



2024-25



Annual Report

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Note from the Chair and General Manager

What a year it's been for Community Futures Fraser Fort George and what a joy it is to be writing this note and celebrating all that the volunteer and staff teams have accomplished in the past fiscal year.

In April 2024, we bid a fond farewell to Susan Stearns, outgoing General Manager. Susan provided steadfast leadership to the business community of Fraser Fort George for over a decade and left a tangible mark in the community economic development space in our region.

In June, Anna Duff jumped on board and put the pedal to the metal, getting to know the team, the organization, and each of the communities in Fraser Fort George. The blend of an established and cohesive Board of Directors and Anna's enthusiasm to learn resulted in steady leadership during her on-boarding and a world of opportunity ahead.

With a passion for gathering people, building relationships, and providing space for sharing information, we saw CFFFG host an array of novel events, while staying true to our grassroots character. Autumn saw *Campfire with Community Futures* take place in Valemount and Mackenzie, providing an opportunity for people to gather around campfires and build connections. Anna also shared expert insight with many different audiences on topics that were relevant to them as a guest speaker. In the background, work was also underway for a wildly successful B2B Expo, to take place in February (read more about the Expo later in this report).

This concerted effort to get to know people and have people get to know CFFFG reaped benefits by supporting entrepreneurs, businesses, and the community. With busy loan activity in the fall and winter, we met our lending targets as outlined by PacifiCan. We're looking forward to continuing this momentum of meeting entrepreneurs where they are and supporting them in ways that makes sense (and cents) for their business.

We will continue to support communities and businesses that are impacted by external factors – climate disasters and changing industries continue to be trends that we are working to support people through. Through both the resources of CFFFG and Community Futures British Columbia, including myCommunityFutures and the Rural Resiliency Initiative, businesses in our region are well-poised to continue serve their communities.

Together, we're anticipating continuing to invest in people and ideas, strategically taking risks to build communities and businesses in 2025 and beyond.



Troy Dungate
Chair, CFFFG



Anna Duff
GM, CFFFG

Mission & Vision

At Community Futures Fraser Fort George, we invest in people and ideas. We strategically take risks, connecting entrepreneurs with resources and funding.

We believe that dreams, passion and a willingness to take risks, builds communities and businesses, now and into the future.



Our 2024 - 2025 Board

- Troy Dungate, Chair
- Sandra Clermont, Vice Chair
- Ben Campbell, Secretary / Treasurer
- Murray Carlson
- Greg Halseth
- Ezinne Uche

2024-25 Key Stats



235

Total clients served



20%
Women



4%
Persons with disabilities

\$1,129,000

Total loan value approved



1

Loan for persons with disabilities



2

Loans for women

87

Jobs



Created or maintained through lending

10



Businesses

were created, maintained, or expanded through services



380+

Individuals who attended events hosted by CFFFG



83

Workshop participants

Success Stories

Client Check-in: Atomic Industries

After 14 years of employment experience in the signage industry in Prince George, Amber Ulrich had a strong desire to start her own business and, with an unmet demand and long waiting periods for service in the local market Amber decided to make the transition with the support of business planning services and a business loan from Community Futures and, she hasn't looked back.

While her business has only been in operation for a short time, the support she has received from the community has been incredible! She has already had the opportunity to work on some large projects including decaling five rock trucks heading to a local mine and wrapping 16 semi trucks for a well-known local chip hauling business. Amber finds being an entrepreneur a lot of work, but she also finds it incredibly rewarding!



"Community Futures helped to bring my dream to a reality. They walked me through all the steps I needed to take, encouraged me when I was feeling unsure of myself and made sure I had all the information I needed to build a successful business plan."

– Amber Ulrich – Atomic Industries

Client Check-in: Rocky Mountain Goat Media Inc.

Spencer Hall moved to beautiful Valemount, BC to take a job as a Civic Reporter for the Rocky Mountain Goat. Shortly after moving he fell in love with the community and discovered the business he was working for was for sale. He learned about Community Futures while reporting on an economic development forum so he was eager to connect. Spencer received business planning service and a loan which enabled him to begin his pathway to entrepreneurship.

Since owning the business, he was able to purchase a square debit machine which has provided more convenient payment methods for our customers and, he has also began redesigning the website. Through a partnership with a local artist, he was able to update the artwork on the storefront windows. Spencer is very proud of his staff team as recently the Rocky Mountain Goat Media Inc. won a prestigious 2023 General Excellence Award at the BC Yukon Community Newspaper Awards.



