

ANNUAL REPORT 2020-21

Community
Futures Highwood



Message From the Chair

It has been a very busy time since our last AGM, and many changes have taken place at CF Highwood. The board has met remotely since the beginning of the COVID restrictions in March of 2020. In that time there have been many new COVID related loan programs and duties added to the former normal day to day functions of our Community Futures staff and board. These added responsibilities, along with COVID office closure and staff working remotely has been difficult on everyone, but thankfully staff has stepped up to keep our programs running and everything functioning smoothly.

Community Futures Highwood has had a change at the Executive Director position since our last AGM, with Sara Noyes moving on to new opportunities. We were very fortunate to have a capable long serving employee Ursula Sherwood interested in the position which enabled CF Highwood board to fill the position from within the organization. This has made for a smooth transition in these busy times. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank all of our staff, past and present for the great work you have done for all of our partners and clients at CF Highwood.

It has been my pleasure to serve as Chairman of CF Highwood for the past four years, in that time there have been many new challenges thrown at the board and I am happy to say that everyone has stepped up to meet those challenges and keep things moving smoothly. This will be the last Community Futures AGM for the current board as the municipal elections will take place in October and some of our elected members do not plan to let their name stand for election again. On behalf of all the managing partners and myself, as board chair, I would like to say a big THANK YOU to all our current and past board members both elected and our appointed volunteer members, for their contributions and valued participation in CF Highwood over the past four years. It has been a pleasure to work with all our Board and staff members.

Thank You,

Evan Berger



BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Evan Berger-Board Chair
M.D. Willow Creek

Delilah Miller-Board
Vice Chair
M.D. of Foothills County

Carol MacMillan-Board
Secretary
High River

Rick Everett-Board Treasurer
Nanton

Wayne Schultz-IRC Chair
M.D. Foothills County

Robert Cotton-IRC Vice Chair
Black Diamond

Florence Christophers-
Director
Okotoks

Kerri Ann Colby-Director
Okotoks

Serena Donovan-Director
Vulcan County

John Dozeman-Director
Nanton

Veronica Kloiber-Director
Black Diamond

Don McRae-Director
M.D. Willow Creek

Sherri Papke-Director
Vulcan

Michelle Roddy-Director
Vulcan

Tom Sales-Director
High River

OUR STAFF

Ursula Sherwood
Executive Director

Billie Charlton
Business Advisor

Cayla Eskesen
CED Coordinator

Tara Cole-Klippenstein
Bookkeeper/Admin

2020-21 HIGHLIGHTS

LOANS

Funded 11 loans for a total of \$742,624 in addition to 117 RRRF loans

ADVISORY SERVICES

Provided 654 advisory services.

ENTREPRENEURS WITH DISABILITIES

Worked with 10 Entrepreneurs with Disabilities Clients.

PARTICIPANTS

Had 416 business training participants.

BUSINESSES

Worked with 190 businesses

CLIENTS

Worked with 453 clients

PROJECTS

Participated in 32 projects with other community partners.

Business Resiliency and Retention Project

CFH ran the Business Resiliency and Retention Project from July 1, 2020 until March 31, 2021 as a direct response to the challenges posed to business owners by Covid-19. This program was a collaboration with CF Alberta Southwest and CF Crowsnest Pass and included mental health and business coaching as well as workshops on a variety of business-related topics, such as changing HR regulations and e-commerce.

- Assisted 346 unique SMEs
- Maintained 588.5 jobs
- Trained 419 participants
- Engaged 50 partners in the delivery of the program
- Provided 584 1-on-1 coaching hours
- Hosted 20 workshops
- Provided 27 group coaching workshops

Succession Matching Project

CFH started running the Southern Alberta Succession Matching project in July 2020 (ongoing until March 31, 2022) in collaboration with 7 other CF offices in Southern Alberta. The project aims to increase awareness and education about exiting a business in order to prevent business closures in our rural communities. Participants have the choice of working with three different industry vendors: The Alberta Business Family Institute, which specializes on business family transitions, Commercial Ventures which specializes on third party sales and SuccessionMatching.com, who run an innovative business buy/sell website. Business owners have access to free 1-on-1 business exit coaching, free workshops and a 2-year membership with SuccessionMatching for a small fee.

