

ANNUAL REPORT 2021

The Pembina County Job Development Authority shall use its resources to seek and promote new and expanded opportunities within the region. The communities and the JDA will work together to create, support, and sustain employment opportunities and develop healthy, vibrant communities to strengthen the regional economy.

OUR REACH IN 2021



JDA INVESTED NEARLY \$103,000 WITHIN PEMBINA COUNTY

Assisted in funding planning, marketing, education, business improvements, and tourism



9 STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT GRANTS AWARDED

\$50,000 was available for storefront improvements. *See pg. 2 for more information*



NV EXPANSION INTO CAVALIER - \$2M PROJECT

JDA approved \$90,000 over three years to this project. *See pg. 4 for more information*

2021 JDA INVESTMENT CREATES \$2.2 MILLION IN IMPACTS

YEAR	JDA INVESTMENT AMOUNT	*LEVERAGED FUNDS
2021	\$102,966	\$2,278,196
2020	\$7,479	\$335,505
2019	\$87,424	\$2,285,283
2018	\$44,142	\$1,223,951
2017	\$55,750	\$80,750
Total	\$297,761	\$6,203,685

*Leveraged funds are acquired from private, local, state and federal sources

NINE BUSINESSES UTILIZE NEW STOREFRONT IMPROVEMENT PROGRAM

In March 2021, the JDA launched the Storefront Improvement Program to provide assistance to Pembina County businesses to make exterior building improvements. Up to \$5,000 was available each business and had to be matched 1:1 with other funds.

A total of nine businesses utilized the program, which leveraged more than \$145,000 in other funds for improvements to Pembina County businesses. The chart below shows which businesses used the program and the improvements made. It is expected the JDA will set aside approximately \$50,000 to support the program again in 2022.

This program strives to improve the aesthetics of Pembina County, assist businesses in attracting new customers, promote new business ventures within vacant buildings, and to lower the costs for property improvements.



Project	Location	Project Description	PCJDA Funding	Leveraged Funds
Busee Salon	Cavalier	New siding, windows, sidewalk, roof, door, sign, and sidewalk with a railing	\$5,000	\$45,000
Jonnasson Rental	Cavalier	Façade beautification for signs and front awning	\$5,000	\$11,000
McCurdy Properties	Cavalier	Handicap accessibility improvements, replacement of window and new storefront signage	\$2,373	\$2,373
Tamarisk Properties	Cavalier	Restore cement and block wall, paint and trim and new windows	\$5,000	\$25,000
Cavalier Do It Best	Cavalier	Outdoor signage and commercial doors and windows	\$5,000	\$12,655
Mike's Parcel	Pembina	Awning, gutters, lighting, and signage for front of building	\$5,000	\$5,000
Pembina County Historical Society	Cavalier	Signage and beautification for the Pembina County Museum	\$5,000	\$14,000
Blu Soul Design	Walhalla	Tree removal, beautification, upscaling facade and improving handicap accessibility	\$5,000	\$5,200
Shane Heck, LLC	Cavalier	Will be used fo new siding, doors, windows and landscaping	\$5,000	\$25,000
		TOTAL	\$42,449	\$145,228

CATALYST FUND: BUSINESS RESOURCE FOR COVID-19 RECOVERY AND RESILIENCY

"The mentoring and support we have received along the way has been phenomenal. We are so fortunate to have these organizations, their staff, and volunteers in our area!"

-Kristen Laxdal
Dakota Landworks, LLC
Cavalier

Four Pembina County businesses utilized the Catalyst Fund in 2021: Dakota Landworks, JRatliff Media, Lorrich Industries, and McCurdy Health & Wellness in the total of \$263,480.

Additionally, the JDA lent approximately \$16,000 as match to the Bank of North Dakota Flex PACE program for three of these businesses. The Flex PACE program is an interest rate buydown program that aims to reduce a bank loan interest rate up to five percent points with a minimum rate of 1%.

The Catalyst Fund is a business loan program offered by the Red River Regional Council (RRRC) and has been established to support recovery and resiliency for businesses impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Catalyst Fund was made possible in partnership with the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration. The RRRC received \$1.26 million to assist with business recovery and resiliency in the four county region of Pembina, Nelson, Grand Forks and Walsh counties. The fund can be used for working capital, inventory, machinery and equipment, and fixed assets.



