



NEWS RELEASE

ACE Communities Officially Launched

Edmonton, September 16, 2008 – Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) President Shelley Shea officially launched Active Creative Engaged (ACE) communities yesterday to an enthusiastic crowd of over 110.

ACE communities is an ARPA initiative designed to “enhance the quality of life in rural Alberta by strengthening community leadership, collaboration, and innovation through recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage.”

More people. More Active. More Often.

Sincere thanks were made to the **Rural Alberta Development Fund, EnCana, CanWest Media** and other corporate sponsors for their support in this three and a half year, \$6.5 million project. Their assistance has resulted in ACE Communities being able to invest the time and energy to learn more about how to strengthen community leadership.

Terry Keyko from Rural Alberta Development (RAD) commented on why they believe in ACE Communities, “We saw this as an ability to grow communities especially in the areas of capacity, leadership and resources — all areas that rural communities identified as being needed. Furthermore, RAD saw the potential to transfer the project’s learnings from the partner communities to other rural Alberta communities. ACE Communities is providing the toolkit to allow communities to grow. We are also delighted to see the partnerships developed with EnCana and CanWest Media who also obviously believe in this wonderful initiative.”

The official launch included announcing the next flight of ACE partner communities: Kitscoty, Cooking Lake, Didsbury, Eckville, Leduc County, Okotoks, Olds, Sylvan Lake, Sangudo and Whitecourt.

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Asked what being an ACE community will mean for the Village of Kitscoty, Harold Trew said, "Kitscoty is planning for the future. Since we started the application process, we (Council) heard about other projects and now we are starting to work cohesively. Part of being a leader is having people willing to work the change — Kitscoty has that with 100% approval. Our goal is to build a healthy, viable community and being involved with the ACE project complements this."

Kitscoty joined the ten previous partners of: Calling Lake, Camrose, Drayton Valley, High Level, Hinton, Irricana, Lethbridge, Paddle Prairie, Wainwright and Wood Buffalo.

Kathryn Badry of Camrose stated, "Camrose has been participating as an active, creative and engaged partner community for over one year. Our coalition has received strong support from ARPA as we have evolved. We received assistance in working through the community development planning cycle, facilitations staff, coaching and professional opportunities. ARPA has also provided our coalition with financial resources as well as ongoing monthly networking. The support and professionalism from the ARPA has been invaluable in helping make Camrose the (most) healthiest, active community in Alberta!"

The launch was followed by an inspiring workshop led by Ian Hill. (Biography and photo attached.)

Comments from attendees were exuberant. "I've heard him (Ian) speak before and each time I hear him I am left energized and wanting more." "Inspiring and mesmerizing, Ian makes me a better person who wants to do more every day." "Without an active and engaged community there is nothing." "Hill gets it and now I know how to 'get it too' Thank you is not enough for such a riveting workshop with real world examples."

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About Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA): *ARPA is a provincial, not-for-profit, charitable organization made up of volunteers committed to building healthy citizens and communities in Alberta through recreation, sport, arts, culture and parks that has been serving Albertans since 1952.*

For more information on the ACE initiative and the ARPA, please visit www.acecommunities.ca and www.arpaonline.ca, or call (877) 544-1747.

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BACKGROUND

Active Creative Engaged (ACE) Communities:

ACE communities is an initiative of the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association (ARPA) designed to “enhance the quality of life in rural Alberta by strengthening community leadership, collaboration, and innovation through recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage.” More people. More Active. More Often.

We know that recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage significantly improve the well-being of individual Albertans and the development of healthy, vital communities. What hasn't always been quite as clear is how to ensure these potential benefits are implemented and maximized.

Fortunately, thanks to the **Rural Alberta Development Fund**, **EnCana**, **CanWest Media** and other corporate sponsors, a three and a half year, \$6.5 million project has resulted in ACE Communities being able to invest the time and energy to learn more about how to strengthen community leadership.

ACE Mission and Strategic Priorities:

Purpose: To enhance the quality of life in rural Alberta by strengthening community leadership, collaboration, and innovation through recreation, parks, arts, culture and heritage.

Strategic Priorities: ACE is comprised of six strategic priorities:

Goal #1 COMMUNITY LEADERSHIP: Enhance creative development and strengthen local capacity by using a variety of province-wide strategies that will nurture existing, emerging and undiscovered leaders to implement the community-led innovation that will result in active/creative communities.

Goal # 2 ACE COMMUNITIES NETWORK: Engage, coach and connect 20 rural and diverse communities/regions to work as partners along with other engaged communities in becoming ACE Communities.



Goal # 3 YOUTH ENGAGEMENT STRATEGIES: Create youth-friendly communities by enhancing opportunities for youth leadership, physical activity, creativity, youth connections, training, education and rural careers.

Goal #4 RESEARCH: Amass the Alberta-relevant intelligence needed to support active creative communities and deep end the understanding of matters important to the quality of rural living.

Goal #5: AWARENESS & SUPPORT: Build understanding of the potential offered by active/creative communities at local, regional and provincial levels.

Goal #6 MANAGEMENT & EVALUATION: Ensure effective Project Planning, Management and Evaluation



BACKGROUND

Ian Hill Biography:

Humanitarian, Social Entrepreneur, Business Leader, and Award Winning Philanthropist, these are some of the words used when referring to Ian Hill.

From running a multi-million dollar business operation with over 1000 employees...to spearheading life-changing community projects...to a unique world-wide initiative. Ian Hill has been recognized for being a catalyst for positive change throughout North America.

Ian's latest humanitarian project is "Let Them Be Kids", LTBK has specific programs for Canada, the USA and the World. Let Them Be Kids-Canada is a nation-wide project to improve community capacity at the grassroots level while building playgrounds and skate parks for disadvantaged youth. Over a 100 communities from Newfoundland to the Northwest Territories have applied to be part of this effort.

Ian Hill has been recognized for his commitment to positive change as Humanitarian of the year by both the National Council for Community and Justice, and the Martin Luther King Jr. Commission. The Stand for Children Organization named Ian its Child Advocate of the Year. The World Leisure Congress named Let Them Be Kids one of the four most innovative social leisure programs in the world, and most recently Canadian business legend Harry Rosen presented Ian with the Adler Business Leader's Award.