SMARTstart

Our first ever SMARTstart program started in February 2021. The 8-month program supports entrepreneurs who are in the concept stage up to the first 3 years in business with online training provided by GoForth Institute, business plan/strategic plan development, workshops and 1-on-1 mentoring with a local professional.

CFH funded 117 RRRF loans between June 20, 2020 and March 31, 2021 for a total value of \$3,470,000 and maintained 204 jobs.

KANATA AVIATION TRAINING

Pedro Hernandez and Kevin Lowe are the diverse duo behind Kanata Aviation Training, located at the High River Airport in Foothills County. Pedro comes from the Dominican Republic with a background in industrial and commercial aviation. He owned a manufacturing company and imported housewares. Kevin on the other hand started off in the UK working construction and flying helicopters. Pedro and Kevin's paths crossed at Integra Air and business started over a simple 'let's get coffee'. One coffee turned into a year of coffee.

"Here in Canada, it is hard to get a hand when you are a start up." Pedro explained that they had a hard time procuring start-up funding. Kevin noted that it was not just being a start up that was hard, it was being a start up in aviation.

"We knew the market was there, we knew it was the time to start a company and grow it. There are easy ways of doing it, but we decided not to go with the easy ways."

"We wanted to do it the right way. If you don't get things set up right from the start to try and change things when you're already running it is hard." said Pedro.

Kanata Aviation Training expects to grow, the issue is no longer funding, the issue is finding an aircraft. "It's a different position to be in versus what we were. We've had 12 months where we can plan systems out, we tried all of them and we know everything that works. We are getting the more out of our aircrafts than any other school. Efficiency is good, and we have great instructors. We are very fortunate there." said Kevin, "I think the big thing for any small business is that it does not matter whether you are a flower shop or this, if you do not set things out right, it will be difficult to carry on because you will forever be changing. You will have enough changes even if you set things out right. If you can limit them as much as possible you are going to be better off. I think that's where we capitalized, we spent a lot of time planning."

Pedro commented "If you take your time to really plan, the execution will be easier."

"Certainly, for us planning it all out early on and getting it all set out beforehand saved a lot of work for us later. And it allows you to grow efficiently because the processes you know now still work later. You just follow the same routine you have already got, and it makes it easy to continue on." Kevin stated, "Working with Community Futures Highwood was really good as well, they identified things we had not thought of. It was really intense but not because everything was avoided but because they were really trying to help us out."

"I'm really grateful that Community Futures exists because if I was to tell you all of the places we had went for help you would be surprised. Until we



found Community Futures which was willing to help. The mission is to help. I feel good that we found them." said Pedro.

"It was still a big risk for Community Futures, it was still as much of a risk for them as it was for anyone else." Kevin commented on the future of Kanata Aviation. "The next five years are going to be busy, if you can build a company now with the right standards it can then exist with mainstream companies. Our mission was really to build something that was sustainable rather than ride the wave now and shut down later."



"They combined efforts, that was pretty big for us."

Photo By BRENT CALVER/Western Wheel)

HUBTOWN BREWERY

Mark and Lisa Watts, the power couple behind Hub Town Brewery, have created an astounding beer haven complete with two outdoor patios, an internal tap room, and endless memory making. When driving through Olde Towne you will often see Hub Town Brewery with their lit-up patios, in house brews, and all-around good vibes.

Recently Hub Town Brewery has gone under intensive renovations to open up two new outdoor patios.

"The patio was a big project for us, originally we were just this little 58 seat tap room then we had expanded to the outdoor patio that is out front. Then we expanded to build out the upper level

taproom and the upper level patio." Lisa Watts commented on the renovations the brewery has undergone, "So you could say we have been pretty busy. Literally on Father's Day we had finished construction on all of the renovations. That was what we have been doing during COVID. We have fortunately opened up another 150 seats as well as the 100 seats that are out front. We were pretty fortunate."

