

ACCESS Saskatchewan

Introducing Rural Youth to Business Skills

by Colleen Gnyp
Freelance Writer, Saskatoon

Each year greater numbers of rural youth sweat over creating business plans, cash flow projections and marketing strategies.

This hard work of learning business skills is part of conferences, camps and business awards programs hosted by Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) across Saskatchewan. It's all part of their efforts to entice youth to think of entrepreneurship as a career option.

One such youth is Spencer Sothmann. This Grade 10 student from Elrose is a two-time winner of the Mid Sask CFDC and Rural Economic Development Authority Youth Business Excellence (YBEX) award program.

In 2004 he took top prize in the category of Grade 7-9 Individual Business Plan Proposal and this year in the Grade 10-12 Individual Business Plan Report category.

"When I entered I really didn't know what a business proposal was," said Sothmann. "But I followed the guide on the Web site, entered and won. This year

I entered because I've been running the business for a year."

His business, named *Hookt*, blends artistry with fishing practicality. He purchases blank fishing lures over the Internet, paints and sells them. Sothmann has eight practical designs, three types of lures and two different size spoons. He also does custom designs, including hockey logos.

"The business is good as it lets me work around everything else in my life," he said.

Applying the skills learned through YBEX and school entrepreneurship classes, Sothmann promotes his business with a sign on his front step, posters around town and he is in the process of creating a Web site. He sees carrying on with the business at least until he completes high school and is considering entering YBEX again next year. That would make him the first youth in the program committed to entrepreneurship over a three-year period.

Mid Sask's YBEX grew from humble beginnings of 20 students involved to

over 75 this year. "It is a very worthwhile program," said general manager Jim Tucker. "(It's) particularly helpful for all youth, as they compete on a level playing field and have the opportunity to participate."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 2



Grade 10 student Spencer Sothmann, shown here with his hand-painted lures, is a two-time winner of the Mid Sask CFDC and Rural Economic Development Authority Youth Business Excellence (YBEX) award program.

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CHRIS HOPKINS OF THE ELROSE PRESS REVIEW

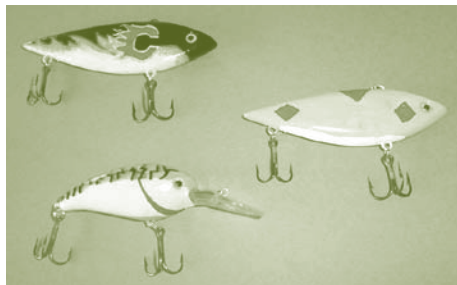
Rural Youth CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Not all Saskatchewan CFDCs have the YBEX program. They visit school entrepreneurship classes, hold summer camps on entrepreneurship and provide business counselling to youth interested in starting a business. In the Kindersley area, Meridian CFDC holds a Youth Entrepreneurship Conference for grades 10 to 12. Youth attend workshops on time management, entrepreneur youth panel discussions and participate in the Lemonade Marketing Game. Community economic development coordinator Judy Penner, also the organizer of the ninth annual event, says the lemonade game is a big hit.

"Youth are placed into groups and everything from there relates to the lemonade stand business," she said. "The first step is for youth to choose a leader, then decide on a budget and eventually a trip to the marketing store to get the product or service promotional items for their business."

"It is a very cool way to introduce rural youth to entrepreneurship and inform them that it is a viable career option to consider."

Community Futures Development Corporations help rural communities expand business development and provide access to business resources and financial assistance. For more information call 1-888-338-9378 or visit www.wd.gc.ca. ■



Sothmann buys blank fishing lures, paints and sells them. Shown here, Calgary Flames (top), Five of Diamonds (middle), The Jack (bottom).

by Colleen Gnypp, Freelance Writer, Saskatoon

Pulse Field Lab Expands Industry Research

There's good reason to invest in the new addition to the Crop Science Field Lab at the University of Saskatchewan. Every dollar invested in pulse research results in a \$15.60 return for farmers and a \$31.60 return for the industry as a whole.

Western Economic Diversification Canada contributed \$750,000, through the Canada-Saskatchewan Western Economic Partnership Agreement, toward construction of the facility, which will provide new space for pulse crop research. The official opening is scheduled for October.

