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Parkland Ability Centre Contributing to the Community Since 1966

The generosity of the late George Morris helped to establish a Sheltered Workshop in Yorkton. John Denysek, Regional Director Saskatchewan Abilities Council said that when the Workshop opened in 1966, it served about 20 clients and had a staff of 5. In 2009, the Parkland Ability Centre, with a staff of 70 serves over 1250 clients throughout the Parkland. A satellite centre is located in Wynyard and one will soon open in Kamsack.

John has been with the Council since 1991. In that time, he has seen many changes but one thing that has stayed constant is the support for the Council in the community. "Yorkton has always exhibited the spirit of cooperation and collaboration," said John. Two programs in particular that exemplify these traits are the Recycling Initiative and the Partners in Employment program. "These two programs required several community partners in order to become successful," he said. "Both programs have gone on to be models for the province."

The Recycling Initiative in Yorkton is held in high esteem due to the range of services it provides (it's a comprehensive recycling program), its financial structure and the ongoing sustainability of the program.

Partners in Employment is also well regarded and has, in fact, been adopted by the province. The Yorkton Branch has participated in many pilot projects through this program and in 2008, initiated the Partners in Settlement & Immigration program. While offering a similar range of services as the Partners in Employment program, it focuses on the needs of new immigrants and employers.

When asked how the Centre contributes to the Community, John cited a list of benefits. Firstly, it provides a mechanism to assist the more vulnerable members of society to become a part of the community through employment and recreational activities. Secondly, it builds human capacity by providing another source of employment from a non-traditional sector. It also generates wealth in the community. And last but not least, the Recycling Initiative addresses both the community's recycling concerns and the clients' need for social value - a place of employment that provides inclusion, independence and quality of life.



Ability Centre Clients & Staff

The Parkland Ability Centre is all about people. John indicated that the aspect of his job he enjoys the most is the interaction with the clients and the staff. "The clients", he explained, "are so open and honest and the staff are united by a common bond to serve individuals and to enhance the independence of the clients."

With expansion in its future, the Parkland Ability Centre is gearing up to better serve its clients and the community at large. The Yorkton Chamber of Commerce salutes the Parkland Ability Centre for all the fine work it does for the community. For more information on any of the programs and services of the Council please call 782-2463 or visit www.abilitiescouncil.sk.ca.

Fast Facts About the Abilities Centre:

- Current pay roll is nearly \$3 million annually
- 70 people are employed by the Council
- The Recycling Initiative in Yorkton began in 1994 Partners in Employment began in 1997
- The Parkland Ability Centre will soon undergo a \$750,000 renovation
- With the growth in the Recycling sector, the Centre is looking to expand into a larger facility in the near future



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Message from our Summer Student

Hello, I'm Jennifer Geddes, the Summer Assistant at the Yorkton Chamber of Commerce. I grew up here in Yorkton, and I'm currently going to the University of Saskatchewan, with Computer Science as my major.

It's been really great working at the Chamber. I get to meet a lot of "different" people. Like this one man who seems to be under the false impression that he is French! Juanita and Sherry have been great too. They really made me feel comfortable and they're pretty funny too, and not always 'haha' funny either. I'm just kidding though, they're really cool, and I'm glad I got this job. It's really a good experience because it seems that every day something goes horribly wrong. Like internet problems, network problems, or printer-sharing problems. Just a few weeks ago someone managed to rack up 15 viruses on her computer. Now she knows to never run a computer without antivirus software.

After Dine-A-Nite ended, the majority of my role at the Chamber has been that of tech support. Not only have I been fixing problems on the Chamber's network, but I have also been heavily modifying the Chamber's website. Lately I have revamped the Member Roster page. The old page only had a few categories and a lot of members were classified as 'Not Assigned'. There are now over 80 categories, each of which links to a page which lists the members in that category. If you haven't visited the website for a while, go to www.chamber.yorkton.sk.ca.

Let me know if your business is in the correct category or if you want it added to an additional category.

The rest of the changes I've made are pretty minor in comparison to the new Roster. Just little tweaks mostly. Like taking down the Business Development Package and updating it, adding and removing links, making new pages and other little things like that.

For the future I plan to make some more changes to the website. I'm going to try to design a new banner, though I'm not much of an artist.

It's weird to think that my job here is almost half over. It seems like just the other day I was having a final exam related panic attack, and now I'm in an office trying to explain the difference between HTML and asp to someone whose only response is to stare at me with a blank expression. If the rest of the summer goes by this fast I'll be back in Saskatoon freaking out about finals in no time!

Jennifer Geddes
Summer Assistant



Jennifer Geddes

Saskatchewan Roughriders 2010 Centennial Celebration

With the Saskatchewan Roughriders celebrating their 100th anniversary in 2010, they are looking to connect with any companies that may be celebrating a significant milestone in their history. Any companies celebrating 50 to 100 years in business should contact Randy Dove, GM, Riders 2010 Centennial at (306) 536-7869.



Ryan Hoffman, Chamber Director, presented the chamber scholarship to Florence Ceasar. Florence is enrolled in year one program at Parkland College Yorkton Campus.



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Government of Canada Action Plan Website

Earlier this year, the Government of
Canada announced an Action Plan
designed to stimulate the Canadian
economy.

Recently I had a phone call from the
Western Economic Diversification Office
in Saskatoon to tell me about the Action
Plan's website. If you're interested in
seeing what the Plan is about and how
it may impact you personally or your
business, visit the website at
www.actionplan.gc.ca

Scroll down to the bottom of the Home
Page to the section entitled "What's In
the Plan for Me" and then click on to
the area of interest such as Individual
and Family, Business, Educational or
Non-profit Organization, or Aboriginal
Community.

The site also shows where the various
projects are taking place.

The Action Plan is scheduled to run until
2011.