



2024

Red Deer District Chamber
Annual Report

CEO Message

130 Years

of supporting the community, creating vital connections,
and laying foundations for our shared future success.



Dear Members, Partners, and Community Stakeholders: We Celebrate 130 Years!

As we reflect on the past year, it is with immense pride and gratitude that I present the 2023-2024 Annual Report for the Red Deer District Chamber. This year marked the 130th anniversary of Red Deer District Chamber – a history and a legacy everyone should be proud of. We have been a significant community leader over our 130 years, and we have been able to showcase some of this history over this past year which has been rewarding and very educational. As part of our 130th celebrations, we embarked upon a journey to refresh our brand. We have made some bold choices and changes that our members were telling us we needed to make to reflect a more forward-looking organization. We are now known as the Red Deer District Chamber; we present a bold new look and new colours to distinguish ourselves from the traditional and we are excited about serving the business and non-profit community for the next 130 years in a bold new way.

This past year has been met with lots of change and transition. We welcomed some new staff in the policy and membership areas only to also see them leave after six months, which has made our support and service in these areas to our members challenging. Despite these challenges we have continued to provide members and the community with some great events, focus groups, and networking opportunities and we look forward to 2025 to elevate the support and influence our Chamber has been recognized for.

Thank you for being an integral part of the Red Deer District Chamber. Together, we are building a brighter future for our community. Charge ahead!

Warm regards,
Scott Robinson
CEO, Red Deer District Chamber

President's Message



As we celebrate 130 years since the founding of our Chamber, we reflect on a legacy that began in 1894 – when a group of forward-thinking businessmen who were trading along the Red Deer River saw the potential for this region to be a thriving centre to live and do business in. Together, they formed the Red Deer Board of Trade with a simple but powerful idea that we can achieve more for all by collaboration instead of competing. This vision was pivotal in shaping Red Deer's future. And, just a few years later, that same group of business leaders took the next step toward incorporating Red Deer as a town, with the Board of Trade President, Raymond L. Gaetz, becoming the town's first mayor.

This story speaks to the Chamber's long-standing belief that a strong business community is essential for a prosperous overall community. It is a value that has guided us for over a century and remains at the heart of everything we do today.

Over the past year, we have accomplished a great deal. We completed our Homelessness Task Force report, providing critical recommendations to support our community. We also launched

a new brand identity for the Chamber and hosted the Alberta Chambers of Commerce AGM and Conference, in addition to offering numerous events, education, and networking opportunities for our members.

Additionally, I want to recognize the leadership of our CEO, Scott Robinson, who is making a significant impact, particularly in fostering collaboration across various community organizations. His leadership is positioning the Chamber to play an even stronger role in driving business and community success.

Looking ahead, the Board has adopted a new Strategic Plan, which will shape our focus for the next three years. This plan highlights four key areas:

1. Maintaining a collaborative business ecosystem that strengthens Red Deer and the broader district.
2. Enhancing the value and benefits of Chamber membership to ensure we remain a vital resource for businesses.
3. Acting as a catalyst for economic growth in central Alberta, driving innovation and opportunity.
4. Expanding the Chamber's capacity to lead and influence on behalf of our members.

These priorities are not just about maintaining our relevance – they are about setting a course for long-term success. As part of this strategic direction, we are working to increase and diversify our revenue streams to ensure the Chamber's sustainability and ability to invest in future growth. In 2025, we will share new membership and sponsorship models designed to enhance both the experience and the impact of Chamber membership.

I would also like to take a moment to recognize two outgoing Board members who are leaving us this year. Tammy Schlamp, who has served a six-year term, has made invaluable contributions to our Board, and her service will be greatly missed. Melissa Delaronde, who served

a three-year term, also brought significant insights to the Chamber, and we wish both Tammy and Melissa the very best in the future.

As we move forward, we remain focused on providing value and advocating for our members to support the growth and success of our business community. It has been an honour to serve as President over the past year, and I am immensely proud of the Chamber staff and Board for all that we have accomplished together. The work we have done sets the stage for an exciting future, and I am confident that we are well-positioned to continue leading the way.

