



NEWELL REGIONAL EXPO SOCIETY

FINAL REPORT

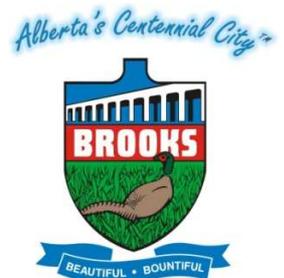
Phase II: Building Our Future Visions

Phase III: Taking Action and Keeping Our Visions Alive

Welcoming & Inclusive Communities

May 2012

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May 26, 2012

Dear Newell Regional Expo Partners and Readers:

The Newell Regional Expo Society Board of Directors are pleased to present our Newell Regional Expo Society's *Final Report. Phase II: Building Our Future Visions; Phase III: Taking Action and Keeping Our Visions Alive. Welcoming & Inclusive Communities. May 2012.*

The Future Vision Project has provided the formal structure (Newell Regional Expo Society) and processes (PAR and Survey methodology), resources (governance and coordination) and means (facilitation and funding) to gather, summarize, disseminate and showcase the *Future Visions* for each identified community and the region as a whole. The *Future Visions* process and documents provide useful planning direction and actions for our communities at every level. Active participation in this process and implementing strategies towards the *Future Visions* helps ensure communities continue to work towards building welcoming and inclusive environments in our communities and region.

The Expo Board of Directors is very proud of the Newell Regional Expo initiative. We have designed the Final Report to provide you with a summary of the *Newell Regional Expo Phases I, II and III*. We have included information from Phase I to allow readers a better understanding of the project. It is not written as an academic report and it is hoped that it may be an interesting read for others who are interested in the process we have used in the Newell County area. We thank other communities whose information proved so invaluable to us throughout the project. We are pleased with the process and outcomes of the Expo project to date. The recent change in the board of directors to reflect a true regional, multi-level, multi-sector membership is a very positive outcome.

The Expo Board would like to thank the County of Newell residents who are involved in the Expo process. We would also like to thank our funders for your continued support. Special thanks to Cam Stewart, Human Rights & Citizenship and Susan Coombs, Consultant, who provided wisdom and support throughout the process. Thank you also to Emery Pastachak, Summer Media Coordinator for Grasslands Regional FCSS and Producer of the two DVD's, who worked very hard to capture the essence of the Newell Regional Expo project and the County Expo Tour. Thank you to Medicine Hat College who was the project banker and Grasslands Regional FCSS who provided all levels of administrative support. Thank you all!

For more information regarding the Newell Regional Expo Future Visions Project please contact Lynn Pye-Matheson, Grasslands Regional FCSS (Phone 403 362 4549; e-mail grasslands.fcss@telus.net).

We hope you enjoy reading about our Expo journey.

Author: Lynn Pye-Matheson, MSW RSW

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GOOD RESOURCES

AUMA Welcoming & Inclusive Communities Video: <http://wic.auma.ca/Newcomers/>

Canadian Municipalities Against Racism and Discrimination (CMARD) Toolkit
http://www.unesco.ca/en/interdisciplinary/coalition/documents/5274_UNESCO_EN_WEB_001.pdf

City of 100 Hello's. Documentary about Brooks: Brandy Yanchyk

Diversity. *Newell Regional Expo Final Report*. Appendix V

Human Rights and Citizenship www.albertahumanrights.ab.ca .

Participatory Action Research. *Newell Regional Expo Final Report*. Appendix VI

Pathways to change: facilitating the full participation of diversity groups in Canadian Society. Background Document. Merrill Cooper, Guyn Cooper Research Associate for Alberta Community Development, Human Rights and Citizenship and Department of Canadian Heritage, Alberta District (2006).

Tamarack Institute for Community Engagement www.tamarackcommunity.ca

Vibrant Communities. Calgary www.vibrantcalgary.com.

Welcoming & Inclusive Communities AUMA Conference Package December, 2011
<http://wic.auma.ca/Events/?contentId=120>

For additional resources, please contact Lynn Pye-Matheson grasslands.fcss@telus.net

BACKGROUND

The Newell Regional Expo idea grew out of an identified need for different sectors and groups/individuals to work together to address priorities within the Newell Region (which includes the City of Brooks)

Formal and informal feedback from newcomer and long term residents (community, sectoral and interest areas) within the County of Newell demonstrated a desire for increased opportunities to have an individual and collective voice in planning for the future of our communities. The feedback also indicates the need to enhance/create community pride, cohesion, and sense of belonging¹ and to ensure communities are sustainable and maintain their unique identities.

