

Opportunity

The Town of Didsbury's objective is to attract new business to grow economic capacity as well as increase its residential base. Due to availability of commercial space and land within town limits, there is an opportunity for new businesses waiting to be filled.

Didsbury is considered rural, but its proximity to larger markets, access to Telus PUREFibre internet, education and a hospital make it an enviable location for businesses to prosper and for families to establish roots. Didsbury is located half way between Calgary and Red Deer along Highway 2A and six minutes west of Queen Elizabeth II Highway, a major thoroughfare in the Edmonton-Calgary corridor; as well as just 40 minutes from Calgary International Airport.

Purpose of the Project

To create awareness and highlight the Didsbury advantage to our target market, Didsbury Economic Development developed an Investment & Opportunity brochure catering to business attraction to fill vacancies within the town. The title of the brochure is: *Your business venture starts now*. The brochure was completed in March of 2022 and was added to the Town's website in e-book format. Due to the demand and in-person events, such as ICSC conference and a trade mission, a total of 200 hard copies were printed.

The 12-page, 8.5 x 11 brochure with a clean and slick design, uses professional photos, and showcases the benefits of doing business in Didsbury, its numerous amenities, advantages, benefits and location. The brochure goes one step further by identifying potential target markets and providing business ideas that may be a great fit for Didsbury.

The brochure outlines industry strengths such as a robust health and wellness sector, a strong creative industry – in particular filming, and a thriving manufacturing/industrial sector.

Target Audience

The target audience are national and international investors and entrepreneurs looking for new areas to invest and set up business. Hardcopies of the brochure were shared at the ICSC Conference in Whistler, BC held in March 2022. The Conference was considered a great opportunity to stimulate interest and share the brochure with retailers and developers. The main goal was to fill a large retail space that became available in downtown due to the business' expansion into a bigger space located in Didsbury.

Furthermore, the Town of Didsbury is a designated community for the Alberta Rural Entrepreneur Stream program that is designed to attract foreign investment and entrepreneurs to Alberta. Didsbury's Economic Development Officer works with accredited VISA & Immigration consultants, nationally and abroad as well as responds to direct inquiries by potential investors. Online inquiries were provided with a link to the e-book brochure on the Didsbury website.

In May, a Calgary based consultancy took a number hard copies of the brochures on a trade mission to India for distribution to potential entrepreneurs and investors.

Effectiveness

As a result of the ICSC Conference, Didsbury was able to secure a major anchor tenant for its downtown vacant retail space. In addition a vacant lot in our Commercial area was sold to a new developer. The Town continues to have conversations with potential investors for other areas in town, stemming from the Conference.

Additionally, hard copies of the brochure were provided to an Immigration and Visa Service consultant for a trade mission to India. The Town has received over 20 inquiries from that trade mission, which translates into 90% of the distributed brochures in print format. As of today two investor have been secured and are moving to Didsbury with their families.

The project was a complete success due to the increase in inquiries from potential investors and developers, which also resulted in an application and approval of a mixed use building with 42 condos and six new retail spaces on a vacant property in our downtown core.

Link to Town of Didsbury e-book brochure: <https://www.didsbury.ca/p/investment-business-opportunity>