Mike Szyszka
President, Red Deer District Chamber

Staff 2023-24



Lindsey Knudson, Shelley Hanlan, Scott Robinson, Jennifer Potts, Sandra Gunderman

Board of Directors 2023-24



Konstantin Neykurs, Tammy Schlamp, Melissa Delaronde, Scott Robinson (CEO), Donna Purcell, Mike Szyszka (President), Mindy Smythe, Matthew Wear (Vice-President), Erin Forbes, Nadine St. Denis, Kevin Walsh

2023-2024 Highlights

817

817 members,
85 new, 92%
retention

76

76 media
mentions

1700

1700+ attendees
at 42 events

12K

12,200 social
media followers

89%

89% member
satisfaction

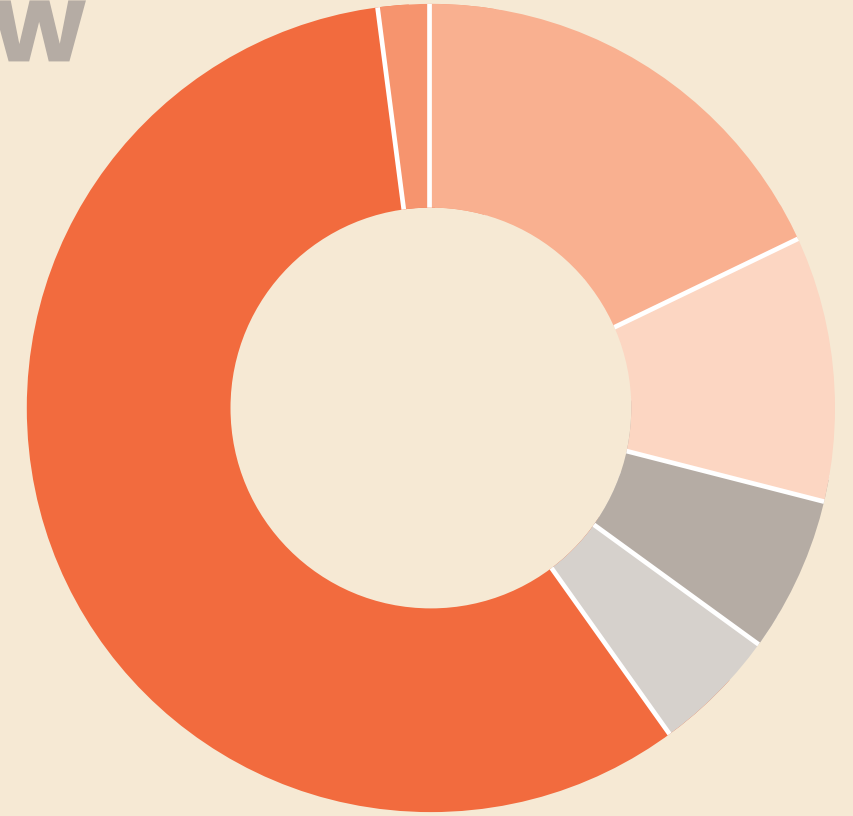
45%

45% average open
rate from 216 email
communications
sent to members

Financials Overview

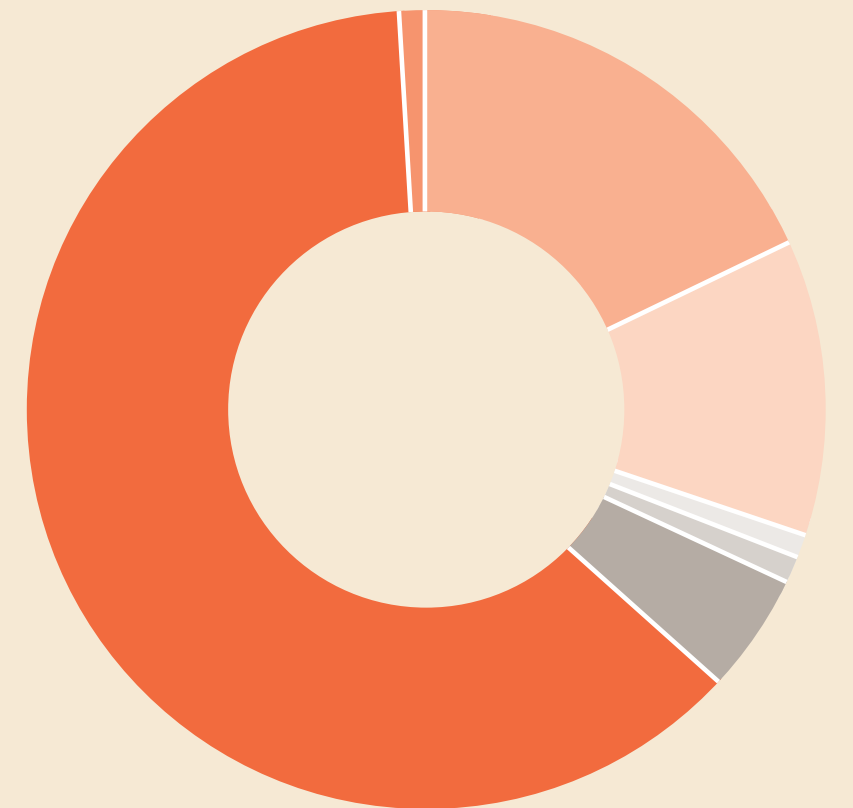
2023-2024
Revenue

- Join Venture 58%
- Investment Income 2%
- Membership Fees 18%
- Events 11%
- Tradeshow - Admin Fees 6%
- Administrative 5%



2023-2024
Expenses

- Salaries and Wages 62%
- Ammortization 1%
- Administrative 18%
- Events 11%
- Bank Charges 1%
- Conferences 1%
- Building Costs 5%





130th Anniversary

We welcomed 92 new members this year:

- Harvard Historical Aviation Society
- Alinea Enterprises
- Fieldpro Software Ltd.
- Expert IT Solutions
- Canadian Massage & Manual Osteopathic Therapists Association
- Ballad Group Red Deer
- Costain Corp
- Precision Bobcat Services
- BLHR Consulting
- Oriel Windows and Doors
- Ruben's Veggies
- 1724054 Alberta Ltd.
- CARROL'S CARAMELS CORP
- Ten Peaks Innovation Alliance
- The Suites by INNhotels
- Birds of Prey Player Development Inc
- Redeeming Home Cleaning
- Haeley Porter - Voice4Word Studios
- Manufacturing & Export Enhancement Cluster (Access Prosperity)
- GetintheLoop-Red Deer
- Acuiti Eyecare & Eyewear
- Sol Invictus Energy Services
- Ty The Tank Guy & Services
- Agri-Food Innovation Expo
- The Dog's Bollocks Ltd.
- GS Equipment Ltd.
- Central Alberta FASD Network
- Tema Virtual
