



ALBERTA SOUTHWEST REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ALLIANCE OVERVIEW OF PROJECTS

Alberta SouthWest Regional Economic Development
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ALBERTA SOUTHWEST REGIONAL ALLIANCE LTD.

CORPORATE HISTORY

- ❖ **1999:** Discussion between 5 neighbouring communities to identify common issues and sharing resources.
- ❖ **June 2001:** A “Memorandum of Understanding” is drafted to support forming a collaborative partnership.
- ❖ **May 16, 2002:** A “Conditional Grant Agreement” from Alberta Municipal Affairs is signed by the five communities to explore establishing common goals and a partnership structure. The communities are Pincher Creek, Cardston, Claresholm, Fort Macleod and the Municipality of Crowsnest Pass. The Town of Pincher Creek is the legal entity acting on behalf of the partnership.
- ❖ **June 25, 2003:** A “Joint Venture Agreement” is signed by eleven communities to establish the “Mounties to Mountains Economic Regional Initiative” (MMERI).
The Town of Pincher Creek is the Managing Partner and legal entity for the partnership.
“Membership Guidelines” form the basis of partnership operations.
An Operational Grant is received from Alberta Economic Development (AED).
A regional office of AED is established in Pincher Creek.
- ❖ **March 19, 2007:** Alberta SouthWest Regional Alliance Ltd. is incorporated as a non-profit company under *The Companies Act (Alberta)*; membership is 14 communities.
- ❖ **June 1, 2011:** revised “Articles of Association” and new “Policies and Procedures” approved and signed by 16 communities.
[2021 membership is 15 communities, as Town of Granum is now included within the MD of Willow Creek.]



FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS

- “Memorandum of Association” (2006) is the legal document that forms the corporation.
- “Articles of Incorporation” (2011) define the structure.
- “Policy and Procedures” (2011) outline operations and can be revised and amended by Board motion.

❖ Vision

“Working together for prosperous and healthy communities.”

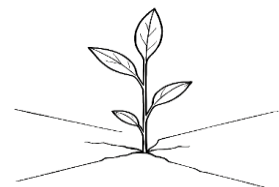
❖ Mission

“Alberta SouthWest is a progressive and innovative regional partnership of diverse communities working together to facilitate sustainable growth in southwest Alberta.”

❖ Quality Themes

It is not only what we do, but how we do it that is important to the success of the region.
“Quality Themes” suggest a guiding spirit for our work in each successive operational year.

- 2007-2008 **ENGAGE:** attract stakeholders to become involved in a meaningful way.
- 2008-2009 **INSPIRE:** think creatively and move toward excellence and innovation.
- 2009-2010 **CELEBRATE:** recognize our successes so that we may build upon them.
- 2010-2011 **CONNECT:** identify partners, resources and community needs.
- 2011-2012 **FOCUS:** set priorities and develop common goals and key messages
- 2012-2013 **ALIGN:** move forward in the same direction to achieve shared vision.
- 2013-2014 **STRENGTHEN:** build the region as a valuable resource for communities.
- 2014-2015 **INFLUENCE:** engage partners to address regional priorities.
- 2015-2016 **SOLIDIFY:** consolidate, research, learn; create a shared vision for bold action.
- 2016-2017 **PROCEED:** assess uncertainties, pick a likely course and keep going.
- 2017-2018 **APPRECIATE:** create value ... and value what we create.
- 2018-2019 **COLLABORATE:** expand strategic partnerships.
- 2019-2020 **ENERGIZE:** fuel the power of connections.
- 2020-2021 **ADAPT:** recognize risks and opportunities; create and support shared success.
- 2021-2022 **PERSEVERE:** do old things creatively ... and do creative new things.
- 2022-2023 **NAVIGATE:** steer a steady course through known and unknown channels.
- 2023-2024 **EVALUATE:** identify strategies for best use of resources.
- 2025-2026 **STRATEGIZE:** address challenges as opportunities.