From left: Cavalier Mayor Lacey Hinkle, Jeremy Ratliff of Ratliff Media, and RRRC Executive Director Dawn Mandt



From left: Kristen and Brady Laxdal of Dakota Landworks and RRRC Executive Director Dawn Mandt



Trisha McCurdy, President of McCurdy Health & Wellness

BUSINESS RETENTION & EXPANSION PROJECT IDENTIFIES CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES



More than 85 people attended the Town Hall event in Walhalla in December, including a group of high school students.



In the fall of 2020, the Red River Regional Council and collaborative partners, including the PCJDA, launched a regional Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E) program. The program included 113 one-on-one interviews with regional business owners or key management to identify challenges and opportunities within the regional business community.

The information is used to create public awareness and develop strategies to address topics raised. The interviews also offered the opportunity to collect and report data on the COVID-19 impacts within the regional business sector. There were 29 businesses interviewed in Pembina County.

The results of the interviews were presented in the form of a Town Hall event. The Town Hall platform was utilized to present the data from the business sector interviews, listen to the testimonies of local business owners, and constructively discuss solutions to the identified obstacles in a workshop setting.

The City of Walhalla hosted a Town Hall event on December 8, 2021. The Walhalla Townhall event discussed the current mindset and identity of Walhalla, the relationship between Frost Fire Park and the Pembina Gorge, and what locals would like to see for the city over the next year.

The Town Hall events for the cities of Pembina and Cavalier are being scheduled for early 2022.



A total of 29 Pembina County businesses participated in the BR+E interviews including, from left, Waters Family Restaurant, The Spud Bar & Grill, The Parcel Barn, and Blu Soul Design.

BR+E Survey Insights:



100%

Reported negative business impacts due to COVID-19



85%

Negatively impacted due to closure of US-Canada border



60%

Want/need more training, certification in technology, health care services, trades



35%

Have technology based opportunities including Telemedicine and Point-of-sale (POS) tech



80%

Have difficulty finding employees



50

Job openings in next 2 years (12 in health care) due to retirements, expansions

PEMBINA COUNTY WAS 'SECRET SHOPPED'



Approximately 50 people attended Roger Brooks' Findings & Suggestions Workshop at Icelandic State Park on October 15.



Destination Red River Region is a regional project striving to develop a four-county Action Plan to provide a clear direction on how and what we can be doing to enhance quality of life and attract new people - both visitors and future residents. Counties included in the project are Pembina, Nelson, Grand Forks, and Walsh.



This project has been led by a Regional Team with members from each county and managed by the Red River Regional Council. Mike Duerre, Kari Helgoe, and Kelli Truver represent Pembina County on the Regional Team. This team interviewed three consultant teams and selected Roger Brooks, one of the nation's leaders in destination development. The Pembina County JDA contributed \$5,000 toward this \$112,000 project.

Roger spent a month in the region competing his secret shopper assessment in September and October 2021 of the 42 communities in Region 4 and the Pembina Gorge. Roger's month-long stay ended with eight public workshops and conversations including one in each county.

During the county workshops, Roger provided a pictorial assessment showcasing each community in that county with strengths and potential improvements. His assessments included thousands of photos of each community. Photos from Pembina County communities are available for public use and can be found on the Flickr photos site on the Destination Red River Region tab on the RRRC's website: redriverrc.com.



Each county workshop was also recorded. To view Roger's assessment of Pembina County, search for the Red River Regional Council channel on YouTube.

In addition to the Pembina County workshop, Roger also held conversations specifically with the City of Walhalla and Frost Fire. Roger will return in mid-May 2022 with the Action Plan consisting of personalized recommendations for each community.



To watch the Pembina County Findings & Suggestions Workshop, search for the Red River Regional Council channel on YouTube.



To access thousands of Pembina County and regional photos from the assessment, which are available for public use, please check out the Flickr photo site on the Destination Red River Region tab on the RRRC's website: redriverrc.com

JDA PLEDGES SUPPORT FOR NORTH VALLEY SATELLITE LOCATION IN PEMBINA COUNTY



"As a committee, we have been overwhelmed by the interest in helping workforce development and we're just so happy we get the opportunity to bring this forward."

-Lizzie Crowston
Cavalier Public School Board

In December, the JDA pledged a \$90,000 grant toward a project that would establish a satellite location of the North Valley Career and Technology Center, based in Grafton, at Cavalier Public Schools. These funds were part of a \$1.6 million campaign a Cavalier team, including JDA staff and board members, completed in just two weeks to provide matching funds for a state grant proposal.

