



explorer

Camsell Portage Makes Positive Investment in Itself

A flock of hens isn't likely to be near the top of most municipalities' wish list.

But in Camsell Portage, with its remote location and small year-round population, investing in a few egg-laying birds makes perfect sense.

"We've just got layers right now, but next year we're thinking of getting meat chickens as well," said Claire Larocque, chair of Camsell Portage's local advisory council (LAC), which recently purchased 30 birds for the community's use.

Coops to house the community-owned chickens were built by local families, and the settlement supplied the fencing, as well as an ongoing supply of food for the birds, Larocque said.

As one of the Athabasca communities with ownership in ABDLP, Camsell Portage receives a portion of the company's dividends, and the LAC combines that money with the funding they receive from the province to make up their yearly community budget.

In addition to the chickens, the community has recently purchased three floating docks. These are for residents and visitors to tie up boats in the summer, when the community's population normally expands.

The settlement is also planning to build a new pump shack along the shoreline to house firefighting equipment, so lumber and new fire hoses were included in this year's budget.

"(We decided) it would be better to have a building down

by the water, (with the equipment) all in one place," Larocque said.

Two other newly-constructed buildings have also benefited the community. A pair of 14' x 16' greenhouses, built by two local families, are producing fresh fruit and vegetables, at a fraction of the cost of barging or flying produce into the community.

Philip Stenne has tomatoes and cucumbers in his greenhouse, while Joyce Powder has been growing honeydew melons, watermelon, massive zucchini, and "tons of green peppers," Larocque said.

"She's just such a green thumb, that girl."

The community also holds an annual spring caribou hunt, flying hunters out to the best hunting grounds, "and whatever caribou they kill, then it's just equally distributed among the families," Larocque said. "The ones with more in a house get more meat."

Ever since the local school was shut down by the province a few years ago, the community has been using the building as a combined health clinic and recreation centre. The LAC pays the power bill, and Larocque opens the rec centre up three times a week for people to enjoy playing in the gym or participating in a card game, with prizes. Camsell Portage residents also enjoy festivities on Canada Day and two annual fishing derbies.

"We don't have any of those big bills (for municipal infrastructure), so the money we do have, we use it for other stuff, to make it more fun to live here," Larocque said.



True to Myself, my Family, and my Company – A profile of Dean Desjarlais



If something exciting is happening with economic development in northern Saskatchewan, you can count on Dean Desjarlais being involved somehow.

And with an educational background in office and project management, business administration and accounting, Desjarlais has been able to count on the skills he's acquired to help him play a key role in improving the economic climate in this region, and helping northerners succeed.

Over the last 18 years, Desjarlais has worked as a loans analyst with Visions North Community Futures, a loans officer and program manager, a policy analyst, director of the Northern Development Fund, a tribal council business development officer, and chief executive officer for the Northern Development Board Corporation.

That last job gave him responsibility for the administration of a \$20-million fund, which eventually helped pay for initiatives such as bringing high-speed Internet throughout northern Saskatchewan, the upgrading of some sections of the Athabasca Seasonal Road, and numerous training and educational programs.

Since August 2008, Desjarlais has been the accounts manager for ABDLP, which requires him to oversee the corporation's finances and that the board and management have the information they need to make strategic business decisions. He also works with the divisional managers to make sure everything is running smoothly within each division, and find out what upcoming expenses need to be budgeted for.

"The position is an exciting one, as it provides the most important aspect of business to the managers, and ultimately the shareholders – that is, the financial health of the various companies," Desjarlais says. He also appreciates the fact that the ABDLP team is "very knowledgeable in what they do, easy to get along with, and approachable."

Prior to entering the workforce, Desjarlais completed a university-accredited certificate program at a community college in his hometown of Ile-a-la-Crosse, and then relocated to Saskatoon to study at a business college.

Yet, even after several years of training, and nearly two decades of work experience, Desjarlais continues to study. He has taken advanced courses in finance and administration through SIAST and Athabasca University, and attends professional development programs as his schedule allows.

"On-going education is very important," he says. "We are never too old to learn something new."

Desjarlais admits that he feels uncomfortable being identified as a role model, yet he knows that what he has accomplished as an Aboriginal northerner sets a valuable example.

"I want to influence Aboriginal youth in a positive manner; however, I would prefer to do so quietly – by example," he says. "I live my life true to myself, my family and the organization I work for. I want youth to know about the various opportunities out there, and that education is key to their attainment. With education, anything is possible."