PROJECTS AND PARTNERSHIPS



❖ Regional Business License Program

Established in 2003, this award-winning Regional Business License Program is now in the 23rd year of successful operation. Strong participation indicates this service is valued by businesses; fees go toward supporting regional projects, with much appreciated support from municipal office staff.

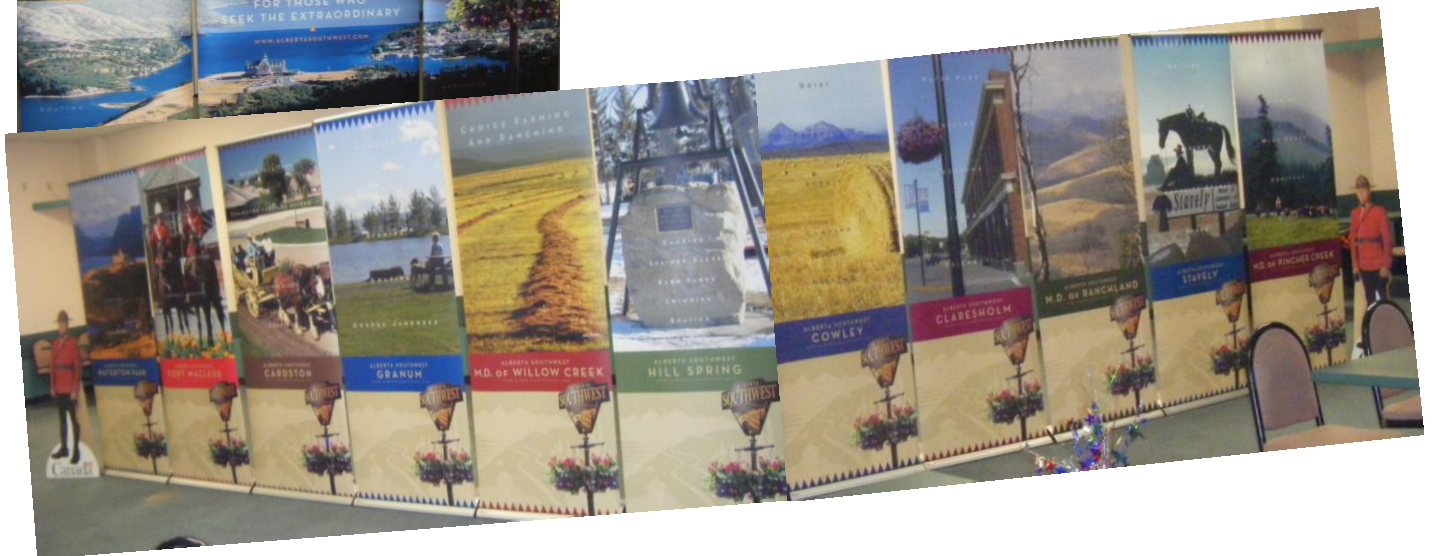
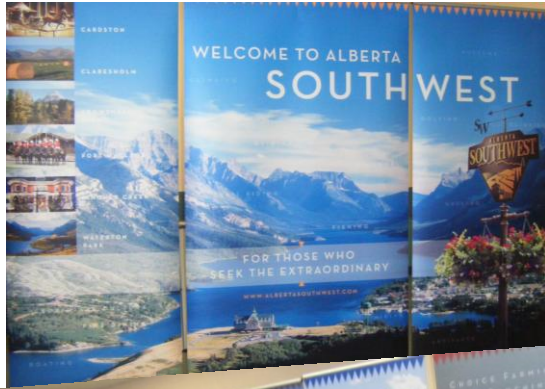


★ 2013 EDA Alex Metcalf Award

❖ Community Display Banners (2009)

Graphically matched pull-up display banners were designed and produced for all 15 communities, to compliment a triple-banner regional image.