A Telling Our Story Centennial Event hosted by Grasslands Regional Family and Community Support Services (FCSS) Society was held in 2005 as a first step to encourage civic participation and to enhance and develop community pride and a sense of belonging and ownership within our region. The face of our area was changing and many residents recognized the increasing diversity as an opportunity to enrich the social and economic fabric of our communities by encouraging inclusion, civic participation and honoring the diversity within our area (ethnic; racial; age; abilities; socio-economic; gender) and by promoting our area as a wonderful place to live and work (APPENDIX I)

At that time, there was a lack of coordinated, adequately resourced opportunities for community residents to have a meaningful voice in grassrootsplanning the long term future of their communities at both the community and regional levels.

Over the years, various local groups were involved in discussion prior to this initiative regarding creating sustainable communities and responding to and/or celebrating the changes within our area in a positive, pro-active manner

In February, 2007, a group of people met at the City of Brooks office to discuss how to positively promote the growing diversity in our area. This group discussed the need to bring people together in some manner to generate discussion around building healthy, inclusive, sustainable communities. This group continued to grow to include concerned residents and people providing services and programs throughout our region (APPENDIX II)

Discussion within this group led to the recognition that many different groups within our area were having similar discussions and it would be a good idea to bring people together to get participation and feedback on moving forward to encourage welcoming, inclusive, sustainable communities. A need was identified to create a vehicle to plan and coordinate together (Community Advisory Committee).

¹Seidel, Rebekah (2006) *Uncovering the strengths in Brooks, Tilley, Rosemary & Duchess; Assets and social needs identification. Community Asset Mapping. Final Report submitted to Grasslands Regional FCSS.* Brooks, Alberta.

Community Advisory Committee

The first community meeting was held in June, 2007 with over 30 people in attendance, many who were involved in communities throughout our area in different ways - economic development; social programming, education, health services and residents interested in complementing work being done in communities.

Discussion occurred about how we can promote our area, encourage residents to get together, share their stories, learn about other cultures and heritages and talk about the strengths in their community and their vision for the future. Discussion evolved into recognition that any process needed to lend itself to long-term, positive results. Participants then agreed that any initiative should be an ongoing process with the underlying belief that people need to Tell Their Story (through music, dance, entertainment, food, language, art, tours, dialogues) , learn about each other and increase understanding of the changing times (through workshops) and have a voice in creating the future of their ideal sustainable, welcoming and inclusive communities (future visions). The feeling was that we needed to move away from the “same ten people” sitting around the table.

Discussions reflected on past and present initiatives to find ways to promote a positive, healthy quality of life for all – long-time residents and newcomers. The idea for what became the Newell Regional Expo project was born. In October, 2007, the group had grown and much discussion led to the naming of “Newell Regional Expo” to reflect a regional process. Although Brooks is a name recognized outside our area, we all agreed that this should be a regional initiative and the name should reflect that.

This grassroots project was created to help provide resources into our communities if there was interest in helping plan the future visions/ideal communities of the future. It was not intended to replace any other work or research being done but to complement other resources within communities. We believe that only community residents can determine what’s best and take the steps to ensure communities continue to be vibrant, sustainable and welcoming to all. Communities are unique yet share many similarities. The hope was that this process would flesh out and help build on uniqueness and generate discussion about living and working together.

The Community Advisory identified and agreed upon a framework for the Future Visions project. Sanction was also given to create a Newell Regional Expo Society which was registered as a society in May, 2008.

FRAMEWORK

Name: Newell Regional Expo Society

Theme: Celebrating Community Diversity, Pride & Partnerships; Past, Present and Future.

Vision: The *Newell Regional Future Visions Project* will develop *Future Visions Plans* to enhance the formation of welcoming and inclusive communities within the Newell Region of Southern Alberta.

Mission: To increase community capacity to develop and sustain work in building inclusive organizations and communities.

- Goals:**
1. To strengthen and re-ignite community spirit, connectedness and pride.
 2. To engage all community residents in discussion about their ideal community
 3. To dispel any myths and counter negative media about our communities
 4. To provide a venue for all citizens to share their heritage and culture
 5. To provide a means and structure to gather and summarize residents' feedback about their communities

This PAR process was designed as a multi-year , three phase project starting in 2008

Phase 1—Engaging the Community (2008) was designed to act as an introduction and catalyst for building, sharing and sustaining our future visions of welcoming & inclusive communities (Conference and *Telling Our Story Festival*).

Phase 2—Building Our Future Visions (September 2008-May, 2010) and Phase 3—Taking Action and Keeping the Vision Alive (May 2010 and beyond) were designed as the major components of the Newell Regional Expo multi-year year initiative created as a grassroots initiative to provide opportunity for all residents to have a meaningful voice in building the *Future Visions* of our ideal communities.

METHODOLOGY

The underlying belief, based on social inclusion research², is that the process and outcomes of the Future Visions Project will encourage welcoming, inclusive communities. This project made use of best practices research, toolkits and evaluation tools to develop *Community Future Vision Plans*, a *Newell Regional Future Vision Plan* and a *Future Vision Community Development Toolkit* for use within the communities, the region and other communities wishing to create and implement Future Visions Plans.