The new 1,200 square metre Pulse Field Lab will improve efficiency of existing research and will let scientists expand into new research, said Jackie Blondeau, special projects manager at Saskatchewan Pulse Growers.

"It will have a big impact on our growers, the processing industry and all the other industries that are associated with pulse crops," she added.

Pulses are legumes, or pod-bearing plants, the seeds of which are used for human food. In Saskatchewan, peas, beans, lentils and chickpeas are the most common pulse crops. Scientists will research crop quality, disease resistance and crop yield at the facility. There will also be space for additional work on other pulse crops.

"One of the projects is to look at what we call the plant architecture, to see



Scientists at the Crop Development Centre are developing chickpea varieties with increased disease resistance and earlier maturity.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SASKATCHEWAN AGRICULTURE AND FOOD

if we can change it so that diseases aren't such a problem in the crop," said Prof. Rick Holm, director of the Crop Development Centre at the University of Saskatchewan, whose research programs will occupy the new building.

For example, traditional pea varieties have long vines and many leaves, creating a dense canopy that retains moisture, he explained. Such a humid environment in the crop canopy fosters the development of diseases.

"If you make the plant shorter and in some cases develop varieties that are called leafless, it's much more open, air circulates through the canopy, it's not as humid, and diseases have a harder time getting established," said Prof. Holm.

"You can manipulate the plants to avoid some of the problems that beset them

out in the field,” he added. “That makes them more productive.”

The original facility opened in 1972. Since then, pulse research has expanded and now includes pulse crop pathology and physiology programs.

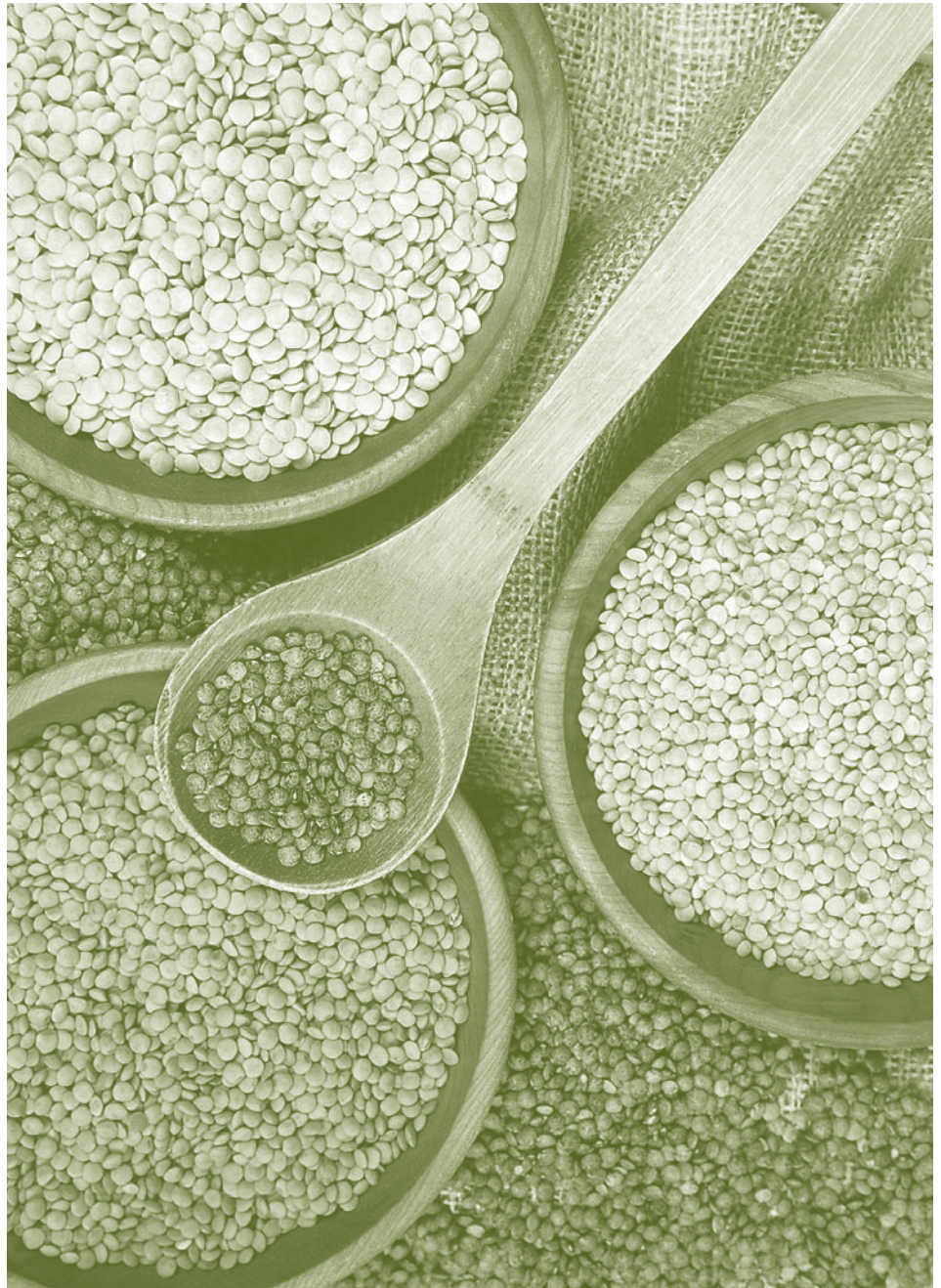
“In the new facilities there’ll be lab space for both of those programs as well as for plant breeding,” said Prof. Holm. “It really makes us a lot more attractive when we go out to hire new scientists to work here.”