This creates a very impactful display, used at regional gatherings and industry trade shows. Each community can also display its own banner for any events. The banner hardware accommodates two designs, so the community can add a second banner to the same hardware.

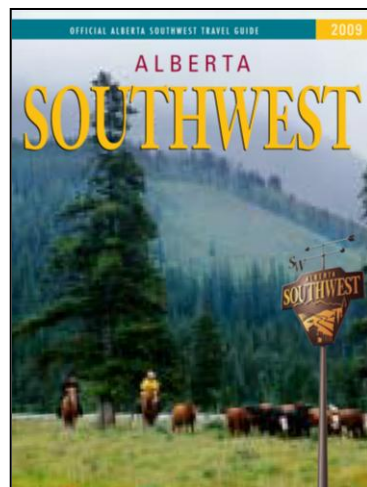
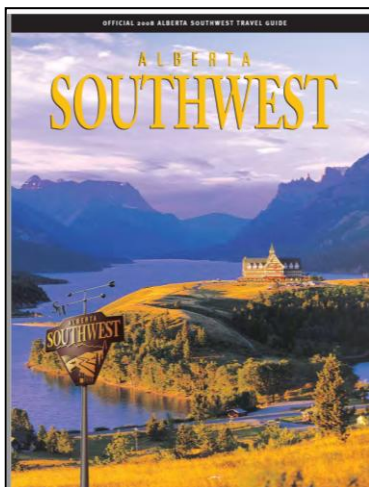


❖ 2008 and 2009 Regional Visitor Guides

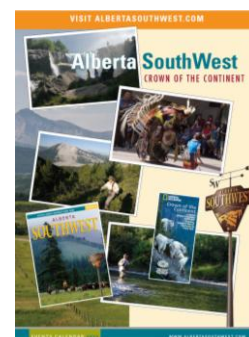
Promoting attractions and businesses, creating awareness of the region “opens the door” to attracting new investment and new residents and retaining and expanding existing businesses.

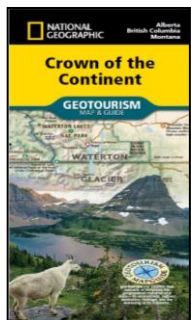
AlbertaSW created its own visitor guide.

Trivia: A few years ago, at a tourism marketing webinar, Roger Brooks held up this guide as a great example of an effective publication.



❖ 2010 Events “Insert”





❖ Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council

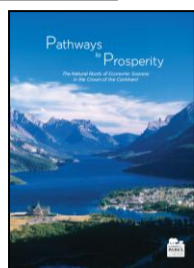
Established in 2007, Crown of the Continent Geotourism Council, is a transboundary partnership with Alberta, British Columbia, and Montana, in collaboration with *National Geographic*.

www.CrownoftheContinent.net

The Council shares best practices from across borders, promoting the concept of geotourism, inspiring visitors and residents to learn, to experience, and to build prosperous communities and businesses while respecting the well-being of our landscapes, communities and culture.



★ 2009 Montana Governor's Award: Tourism Partnership of the Year



❖ Pathways to Prosperity

This 2013 research publication demonstrates the economic value of open spaces. Spectacular outdoor spaces offer lifestyle and recreation amenities that attract knowledge workers and new investment.



❖ Business of Outdoor Recreation Summit

Led by Governor of Montana, the inaugural event in 2018 brought together transboundary partners to build upon business opportunities in this huge sector. 2019 and 2020 events held as on-line workshops and presentations.



❖ GPS Guided Driving Tours

In collaboration with the GYPsy Tour Guide Company, Banff AB, three months of research resulted in over 50,000 words of descriptive content that covers about 1,400 km of highways and 490 points of interest in AlbertaSW.