The *Building Our Future Visions* Participatory Action Research process provided the resources and opportunities for residents throughout our area to have a meaningful voice and continued involvement in a variety of ways: (i) introduction and resident-engagement at the one day Phase I *Welcoming & Inclusive Communities Conference* and the two day *Telling Our Story Festival held in Brooks October 3-5, 2008.*; (ii) *secondary research* to inform planning (iii) *100 Welcoming & Inclusive surveys* administered to establish a baseline and provide comparative data; (iv) participation in the *Future Visions of Welcoming & inclusive PAR Process* which gathered feedback from residents and established working groups who identified preliminary next steps to build welcoming and inclusive communities; (v) preliminary action steps in each community; (vi) showcasing plans and actions in a variety of ways; (vii) Newell Regional Expo Evaluation and (viii) Future Visions continuation and sustainability.

FUTURE VISIONS PROCESS

Phase 1 – Engaging our Community (March 2007 – November, 2008)

Phase 1 *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Conference* and *Telling Our Story II Festival*, October 3-5, 2008. Phase I was designed for residents to become familiar with the Future Visions project and to become engaged in community building through increasing knowledge of welcoming and inclusive communities (conference) and through sharing histories and culture (*Telling Our Story II*). It was intended to act as a catalyst for Phase II and Phase III. Residents were introduced to Monica Knight, Future Visions of Welcoming & Inclusive Communities Facilitator. For logistical reasons, most of the activities of Phase 1 were held in Brooks, however, never forgetting the overall regional consideration.

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² Merill Cooper, Guyn Cooper Research Associate for Alberta Community Development, Human Rights and Citizenship and Department of Canadian Heritage, Alberta District (2006). *Pathways to change: facilitating the full participation of diversity groups in Canadian Society. Background Document.*

Conference

A one day Welcoming & Inclusive Communities conference was held at the Heritage Inn on Friday, October 3rd, 2008. The conference was attended by over 100 persons and featured keynote speaker Monica Knight and workshops directed at Business, Seniors/Elders, Youth and Community Development. Youth presentations, including a youth leadership forum, were held at ALL schools within the County and in Brooks. Over 700 youth participated in the workshops. A discussion about future visions of welcoming and inclusive communities facilitated by Monica Knight provided preliminary feedback for the Future Visions project (APPENDIX III)

Telling Our Story II Festival

The two *Telling Our Story* festival, which was free to all participants, was centered at the Lakeside Leisure Centre and surrounding schools. The Festival included a wide range of activities for people of all ages. The Festival schedule included: Community Performances (music, singing and dance), Art and Artisan Exhibits, History and Community Exhibits, Children's Festival, Tours, Ceremonies (Lieutenant Governor Norman Kwong, officially opened the Expo) and Food (Food included a Taste of Brooks, a community supper and pancake breakfast). Festival sessions provided the opportunity for all community groups to share their culture and traditions with the rest of our very diverse community (APPENDIX IV). A somewhat behind the scenes activity during Phase 1 was the gathering of face-to-face information about the welcoming state of our communities through the conference and Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Survey (n=100). This information served to get a snapshot of where communities were at in the fall of 2008 and provided information for the participatory action research process to begin in communities.

Extensive evaluation and reporting to funders completed Phase 1 in November, 2008. During this part of the evaluation process feedback received from many individuals was positive and provided valuable information for continuing the Future Visions project.

PHASES II AND III Preparation

Secondary Research and Planning

Secondary research on Diversity (APPENDIX V) and Participatory Action Research (APPENDIX VI) was completed by Monica Knight and the Expo Board of Directors to inform the work plan

Presentation to Councils

The Board of Directors of Grasslands Regional FCSS invited their municipal partners to a Future Visions Presentation in October, 2008 to share information and to build continued support for the project (APPENDIX VII).

Welcoming & Inclusive Communities Survey

A *Welcoming & Inclusive Communities Survey* was administered to 100 residents at the three day Expo and results were used to create a baseline to measure change and to inform the PAR process. This survey was re-administered in October, 2011 to 100 residents at the Family Fun Day event for comparative analysis against the first survey. This survey was created as a learning tool for the Brooks Campus introductory sociology class to collect specific, local information and cannot be considered as valid or reliable for use elsewhere.

Phase II and Phase III

Phase II: Building Our Future Visions

This component provided structure and resources to focus on the process of gathering residents to create, approve, action and share the *Future Visions* plans for individual communities and region.

Phase III: Taking Action & Keeping Our Visions Alive

Phase III provided structure and resources to disseminate, to begin to implement, and to promote our area and our *Future Visions Plans*. It was also intended to inform the planning for key stakeholders across the sectors.

THE PARTICIPATORY ACTION RESEARCH PROCESS

Goal 1 : To engage all community residents in discussion about their 'ideal' community.

