

MEDIA RELEASE

City of Williams Lake



For Immediate Release

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Tel: 250-392-2311
Fax: 250-392-4408
450 Mart Street
Williams Lake, BC
V2G 1N3

First Seeding Start-Up Participants to Receive Funds

The first Seeding Start-Up Participants pitched their Business Concepts to the Review Panel on Thursday, April 6.

The Review Panel, made up of the jointly funded Project Partners, included representatives from Community Futures of Cariboo Chilcotin, Williams Lake Business Improvement Association, Thompson Rivers University, Williams Lake and Area Chamber of Commerce and City of Williams Lake. The Seeding Start-Ups Program is designed to encourage new business development in the City of Williams Lake and has been partially funded by the Province's BC Rural Dividend Fund.

The first participants to go before the panel were representative of the two eligibility groups of the program, the Youth category, (19-29) and 50+ group.

Jessica Pickering is the owner of Circuit Cell Shop. As a new Start-Up, Jessica is eligible for a contribution of up to \$1500 from the Youth category of the Seeding Program. Like many entrepreneurs, Pickering started her business out of her home, and her success led her to take the next step into a store front location. Jessica has a "niche" business, as there is virtually no local competition for the service and products that she is offering. "I offer on-site Cell Phone repair services. Customers love that I can fix a cracked screen right on site which saves them having to send their device out of town and the downtime that comes with that".

"I attended the Community Futures Business Plan Workshop and found that I got a lot of good information that I was able to apply to my business operations. It got me to think about things I hadn't considered, and helped me to work out how I was going to run the financial end of things" said Pickering. "So far, I have been able to start up my business with my own savings and a small personal loan. The potential of a contribution from Seeding Start-Ups is really exciting for me because it is going to enable me to make the investments in tools and a work bench that I need to be even more productive. It is great that I will be able to do that right away, leaving my business income available to cover my operating expenses." Pickering hopes to one day be able to hire and train a new staff person. The business is open Tuesday to Saturday and is located in the Delainey's Mall at 271 Oliver Street.

The second Pitch that the Review Panel will be hearing is from Eric Sannes who is about to launch his company "On Air Training and Consulting". This business will provide professional broadcast services and training to a variety of associations, societies and groups who are looking to increase their communication skills.

Falling into the 50+ category, Sannes will be eligible for a contribution of \$1000 which he plans to use to purchase a portable recording device and software which will enable him to record outside of his home studio. "The Start-Up contribution provides the little extra my business needs to succeed" say Sannes. "Frightening as it is, a low percentage of Start-Ups are successful. This extra money provides the fiscal encouragement that makes success a little more likely." Sannes too attended the Community Futures workshop and found that the information and support that he received was valuable in solidifying his business and marketing plans. Both participants have also been working with the Seeding Start-Up Coordinator Beth Veenkamp to get ready for the Pitch Presentations.

Says Veenkamp, “My role is to work with participants to provide whatever support they require to get ready to go in front of the panel to pitch their business. Community Futures is a great resource in our community, and because of the partnership that they have made with this project, there is an unprecedented opportunity for people to access the resources available there. With the training offered in their Business Plan Workshops, I feel that applicants will be very well positioned to present to the panel and be successful in the goal of viable sustainable business.” Once approved for the seed contribution, Veenkamp will continue to work with participants to assist in the success of their venture.

If you have a business idea that you would like to grow, contact Seeding Start-Ups Coordinator Beth Veenkamp at 250-392-8480.

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Media Contact:

Beth Veenkamp
Seeding Start-Ups Coordinator
250-392-8480

Seeding Start-Ups is a pilot program funded by the Provincial Rural Dividend Initiative and community partners including, Community Futures of the Cariboo Chilcoltin, Williams Lake Business Improvement Association, Thompson Rivers University, The Williams Lake and District Chamber of Commerce and the City of Williams Lake. Aimed at diversifying and strengthening the local economy, contributions of \$1000-1500 are available to business startups who are in their first year of operations. The program runs until March 1 2018. Contact the Coordinator, Beth Veenkamp at 250-398-8480 for more information.

