

## Big Lakes County Successfully Obtains \$59,109 Grant from Alberta CARES

On June 30th, 2017, Big Lakes County Economic Development Authority (EDA) and Minister Danielle Larivee's Office hosted a media launch event at Christie's Gardens and Greenhouse to present the "Big Lakes Diversification and SME (Small and Medium Enterprises) Support Initiative."

As part of the Alberta Jobs Plan, the Alberta government allocated \$30 million over the course of two years to promote long-term economic growth and prosperity in Alberta's communities and region and they called this program [Community and Regional Economic Support \(CARES\)](#). In February of 2017 our Big Lakes County EDA successfully obtained a \$59,190 grant from Alberta Cares. The EDA is using this grant money to research ten sectors: agriculture, energy, forestry, transportation and logistics, tourism, education, construction, health, retail, and Information and Communications Technology (ICT). In 2017, the focus is on agriculture, tourism, ICT, and energy.

For each sector, the EDA gathers information through research and tours as a first step to produce sector profiles. It then identifies opportunities for diversification and growth together with local companies and industry experts. Next, the EDA develops a focused, actionable plan and works to implement it with partners. Finally, the EDA works with participating local companies on one challenge for their business and gathers information to feature them in an online business directory slated for completion in 2018 on the Big Lakes County website.

The sector profiles, tours, plans, and directory provide information and tools for all current and future stakeholders involved in the economic success of the County – government, businesses, investors, organizations, and residents and visitors. This helps them to make informed decisions about their investments within Big Lakes County.