Goal 2: To provide the means and structure to gather and summarize residents' feedback about their communities.

Phase 2 – Building Our Future Visions (September, 2008 – May, 2010)

This Participatory Action Research (PAR) process gave opportunity for the residents of the County of Newell and the City of Brooks to have direct input at the grassroots level into developing future visions. Residents, either as individuals or as groups/organizations expressed their views of a welcoming and inclusive community. This gathered a wide range of information and ideas for the development of social, economic or other strategies intended to inform key stakeholders and decision-makers.

Using a Participatory Action Research approach, feedback from residents throughout our area was gathered by Monica Knight from October, 2008 to May, 2010 (APPENDIX VIII).

Understanding the complexity of communities, various venues were created to facilitate feedback: Future Visions Community Open and Closed Forums with various numbers of participants; World Cafes; Kitchen and Coffee Shop meetings; and presentations and discussion with municipal councils and key formal groups throughout the County of Newell (including the City of Brooks). Over 200 individual residents participated directly in the PAR forums, cafes and individual/small group meetings and an additional 250 participated in presentations and

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discussions. Resident participation reflected a fair representative sample of both the diversity and population size of the various communities in our area with the exception of our rural Mennonite and Hutterite residents.

County of Newell Individual Communities

In the County there were over 200 persons involved in the PAR Process.

Forums, Cafes, individual/small group gatherings were held in Scandia, Rosemary, Tilley, Patricia, Rolling Hills, Bassano and Gem (APPENDIX IX Interim Report, December 2009)

Identified Feedback and Actions:

- Tilley - Community Action Team Society (CATS) was formed to begin rejuvenation of main street
- Scandia - Promotion of Brand "*Scandia: the Best Place to Bee*"
- Rosemary - Promotion of Rural Roots through Long Lunch
- Rolling Hills -Celebrating their Community through hosting the Expo Celebration
- Patricia – need for increased volunteerism identified. The FCSS Volunteer Resource Centre provided resources and suggestions
- Gem – need to accommodate needs of a growing seniors population. Facilitator attended the monthly Seniors Dinner and Clinic in Gem
- Bassano – Customer Service – workshop developed and presented to group in Bassano

City of Brooks

In Brooks, there were over 240 persons involved in the PAR Process (APPENDIX IX; Interim Report)

- Heritage Inn Courtyard Communities in Bloom
- Workshops held at Brooks Campus with a variety of stakeholders; World Cafes
- Meetings at organization workplaces (SPEC, Rainbow Coalition, Brooks Campus, Seniors Outreach, Volunteer Resource Centre, FCSS, etc.)
- Meetings at municipal offices
- Chamber of Commerce
- Rotary Club of Brooks
- United Church Ladies Auxiliary
- Retired Teachers' Association
- New Directions Course at Brooks Campus
- Medieval Faire Committee
- Tumbleweed Theatre troupe members

Brooks Community Identified Feedback and Actions:

- Use the *Newell Regional Expo Telling Our Story Festival* (October 2008) event as a model and hold another Expo-like event
- Need for a community hall type facility with industrially approved kitchen and space to host weddings, food incubators (*Flavour of Brooks*) in partnership with Horticultural Centre/Entre-Corp, festivals etc. (APPENDIX X)
- *City of 100 Hello's* was embraced as a slogan for future consideration particularly given 2010 Centennial Year.
- 100+ attended a *Long Lunch coordinated by Global Friendship Immigration Centre*, to celebrate diversity in Brooks. Potential as annual event.
- What began as the Expo *Small Beginnings* art show (now permanently located at Medicine College, Brooks Campus) for the October 2008 Expo event led to the *New Beginnings* art show, featuring 61 local artists which travelling as an Alberta Arts Exhibit throughout the province from 2010 to 2012 (APPENDIX XI)
- A documentary *Brooks: City of 100 Hello's* was produced and distributed by Brandy Yanchyk, independent filmmaker for OMNI television. This originated from informally hearing about Brooks as a "City of 100 Hello's" This documentary premiered in Brooks in 2011 and has been nominated for several awards, internationally, nationally and provincially (APPENDIX XII).

Regional Themes

Five Themes developed for Regional Future Visions

Five Regional EXPO Pillars of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities s were identified as themes in the County of Newell and City of Brooks communities. Although each community did not identify all themes, communities agreed that these themes were appropriate at the regional level:

1. Diversity and multiculturalism
2. Main street rejuvenation
3. Celebration of rural roots
4. Promotion of local business/producers
5. Promotion of economic development/tourism underpinned by developing partnerships.

Learning, Sharing And Showcasing Community Actions:

Community plans and actions were showcased in a variety of ways with participation of residents from the working groups and other interested parties throughout the PAR process (APPENDIX XIII). Opportunity for learning about funding opportunities and successes in other communities were made available.