- Central Alberta Immigrant Women's Association
- Three Broke Sisters
- Easymax by ENMAX Energy
- First Steps & Beyond
- Great Strides
- Cafe Millennium Inc.
- Varme Energy Inc.
- Small Town Girl Promotions
- Simply Lawn and Snow Ltd
- Agent Boomer
- Vleeming Custom Homes
- Wall Art Inc.
- West Country Pump and Filtration Ltd.
- Make Your Mark Dance
- City Roast Coffee
- Prairie Soap Shack
- Brace Tool Inc.
- The Forum
- Anytime Fitness
- The Gutter
- MCG Career College Inc.
- GKM Events Management
- Sun Life
- Fireside Indian Bar & Restaurant
- Legacy Branding Co.
- The Golden Touch Goldsmiths
- Century Maximum - Keith Acheson
- Raven Mad Productions
- Lockdown Escape Rooms Inc
- Fresh Start Mediation
- Glenn's Family Restaurant and Gift Shop
- Danica Designs Coaching and Consulting
- Alexis, Your Int'l Travel Manager
- Nurturing Minds Daycare & Osc

- Aligned Together
- Champagne & Promises Travel Planning
- Red Deer Native Friendship Society
- Copper Cloud Events
- 2549302 ALBERTA LTD.
- Camp L.G. Barnes Society
- Leftovers Foundation
- Red Key Realty & Property Management
- Cilirico
- Klay Tate Productions
- Compassion Ink
- Bull Skit Comedy (Non Profit Name- Against the Wall Theatre Society)
- Pinsky Law Office
- Bloom & Basil / Alberta Lavender Farm
- Canadian Mental Health Association, Central Alberta
- Red Deer Minor Baseball Association
- BONOGZH CLEANING SERVICES
- CASA Mental Health
- Home Instead Red Deer & Central Alberta
- Comfort Keepers
- Craft Beer Commonwealth & Birdy Coffee
- Veolia Water Technologies & Solutions
- Maverick's Donuts Red Deer
- RPA Consulting
- Jumble Eats Restaurant
- Apex Accessibility Services
- Precision Motor Worx
- Central Alberta Dermatology
- Hebe Beauty Bar Ltd.
- AB WiFi & Networking LTD

In March we celebrated our 130th anniversary with the launch of our vibrant new brand, marking a significant milestone in our commitment to local businesses and entrepreneurs.

