

Subject: **BREWD - Business Retention Expansion & Workforce Development**  
 Meeting Date: Tuesday, January 14, 2025  
 Prepared By: Jenna Kester, Economic Development Officer  
 Presented By: Jenna Kester, Economic Development Officer  
 Wendy Gerbrandt, Economic Development Manager

**STRATEGIC PLAN ALIGNMENT: (Check all that apply)**

	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>		<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
High Quality Infrastructure		Economic Resilience		Quality of Life		Effective Leadership		Level of Service	

**RELEVANT LEGISLATION:**

Provincial (cite)- N/A  
 Council Bylaw/Policy (cite)- N/A

**BACKGROUND/PROPOSAL:**

At the Economic Development of Alberta Conference in April of 2024, it was brought to our attention that a new regional initiative would be introduced in our region, surrounding Business Retention & Expansion & Workforce Development (BREWD). Spearheaded by the Town of Olds, BREWD is part of an extensive three-year industry and economic growth plan. Regional partners participating include Olds, Innisfail, Penhold, Red Deer, Red Deer County, Mountainview County and Kneehill County.

Business Retention & Expansion is a strategy to support and keep existing businesses in a community or region. BREWD aligns with the Economic Development Plan to strengthen existing businesses. The purpose of BREWD is to foster a more competitive regional business environment that provides business and industry the economic support system they need to grow and succeed. Furthermore, the information gathered will support Council and Administration to align initiatives through it's Economic Development Plan and budget process.

In July of 2024, Kneehill County committed to partner on the Business Retention & Expansion. This process will engage local businesses to identify their needs, set priorities, and ultimately create jobs and wealth. Following our commitment, the first leadership meeting happened in October 2024. There, the partnering municipalities discussed the path forward. On January 23, 2025, a business-centric survey will be launched and will be conducted via online and one-on-one interviews.

Upon the closing date of the survey, a survey research report will be constructed to compile and present the findings and determine overarching themes/opportunities. After the summary report, an action plan of priorities will be ranked and implemented into action. Administration's goal is to obtain a 10% response rate from Kneehill County's businesses and producers. This is critical to ensure that Kneehill County will obtain a report and overview of our current business state. This information will also be represented in the regional aggregate data.

**DISCUSSION/OPTIONS/BENEFITS/DISADVANTAGES/OTHER CONSIDERATIONS:**

Administration will provide an overview of the Business Retention and Expansion process and how the BREWD project will impact and benefit businesses and Kneehill County.



Additionally, Administration is seeking Council's support and participation in spreading the word on this very beneficial initiative for our region. Businesses participating in the initiative will play an active role not only in shaping the plan but also in overseeing its implementation.

The BREWD launch event will be hosted in Olds on January 23, 2025. It is a celebration of the region's partners coming together to launch the survey and is a formal kick-off of BREWD and an acknowledgement of all the volunteers who have stepped up to take action for our businesses.

Community Leads, CAO's and Councils / Boards, volunteers will be invited to attend as well as the media. At the launch event, Reeve's and Mayors will also be invited to sign the Partnership Charter. The Partnership Charter is an informal document whereas Kneehill County is committing to work together regionally through the regional action plan. The County is not committing to any financial contribution or initiatives through this Charter, but rather an informal partnership to demonstrate a collaborative approach to a broader audience.

**FINANCIAL & STAFFING IMPLICATIONS:**

\$3000 community contribution dispersed in 2024.

Travel and/or per Diem's as per policy 3 – 1.

**RECOMMENDED ENGAGEMENT:**

Collaborative Decision (Active Participation- Share or Delegate Decision Making)

Tools:	Individual Notification	Other:	
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**ATTACHMENTS:**

BREWD Presentation to Council – January 2025

**COUNCIL OPTIONS:**

1. That Council make a motion for Council members to attend the BREWD Survey Launch Event on January 23, 2025 and to sign the Partnership Charter in the spirit of recognizing the importance of collaboration and regional partnership.
2. That Council make a motion to not attend the launch event on January 23, 2025.
3. That Council make a motion to accept as information.

**RECOMMENDED MOTION:**

That Council make a motion for Council members to attend the BREWD Survey Launch Event on January 23, 2025.

That Council make a motion to sign the Partnership Charter at the launch event in the spirit of recognizing the importance of collaboration and regional partnership.

**FOLLOW-UP ACTIONS:**

**APPROVAL(S):**

Mike Haugen, Chief Administrative Officer

Approved-