1. *Flavor of Brooks Celebration*, October, 2009, at the Douglass County Inn
The celebration and discussion featured an International Sample buffet and was attended by county and City of Brooks residents (APPENDIX XIV)
2. *Expo Community Showcase Celebration* in Rolling Hills November, 2009
Communities showcased the actions they had taken in each community. The Rolling Hills Community hosted 200 people at this event. Displays were set up and power point presentations were given by each community (APPENDIX IX)
3. *Celebrating our Rural Roots* at Douglass Country Inn , February, 2010 Expo
This was attended by 50 people who discussed how to work together. Guest speakers included: Alberta Agriculture, Alberta Tourism & Development, presentations from communities outside the Newell region (APPENDIX IX)
4. *Funders Forum*, May 2009
This forum featured presentations from by a variety of provincial grant program staff regarding grants for arts, heritage, social programs, community and rural development and sustainability. (APPENDIX XV). As a result of the forum, Scandia applied for and received \$223,500 from the Rural Community Program from the Province of Alberta (APPENDIX XVI)
5. *Expo Partners Phase II Results Forum and Celebration*, March 2010 at Brooks Campus
This was attended by County of Newell and City of Brooks Phase II participants. Monica Knight, Phase II facilitator, presented her findings and attendees discussed the process and next steps (APPENDIX XVII).
6. *Findings and Recommendation to Local Funders and other Key Stakeholders*. May, 2010

Conclusions And Recommendations:

- A Welcome Package (i.e. Welcome Wagon) concept was identified in all communities with a common theme but tailored to each community.
- A Regional Tour - concerns identified regarding coordination and funding.
- Offer some continued resources in partnering communities. Recommendations and Actions Steps had been identified in partnering communities but general consensus was there needed to be resources to move forward the short terms projects and long/or longer term planning. There were concerns that without additional resources the work completed to date could potentially lose momentum and get lost. {Details of Phase II: *Phase II Interim Report* (APPENDIX IX); *Phase II Final Report* (APPENDIX XVIII) ; DVD Newell Regional Expo Phase I,II,III DVD (APPENDIX XIX).

Phase III- Taking Action and Keeping the Vision Alive

To promote and share successes of Phase I and II and to help ensure sustainability of future visions.

FUTURE VISIONS CONTINUATION

Newell Regional Expo's primary focus during this phase was to ensure that communities had the resources to continue the previously identified actions and to plan for new collective actions to build welcoming and inclusive communities (APPENDIX XIX). A major consideration with partnering communities involved in the project was to have the resources in place to ensure sustainability.

The Future Visions of Welcoming & Inclusive Communities PAR results were utilized to invite community champions to attend follow-up forums held in Scandia (October 2010) and Brooks (September, 2010). The purpose of these forums was to confirm and discuss identified themes and to develop further action steps, continuing to build the *Future Visions of Welcoming & Inclusive Communities*.

NEXT STEPS

Brooks

Brooks Forum

The Brooks Forum was attended by community champions identified through the PAR process. ACE Communities facilitated this forum which shared information for community engagement but did not provide opportunity to identify further action steps to build welcoming and inclusive communities. Attendees agreed that the ACE workshop and toolkit would be more useful for those communities just beginning a community building process (APPENDIX XXI).

The Newell Regional Expo Board members and City of Brooks Future Visions participants determined that future feedback and concrete action would be required, with the City of Brooks potentially taking the leadership role through a partnership with the Newell Regional Expo Society. This would provide resources to expand the welcoming and inclusive communities work already begun by the City of Brooks.

City of Brooks and Newell Regional Expo Society Partnership

Through the feedback, forum and surveys, it was identified that the City of Brooks would be the appropriate party to take the leadership role in building welcoming & inclusive communities. In June 2011, negotiations were held between Expo board members and City of Brooks staff. The *Welcoming and Inclusive Communities: Working in Partnership* identified the congruence between the Expo Goals and Pillars and the City of Brooks Objectives (APPENDIX XXII). An agreement and Process Flow Chart (APPENDIX XXIII) was created to guide the partnership process.

The Newell Regional Expo Society entered into a formal agreement (APPENDIX XXIV; APPENDIX XXV; APPENDIX XXVI) to help the City of Brooks expand their leadership role in building a welcoming and inclusive community. The timing for this partnership was right and the agreement with the City of Brooks included the hiring of an inclusion coordinator to get feedback from community on the City's role in building a more comprehensive welcoming & inclusive communities plan.