"Without Community Futures, purchasing The Rocky Mountain Goat would not have been possible. They provided the funding to purchase the business and supported me while I worked through my business plan and budget. Because of their support, the residents of the Robson Valley get to keep their only independently owned local paper!"

– Spencer Hall – Rocky Mountain Goat Media Inc.

Success Stories

Client Check-in: Inspire Productions Ltd.



With a shared background as mobile DJs, Nigel Rimmer and Darren Hanson, co-owners of Inspire Productions Ltd., frequently collaborated while running separate businesses. When they decided to start their business, the pair turned to Community Futures Fraser Fort George for essential business planning guidance and financing, allowing them to secure equipment and establish their company. Just months after starting, Inspire Productions hosted its first large-scale event at Prince George's CN Centre.

"Community Futures gave us the business plan framework we needed. They helped us figure out how to start and run a sustainable business. Their support made all the difference."

– Darren, Inspire Productions

Since then, Inspire Productions Ltd. has grown into a full-service audio-visual and event production company, specializing in concerts, special events, and equipment rentals. Their client-focused approach has fueled their success. "Inspire Productions is event-driven and people-focused. We want to see others succeed—wherever our clients' needs go, that's the direction our company follows," says Darren. Nigel and Darren credit Community Futures with being approachable and supportive from the start. "You don't have to have everything figured out," says Nigel. "Even if you just have an idea, reach out—they'll help."

Events

2024 B2B Expo

February 14-15, 2025

Prince George Conference and Civic Centre

Presented by the City of Prince George, the Prince George Chamber of Commerce, and Community Futures Fraser Fort George, the B2B Expo was developed in response to the growing demand for networking and collaboration among local small and medium-sized businesses, a need identified through general conversations and survey feedback. Previous initiatives by the three organizations have demonstrated the value of organized networking events, leading to their collaboration on the B2B Expo — a larger event tailored to the networking needs of SMEs in the region.

The inaugural B2B Expo 2025 successfully provided a dynamic platform for local businesses, entrepreneurs, and industry stakeholders to connect, collaborate, and grow. With robust participation from exhibitors and attendees, the event fostered meaningful conversations, networking opportunities, and insightful learning sessions that strengthened the regional business ecosystem. The overwhelmingly positive feedback underscores the event's value in facilitating strategic partnerships and knowledge exchange. Overall, B2B Expo 2025 exceeded expectations in fostering business relationships and reinforcing Prince George as a hub for entrepreneurial collaboration.

160+ 70+

Public attended
the showcase

Businesses and
organizations
were represented



"I did not expect to make the connections I have made here – all this time I have conducted my business without knowing all of these supports existed."

- B2B Expo Attendee

B2B EXPO



Events

Campfires with Community Futures

The 2024 "Campfire with Community Futures" events aimed to introduce our new General Manager to the Fraser Fort George communities while increasing awareness of our services and attract prospective entrepreneurs, and strengthen ties with clients, partners, and the general public.

The events featured lively conversations and refreshments around the fire. Overall, the events were a successful re-acquaintance with the various communities and local business environments, laying a strong foundation to broaden the reach and profitability of Community Futures Fraser Fort George.



Mackenzie, BC

This event highlighted the strong partnership between the Mackenzie and District Chamber of Commerce and CF FFG. Taking place on the community ski hill, dozens of community residents shared about local goings on and enjoyed friendly camaraderie while getting to know the new faces at CF FFG.

10+ New Contacts Made

6+ Partnerships/Collaborations Initiated or Re-invigorated



Valemount, BC

This event was featured on local VCTV with Michael Peters, as well as highlighted local CF FFG client Vale Coffee at their location with their coffee and baked goods for purchase.

5+ New Contacts Made

4+ Partnerships/Collaborations Initiated or Re-invigorated



Prince George, BC

Hosted outside of the CF FFG office in Prince George, the Prince George Chamber of Commerce, Downtown Prince George, and CF FFG welcomed friends and colleagues for an afternoon of holiday cheer and s'mores.



Events



McBride Tourism Summit

This event saw business owners, nonprofits, and government representatives gather in McBride to discuss strategies and challenges facing the local tourism sector. General Manager, Anna Duff, provided an engaging presentation about Community Futures services and support of the business community in the region, including a feature of CF FFG client Rocky Mountain Goat Media.

15+ New Contacts Made

10+ Partnerships/Collaborations Initiated or Re-invigorated



Mackenzie Northern Roots Symposium

This annual event brought together farmers, industry professionals, and community members to explore new agricultural practices, share knowledge, and build valuable connections. Along with hosting an exhibitor table, General Manager Anna Duff gave an informative presentation about CF FFG services and supports.