★ 2014 EDA Use of Digital Media Award



GuideAlong

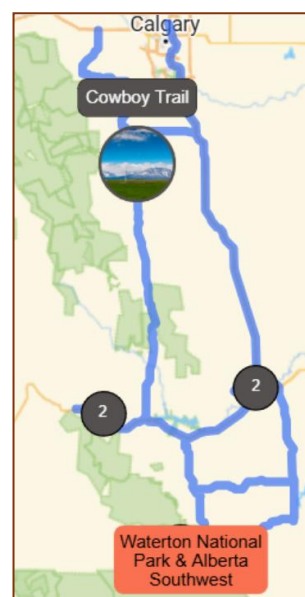
Formerly known as
Gypsy Guide

UPDATE:

The new name is **GuideAlong Tours!**

For a personal GPS guided tour of the region the app can be downloaded for \$4.99!

Go to <https://guidealong.com/> and scroll down to find **Waterton AlbertaSW**



❖ Alberta SouthWest Summer Events and Activities Directory



Designed in collaboration with Parks Canada, who requested our assistance to provide information about "what to do in the region". This was initially created as a tool to be used in anticipation of increased 2017 Sesquicentennial visitation to Waterton Lakes National Park. If the Park was full, staff could helpfully send people off to other options.

That was seen to be very useful, so was updated and revised in 2018 and 2019 and made available as both a print and on-line directory of events, experiences, and activities in the region. 2020 and 2021 updates limited by covid.



❖ Vacation Country Travel Guide

This publication is designed for those from western US, BC, and Alberta who are traveling to the Yukon and to Alaska.

AlbertaSW is favourably featured in the publication.

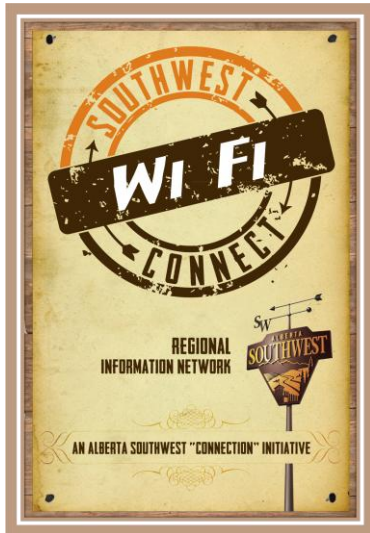
There is a "full" publication, as well as a "north" and "south" version.

Our full-page ad often appears in more than one place within the publications.

The Alberta section has individual notes about the communities in our region, and the publisher welcomes updates and edits from us.

2026 will be the 50th Anniversary of this publication!

<https://travelguidebook.com/>



❖ SOUTHWEST CONNECT Regional Wi-Fi Network and Partners Program

Begun in 2011, this award-winning initiative established a regional partnership network of 37 radios, a mobile locator map and community signage that offered free Wi-Fi and access to regional websites and information. The network is retired; the telecommunications world has evolved. This project was a first step toward creating awareness of the importance and possibilities of community broadband.

★ 2014 EDA Alex Metcalf Award

★ 2014 EDAC Award: On-line Outreach

★ 2014 EDAC Cup Contender; one of 3 Finalists

★ 2014 ALTO Finalist: Tourism Partnership of the Year

❖ Broadband for Community and Economic Development

High speed, high capacity connectivity is essential our communities. SouthWest Connect conducted research to explore the larger issues of deploying fibre-optic infrastructure.

AlbertaSW communities are among the first to be fully serviced by Axia.

This project helped the REDAs to address this issue as a province-wide conversation.



❖ Website, Social Media, and Regional Promotion

A key component of economic development is communication, partnership-building and increasing capacity to promote the region and its opportunities. www.albertasouthwest.com

The AlbertaSW website was re-designed in 2011 and launched with a regional communication and promotion plan.

*The regional site is designed to support and complement our community and chamber sites.

★ 2012 EDAC Cup WINNER - Best National Project: Web Design and Multimedia Marketing

★ 2012 EDAC Project Award: On-line Outreach and Video Contest

★ 2012 EDAC Project Award: Media Campaign

★ 2012 EDAC Project Award: Website Design

★ 2012 Summit International Bronze Award: Community Website



❖ 13 WAYS Performance Review for Ambitious Communities

AlbertaSW, through Twist Marketing, was granted special permission by Doug Griffiths to pilot an implementation of the principles he outlined in his book "13 Ways to Kill Your Community".

