

7 January 2015

Dear Lucien Cloutier,

I am writing to introduce you to an exciting new initiative called the Co-operative Innovation Project (CIP). In November 2013, the Centre for the Study of Co-operatives at the University of Saskatchewan entered into a first-of-its-kind partnership with Federated Co-operatives Limited to explore co-operative development in rural and Aboriginal communities in western Canada. Co-operatives can make a positive contribution to a community. They offer opportunities for economic and community development in important areas such as housing, social services, retail, energy, and recreation.

Our team is looking for a new approach to co-operative development that is more responsive to the characteristics and needs of rural and Aboriginal communities across western Canada. This project is going to paint a picture of rural western Canada. By participating, you will ensure your community is part of the picture.

This winter and spring we will be hosting community meetings throughout British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. We will be inviting community members to come and discuss local needs and explore possible solutions together. Your community could see the following benefits from attending our meeting:

- It's a chance to discuss ways to address the needs and challenges of your community by working together.
- It would give your community a sense of purpose. Feel good about sharing information that will benefit your community's economic growth. See how collective action can help address your special needs and interests.
- It would develop a story about the community-driven activities that have worked well in your area.

In return for allowing us to come into your community, we will provide you with a document that contains a summary of everything we discussed. We will also give you the most up-to-date information from a variety of sources about your community and surrounding area.

We will be hosting a meeting in Rimbey on Thursday, January 29<sup>th</sup>, 2015. The surrounding communities of Ponoka, Leedale, Bluffton, Hoadley and the Summer Village of Parkland Beach will be invited to attend. Please review the enclosed information package. Our project lead, Rhiannon Klein, will follow-up with you next week after your town council meeting on Monday, January 12<sup>th</sup>.

If you have any further questions, please contact Rhiannon Klein at 306-514-0248.

Kindest regards,



Murray Fulton, Director  
Centre for the Study of Co-operatives