6+ New Contacts Made

10+ Partnerships/Collaborations Initiated or Re-invigorated



CFBC Fall Conference & Spring Training

Opportunities to connect face-to-face with Community Futures colleagues from 33 other offices across B.C. were enjoyed twice throughout the year. In September, three staff travelled to Chilliwack for Let'semo:t One Heart, One Mind, two full days of inspiration, connection, and learning. CFBC's annual Spring Training was hosted in Vancouver in early 2025 and for the first time included Export Advisors and other representatives from the Export Navigator Program, which joined the CFBC suite of programs in January 2025.



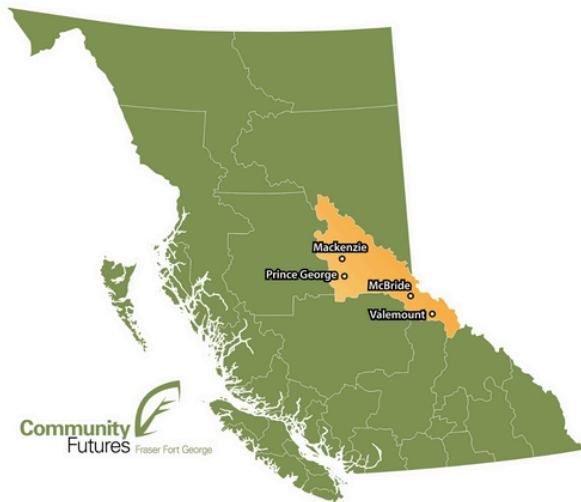
Projects

Regional Business Liaison Project Completed

The Regional Business Liaison (RBL) Project was designed to support businesses and organizations across the Fraser-Fort George (FFG) region in adapting to significant economic changes influenced by forestry policy impacts and economic downturns.

This project, led by Community Futures Fraser Fort George, and funded by PacifiCan and the Northern Development Initiative Trust, involved collaboration with multiple regional partners, including local governments, chambers of commerce, and economic development professionals as well as the small businesses we interviewed.

“The resilience and adaptability shown by businesses in our region reflect an incredible spirit that is the backbone of Fraser Fort George,” said Ben Campbell, Treasurer, Community Futures Fraser Fort George Board of Directors and Chief Executive Officer, Northern Development Initiative Trust. *“This report is a testament to their efforts, and Community Futures Fraser Fort George is committed to standing by them as they continue to build a strong, sustainable future for our region.”*



The 2023-2024 RBL report shares insights from 210 businesses across the Fraser-Fort George region, highlighting opportunities and challenges for local businesses, and emphasizing collaboration as a cornerstone for fostering economic resilience and sustainability.

The report highlights distinct economic dynamics across the region:

- In Mackenzie, small-scale and microbusinesses navigate forestry sector challenges, with strong community ties and diversification efforts offering pathways to growth.
- Prince George, the region's most diversified economy, showcases resilience through investments in digital marketing, sustainability, and robust infrastructure.
- The Robson Valley-Canoe region, rooted in forestry, tourism, and agriculture, faces vulnerabilities but has opportunities for stability through renewable energy and sustainable practices.

The report also identifies key priorities for fostering business resilience, such as improving access to capital, enhancing infrastructure, promoting sustainability initiatives, and addressing workforce development needs. Community and network building emerged as a critical component for fostering long-term growth and stability through collaboration among businesses, local authorities, and organizations.

The insights from this report provide a foundation for building resilience and fostering sustainable growth, ensuring businesses and communities in Fraser Fort George region can thrive in the years ahead.

[The complete 2023-2024 Regional Business Liaison report is available online.](#)



“Access to the insights in this report is invaluable for both current and aspiring business owners. Initiatives like this are essential for fostering growth in our community. Knowledge is power, and sharing it through collaboration is the key to building a resilient and thriving business ecosystem.” - Mayor Simon Yu

Projects

Export Navigator

Export Navigator is a Government of British Columbia initiative and also financially supported federally by PacificCan. The Export Navigator program is delivered through Community Futures BC and is designed to help businesses across BC grow their business and help grow the local economy through exporting. The program provides personalized, one-on-one support to businesses (at no cost) from experienced Export Advisors who guide businesses through the complexities of exporting—whether it's navigating regulations, identifying market opportunities, or understanding logistics and pricing.

Export Navigator empowers businesses to diversify their markets, reduce risk, and increase profitability by tapping into national and international markets.