The extensive project included interviews with community leaders, surveys, and other research to develop a way to demonstrate where we are doing great (and NOT killing our communities!) and also identify where there might be some factors that are strangling progress.

The results were shared at a region-wide workshop; communities received their "scorecards" and then had an opportunity to discuss next steps.

These results were rolled up into a regional report that was presented and

discussed.

The results for each community, however, have been treated as "personal" information, and it is at the discretion of the municipality to use and share in any way that might be useful.

*Note: These documents, reports, and workshop notes date back to 2015, and we have had changes in staff and council since then. These documents are on file and can be sent to CAO by request.

★ 2016 EDA Community Economic Development Project Award



❖ SouthWest Invest

Regional promotion is foundational to bringing economic benefit to our communities and to our region. AlbertaSW values the work and services of Community Futures Offices (CF SouthWest, and CF Crowsnest Pass) who focus on growing business “one at a time”. Together our offices can meet the needs of communities and business at multiple levels. Alberta SouthWest has landscapes, industry, people, and resources that are attractive to a new generation of wealth creators interested in sustainable economic and community development.



❖ Bringing Investment Home

This 2014 partnership with Community Futures engaged InnoVisions and Associates to conduct research and a series of regional workshops to build upon the CF business visitation program and bring together a cross section of municipal and business partners, expand knowledge and build community investment readiness. www.investsouthwestalberta.com



★ 2015 EDA Alex Metcalf Award

★ 2015 EDA Business Retention and Expansion Project Award



❖ Regional Innovation Network of Southern Alberta (RINSA)

Aligned with Alberta Innovates, RINSA is a multi-organizational initiative to help entrepreneurs bring new products and processes to market and connect with other innovation systems to build province-wide innovation collaboration. www.rinsa.ca

❖ Summer Speaker Series

Through the Regional Innovation Network, the University of Lethbridge offered to help with the request and created a jointly sponsored “Summer Speaker Series” to provide monthly, half-hour presentations on topics such as: Crops and Irrigation; Pollinators; GIS/Smart Farming; Ag Economics. <https://www.ulethbridge.ca/research/agri-food-summer-series>



❖ Succession Planning: How to Sell Your Business

Another need that was identified in the EAT project is the lack of succession planning among agricultural (and other) businesses.

In 2018-2019 AlbertaSW, in partnership with Community Futures engaged InnoVisions and Associates to pilot a program to find ways to effectively prepare businesses for transition and continuity planning.

That successful pilot was forerunner of the following larger, multi-regional Community Futures project:

❖ Southern Alberta Business Succession Partnership

Nine Community Futures offices offered services FREE OF CHARGE to support business continuity. Information videos, workshops, one-on-one coaching and consulting will help businesses prepare to sell or transition AND connect buyers and sellers utilizing an innovative “match-making” on-line global network.



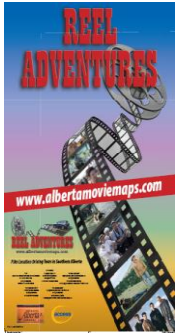
❖ Connect4Commerce

The region is licensed to have all MLS real estate and municipal assets listings all in one place!

This offers a way to conveniently promote opportunities in the region, and in each community.



The annual license is sponsored by AlbertaSW and Community Futures, so our member municipalities and businesses can add their listings for no cost,



❖ **Reel Adventures Alberta Movie Maps**

This extensive research and design project began in 2007, a collaboration between AlbertaSW, SouthGrow, Calgary Regional Partnership, Alberta Film, Travel Alberta, and Community Futures. Building upon the rich history of film in southern Alberta, the project identified the high-profile film locations in the regions and designed three themed driving tours with background information about the productions. The tours also note other attractions and things to do along the way.