When asked about the funding Community Futures Highwood has provided Mark commented "The start up funding that we received from Community Futures was super important and without that it would have been a lot more difficult to get going in the first place."

"We were needing more money than one singular office was able to offer so of course they combined efforts and had gotten three offices on board to support funding us in the beginning of our business. That was pretty big for us." Lisa said, "That was a lot of funding that we would have struggled to get otherwise."

Hub Town Brewery has gone under intensive renovations, allowing them to open two new outdoor patios.

FRESH AIR FURNACE CLEANING

Jim and Darlene Fernell started Fresh Air Furnace Cleaners in October of 2007. Jim had an extensive background in furnace cleaning and after a change of structure on the Alberta oil rigs there was a need for Jim and Darlene to sit down and discuss their future. Sitting down as a family they thought about their options for starting a business and opted for furnace cleaning, as they knew the industry and the work and felt that it was the right choice.

“There is not a lot out there to help small businesses,” Darlene spoke on the initial years of Fresh Air Furnace Cleaners, “When you do reach out for help being a small business there are different struggles. When something happens and you do not have the money it will just push you farther behind. If it wasn’t for Community Futures Highwood, we never would

have started this company. Jim had just left the rigs when we began, and we didn’t have any savings. We needed the money they lent us to get started in the beginning.”

Fresh Air Furnace Cleaners has built up an impressive customer base and

“When we get into a house we give everyone the full meal deal.”

with no formal marketing they have managed to create very close relationships with their clients all through word of mouth. “Because of our great community we are doing well, and we do not have to advertise. Our son came to work with us fulltime this year so that we didn’t get so backed up and right now [September] we are booking well into November!”

Darlene is a severe asthmatic and recalls calling Sears when the company was still in business. They had quoted \$800 to clean her furnace which was a whopping amount compared to the \$216 it would cost Jim to clean. “I didn’t want to buy shares in their company,” She said, “I just wanted my furnace cleaned!”

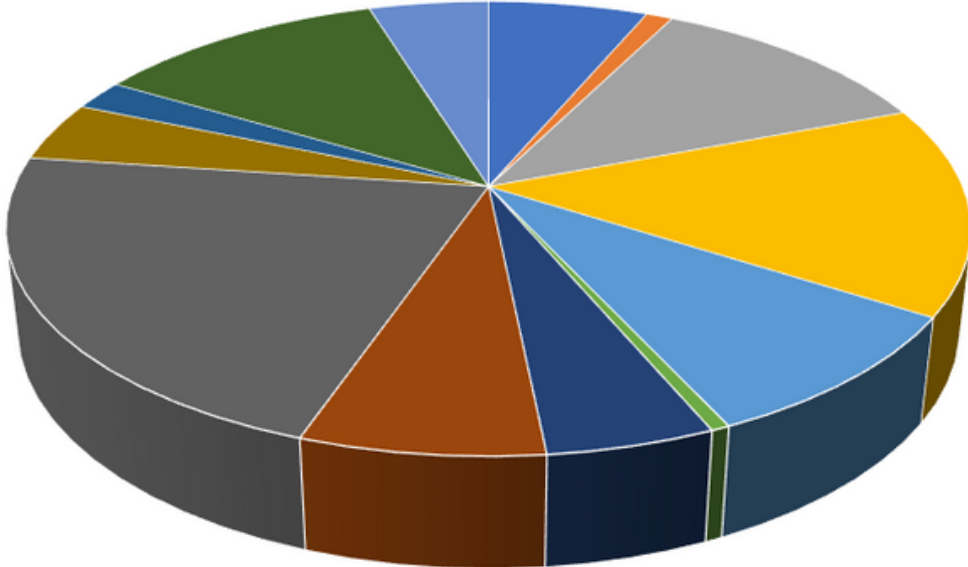
Jim and Darlene have never changed their prices since starting in 2007. Not only have they managed the same prices, they also have never charged for travel. “We think the old-fashioned way,” Darlene said, “If I show up at your door to do a job you should not be paying me to travel for it. We are just running this business the way we think it should be done and treat people the way they deserve to be treated. When we get into a house, we give everyone the full meal deal.”