Below are some of the types of services offered to businesses as part of the Export Navigator Program:

- Dedicated Export Advisor support
- Step-by-step export planning
- Market entry strategies

- Guidance on trade shows and funding opportunities
- Support with documentation, logistics, and compliance

The Cariboo region's Export Navigator program supports businesses located in communities such as Prince George, Mackenzie, Quesnel, Williams Lake, and 100 Mile House as well as communities in the Robson Valley and communities out to Vanderhoof and Burns Lake.

Regional Export Advisors work closely with entrepreneurs to tailor exporting strategies that reflect the unique strengths and challenges of businesses in this part of BC. We work with a wide diversity of business (looking to export products or services). From startups, to companies that have been in business for decades and are looking to expand into new markets. We work with micro-businesses to businesses with large numbers of employees.

The Export Navigator Program is always welcoming new conversations and clients. Visit exportnavigator.ca to learn more or connect with your local Export Advisor.



"It's been so inspiring to work with a wide variety of businesses across the Cariboo region in helping them to expand their markets and build the local economies. I know first hand how inspiring it is to reach customers and have positive impacts in new markets while contributing to the growth of our local economy." - **Kevin Pettersen, Export Navigator Advisor**

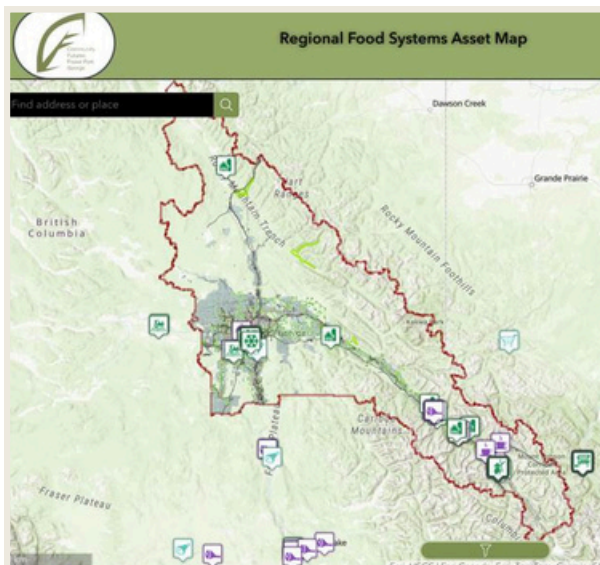
Projects

Agriculture Project

In 2024/25, the CFFFG Fraser Fort George Agriculture Program made significant strides in research, building relationships, and mapping the regional food system.

Asset Map Development:

- Ongoing cataloging of farms, processors, and value-chain actors
- GIS consultant retained to expand interactive functionality
- Preliminary design of desktop/mobile access interface



Food system mapping empowers communities by promoting collaboration among producers and partners to address market gaps and identify strengths. This publicly accessible resource highlights challenges and opportunities for all those involved in the food system economy, including small-scale farmers, transporters, processors, and food storage facilities.

Literature Review Progress:

- Compilation of agriculture reports underway with assistance from farmers, institutions and a Knowledge Synthesis Librarian
- Integration of personal archive materials to enrich contextual depth
- Exploration of AI-supported analysis tools

Community & Sector Engagement:

- Outreach at local farmers' markets and agriculture events
- Presented at Mackenzie's Northern Roots Agriculture Symposium (October 2024)
- Invited to host a booth at Farmer's Institute District C's AGM in May 2025
- Consultations initiated with Indigenous organizations and Ministry representatives



This project will contribute to strengthening food security, resiliency, and health in rural Northern B.C. while also highlighting investment opportunities. The work being undertaken during this two-year project, funded through the Province of BC's Rural Economic Development and Infrastructure Program, aligns with global objectives for affordable, nutritious diets and reduced environmental impact, as emphasized in UN reports. Work will continue on the Agriculture Program throughout the 2025/26 year.

Staff Training & Events

Jon Close Training

September saw Jon Close, an experienced Community Futures professional, visit Prince George for one week to conduct developmental lending training with half of the CFFFG staff. With changing roles and responsibilities, the opportunity to learn best practices and approaches to developmental lending provided the team with a strong foundation for future work and growth. This professional development opportunity supports the staff as they engage with clients and provide coaching.



Operational Planning and Internal Process Review

While CFFFG did unprecedented amounts of engagement, outreach, and networking with people in all four communities in Fraser-Fort George, processes and operations within the office were also reviewed, revisited, and in some cases, refreshed. These days brought the team together to identify and celebrate what habits are successful and to consider new ideas. The two main themes that were discussed were operational goals for the following fiscal year and internal communications and processes.





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