The information is summarized in a “map” brochure and is available on-line.

www.albertamoviemaps.com



★ 2009 ALTO Finalist

★ 2009 Growing Rural Tourism Finalist

★ 2008 Chinook Country Partnership Award



❖ **Southern Alberta Investment and Trade Initiative (SAITI)**

Alberta SouthWest, SouthGrow, Economic Development Lethbridge and Lethbridge County have achieved award-winning results, collaborating with provincial and federal departments and foreign trade offices to connect foreign investors and buyers with businesses in tourism, agri-food, manufacturing, renewable energy and clean tech.



SAITI Partnership (AlbertaSW, EDL, SouthGrow, Lethbridge County):

★ 2025 EDA Marketing for Economic Development Outcomes Award

★ 2023 EDA Marketing for Economic Development Outcomes Award

★ 2017 EDA Investment Attraction Project Award



❖ **Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership (SAAEP)**

AlbertaSW, SouthGrow and Economic Development Lethbridge have collaborated since 2007 to create a focus on business opportunities in southern Alberta related to wind, solar and bio-products.

Study completed to quantify economic impact of new projects in 2019-2021: 6 solar and 3 wind projects will represent and investment of **\$1.56B** with community spin-off benefit estimated at **\$256M**.

View full report at www.saaep.ca under the ABOUT US tab.



Canadian Renewable
Energy Association

Association canadienne
de l'énergie renouvelable

SAAEP is a member of Canadian Renewable Energy Association (CanREA); CanWEA and CanSIA merged to form this new “multi-tech” organization on July 1, 2020.



❖ **Highway 3 Twinning Development Association**

AlbertaSW participates on the Board of this newly re-energized and focused initiative to provide perspective from our region. Highway 3 is significant in the network of transportation corridors in the region.

Focused initiatives have expanded industry engagement and addressed long term strategic planning to address a very large project in achievable pieces.

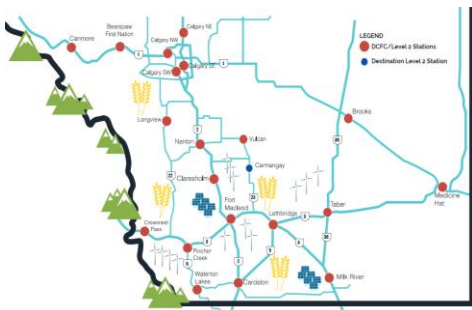
❖ **“Peaks to Prairies” Electric Vehicle Charging Station Network**

AlbertaSW, SouthGrow, cities of Calgary, Lethbridge, Medicine Hat collaborated with Community

Energy Association on this **\$2.16M** project to research, design and build a “backbone” of 20 charging stations that will enhance tourism and economic development, providing connectivity for EV travel along highways 1,2,3,4,5,6,22,23 and 36.

www.PeaksToPrairies.ca

The network generates data on EV adoption, usage, cost savings and GHG emissions avoidance. Video clips can be viewed at <https://peakstoprairies.ca/driver-videos/>



★ 2021 Top 100 Sustainable Destinations Good Practice Story:

Charging ahead: Driving a Regional Asset





❖ Energizing Agricultural Transformation (EAT)

Beginning in 2018, this initiative engaged producers and innovators from across the region to share knowledge on what is happening in the agricultural supply chain in our region. This "Agricultural Resource Round Table" identified issues and opportunities and helped guide research conducted by InnoVisions and suggested some next steps toward continuing to share knowledge and increase opportunities for producers and suppliers in the region.



❖ Building A Sustainable Tourism Investment Opportunity Network (BASTION)

The extensive inventory of regional tourism businesses/attractions identifies gaps and opportunities for continued investment and development. Municipal partners continue to take a collaborative approach to investment readiness and succession planning, and services. The region now has an inventory of tourism product in 6 categories of amenities and attractions with data to support opportunities that are investment ready or indicate growth potential.