Message from ABDLP Board, Chair

As the newly appointed Chair on the ABDLP board of directors, this is my first chance to introduce myself through the Explorer Newsletter. I have sat on the ABDLP board since its inception, and my professional background includes being a band employee since 1986. The year 2011 brings many new adventures for me as I have also went from being

the Director of Economic Development to the General Manager of Hatchet Lake Development Limited Partnership.

As I set out on my personal responsibilities and duties with these new positions, I see a lot of exciting opportunities and adventures for my organizations as well. ABDLP is as strong as ever. I have watched our current holdings develop and achieve great success, and I will now watch as ABDLP continues to invest in successful partnerships. I am part of a powerful group of board members and management within ABDLP and am honored to now act as board chair.

The Hatchet Lake Development Limited Partnership is also an honor to work with and it brings me immense pleasure to be able to work at and help develop the future of my community. Our relationship with ABDLP has helped us to grow and prosper and I look forward to all the great opportunities that lay before us.

As we continue through the year 2011, I hope to meet and interact with as many individuals as I can from industry, Government, and other ABDLP partners.

Anne Robillard
ABDLP, Chair





Airline and Volunteers Bring Christmas Magic to Northern Kids

The annual Transwest Santa Flight is an opportunity for the airline and some of its corporate friends to bring good cheer to the communities in which they operate.

“We have a very good relationship with the three bands in the Athabasca Basin, and Transwest Air is very grateful for all the business we get out of the north. So, this is our way of giving back, and we like to do it through the children,” says Deb Wrightson, Transwest’s customer relations and sales manager.

This year, more than 1,500 kids in Wollaston Lake, Black Lake, Fond du Lac and Stony Rapids had the chance to have their photo taken with Santa, and receive a small gift. A trip to see Santa at a shopping mall is not an option for most of these

kids, so this is their chance to meet him face-to-face.

While Santa might fly around the world solo, in a single night, co-ordinating this particular flight requires a whole team of volunteers.

Susan Fern, office administrator for Athabasca Labour Services, spent the day assisting Santa with his deliveries. “To see the smiles on the kids faces made me realize how important Santa really is to the children. Some of the kids didn’t want to get off Santa’s lap, but eventually all kids were able to have their turn.”

Overall, Fern said, the experience was one she would do over “in a heartbeat.... It made me realize how important children really are, and how thankful I was to be part of something spectacular.”

A Profile of Nathan Lidguerre



A tradesman originally from Fond du Lac is learning firsthand the ins and outs construction site safety.

Since last fall, Nathan Lidguerre has been working for Points Athabasca at the Key Lake uranium facility, where the company is building a new acid plant.

“We’ve been fitting him into the work site, and teaching him how to do inspections and orientations for new employees, says Lidguerre’s supervisor Dave Turner, senior project safety co-ordinator on the Key Lake project.

In an 11-hour shift, working two weeks onsite and one off, Lidguerre spends between six and eight hours inspecting every aspect of the construction project. His inspections include checking everything from scaffolding to

fire extinguishers, and everything in-between. While he jokes that the toughest part of his job is “remembering people’s names,” he appreciates his coworkers’ willingness to help him learn more about all aspects of the construction trade – not just the safety issues. “I like getting out there, and learning new things as I go along,” says Lidguerre.

He is still a couple of courses away from completing his certification as a construction safety officer (CSO), but Turner says that with Lidguerre’s northern background, acquired skills and interest in the field, he was already enough of an asset to be snatched up by Points Athabasca. With the number of vacancies in the construction safety field – both due to the transience of employees and the scarcity of skilled workers – having someone like Lidguerre working for Points Athabasca is a bonus.

“Lidguerre has an impressive work ethic, he’s very keen, and eager to learn; he wants to take everything in,” says Turner.

CEO’s Message

I would like to welcome Anne Robillard as the new chair of ABDLP. Glen served the company very well for nearly a decade in the chair position and we are very appreciative of the dedication he has shown to our company. We will value his future contributions as a continuing board member. Anne brings years of experience as she was a board member since inception and is definitely up to the challenges and opportunities that lie ahead.

This version of the newsletter once again highlights some of the energy and great people we have – in

particular I do like the creativity shown by the community of Camsell Portage! If anyone ever gets the opportunity to go there it is one of the hidden gems on Lake Athabasca.