“Our potential to attract top-notch scientists to expand our program is going to go up many, many fold when this new building opens.”

To see the progress of construction of the field laboratory, visit www.saskpulse.com/production/production-capital or call (306) 668-5556 to learn more about pulse crops. For more information on how WD helps advance new research, visit www.wd.gc.ca. ■

Developing enhanced lentil varieties will be one of the many roles of Crop Development Centre scientists at the new Pulse Field Lab.

PHOTO COURTESY OF PULSE CANADA



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Research: The Basis of Good Planning



Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD) supports economic research in Saskatchewan by providing seed capital to organizations that can further the prosperity of the province's economy.

Social Attitudes Vital

A \$150,000 investment helped the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce conduct a four-part study to probe the socio-economic indicators of the provincial economy.

Chamber president Ted Hillstead says it is important to look at the economic as well as the social and cultural factors, including attitudes and values.

"There may be good ideas in a local area but if it is not accepted from a social aspect, it may not be successful," he said.



Beyond Saskatoon's Bounds

The Saskatoon Regional Economic Development Authority Inc. (SREDA) received \$48,538 to research and work on a three-year strategic plan involving several nearby communities in the region.

"The WD support helped SREDA work with many key local stakeholders to better define our competitive strengths, investment attraction opportunities, targeted industries and regional economic development initiatives," said Ted Mitchell, chief executive officer, SREDA.

Local Residents Hold the Power

Action Humboldt, a grassroots community movement, and the City of Humboldt, received \$17,550 for community development initiatives. This group of interested citizens trained volunteers to create an economic development plan for the community.

An offshoot of the training has yielded greater involvement by citizens in local government.

"We gained five to six new people to positions on the Chamber," says Tom Goulden, city manager, City of Humboldt. "Several of these people completed the training and have taken on leadership positions in the community. We are proud of what we have accomplished and really it is an extension of the geniuses of the people who live here."

A Global Perspective

With funding of \$180,000 over 2.5 years to assist with a suite of research projects, the Saskatchewan Trade and Export Partnership (STEP) released the first Saskatchewan State of Trade report in April 2005.

"The report sets the groundwork for the next couple of years," says Candace Phelps, STEP's director of market intelligence. "It highlights opportunities for local sellers, particularly in regions and countries in the world where Saskatchewan is a major player, including Ukraine and Kazakhstan."

WD-Saskatchewan director of operations David James says a lot of the economic numbers are extremely positive.

"They are as good as anything in this country. Our self-image is changing as we begin to recognize sectors other than agriculture as central to our identity."

For more information on research supported by Western Economic Diversification Canada, visit www.gc.ca. ■

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