

## **Workshop 1: Swift Current**

*The following notes were taken during the brainstorming session by all the community leaders represented at the workshop.*

### **Session 1: Attitudes**

#### **Positives Identified For the Area**

- ☞ Great place to raise a family
- ☞ Low crime rate
- ☞ Low cost of living
- ☞ Tax incentives for property
- ☞ Strong community spirit
- ☞ Nature amenities (parks, lakes, wildlife, etc.)
- ☞ Hunting Fishing opportunities
- ☞ Shortline rail
- ☞ Quality Water
- ☞ Nice Weather
- ☞ Good level of services (schools, health care, RCMP, ambulance)
- ☞ Abundant Resources: oil, gas, agriculture
- ☞ Employment Opportunities
- ☞ Room to expand existing businesses
- ☞ Good access to region (roads, hwy, rail)
- ☞ Built a good base for industry, manufacturing, oil (Build on them)
- ☞ Tourism Industry is growing
- ☞ Creative problem solving people
- ☞ Recreation facilities (rinks, fields, arenas)
- ☞ Historical areas/sites (Fort Walsh, Red Coat Trail, Archeological sites)
- ☞ Local artists
- ☞ Abundance of agriculture products
- ☞ Affordable ag. land
- ☞ Dedicated people – work together
- ☞ Schools (k-12, community colleges, etc.)
- ☞ Windpower is operating (expand it)
- ☞ Cost of Living (better than Alberta, larger centers)
- ☞ Amenities (hotels, restaurants, grocery)
- ☞ Cultural Amenities (museum, theaters, etc.)
- ☞ Communication links (cell, highspeed internet access starting to increase)
- ☞ Oil and gas development is growing
- ☞ Volunteer Spirit.
- ☞ Diversity of landscape (Sand Hills to Cypress)
- ☞ Good clean air
- ☞ Toughest, versatile people – positive attitude
- ☞ Communities are learning to work together (despite old sports rivalries)
- ☞ Golf courses
- ☞ Wives of oil workers are establishing their own small businesses.
- ☞ Young people are coming back to work in the oil/gas industry.
- ☞ Strong work ethic, pioneer spirit, cooperative spirit.
- ☞ Reasonable access to all essential services

## **Goals and Challenges Identified:**

- ☞ Not enough people to work in smaller communities
- ☞ People have to realize that it doesn't matter where the opportunities are, as long as they are in our area.
- ☞ Realization that every community (big and small) has different positives to offer.
- ☞ Need to harness value added opportunities in agriculture (livestock, ethanol)
- ☞ Need to brand and market our area as an area of opportunity
- ☞ Need to promote our open door policy
- ☞ Transportation links (hwy, rail) need some improvement north and south
- ☞ Need to encourage outside investment – invest back in rural SK.
- ☞ Build on our potential
- ☞ Keeping our families in our communities (youth)
- ☞ Encourage kids to come back (start a businesses, take over one in existence)
- ☞ Seniors are committed to SK. Need that same commitment from our youth.
- ☞ Bring in outside investment to grow
- ☞ Embrace Agriculture – core of rural communities
- ☞ Industry – open door policy
- ☞ Tax Incentives – maintain businesses
- ☞ Promote ourselves
- ☞ Expand existing facilities and infrastructure (investment)
- ☞ To create more job opportunities
- ☞ Lack of infrastructure (Province of SK) ie. highways
- ☞ Build an atmosphere for youth (coffee shops, theatres, etc.)
- ☞ Any community can handle development but feel there is a shortage of entrepreneurs (how do you find them?)
- ☞ Thinking outside the box.
- ☞ Target upgrading roads & infrastructure to allow access to our communities so they can attract development to the area.

## **Session 2:**

### **Sectors of Developments To Target In the Area**

- ☞ Expand Tourism Industry
  - Southwest Tourism map (100 attractions)
  - Birds – bird watching
  - Expand ecotourism opportunities
  - Spin-offs from tourism (Souvenirs, Museums, etc.)
  - Grasslands National Park (Mankota) is importing tourists from Yuma, Florida.
  - Tourism: Wind turbine interpretive center
  - Package tourism and culture – Agro-tourism, Aboriginal culture, Hutterite culture.
  - Motel development
- ☞ Support Action Southwest (target – expansion of local economy).
- ☞ Initiate air service (invested seed money)
- ☞ More oil and gas development
- ☞ Spin-offs from oil and gas (hotels, restaurants, welding, etc.)
- ☞ Home based businesses – call centers, on-line consulting
- ☞ Energy sector – welding, manufacturing, etc.

- ☞ Package services and sell them to the oil/gas coming into the area to ensure they use local services not those offered in Alberta.
- ☞ Value-added Agriculture
  - ILOs
  - Biodiesel
  - Feedlots
  - Ethanol
- ☞ Pelleting Plants
- ☞ Value add all resources into energy sector
- ☞ Agriculture Industry: alternate energy sector
  - Cattle - Feed lots
  - Grains - Ethanol
  - Wind – Wind power
- ☞ Rail Access - container loading facilities
- ☞ Welders, engineers in our communities – market them to oil and gas industry.
- ☞ Restaurants, lounges – extend hours to accommodate youth.
- ☞ RV parks
- ☞ Build facilities/businesses to accommodate tourists.
- ☞ Agro-Tourism: urban centers to experience ranch life
- ☞ Kaolin project
- ☞ English as a second language
- ☞ Southwest made product line (BRAND)
- ☞ Rural Detox Center
- ☞ Empty buildings – Care home, nursing homes
- ☞ Truck driving/rig training schools
- ☞ Casino/performing arts center (keep youth)
- ☞ Potatoes, pork barns, fish farm,
- ☞ Irrigation Projects (lakes)