For over a century, Red Deer District Chamber has dedicated itself to empowering the local business community through unwavering support and advocacy. The new brand essence, "Charge Ahead", encapsulates our commitment to pushing boundaries and embracing the limitless possibilities that lie ahead.

The official launch event for the 130th anniversary rebrand was held on March 18, 2024, when the community was invited to join in celebrating this milestone and to view the new brand for the first time.

As we move forward with this new brand, we remain dedicated to our mission of supporting and advocating for the local business community.

We invite both current and future members to join us as we charge ahead, united by the spirit of collaboration and resilience, toward a future filled with endless possibilities for businesses in Red Deer and the surrounding area.

Policy and Advocacy



In 2024, Red Deer District Chamber demonstrated a steadfast commitment to fostering a favourable business environment and addressing key issues impacting our members. Our policy team actively engaged with local, provincial, and federal governments, advocating for policies that promote business growth, innovation, and sustainability. We have successfully influenced legislation that enhances our members' ability to thrive, including reforms in small business taxation, red tape reduction, labour access, and regulatory relief measures. We continue to advocate on critical issues such as the city's budget, economic development, and addressing homelessness, making determined progress for the betterment of our business community.

2023 Women Leading Change Conference



A highlight of our policy activities was hosting the Alberta Chambers of Commerce AGM and Policy Plenary Session in May, at the Red Deer Resort and Casino. This event brought together delegates from across Alberta to address key issues, resulting in the adoption of 22 policy resolutions. Red Deer District Chamber played a leading role, presenting and advocating for four key policies, including those related to regulatory approval for heat and steam recovery technologies, initial capital expenditures, and an increase to the Canada Workers' Benefit. Additionally, our Chamber co-sponsored three impactful policies focused on addressing housing affordability and increasing access to mental wellness workplace support. These efforts reflect our dedication to grassroots initiatives that drive meaningful change and innovation in collaboration with the government.

Habitat for Humanity Team Build



Homelessness Task Force

One of the most significant and impactful initiatives of 2024 has been our Homelessness Task Force project. The intent of the Homelessness Task Force was to do an independent review of the support system in Red Deer with a business lens. From the 10-month review, we identified six core recommendations for change in how homelessness is led and how the business community can play a bigger role in supporting this challenge. There is more work to be done and the Chamber is supporting a community-led transition team who will be working to activate the recommendations of the Task Force in the coming year.

Membership and Community

Our members have access to a variety of cost-saving affinity programs that help them improve their bottom line, including the Chambers of Commerce Insurance Plan which is the #1 in Canada for extended health care benefits for small- to mid-sized businesses.

Long-Term Members



In the Community



We launched a new partnership with the "Oh Deer" podcast to showcase the businesses in the community, producing two video series called "Business Spotlights" and a fun feature called "Lund Employed". These new initiatives are designed to help businesses market themselves and grow their visibility, and we encourage our members to contact us if they would like to take advantage of these initiatives.



We are proud to play an active role in our community. From swinging hammers during our Habitat Team Build to supporting local families through our Food Bank donation, and even bonding over strikes at The Gutter's Corporate Bowling League, we've shown that when we work together, we can achieve great things for Red Deer.

Events

From our highly-anticipated Business of the Year Awards, our sold-out Women Leading Change development summit, to our new monthly What's Brewing networking events, we have had some great engagements with our members this year. We also hosted the Alberta Chambers of Commerce Annual General Meeting, which was great to have our colleagues from other chambers across Alberta come to Red Deer and celebrate our 130th anniversary. We are grateful for the enthusiastic participation of our members and sponsors, whose support continues to drive the success of these events and our marketing initiatives.

The Chamber Chase saw 93 guests participating in teams going to visit member businesses and complete various tasks, with the winners receiving the Chamber Chase trophy. Women Leading Change set a new record with 158 guests. The day featured opening speakers Natasha Karas and Megan Switzer from Principle Projects, along with 18 additional speakers and workshops, wrapping up with a delightful wine and cheese pairing. The Woman Up event was hosted at The Forum was a huge success, selling out completely.