Key Actions and Outcomes within Brooks:

- I) City of Brooks Council/Staff *Diversity* Workshop (APPENDIX XXVII)
- II) City of Brooks *Staff Diversity Survey* (APPENDIX XXVIII)
- III) City of Brooks Community Advisory Group Orientation Luncheon: created to introduce attendees to the City/Expo partnership and gather community feedback regarding the City of Brooks operations, internal and external (APPENDIX XXIX; APPENDIX XXX).
- IV) *City of Brooks Welcoming and Inclusive Communities Partnership Plan 2012-2014* Included in the plan are both internal and external Goals, objective and measures of success as well as results of a review of Diversity Policies (APPENDIX XXXI; APPENDIX XXXII; APPENDIX XXXIII).
- V) *Welcome Package* created tailored to need: ie. business; physicians, families. (APPENDIX XXXIV)
- VI) Translation services on the City of Brooks *website www.brooks.ca* (APPENDIX XXXV)
- VII) Bringing Citizenship Ceremonies to Brooks (Dinosaur Provincial Park September, 2011 and Griffin Park Theatre, April 27, 2012 (APPENDIX XXXVI)
- VIII) Commitment to the Inclusion Coordinator Position in 2012.
- IX) Diversity Business Recognition Program. The first winner was announced in March, 2012 (APPENDIX XXXVII; APPENDIX XXXVIII; APPENDIX XXIX; APPENDIX XL; APPENDIX XLI)
- X) Hate Crime Awareness Day (APPENDIX XLII).
- XI) Proclamation of March 21st International Day for Elimination of Racial Discrimination (APPENDIX XLIII).
- XII) Diversity and Anti-Discrimination Connections Program : St. Joseph's Collegiate and the Brooks Composite High School. Students were involved in numerous activities that highlighted diversity and anti-discrimination.
- XIII) *The City of 100 Hellos* Premiere at Griffin Park.
- XIV) Black History Month display at City Hall.
- XV) Promotion of Brooks as Welcoming & Inclusive: Lethbridge and Strathmore Diversity Conferences- presentations by City of Brooks staff Lisa Tiffin and Lynn Pye-Matheson (Grasslands Regional FCSS) ; Welcoming and Inclusive Conference in Edmonton, December, 2011 highlighted Brooks (APPENDIX XLIV).

Bassano: A planned ACE Communities workshop was cancelled in Bassano due to low registration numbers.

County Communities Joint Planning Forum

38 community champions from Tilley, Rosemary, Duchess, Rolling Hills, Scandia, Patricia and the County attended a forum in Scandia in October, 2010 . This forum resulted in the formation of the *Celebrating Expo Communities* working group. Discussion of individual communities and brainstorming at the regional level led to the realization that residents often did not understand, visit or share information with their neighboring communities within the County of Newell. These residents identified five primary actions steps focused on increasing common understanding and working together to create welcoming & Inclusive communities:(Appendix XLV; Appendix XLVI) . Results were submitted to the Expo board (APPENDIX XLVII; APPENDIX XLVIII) and the *Celebrating Expo Communities* group received \$10,000 from the Newell Regional Expo Board in March, 2011 (APPENDIX XLIX). Since that time the group has continued to meet and with funding provided by the Expo Board and Grasslands Regional FCSS (\$10,000 in 2012), has planned and implemented several initiatives since April, 2011. Membership in the group has grown to include most communities in our area.

Celebrating Expo Communities Key Action Steps and Outcomes:

- i) Expo Short Tour June, 2011. A prelude to the long tour to Showcase each community and gather information for possible long tours in the future. 45 persons rode a bus throughout the county and gained knowledge about each community featured on the tour (Appendix L; Appendix LI;).
- ii) Long Tour. To expand on the short tour and provide opportunity for communities to share their heritage, culture and community highlights/facilities with others. This is scheduled for June, 2013.
- iii) Calendar of Events – Event, dates and times included. Contact names and numbers included. The County of Newell has taken responsibility to provide information of weekly events and important happenings throughout our area (Appendix LII)
- iv) Honour A Community Dinner and Social. One community hosts a dinner honouring another community who showcases the community to those attending the dinner. In April 2011, Scandia honoured Rosemary; Rosemary honoured Tilley in 2012; Tilley will honor Bassano in 2013. (Appendix LIII ; Appendix LIV.; Appendix LV; Appendix LVI; Appendix LVII; Appendix LVIII; Appendix LIX; Appendix LX).
- v) Potluck International Supper. Bring all ethnic groups together. A dinner is planned during Alberta Arts Days in September, 2012 in Brooks.

FINDINGS:

Welcoming & Inclusive Communities Surveys - 2008; & 2011 The 2008 and 2011 informal surveys were created based on feedback from community regarding what information might be useful to the project. The survey was used as a tool for Lynn Pye-Matheson's Introductory Sociology students to learn about research methodology and should not be considered as meeting the standards of scientific rigor necessary to be seen as valid or reliable for uses elsewhere.

