



Hundreds of delegates from across Canada gathered in Ottawa last week to highlight the role community economic development has played in helping Canada’s rural, remote and Indigenous communities recover from the effects of the pandemic

POST-EVENT NEWS RELEASE

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OTTAWA, ON --- The Community Futures Network of Canada (CFNC) held its national conference in Ottawa on May 8-10, 2022 to highlight the contributions the Community Futures Program has made in helping Canada’s rural, remote and Indigenous communities become more sustainable. The three-day event brought together more than 500 decision makers and industry leaders from all 13 provinces and territories to network, share best practices, and learn new approaches to developing strong, economically sustainable communities.

One of the highlights of the event was a reception on Monday evening, May 9th, at the Westin Ottawa that was attended by more than 50 Members of Parliament from all parties. The Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development, delivered the opening remarks at the reception.

“Important programs like Community Futures remind us that for Canada to succeed, we need our rural and remote communities to thrive. The Government of Canada is committed to continuing to support the economic growth and resilience of rural Canada. Budget 2022 proposes a range of important programs and initiatives to support Canadians living and working in rural communities. We all need to double down, and support the economic diversification and sustainability of our villages, towns, hamlets and coves from coast-to-coast-coast.” said the Honourable Gudie Hutchings, Minister of Rural Economic Development.

The conference also featured opening remarks from the Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister Responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev

Ontario) on behalf of Canada's regional development agencies, and a keynote address by Sébastien Sasseville whose presentation, "One Step at a Time: Thriving in Change to Win the Long Game," set the tone for the whole conference.

"By utilizing their regional knowledge and ability to provide direct on-the-ground support to the unique rural communities they serve, Community Futures Development Corporations play a vital role in delivering support, building partnerships and providing mentorship to rural businesses and organizations." said the Honourable Helena Jaczek, Minister responsible for the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario).

Other speakers included change management specialist Mark DeVolder on leading organizations through change, scientist and astronaut Dr. Shawna Pandya on success, failure and resilience, and Kyle Larkin on grassroots advocacy.

About the Community Futures Network of Canada

Established in 1985 by the federal government, Community Futures is a community-based, economic development initiative designed to help strengthen and diversify the economies of rural and remote communities. It is the oldest and largest national community economic development program in Canada with 267 offices operating in rural communities across the country. They operate as either Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs), Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) and, in Québec, Sociétés d'aide au développement des collectivités (SADCs) and Centres d'aide aux entreprises (CAEs).

Each Community Futures is an independent, not-for-profit organization that is guided by a volunteer board of directors and staffed by a team of professionals. They offer business counselling, training, and access to financing for start-ups and existing businesses interested in expanding their operations.

Last year, Community Futures organizations collectively invested more than \$235.3 million into the economies of rural communities across Canada, helping to create and/or maintain more than 24,000 jobs and leveraging an additional \$520.5 million from other investors. They currently manage a portfolio of \$1.8 billion in combined assets.

For more information about the Community Futures Network of Canada, visit www.communityfuturescanada.ca. For more information about the CFNC National Event, visit www.communityfutures-2022nationalevent.ca

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