Additionally, the Key Speaker Luncheon with Mayor Ken Johnston attracted 94 guests, highlighting key issues and developments in the community. The Butcher, Baker & Beer Maker Golf Tournament, held at Alberta Springs Golf Course, welcomed 94 guests and featured food and beverage holes supplied by Chamber members. This year's Annual BBQ was held off-site at Heritage Park Square, in conjunction with the Red Deer Museum + Art Gallery's 130th Chamber anniversary exhibit, "For Progress and Development."

The annual Business of the Year Awards drew 239 guests and new to the event was the live winner interviews by Oh Deer Podcast, adding many laughs! The winners for 2023 were shiftOHS for Small Business of the Year, Royal LePage Network Realty Corp. for Business of the Year, Johnson Spring & Trailer for New Business of the Year, Three Broke Sisters for Emerging Business of the Year, Golden Circle Senior Resource Centre for the Non-Profit Award, and Business Leader of the Year, Rielely Kay, Cilantro & Chive.

Among the new events introduced this year was What's Brewing, which quickly became a popular monthly morning coffee and networking session hosted by Chamber member businesses. The Chamber Long Table Dinner, held on summer solstice at Sunterra Market, was also a hit, selling out quickly.

Thank you to our major sponsors that made our events possible this year!



Our Sponsors



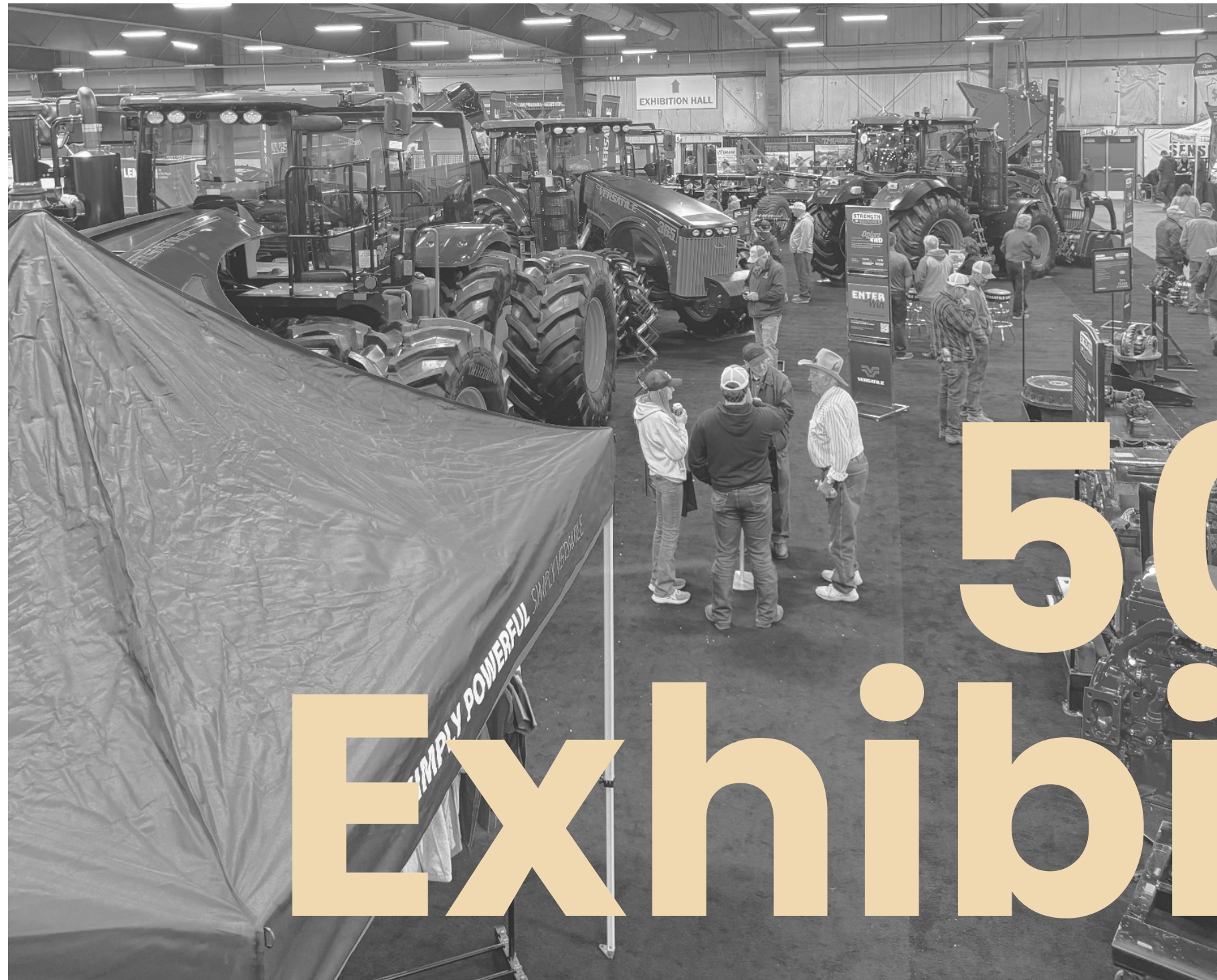
2023 Agri-Trade Equipment Expo

The 2023 Agri-Trade Equipment Expo, presented by Farm Credit Canada, was a record-breaking event that brought together over 500 exhibitors and attracted global interest, with representatives from countries like Germany, the USA, Mexico, Nigeria, India, and Brazil. The Expo showcased the latest agricultural equipment and innovative technology, offering farmers opportunities to enhance efficiency and profitability.

The Expo achieved a record year with a complete sell-out of indoor exhibit space and more outdoor exhibits than ever before. With over 500 exhibitors and fantastic attendance, coupled with perfect weather, the event was truly record-breaking.

A key highlight of the event was the Ag Innovations Competition, where Spider Hitch won the \$20,000 Judges' Choice Award, and Ground Truth Ag received the \$5,000 Farmers Choice Award. Despite drought conditions in much of the prairies, central Alberta saw strong yields, and with cattle prices at an all-time high, the show provided an excellent platform for farmers and ranchers to do business.

As Agri-Trade continues to thrive, we look forward to celebrating our 40th year in 2024. Save the date for Agri-Trade 2024: November 13-15, 2024. Right show! Right time! Right location!



500 Exhibits

The Road Ahead

As we chart our course for the future, the Red Deer District Chamber is excited to share our strategic direction for the next three years, which sets the stage for the next chapter of our growth and impact. Our focus for the upcoming period is rooted in five key areas that will drive our efforts and shape our community's economic landscape:

Membership Value remains at the core of our strategy. Ensuring that the Chamber is not only relevant but indispensable to our current and prospective members is crucial for sustained growth. We are committed to delivering unparalleled value through tailored services, resources, and support that address the evolving needs of businesses in our region.

Revenue Diversification is another strategic priority. Recognizing the risks associated with relying heavily on a few key events for revenue, we are actively working to diversify our income sources. By expanding our revenue streams, we aim to build financial resilience and ensure the Chamber's stability and capacity to serve our members effectively.

Marketing & Communication Enhancement will be pivotal in amplifying our voice and expanding our reach. We plan to leverage advanced marketing strategies, cutting-edge technology, and storytelling to engage our audience more effectively. This approach will help us better connect with businesses and the community, ensuring our message resonates and drives meaningful engagement.

...a collaborative approach will strengthen our community and enhance opportunities for all.

Collaborative Ecosystem Development is essential for fostering a thriving business environment in Red Deer. We envision creating a unified physical and digital space where businesses can collaborate, innovate, and grow together. This collaborative approach will strengthen our community and enhance opportunities for all.

Finally, our **Economic Development Focus** will centre on making Red Deer an attractive destination for external businesses.

By working closely with our regional economic development partners, we endeavour to assist in driving economic growth and diversifying our local economy, creating a vibrant business ecosystem.

With these strategic priorities, we are poised to navigate the future with confidence and purpose. We look forward to working together to realize these goals and continue building a prosperous community for all.



Our Chamber Staff Team!

In addition to our core team of Sandra Gunderman, Senior Manager of Administration and Finance, Shelley Hanlan, Manager of Events, Lindsey Knudson, Manager of Marketing, and Jennifer Potts, our Administrative Assistant, we are excited to announce we have some new staff who will be focused on membership development and support, as well as our policy and advocacy work. Tricia Hunter was hired in June 2024 to be our Senior Manager of Business and Membership Development. Tricia will be working closely with our Membership, Marketing, and Events Team to drive value and better support our membership this year. Amber Mack will be our new Manager of Policy and Government Relations, starting in mid-September. Amber's focus will be to work with our various Policy Committees to identify and advocate for good business-centric policy and ensure that Red Deer is on the map with our government partners when it comes to supporting our business community.

Scott Robinson
CEO, Red Deer District Chamber



3017 Gaetz Avenue, Red
Deer, AB, T4N 5Y6

403-347-4491

reddeerchamber.com