



Photography by Adrian Wolfe

Attracting High Value & High Impact Investments

to Northwestern Alberta

A primary goal for the Regional Economic Development Initiative (REDI) is to attract investment to the region. The newly-launched Site Selection Project is poised to do just that.

With behind-the-scenes preparation nearing completion, REDI is proudly promoting 11 development sites that are ready for investment. They span across six communities—Fort Vermilion, High Level, La Crete, Paddle Prairie, Rainbow Lake and Zama City.

“Each community has its own competitive advantage, and each site has its own unique attributes,”

said REDI Manager Andrew O’Rourke. “Sites are near rail lines, and some are located next to existing industries. They are primed for companies wanting to tap into existing resources and synergize.”

REDI hired local contractor Adrian Wolfe to complete the project’s community investment profiles for each of the six communities. His role also includes working with municipalities in preparation for the project.

“We hired Adrian Wolfe for many reasons. He came with local knowledge, has a background in business management and a strong understanding of investment in the region,” said O’Rourke.

The 11 sites REDI has chosen will be of interest to businesses looking to build or expand, which will help grow the local economy.

“When we attract new business to the region, we create the potential for new jobs, higher wages, population growth, increased tax revenue and even supplementary business opportunities,” said Wolfe.

Recognizing the benefits, Wolfe has been diligent in completing and implementing a strong foundation for this project to launch from.

“Developing a strategic, forward-looking plan for regional investment is critical for the future growth and stability of our local economy,” said Wolfe.

Ensuring communities are prepared for investment attraction is key, and both Wolfe and O’Rourke took this into consideration when seeking out lot sites that aligned with the needs of future industries. Moving forward, REDI’s role will be to work with municipal partners, community stakeholders and investors to accomplish mutual goals.

The need and demand for this Site Selection Project has been apparent for some time.

In the summer of 2022, REDI started receiving an increase in requests from Invest Alberta, specifically from companies looking for locations to establish themselves. Each company had different requirements, such as areas with locally



(L to R): REDI Manager, Andrew O’Rourke and Adrian Wolfe
Photography by Trent Schlamp

sourced materials and skilled labour forces.

“Along with site requirements, many companies wanted sites that already had, or could easily access, utilities such as water, power and gas,” said O’Rourke.

Much of the information the companies were looking for wasn’t readily available. REDI identified this gap in information and research as a matter of priority.

In December of 2022, REDI received, and matched, funding from CanExport. This collaboration allowed them to incorporate the site selections, use video promotions for the overall project.

Over the past year, REDI has built strong ties with Invest Alberta, a crown corporation. Lynette Tremblay, COO of

Invest Alberta explains communities have an advantage with investors when they show readiness for attracting new projects in their areas.

“In today’s competitive global landscape, communities that are investment-ready have a distinct advantage when it comes to attracting major projects,” said Tremblay. “Investment readiness sets communities up for growth and progress by sending a clear message that we welcome investors, foster innovation and support sustainable development.”

With the Site Selection Project firmly in place, REDI and partnering municipalities can now ensure investment information is readily available.

“REDI’s main focus is to promote and enhance economic growth amongst

our communities and to promote the region as a whole,” said O’Rourke.

Extensive groundwork was needed to initiate this project. Wolfe worked alongside municipalities to investigate 33 parameters for each site, which included zoning, utility providers, power and gas lines, current capacities, adjacent transportation, ownership, price per acre and more.

“We ensured every community was included,” said O’Rourke. “Our goal now is to better prepare the region for future growth and investment. Understanding the benefits of the chosen sites across our area will allow REDI, Invest Alberta and our municipalities promote the region.”

Work has been put into targeting industries that complement the area’s resources—building on the resource networks that are already strong within the region.

“For this project, REDI’s role is similar to a concierge service. We will make the needed introductions and then let the companies and municipalities work together on their own,” said O’Rourke.

Once introductions are made, companies interested in investing will work directly with municipalities for possible development incentives, such as extending roads or creating new entrances for the sites.

In mid-October, REDI hosted an Alberta Can: Regional Investment Initiative workshop with Invest Alberta to help

municipalities understand the decision-making processes industry follows when choosing to locate in a particular place.

“We are really trying to get Northwestern Alberta on the map. We will be able to promote the region better using the channels available through Invest Alberta,” said O’Rourke.

“Invest Alberta’s work with communities across the province has helped build capacity to attract investments and to chart a path to long-term prosperity by working together,” said Tremblay.

“Northern Alberta is flush with natural resources, particularly in energy and forestry,” said Wolfe. “By identifying these unique geographic and competitive advantages, we can build on these strengths, fill gaps and solidify stable and robust communities for the future.”

The new site selection documents are available on REDI’s website. REDI will continue to work with its municipal partners to build on these opportunities.

Looking ahead, REDI is excited about the positive outcomes now possible with the roll out of the Site Selection Project as well as what the project could mean for northern communities.

Learn more about the Site Selection Project by following the QR link or visit rediregion.ca

