

Chairperson's Report for the 2013-14 year

The year ending in March 2014 was a year of growth and great change for the Community Futures Saskatchewan organization. Our management team went through a great deal of restructuring and we were supported by the Meridian Community Futures Staff and Vickie Newmeyer. In the end, after a strategic planning session, the board decided to contract association management services from Community Futures Manitoba and have Jason Denbow serve as the Executive Director for Saskatchewan to provide some stability and provide some continuity and experience to our organization. Welcome to Jason and his staff.

One of the largest projects for Community Futures Saskatchewan is the provincial Marketing Campaign. This campaign is a jointly funded project between CFS and the majority of Saskatchewan CF organizations that focuses on utilizing social media to attract new clients for the CF program. The board is excited about the potential of this campaign, as it moves into its next phase, which involves identifying and referring potential clients directly to their CFs for assistance.

Another ongoing project we are very proud of is the *Just Watch Me!* video contest. An initiative of our Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Program (EDP), the 2014 contest was won by Taylor Layton from Outlook and her idea for Taylor's Recycling Pick-up. This contest is part of our ongoing commitment to support Saskatchewan CF organizations in their delivery of CF services to entrepreneurs with disabilities or health conditions.

The third item I would like to touch on is our Loan Pool. This past year, the Community Futures Saskatchewan Investment Pool or CFSIP continued to operate effectively and efficiently in helping to address discrepancies in the availability of loan capital among our CFs and helping to reduce the risk to our program that's posed by uncommitted cash reserves. The Pool is a great tool to help get more capital out of bank accounts and into the hands of rural entrepreneurs to support growth in their businesses and in our communities.

CFS's involvement in our western and national networks continued to bring Saskatchewan CFs the benefit of strength in numbers and the ability to undertake large-scale projects that could not have been achieved at the provincial level. The CF Pan West network played a lead role in promoting CF Program renewal and continued the delivery and enhancement of the Community Futures Board Development Program and the staff professional development program. The CF Network of Canada continued to provide a national voice on issues of importance to the Program. I was happy to serve as Saskatchewan's Pan West and CFNC representative this past year.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank Western Economic Diversification for their ongoing support of this program. We look forward to our continued working relationship to assist clients and small business owners in Saskatchewan.

And finally, a huge thank you to our volunteer board members and our staff for your countless hours of hard work and dedication towards this great program.

Respectfully submitted,



Lori Ries