you find fair and equitable business partnerships, help your business communicate with a larger market and provide community learning for businesses and entrepreneurs.

SEMINARS NOW AVAILABLE BY VIDEO CONFERENCING AT RRFDC

RRFDC is excited to announce that a video conferencing unit is now installed and ready to go. The new unit provided by the Canada-Ontario Business Service Centre will allow a wide range of business training from the Canada-Manitoba Business Service Centre (Winnipeg) to be offered locally. The fee to participate is only \$5.00 per person per session (payable to RRFDC). Sign up for as many sessions as you want. Sessions will be offered for any number of participants, from one to 20. Price per

session is subject to change.

February and March sessions will offer a wide range of topics of value to the local business community and individuals interested in starting and managing a small business. The video session schedule is posted on the RRFDC website with links to the Canada Business Centre website for complete seminar descriptions.

To register call the RRFDC at 274-3276 and let us know which sessions you are interested in.

Some Video Conferencing Seminars are...

How to Buy a Business

Preparing a Winning Business Plan

Customer Centric Service

Marketing Basics

Marketing Research

Advertising & Promotion

Developing a Marketing Plan

Basics of Exporting

Branding Basics

Interviewing Skills

and many more....Be sure to check out www.rfdc.on.ca for a complete listing of dates and times.

RRFDC Welcomes New Bookkeeper



The RRFDC extends a warm welcome to our new bookkeeper, Shaari Clinker. Shaari started her part-time position in September and has adjusted well to the "something new and different every day" pace at RRFDC. Shaari is a 2000 graduate of the Confederation College Computerized Bookkeeping certification program. She has worked at various businesses throughout the district and enjoys many of our community activities with her children. Shaari is excited to be with the RRFDC and is enjoying all the challenges that working here involves.

Upcoming Events in 2009

February 6-7, 2009: 9 am to 4 pm — Growing Your Opportunities
Emo Inn — Presenters from Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs
\$75 per person — Register at RRFDC or call Jeannette Cawston at 482-3983

March 8, 2009: 10am to 5 pm EST—Northern Women's Expo at Valhalla Inn, Thunder Bay

May 1-2, 2009: Fort Frances Chamber of Commerce Home & Leisure Show
Fort Frances Memorial Sports Centre

June 12-13, 2009: Saw Tech Log & Rural Northwest Expo
Fort Frances Memorial Sports Centre

New Fabric Shopping Bags A Breeze To Use

On a return trip from Kenora in late 2007, Kami Leatherdale experienced visible evidence of the problem that plastic shopping bags have on the environment these days and a business was soon to be conceived. While driving home, Leatherdale saw a plastic bag hanging from a tree in the middle of nowhere. She immediately vowed to personally stop using plastic bags and do something to help reduce this unsightly enviro-problem.

The task was not as easy as it seemed though since most of the earth-friendly, reusable fabric bags currently available to carry groceries and other goods are stiff, big and bulky, and don't get constant use without real dedication. Leatherdale tried and rejected them for these reasons but didn't forsake her vow to switch from plastic to a reusable alternative.



With this in mind, Kami bought some light weight and sturdy ripstop nylon fabric and made two sets of five bags and a convenient storage pouch for her husband and herself. Small and light weight, one pouch full of bags went into her husband's pickup and the other into her purse. "We used them for everything and stopped the plastic bag invasion of our home," Leatherdale stated.

The Leatherdales quickly noticed a lot of interest in Kami's bags so they bought a bolt of fabric and manufactured their new light weight "Breezy Bags" at home and gave them away to friends and family in Canada and the US. Out of this a business was born with the idea to manufacture the "Breezy Bags" for sale to others. After producing 25 sets of shopping bags at home the Leatherdales soon realized the process was a lot more time consuming than they had imagined.

Entering the February 2008 "Idea Factory Challenge" organized by the Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre in Thunder Bay in partnership with the Rainy River Future Development Corp, Kami received an honorable mention and soon launched her business to sell "Breezy Bags". Being busy people and both fully employed, the Leatherdales followed up on a contact tip received at the "Idea Factory Challenge" and found a Chinese manufacturer for their product. After several prototypes the final design for "Breezy Bags" hit the mark. With their product now being made in China the Leatherdales can devote their time to marketing and sales.

"We see our business doubling every year for the next three years. More and more municipalities are banning plastic bags. Everyone needs to quit using plastic bags," enthused Leatherdale. "Breezy Bags" are convenient, strong, lightweight, and most importantly, with you when you are shopping, not still at home or in the car."

The best thing about "Breezy Bags" is that they are small, lightweight and convenient. They fit into a jacket pocket, purse or vehicle cup-holder so they are always available and will be used. Leatherdale's big thrust to promote her "Breezy Bags" business will blossom during Earth Day in April 2009. If you just can't wait and want "Breezy Bags" now, look for them locally at Fort Frances General Supply or online at www.breezybags.com.



**NEED
INTERNET
ACCESS TO
HELP
START
YOUR
BUSINESS?**

ASK US!

**RAINY RIVER
FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT
CORPORATION**

608 Scott Street
Fort Frances, Ontario
P9A 1H6

Phone: 807-274-3276
Toll Free: 800-465-8502
Fax: 807-274-6989

Email: info@rrfdc.on.ca

We're on the Web!
www.rrfdc.on.ca

***Working for
your future...***

FedNor 
Canada 



**RAINY RIVER FUTURE
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION**
A Community Futures Development Corporation



Highway 11 Cellular and Broadband In-fill Project

With the Emo tower now up and operational, the Rainy River Future Development Corporation (RRFDC) and TBayTel are proud to announce that the Highway 11 / 71 corridor and much of the Rainy River District will soon be benefiting from the addition of five new broadband and cellular towers and upgrades to seven existing towers. These twelve towers will be receiving digital cellular service; these are located at Bergland, Pinewood, Barwick, Emo, Burriss, Burditt Lake, Nestor Falls, Crow Lake, Gagne Lake, Horsecollar Junction, Perch Lake and Sapawe. Eight towers will be receiving broadband service, these are located at Emo, Crow Lake, Nickel Lake, Gagne Lake, Flanders, Perch Lake, Sapawe and Shabaqua.

The project was made possible with financial support totalling approximately \$3 million from the Northern Ontario Heritage Fund Corporation (NOHFC) and Industry Canada / FedNor. The contribution from the NOHFC will assist with development at all

sites. FedNor will assist with the development of the eight broadband equipped sites.

“The RRFDC believes that digital cellular service and high speed internet service are essential tools”, said Russ Fortier, Chairman of the Rainy River Future Development Corporation. “These improvements will offer necessary services to area businesses, residents and travelers. We are happy that our partnerships have helped to provide digital cellular service and high speed internet service to the majority of the Highway 11 / 71 corridor from Shabaqua in the East, Pinewood in the West and Crow Lake in the North.”

The RRFDC would like to offer a special thanks to TBayTel, Pwi-Di-Goo-Zing Ne-Yaa-Zhing Advisory Services and the Northwestern Ontario Innovation Centre for their assistance in developing and planning the project.

“Stay committed to your decisions, but stay flexible in your approach.”

... Bill Gates