The future is looking quite bright for ABDLP and its group of companies as we continue to gain momentum and look for new opportunities. Business activity seems to be increasing and that can only be positive news for employment, training, and infrastructure development in the region.

Finally, I’d ask the readers to keep our former chief and board member

Albert Mercredi in their thoughts as he is in a very tough battle with cancer. Albert has always been a strong supporter of economic development. In 2004 at a regional strategy his quote summarized the Athabasca region’s direction: “We lived the past, we respect the past. Now it’s time to build a future.”

Geoff Gay
CEO



Winter Festival

It is Winter Festival time again in the Athabasca. If you've never had the chance to experience the traditions and festivities that surround one of these winter celebrations, see if you can coordinate your travel schedule so that you can visit one of the communities during their winter event.

Come out and experience dog races, snowmobile races, drag races, King and Queen events, bannock making, tea boiling, trap setting, and so much more.

Black Lake: February 21-26

Hatchet Lake: March 1-7

Fond du Lac: March 15-19

Athabasca Roads - Winter Update

Fond du Lac Ice Road (approx 32 km)

Authorization was given from Phil Bartley, Area Manager Athabasca Region, Sask. Ministry of Highways & Infrastructure to open the ice road on February 3rd at a weight restriction of 18, 816 kg based on a minimum of 56 cm of ice thickness. 41,305 lbs on a minimum of 22" of ice (imperial measurements). Fern Contracting, operated by May Leibel of Fond du Lac, is the sub-contractor for the Fond du Lac Ice Road. Athabasca Basin Road Services (ABRS) coordinator Victor Fern is the company's representative for construction and maintenance of the Fond du Lac Ice Road.

Fond du Lac Overland Road (52 km)

The Overland Road is also now open. P&M Gas Bar, operated by Peter and Marilyn Fern of Fond du Lac, are the sub-contractor the Fond du Lac Overland Road. Athabasca Basin Road Services coordinators Lawrence Bueckert and Victor Fern are the company representatives for the construction and maintenance of the Fond du Lac Overland Road.

#905 Seasonal Road (187 km)

Maintenance this time of year is completed by graders blading the excess snow off the road, and/or using a drag to pack the snow to develop a smooth driving surface. The road is maintained by two Black Lake Contractors. E&L Enterprise operated by Elizabeth and Leon Alphonse and Medal Contracting operated by Napoleon and Jeanette Medal each maintain approximately half of the road. Lawrence Bueckert is the ABRS rep for the #905 Seasonal Road.

Uranium City Ice Road (approx 90 km)

The Uranium City Ice Road is constructed during the construction phase of the Fond du Lac Ice Road. SAB'S Contracting operated by Raymond Fern of Fond du Lac is the sub-contractor for the Uranium City Ice Road. Athabasca Basin Road Services coordinator Victor Fern is our company's representative for the construction and maintenance of the Fond du Lac Ice Road.

It is very important for road users to check Highway Hotline as conditions can change very quickly.
Highways Hotline Tollfree: 1-888-335-7623.



Athabasca Upgrade and Indenture Program

The Upgrade and Indenture Program began in Cigar Lake on Jan. 24th. This Program has 8 Athabasca residents being indentured in the Carpentry Trade and receiving academic upgrading. All 8 have less than a grade 10 education and will be tutored by an on-site instructor provided by Northlands College.

The program is being funded by Cameco, Northlands College, Northern Apprenticeship Committee, Northern Career Quest and Points Athabasca. The program runs for one year with quarterly assessments on the employee's progress.

Points Athabasca has agreed to have the students spend four hours a week of paid time on the Upgrading and in turn the students will devote four hours of their own time throughout their week in week out shift schedule. They have also supplied the students with laptop computers which will be theirs to keep once they have succeeded in this Program. Cameco has partnered with this program by supplying the flights, meals and accommodations for the Instructor as well as a classroom with Internet hook-up.

ABDLP has named Anne Robillard as its new Board Chair



"Anne has been involved with the organization since inception and is very familiar with ABDLP. She has a strong background in economic development and I am very pleased that she accepted this new role within our company," says CEO Geoff Gay. Anne Robillard is from

Hatchet Lake Denesuline First Nation and has been a band employee since 1986. She is currently the General Manager of Hatchet Lake Development Limited Partnership.

For a list of ABDLP's corporate social responsibility please visit www.athabascabasin.ca.



Watch for our next newsletter - September, 2011.

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