



RISE Vision

Improved community information resources and the creation of new services provided by community libraries thereby building rural development and sustainability.

RISE Mission

Building sustainability for rural communities through collaborative action

Project Overview

RISE is a collaborative approach to enhancing local community services through a “partnership of partnerships”. RISE will link southern Alberta communities of all sizes in a library-based videoconference network. RISE will reach more than 450,000 people in 89 municipalities throughout southern Alberta. RISE will also enable libraries to enhance their current service through increased staffing and/or hours of operation. RISE is developing innovative programs and services which will focus on the creative use of the Supernet to move library service into the 21st century environment.

The project will be particularly beneficial to the many rural communities which currently have no other publicly accessible facility for access to distance education, government information and resources and other initiatives which attempt to reach those in very remote communities. Through a network which will link the smallest village facilities through mid size small towns and somewhat larger rural communities, RISE will reach more than 450,000 people in 89 rural municipalities over a large geographical area in southern Alberta.

How is RISE funded?

RISE is a \$5 million project. Chinook Arch, Marigold and Shortgrass successfully developed a project proposal and applied to Rural Alberta’s Development Fund (RADF) which is providing 75% of the funding. Other sources include the Public Library Development Initiative (PLDI) from Alberta Municipal Affairs and The Alberta Public Library Electronic Network (APLEN). The three Regional Library Systems are also contributing significant in-kind support and will raise an additional \$500,000 privately.

RISE will:

- Enhance public access to training opportunities in communities where there are no other access points
- Offer a virtual meeting room facility for small businesses, distance education students and others who currently have no such services available in the smallest communities
- Create a local facility for distance education students to make video contact with programs and instructors in larger centres – approximately 80% of our communities currently have no such facility
- Ensure the only public facility with high speed access (library) is accessible to those who need it for the use of government resources such as Service Alberta and Service Canada.

- Provide the training for local staff to achieve enhanced information service in rural and remote communities
- Allow meetings, presentations, and training between collaborating libraries
- Create the opportunity to explore the possibilities of interactive programming between resource libraries and smaller member libraries and
- Explore the use of public programming via interactive teleconference from larger libraries to the smaller libraries

Goals

1. To facilitate learning and skill development at an existing local community facility (library).
2. To help sustain rural and remote communities by increasing the public services available in the community.
3. To provide a virtual meeting room to local businesses, distance education students, library staff and government workers in the community and evaluate the need for and economic benefits of the service.
4. To deliver literacy programs such as English as a Second Language, other adult literacy programs, interactive library story times and interactive summer reading programs.
5. To provide a virtual consulting room to increase access to quality health care services in their community.

Support

- The project is based on the existing infrastructure of 80 public libraries which are currently all members of one of the three regional library systems in order to enhance their services.
- The project is therefore being built on support provided to the libraries by their municipal councils as well as the provincial funding and the local fund raising which support the libraries.
- The 80 autonomous member libraries will be the front line of service and are key supporters of the project.
- Other supporters of the project include Alberta Municipal Affairs, Library Services Branch, and APLEN (Alberta Public Library Electronic Network) which will together provide some of the funds to purchase the video conference equipment.
- Potential partners include literacy groups, further education groups and post-secondary institutions which will be able to assist with programming.