

ARE WE MISSING OUT ON VALUE ADDED?

Northwest Alberta is a region of commodity production and shipping, but transportation logistics have always created challenges in the development of value-added products. For that reason, we have traditionally shipped out raw commodities, but value-added products are where the jobs and the boost to the local economy are.

The Regional Economic Development Initiative for Northwest Alberta (REDI) has partnered with the Peace Region Economic Development Alliance (PREDA) to secure a research grant to identify the production and export levels of the three primary economic drivers of the northwest region—agriculture, forestry and energy.

“This research project will determine what our primary commodity

products are; how much our region produces; how much we export; who our international buyers are; and how we deliver our products whether by road, rail, air and/or pipeline,” said REDI Chair Lisa Wardley.

It is anticipated that the collection of this information will assist the leaders of Alberta’s northwest region to highlight the transportation benchmarks in the region and identify possible new transportation routes in the effort to increase access to export markets with greater efficiency and affordability. It is also anticipated the information collected will assist local economic developers in the region to provide needed information for potential value-added opportunities and infrastructure investments.

The table to the right shows the amount of wheat, canola and dry peas delivered

to the grain elevators in northwest Alberta in 2017.

The table shows the location of the grain delivery points in the region; the amounts delivered; and the percent the region contributes to the total amounts delivered in Alberta.

It should be noted these commodities left the region by rail.

“To further clarify this, 50 percent of the peas in the region are shipped to North Dakota,” said Wardley. “So, what exactly is North Dakota doing with our peas and is there an opportunity for value-adding that we are missing?”

The REDI region, while not the largest delivery point for agricultural products, is a large producer of forest products, oil and gas and has potential in other areas such as lithium. Regardless of the commodity, northwest Alberta always

has challenges in attracting large value-added companies because of its remoteness.

“REDI is doing this research to look at what opportunities may exist to create value added businesses on a smaller scale,” said Wardley. “These types of ventures would create local opportunities and local jobs that contribute to our local communities.”

REDI anticipates the report to be completed by March of this year.



NORTHWEST ALBERTA DELIVERIES TO GRAIN ELEVATORS (2017)

(Metric Tonnes)	WHEAT	CANOLA	PEAS
NAMPA	167.8	141.8	30.1
RYCROFT	317.1	329.4	169.7
HIGH LEVEL	46.3	66.8	29.7
SMOKY RIVER	166.6	166.3	38.8
SEXSMITH	169.5	160.9	88.8
MCLENNAN	156.6	103.2	22.3
FALHER	30.6	2.0	18.5
GRIMSHAW	170.5	150.3	93.8
NW TOTAL	1225.0	1120.7	491.7
ALBERTA TOTAL	6934.1	4287.2	2050.1
NW% OF AB	18%	26%	24%

WHAT IS REDI?

The Regional Economic Development Initiative Association for Northwest Alberta (REDI) formed in 2002. It exists to promote and enhance economic growth amongst its member communities and to promote the region as a whole, rather than as individual communities.

REDI is geographically located in the far northwest portion of Alberta and is located within Mackenzie County and the Metis settlement of Paddle Prairie.

The region is home to a number of progressive and established resource industries such as agriculture, forestry and oil and gas. This vibrancy has enabled sustained economic diversification. Husky Energy, Apache Canada, Agricore, and Tolko Industries have all made major investments in the REDI region.

Like the northern lights that dance overhead, the REDI region is vibrant and alive. The region is filled with unique commercial, residential and industrial investment opportunities. This, together with a high regard for family and lifestyle, make the region an amazing place to work and live.

The REDI region has a population of more than 20,000 residents. The main source of revenue for REDI is from annual membership fees and government partner funding. REDI is registered as a society under The Societies Act of Alberta.