❖ Manufacturing, Energy, Construction and Ag Production (MECAP)

MECAP project focused on building an inventory, of businesses in the region, connecting industry leaders, gaining insight on trends, issues and opportunities. Round tables, "think tank" discussions identified ways to connect, collaborate and support new investment and/expand market access. Key issues emerging are skilled workforce, research and innovation, productivity, energy efficiency, logistics and transportation, permits and regulations, supply chain, flow of imports and exports... and housing.

★ 2025 EDA Partnerships and Collaboration Award

★ 2025 EDA Alex Metcalfe Award



Check out the project outcomes and interactive map produced by University of Lethbridge senior geography class as a student project! www.albertasouthwest.com/mecap



❖ Invest SouthWest: Aligning the Stars

This new project for 2025-2027, supported by NRED grant, will build upon the research and industry collaboration of EAT, BASTION and MECAP projects.

The data will identify gaps, opportunities, regional strengths, trends and issues in key sectors and promote the "starring" opportunities in the region.

A meaningful BRE visitation strategy will strengthen collaboration and investment readiness.

Action plans will address shared priorities and opportunities, facilitate resource sharing, networking, and training events to build regional and community capacity..

❖ Film Friendly Southwest Alberta: We Love Alberta Film

The data, connections and resources were a 2021-2023 project. That work will now go forward toward a new multi-regional partnership project led by Economic Development Lethbridge to assess the feasibility of a "Creative Industries Hub" in southern Alberta.

AlbertaSW has been the location of many great film productions. With new investment in the province and strengthening partnership with Calgary Creative Industries and Lethbridge Creative Industries, our region will be more important than ever to support new productions.

"We Love Alberta Film" engaged regional Chambers and businesses to "put themselves in the picture", raising awareness that local business owners and residents provide services to the film industry.



INTERNATIONAL RECOGNITION



❖ Green Destinations International Top 100 Global Sustainable Destinations

Alberta SouthWest Crown of the Continent has been named to the Top 100 list for five years and met standards for Gold Award Certificate in 2024.

<https://greendestinations.org/programs-and-services/top-100-destinations/>

This designation recognizes demonstrated effort and continuous improvement in developing the economy of our region ... building healthy, prosperous communities in harmony with the landscape.

The evaluation/audit is based upon United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UNSDG) and standards articulated by the Global Sustainable Tourism Council (GSTC)



★ 2025 Gold Award Certification

★ 2018, 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022 Top 100 Global Sustainable Destination



Best of the Americas 2020

From among the Top 100 list, destinations are chosen for special attention in various categories at the annual ITB Berlin Conference which attracts 10,000 exhibitors and 113,000 attendees from 180 countries.

In 2020 Alberta SouthWest Crown of the Continent, Canada, was named *Third Place Best of the Americas* (First place: Vail Colorado; Second place: Guyana)

★ 2023 ITB Berlin 2nd Place Sustainability Story *Dark Skies, Bright Future* in category of Business and Marketing

★ 2022 ITB Berlin 3rd Place Sustainability Story *Charging Ahead* in category of Decarbonizing the Supply Chain

★ 2020 ITB Berlin Top 3 Best of the Americas



PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

AlbertaSW is a member of our provincial, national, and international economic development professional associations.



INTERNATIONAL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT
COUNCIL

The Power of Knowledge and Leadership

Our professional associations offer the opportunity to highlight innovative and effective work.

EDOs in AlbertaSW are members of EDA and are recognized for award-winning projects and personal achievements.

Bev Thornton represents the region and has received some special recognitions:

2023: Queen Elizabeth II Platinum Jubilee Medal for leadership in sustainable economic development and community service.