The project would add four new classrooms, a greenhouse, and renovate space connecting the existing school to the new classrooms. This would allow for expanded education in agriculture, health/medical science, business education, and information technology. This satellite may also serve Langdon, Walhalla and Pembina students.

The State created a capital grant program to expand high school and community technical education in response to workforce shortages and projected growth. North Valley and a team of school board and community leaders worked together to submit the proposal by December 31, 2021. The total scope includes expansion of facilities in Grafton, Minto, Park River and Cavalier with a total estimated cost of \$9.4 million.

FROST FIRE PARK IMPROVEMENTS CONTINUE



New deck constructed with COVID-relief funds



Phase 2 of North Dakota's only downhill bike park was completed in 2021

Through operations the past few years, the Pembina Gorge Foundation discovered nearly half the snowmaking infrastructure at Frost Fire Park was inoperable. To open as soon as possible in the winter season and maintain stable operations, the infrastructure needs to be replaced.

During the 2021 Legislative Session, the JDA assisted in securing \$900,000 from the State of ND to be used as match for a federal grant to replace all of the snowmaking infrastructure including the water pumps, holding pond, water pipes, electrical systems and expand service to include two slopes currently not served by this infrastructure. Shouts out to Representatives Monson and Damschen and Senators Myrdal, Kreun, Wardner and Holmberg for their ongoing support. The cities of Cavalier and Langdon provided \$10,000 each toward the necessary preliminary engineering report to seek federal funds. This was completed by KLJ of Grafton. A \$2.1 million request was prepared and submitted to the US Department of Commerce Economic Development Administration in September 2021.

The second phase of construction of the state's only downhill bike park was completed in 2021 which now has seven trails at a total investment of approximately \$500,000 with funding from ND Parks and Recreation Department, Pembina and Cavalier County JDAs, and the Foundation.

The redevelopment of Frost Fire has been a JDA priority since 2014 and was a co-founder of the Foundation. Today, the JDA staff serve on the Board of Directors and provide project and funding development strategy and support.

Follow Frost Fire Park on Facebook and Instagram, or check out the website: frostfirepark.org.

RENDEZVOUS REGION TOURISM COUNCIL CONTINUES ATTRACTION EFFORTS

The Rendezvous Region Tourism Council (RRTC) continued to make strides in 2021.

The Rendezvous Region began the year with a commercial photoshoot, from Michael Haug, that emphasized outdoor recreation. There were approximately 2,500 high quality photos taken for the use of promoting this region. More than half of North Dakota Tourism's first-ever winter campaign included images from this photoshoot. A total of 70 local models - including four mayors from Pembina, Walsh, and Grand Forks counties - participated in the 2-day event. Photos were featured in the 2022 ND Travel Guide and used in other marketing campaigns and promotions.

Images captured are available for promotional use and can be found by accessing the Flickr photo site on the Red River Regional Council's website under the Destination Red River Region tab. The website is redriverc.com.

The RRTC also contracted with Forum Communications, utilizing a state grant, in effort to better market and advertise tourism within the region. These articles will appear on Forum Communications online publications in early 2022. Topics will include his and hers itineraries when visiting the Rendezvous Region.



RRTC Board retreat at One Majestic Place in Mountain



To access thousands of high-quality professional photos from the winter photoshoot, please check out the Flickr photo site on the Destination Red River Region tab on the RRRC's website: redriverc.com

In September, the tourism council held a strategic planning session to discuss ideas for the future. To learn more about the Rendezvous Region, check out the website: rendezvousregion.com



IMAGES FROM WINTER PHOTOSHOOT





Left: The full page Rendezvous Region ad that appeared in the 2021 North Dakota Inspiration Guide.

2021 JDA Board of Directors include:

Charles Wellman (Chair)	Lisa Hall
Chuck Thacker (Vice Chair)	Charles Hart
Kathy Stremick (Treasurer)	Elton Heuchert
Jim Benjaminson	Lacey Hinkle
Jeni Carrier	Ashley Nordstrom
Rep. Charles Damschen	Ardis Olson
Melissa Gapp	Hugh Ralston
Nathan Green	Kelli Truver

Right: JDA Treasurer Kathy Stremick presents a plaque to Chuck Thacker to honor his 31 years of service to the PCJDA which began as a founding Board member along with Stremick. Thacker retired from the PCJDA at the end of 2021.

