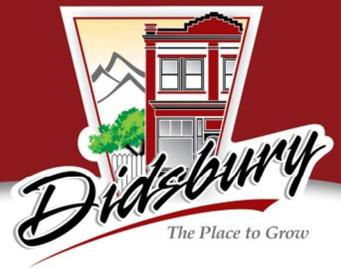


AWARD SUBMISSION – Supporting Info

Publication 5 pages and more

“Your business venture starts now” – Investment & Opportunity Brochure



Additional Information

The Opportunity

The Town of Didsbury Economic Development implemented a number of support services for entrepreneurs, small businesses and newcomers such as online tools, programs and resources. The Town of Didsbury has a population of just over 5,000 and very limited resources to navigate through the challenges of post pandemic and trying to fill the space that is currently vacant. Located in the foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Mountain View County, 40 minutes north of Calgary with Red Deer just 45 minutes further north, Didsbury finds itself conveniently nestled on Highway 2A, just six minutes west of Queen Elizabeth II Highway and only 40 minutes from Calgary International Airport as well as the Red Deer regional airport, which is about to be expanded. Didsbury is considered rural, but its proximity to larger markets, access to Fibre Optics Internet, a hospital and seniors care, as well as education opportunities with a recreation centre and post-secondary in close proximity makes it an enviable location for businesses to prosper and for families to establish roots.

Purpose of the Project

The brochure was completed in March of 2022 and added to the Town’s website in e-book format.

Due to environmental considerations only a limited amount of hard copies (initially 100) were printed. However, there was a demand for the print version of the brochure by our developers and realtors, as well as immigration consultancies which led to a second print run of 100 hard copies for distribution.

Innovation

The Town of Didsbury recognizes the difficulty for some entrepreneurs and future business owners to conduct their own research to determine target markets, available space, local resources and best fit. At times entrepreneurs are looking for business ideas in smaller communities that would fill a need. Additional resources and information for the people interested in settling in Didsbury, such as banks and Chamber of Commerce info were also included in the brochure. The easy-to-read brochure clearly outlines this type of information.

Our objective is to attract entrepreneurs and their families. Therefore the brochure entailed also information about amenities that are important to families, which resulted in two families moving to Didsbury in addition to opening up a business. The brochure goes one step further by identifying potential target markets, examples of businesses and ideas that may be a great fit for Didsbury. The brochure outlines industry strength such as a robust health and wellness sector, a strong creative industry – in particular filming, and a thriving manufacturing/industrial sector.

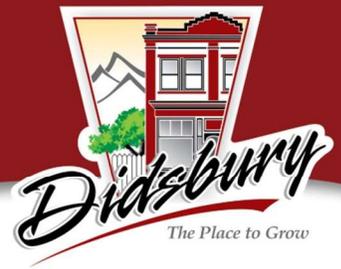
Challenges/Changes

The only change that was made before the brochure went to print the second time around is that we added some licensing information. There have not been any challenges related to the project. The project was straight forward and we knew exactly who we are trying to attract and where to distribute the brochure or the link to the brochure, in order to succeed.

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Target Audience

The Town of Didsbury was successful with its application to become a designated community for the newly established provincial Rural Entrepreneur Stream Program. The program was designed to attract foreign investment and entrepreneurs wanting to settle in Alberta. Didsbury’s Economic Development Officer works with accredited VISA and Immigration consultants, nationally and abroad as well as responds to direct inquiries by potential investors.

The brochure is utilized to provide investors and entrepreneurs with information that addresses most of their questions. The link to the online version of the brochure is provided to investment inquiries that come directly to Didsbury’s Economic Development Department.

Effectiveness

The brochure was first shared with targeted participants at the Whistler ICSC (International Council of Shopping Centers) conference. As a result, Didsbury was able to secure a major anchor tenant for its downtown vacant retail space. *Red Apple* signed a ten-year lease and is moving in by fall.

This retailer is a perfect fit for our community as it is family oriented with its products. Obviously, the brochure provided information that spoke to this retailer, hence the brochure fulfilled its purpose and spoke to the audience that it was intended for.

Additionally, hard copies of the brochure were provided to an Immigration and Visa Service company that went to India on a trade mission. The success is reflected in one of the **testimonials** we received:

“Didsbury is a wonderful place to grow. It has been our distinct pleasure to work with the Town of Didsbury and especially its economic officer, Alexandra Ross, who is an incredible resource in highlighting the opportunities in Didsbury. [...] In particular, the Investment & Business Opportunities brochure has been a very useful resource for our clients and friends who have discovered opportunities and properties to consider. [...]” – Sean G McKinsley, Managing Partner CANADA IMMIGRATION

The Town continues to have conversations with potential investors for other areas in town, stemming from the conference as well as the trade mission.

The success of the brochure exceeded our expectation. Considering we only have this tool in place since the end of March, we are very pleased with the outcome so far. In a very short period of time (approximately 5 months) we achieved what we set out to do, filling vacancies, attracting a downtown anchor, and having new residents move to town.