Survey Questions:

1. What is your age?
2. Where do you live?
3. How long have you lived in the area?
4. In what country were you born?
5. If an immigrant, in what year did you come to Canada?
6. What work do you do?
7. Do you think your community is welcoming and inclusive?
8. If you are a newcomer/ new resident to the community (lived here less than two years), how were you welcomed into your community/ who welcomed you?
9. What ideas do you have to welcome newcomers to this area? (From other places in Alberta? Canada? Other Countries)?
10. What/ who can help "your community" be welcoming & inclusive and move forward successfully into the future? It is important to note that some respondents had more than one idea.
11. What "history" do you think is important to preserve in your community? It is important to note that some respondents had more than one idea.

2008 Welcoming & inclusive Survey (October 3-5, 2008) Summary (n=100):

Summary: The survey was an informal opportunity to get a snapshot of residents' perception and ideas for building welcoming & Inclusive Communities. 16.9% (n=14) of 97 question respondents identified themselves as immigrants, with 12 of these respondents living in Brooks. Ages ranged from fourteen years to eighty years.

62% of respondents said "Yes", their community is welcoming and inclusive; 34% did not find their community welcoming and 4% were undecided. This indicated a potential need for additional planning and initiatives to increase residents' perception of being welcomed and included in their communities.

Ideas for building welcoming & inclusive communities formed key themes: (i) community cultural events & activities; (ii) individuals being welcoming; (iii) a community gathering place; (iv) promotion and marketing; (v) community beautification; (vi) more shopping; (vii) learning about each other.

There was overwhelming support for the municipalities to take a leadership role in building community. Respondents felt it was a personal responsibility and help could be provided by business, human services and government sectors. Respondents thought that it was important to preserve the history of people and places in our area. 53 of the 99 respondents indicated interest in discussion about future planning. These respondents provided contact information and were invited to the community discussions of Future Visions: Welcoming and Inclusive Communities.

2011 Welcoming & Inclusive Survey (October 3, 2011) Summary (n=100)

The survey was an informal opportunity for comparative analysis of the previous survey administered in 2008 regarding residents' ideas for building welcoming & Inclusive Communities. The October 2011 welcoming and inclusive survey results demonstrate an increased satisfaction that communities are welcoming and inclusive. 39.7% (n=27) of 95 question respondents identified themselves as immigrants, with all of these respondents living in Brooks. Ages ranged from fourteen years to seventy years.

86.5% of respondents thought their community was welcoming and inclusive; 10.4% did not find their community welcoming and 16.7 were undecided. This reflects an increase from 2008 of 17.9% of residents finding their communities welcoming and inclusive. Although not tested, the increase in satisfaction may be the result of purposeful diversity initiatives and growing comfort levels with residents living in diverse communities.

Ideas for building welcoming & inclusive communities formed key themes , some similar to 2008: (i) more community cultural events & activities; (ii) individuals being welcoming; (iii) a community gathering place (67.7%); (iv) children and youth spaces and programs ; (v) community beautification; (vi) residents having a voice in communities.

Primary responsibility for a welcoming & inclusive community resides with the City of Brooks and the Council/Mayor according to respondents. 38.5% of respondents feel that it is everyone's responsibility to welcome newcomers. People continued to believe it is important to preserve the history of people and places in our area.

Some of the responses indicated prejudicial and racist attitudes towards newcomers which may indicate additional work could be done through public education and increased opportunities to learn about each other.

Future Visions Feedback Survey : May, 2012

The *Newell Regional Expo Society Evaluation* was created to measure the Expo goals. The survey (n= 31) gathered feedback from persons who have knowledge and understanding of the project vision, goals and process and who have been directly involved in the Newell Regional Expo initiative. (Appendix LXI). The survey provided good feedback from persons who were directly involved in the process.

Key Findings and Recommendations:

Process

- Participatory Action Research is a very effective tool to begin to engage communities and to bring people together. It builds excitement and helps ensure residents stay involved because they have a 'voice'.
- Participatory Action Research is good because it involves people at the grassroots level but need to ensure that communication is clear and filtering to all people involved
- People don't always have to be involved in everything but need to be kept informed
- Marketing and promotion is a key element and needs to be one of the focuses
- When working on a project with a broad scope, it is important to build in opportunities for people to understand, give feedback and provide clarity and direction throughout the process.
- The advantage of having a "Society" (formal structure) is that it enables a smaller group of people to make decisions and move things forward in a timely manner
- The disadvantage of "Society" is you lose the consensus framework where everyone is involved in every step of the process (although very time consuming)
- Critical to have clearly established vision, goals, objectives and agreement about who/what/when/where/why. These need to be visited regularly.
- Important to ensure that key decision-makers are kept well informed of the project, process and outcomes. (Orientation and reporting back personally at key times).

Future Recommendations:

- Keep a regional focus but recognize that each community has their own unique characteristics
- New board members – visioning and planning for the future
- Ensure that the grassroots component continues
- Continue to support the work in the smaller communities and in the City of Brooks, recognizing that we have a rural/urban blend.
- Revisit the Newell Regional Expo name.
- Market and promote the Newell Regional Expo.
- Develop strategies to engage residents with Mennonite and Hutterite backgrounds.

