

COMMUNITY PROFILE

OVERVIEW

The County of Grande Prairie No. 1 is located in northwestern Alberta, a rapidly growing area of the province. The County has a diverse economic base built on oil and gas, forestry and agriculture.

The County is 460 kilometres northwest of Edmonton and offers tremendous potential for industrial, commercial and residential development. Based on the 2006 municipal census, the population of the County is 17,989 with a market area population of 250,000 within a two-hour drive.

With the significant growth and development of the region, and the natural resources of the area, there remain significant opportunities to develop tourism and hospitality-related services and facilities for those that have an interest in recreation, river sports, golfing, heritage and cultural experiences. With the desire to more fully diversify the County's economy, plans are underway to develop a world-class attraction in the County which will showcase the region as it was 70 million years ago and profile the rich paleontological resources that have been discovered in the region.

HOSPITALITY

There are 45 hotel/motel properties in the area featuring over 3000 rooms. There are another 100 rooms being added with new properties coming on stream. This is supplemented by 130 eating establishments in the region.

EXISTING ATTRACTIONS

- Beaverlodge Cultural Centre
- Kleskun Hills Park
- Hythe Speedway
- Spring Lake Resort
- Nitehawk Ski Area
- Historic Main Street Sexsmith

TOURISM STATISTICS

*Statistics are from the Grande Prairie Visitor Information Centre and may not capture all visitors to the region.

Origin of Visitors	2007	2008	% Change
Alberta	38.3%	55.3%	17%
Canada (excluding Alberta)	30.8%	23.8%	-7%
United States	23.8%	15.3%	-8.5%
International	7.1%	5.6%	-1.5%

GRANDE PRAIRIE

COMMUNITY WEBSITE

To learn more about the County of Grande Prairie No. 1, please visit www.countygp.ab.ca

TOURISM INVESTMENT OPPORTUNITY – TOURISM DEVELOPMENT

OVERVIEW

The County of Grande Prairie No. 1 is home to one of the largest and northern-most dinosaur bone beds in Alberta. This area has the potential to become a multi-purpose tourism site with the bone bed as the main attraction.

The River of Death and Discovery Dinosaur Centre would emphasize education and would include a complementary viewing area of the bone bed. The first bone bed is at least as large as a football field and contains a high density of fossils – 85 per cent bone with only 15 per cent sediment. It has recently been discovered that the region hosts a second bone bed, the Charlie Young Bone Bed on the Wapiti River, stretching approximately 100 metres in length. Findings from the area will be presented at the International Vertebrate Conference and Symposium in Italy in 2009. In addition, a third site has recently been discovered that is rich in bones and tracks.

The project would be situated on land purchased by the County as well as on some public land. The River of Death and Discovery Dinosaur Centre would be located 14 miles southwest of the City of Grande Prairie. Neighboring attractions include an 18-hole golf course, recreation area and a 75-stall campground overlooking the Wapiti River. The site is also well-suited for river activities.

The County has purchased the land where the Centre and parking lot will be located. The bone bed is held in long-term lease.

Some of the work that has been completed in relation to the project includes: a feasibility study, economic impact assessment, business plan, marketing strategy, fundraising strategy, footprint design, 3D video presentation and land purchase. As well, work is now in progress for developing the bone bed site.

The County had recently hired a coordinator for this project and has launched a fundraising campaign.

INVESTMENT

While investment is not being sought for the interpretive centre, there are abundant surrounding business opportunities. The County of Grande Prairie No.1 encourages complementary tourism business development to support tourism visitation to the region, and specifically to the area of the proposed River of Death and Discovery Dinosaur Centre. This may include fixed roof accommodation, RV/camping facilities, restaurants and other supporting tourism attractions and services.

GRANDE PRAIRIE

PROPOSED DRAW

It is expected that the region will draw tourists, students and paleontological researchers; with projections of up to 60,000 visitors annually. The region continues to benefit from marketing that is undertaken by Travel Alberta, the Alberta North Tourism Destination Region and the Grande Prairie Regional Tourism Association.

In addition, the Alberta government has developed “Tracking Alberta’s Dinosaurs”, a tourism marketing program to promote paleontological sites around the province. This promotional campaign features the dinosaur fossils located in the County of Grande Prairie No. 1.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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