Customer care and respect is weaved deeply into the foundation of Fresh Air Furnace Cleaning. “I think customers always need to be treated better. You are offering a service to them, and that service should always be true.”



LOAN PORTFOLIO INDUSTRY MIX

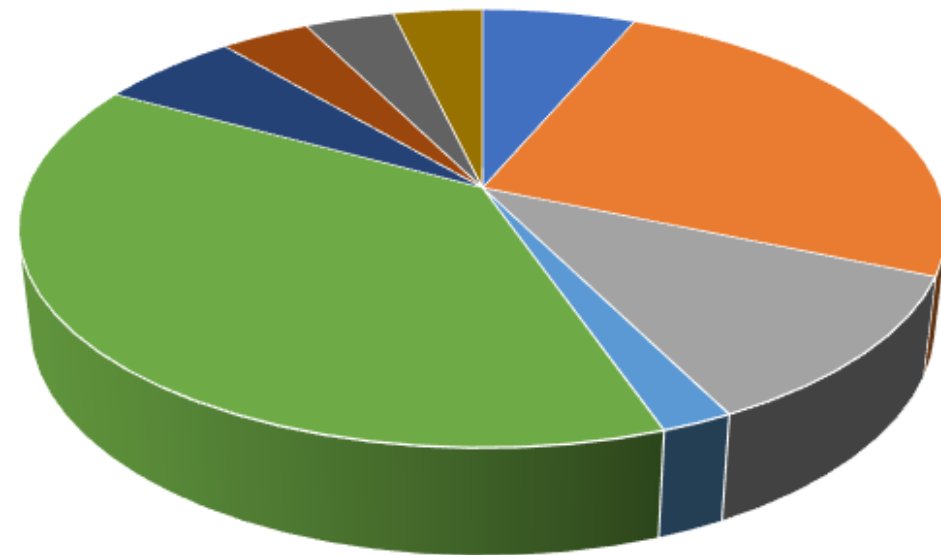
Industry	# Loans	Industry %
Accommodation and Food Services	12	16.38%
Administrative/Support/Waste Mgmt/Remediation	2	1.06%
Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting	22	11.70%
Arts/Entertainment/Recreation	28	14.89%
Construction	17	9.04%
Information/Cultural Industries	1	0.53%
Management of Companies & Enterprises	9	4.79%
Manufacturing	13	6.91%
Other Services/Oil & Gas	41	21.81%
Professional/Scientific/Technical Service	8	4.26%
Real Estate/Rental/Leasing	4	2.13%
Retail Trade	22	11.70%
Transportation/Warehousing	9	4.79%
Total	188	100.00%



- Accommodation and Food Services
- Administrative/Support/Waste Mgmt/Remediation
- Agriculture/Forestry/Fishing/Hunting
- Arts/Entertainment/Recreation
- Construction
- Information/Cultural Industries
- Management of Companies & Enterprises
- Manufacturing
- Other Services/Oil & Gas
- Professional/Scientific/Technical Service
- Real Estate/Rental/Leasing
- Retail Trade
- Transportation/Warehousing