2018: EDA President's Award

2018: Appointed to International Economic Development Council Accreditation Committee

2017: IEDC Jeffrey A. Finkle Organizational Leadership Award; first Canadian recipient

2014-2019: EDA Board member; President 2017-2018

2013: EDA Economic Developer of the Year



AlbertaSW is the first International Economic Development Council (IEDC) **Accredited Economic Development Organizations** (AEDOs) in Alberta and the 3rd of 6 in Canada and 85+ world-wide.

AlbertaSW was accredited in October 2018 and has met standards to be formally re-accredited in 2022.

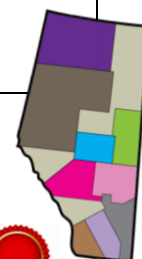
<https://www.iedconline.org/index.php?src=pages&ref=list-of-aedos&submenu=ListofAEDOs>



ACCREDITED
ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT
ORGANIZATION
International Economic Development Council

AlbertaSW Partners and Resource Agencies

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • EDA/EDAC/IEDC • ABMunis/RMA • EDOs/EDCs • Chambers • Tourism and businesses • CF Crowsnest Pass • CF Alberta Southwest • CF Lethbridge • CF Highwood • Economic Development Lethbridge • Travel Alberta • Cowboy Trail • Tourism Calgary • Foothills Tourism Association • Tourism Lethbridge • Waterton Biosphere Reserve Assoc • South Canadian Rockies • Alberta REDAs | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs, Economy, and Trade • Agriculture and Forestry • Environment and Protected Areas • Parks Canada • Energy • Service Alberta • Municipal Affairs • Alberta Film • Calgary Creative Industries • Lethbridge Creative Industries • Keep Alberta Rolling • Montana Office of Tourism • Kootenay Rockies Tourism • National Geographic/Crown Geotourism • Community Energy Association • Peaks to Prairies EV network • Yellowstone to Yukon study project • Green Destinations International | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RINSA • Invest Alberta • Invest in Canada • Travel Alberta • Destination Canada • Lethbridge College • University of Lethbridge • University of Montana • ORRSC • NRC • Livingstone Range School Division • Piikani First Nation • Cybera • O-NET • FTTH Council • CanREA • ETC!!! |
|--|---|--|



❖ Alberta's Regional Economic Development Alliances (REDAs)

AlbertaSW is one of 9 REDAs in Alberta, creating a "network of networks".

Aligned with regional offices of Alberta Jobs, Economy and Trade, the regions are an efficient and effective mechanism to support municipal collaboration as well as cross-ministry information-sharing and implementation of provincial programs.

★ 2004 Premier's Award of Excellence

"All of us are smarter than just one of us." - Dr. John Irwin, Past-Chair, AlbertaSW

The 9 REDAs in Alberta represent 250 communities.

This province-wide "partnerships of partnerships" is unique in Canada.

This gives Alberta not just a COMPETITIVE ADVANTAGE but also a COLLABORATIVE ADVANTAGE.

ADVOCACY, COLLABORATION AND COMMUNICATION

REDAs have formal lines of communication between local, provincial, and federal government and agencies and economic development associations. Collaboration advances economic development, knowledge of global trends, learning and development for staff and elected officials AND, most importantly, strengthens the ability of EDOs to further develop their specific and creative community projects.

REGIONAL AWARENESS AND INVESTMENT ATTRACTION

AlbertaSW has raised regional awareness to an international level; over 30 provincial, international, and international awards.

REDA initiatives are REGIONAL or multi-regional and benefit all partner communities.

Examples: Peaks to Prairies EV Network, Broadband for Economic Development, Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership, Invest Alberta Southwest, etc. ** It is estimated that AlbertaSW initiatives attracted over \$30M of investment in agricultural land and new business since 2009.

EFFICIENT USE OF RESOURCES

Partnerships can leverage resources for projects to address common goals. Clearly, dollars are effectively leveraged. Though more difficult to quantify, there is immense value in sharing ideas and information. This has created efficiencies and strengthened the capacity of each individual municipality. Just as Olympic athletes train together, community collaboration helps each participant to be stronger and better.

Success for one is success for all.