FUTURE VISIONS

The *Future Visions of Welcoming & Inclusive Communities* continues with positive steps being taken to meet the vision and goals of the Newell Regional Expo project. An increasing number of people are involved, collective action is occurring and the ideas and excitement keeps growing!

Most recently, the City of Brooks and Celebrating Expo Communities membership has grown and members have come together to step forward onto the Newell Regional Board of Directors, including Mayors and Councilors from five municipalities. This demonstrates a continued commitment to collectively build welcoming & inclusive communities. Newell Regional Expo Board approved at the May 29, 2012 Annual General Meeting the following Board Members from throughout the area:

1. Sharon Fisk, Chairperson – Hamlet of Scandia, Chair former Celebrating Expo Communities Expo sub-committee
2. Bruce Snape, Vice-Chair – Village of Duchess Councilor
3. Martin Shields, Secretary – City of Brooks, Mayor
4. Lynn Pye-Matheson, Treasurer – Grasslands Regional FCSS
5. Jeff Gerestein – Board Member – City of Brooks, Inclusion Coordinator
6. Yoko Fujimoto – Board Member – Village of Rosemary, Councilor
7. Lisa Tiffin – Board Member – City of Brooks, Manager of Shared Services
8. Tracey Harahus – Board Member, SPEC Association for Children & Families
9. Doug Miller – Board Member, President Royal Canadian Legion #63
10. John Timko – Board Member, Village of Tilley, Mayor
11. Michelle Gietz – Board Member, County of Newell, Newell Regional Economic Development Committee – Chair, County of Newell Economic Development Officer.
12. Terry Riles – Board Member, Royal Canadian Legion #63, Manager.

The Key Actions identified by the former Celebrating Expo Communities group and City of Brooks staff, council and community members will be continued through the Newell Regional Expo Society Board of Directors with the Regional Expo Tour, Community Calendar, Honoring a Community Dinners and International Dinners and continued community and regional planning.

Future inclusion community partnership plans led by the City of Brooks include : (i) Celebration of June 21st as National Aboriginal Day; (ii) July 1st Canada Day Celebrations; (iii) Ramadan August celebration and information session about Ramadan; (iv) Alberta Culture Days in September which will include a Potluck Internal Supper.

The City of Brooks will continue to build welcoming and inclusive communities internally through continuous staff feedback and ensuring policies and procedures reflect diversity best practices; externally, the City will continue to partner with community to recognize and promote diversity within our communities.

16.

SUCCESS OUTCOME INDICATORS SUMMARY:

PARTNERSHIPS and SUSTAINABILITY

The *Future Visions of Welcoming & Inclusive Communities Project* has provided resources and sustainability opportunities to residents in our area. Feedback and collective actions have resulted in Newell Regional Expo Society partnerships with both the City of Brooks and the *Celebrating Expo Communities* working group.

Community champions, organizations and key decision-makers have reviewed, approved and utilized the results of the Future Visions results. The *Celebrating Expo Communities* group was successful in receiving funding from Grasslands Regional FCSS , Newell Regional Expo Society and the County of Newell's Regional Economic Development department as a result of providing their Future Vision collective plan , implementation of key actions and confirmed actions for the future. The City of Brooks partnered with the Newell Regional Expo Society to conduct a comprehensive analysis of their internal operations and relationship with community when building welcoming & inclusive environments. This has resulted in hiring an Inclusion Coordinator and producing two keys documents: (i) 2011 Staff Diversity Survey; (ii) 2012-2014 City of Brooks Welcoming and Inclusive Plan. These results are indicative of integration into planning processes at all levels and the ability of the results to leverage additional funding. Community champions have been committed to working hard to ensure that plans are in place and moved to action within each community and regionally. Collectively, the Newell Regional Expo Society will be utilized as a mechanism to ensure sustainability and continued planning and action to continue to build the Future Visions of Welcoming and Inclusive Communities.

The Future Vision Project has provided the formal structure (Newell Regional Expo Society) and processes (PAR and Survey methodologies), resources (governance and coordination) and means (facilitation and funding) to gather, summarize, disseminate and showcase the *Future Visions* for each identified community and the region as a whole. The *Future Visions* process and documents provide useful planning direction and actions for communities at every level. Active participation in this process and implementing strategies towards the *Future Visions* helps ensure that communities continue to work towards building welcoming and inclusive environments in our communities and region.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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- Emery Pastachak: Phase I, II and III DVD (Summer Marketing Coordinator, Grasslands Regional FCSS)
- Medicine Hat College, Brooks Campus
- Brooks & County Immigration Services
- Newell Regional Expo Board Members Past and Present
- SPEC Association for Children and Families
- Grasslands Regional FCSS: DVDs Script and Production; Proposal and Report Writing)

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