LOAN PORTFOLIO DISTRIBUTION BY REGION

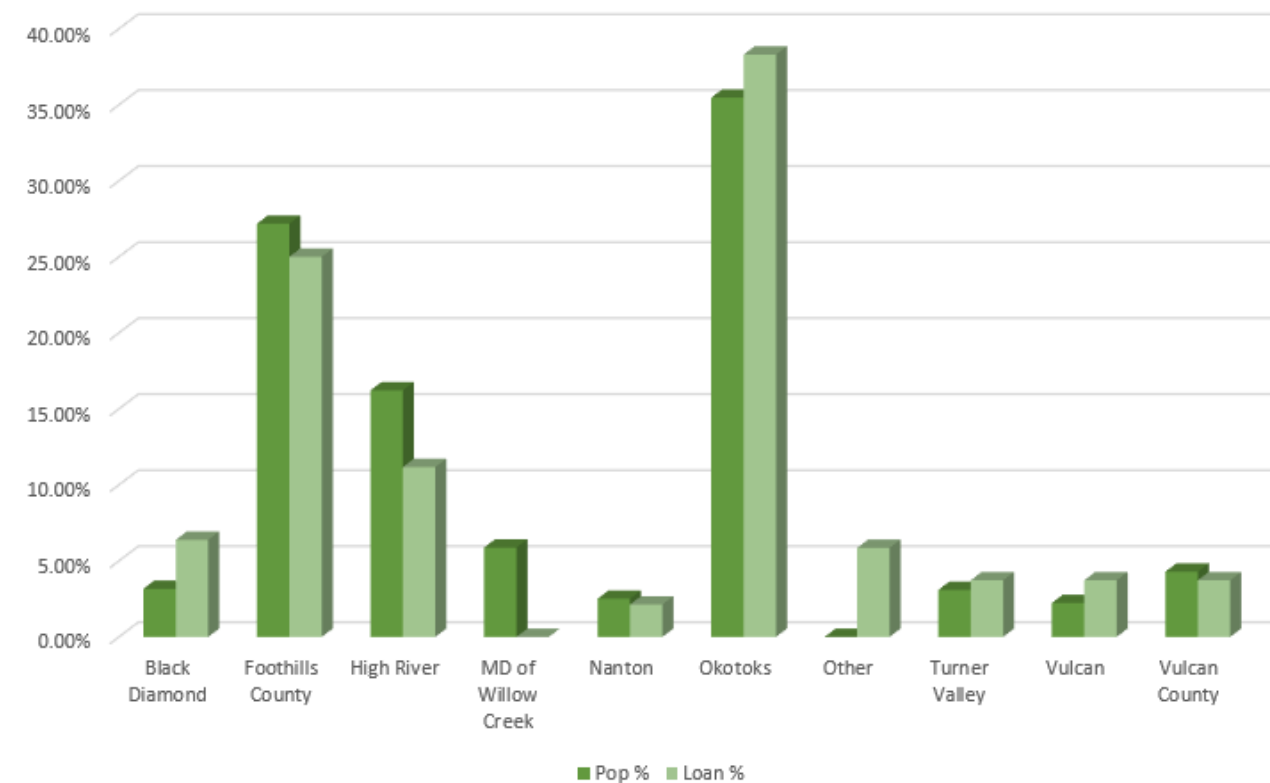
Area	# Loans	Loan %
Black Diamond	12	6.38%
Foothills County	47	25.00%
High River	21	11.17%
MD of Willow Creek	0	0.00%
Nanton	4	2.13%
Okotoks	72	38.30%
Other	11	5.85%
Turner Valley	7	3.72%
Vulcan	7	3.72%
Vulcan County	7	3.72%
Total	188	100.00%



■ Black Diamond	■ Foothills County	■ High River	■ MD of Willow Creek
■ Nanton	■ Okotoks	■ Other	■ Turner Valley
■ Vulcan	■ Vulcan County		

LOAN PORTFOLIO DISTRIBUTION

Area	Pop %	Loan %	# Loans
Black Diamond	3.16%	6.38%	12
Foothills County	27.17%	25.00%	47
High River	16.21%	11.17%	21
MD of Willow Creek	5.88%	0.00%	0
Nanton	2.51%	2.13%	4
Okotoks	35.46%	38.30%	72
Other	0.00%	5.85%	11
Turner Valley	3.09%	3.72%	7
Vulcan	2.23%	3.72%	7
Vulcan County	4.28%	3.72%	7
Total	100.00%	100.00%	188





CONTACT INFORMATION

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Instagram @CFHighwood

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COMMUNITIES SERVED

Aldersyde, Arrowwood, Black Diamond, Blackie, Carmangay, Cayley, Champion, De Winton, Foothills County, High River, Kananaskis Improvement District, Lomond, Longview, M.D. of Willow Creek, Millarville, Milo, Mossleigh, Nanton, Okotoks, Priddis, Turner Valley, Vulcan, and Vulcan County

SUPPORTED BY

Canada 