



# News Release

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## Rural Alberta Community Refocuses on Heritage Development

Northern Lakes College, with support from the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN), will create the foundational plan to develop Grouard, Alberta as a heritage destination. The project, *Supporting the Development of Heritage Potential in Grouard, Alberta*, is valued at \$198,000 and aims to make the area a regional tourist destination for local, regional, national and international visitors, creating employment and providing educational opportunities for northern school districts.

Paula Carson, director of university transfer at Northern Lakes College, has long been a champion for Grouard's historical sites. "Support from ARDN is our first step to protecting these treasures. It will help us develop a plan of action to protect and share these sites as a heritage destination. We're looking forward to getting started."

The Grouard Heritage Project highlights a significant portion of Alberta history as far back as 1799. The project will also address a painful part of Canada's past by telling the story of residential schools at one of the original sites, St. Bernard's Mission. Northern Lakes College, in collaboration with local partners, has determined the project will include other historical sites, such as The Native Cultural Arts Museum, a number of heritage buildings and Moosehorn Lodge.

"This project will provide tangible benefits to the community," says Paul Watson, ARDN research director. "The documentation of the process will prove valuable to other communities looking to manage their historical places and it will also add to Alberta's body of knowledge."

Not only has Northern Lakes College partnered with two local organizations, the Municipal District of Big Lakes and the Grouard & Area Historical Society, but they are working with other ARDN member post-secondary institutions to share expertise and capacity, including the Grande Prairie Regional College Centre for Research & Innovation, Athabasca University and the University of Calgary.

"ARDN creates an environment to build new and stronger partnerships," says Dee Ann Benard, executive director of ARDN. "By encouraging and supporting collaboration, we contribute to a more effective team approach to rural development."

More information is available by calling 1-877-987-1006.

*The Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) is a not-for-profit partnership of Alberta's 21 public colleges, universities and technical institutes working together to support rural communities. ARDN is funded in part by the Rural Alberta Development Fund whose funding is provided by the Government of Alberta.*

*Northern Lakes College has campuses in over 30 communities across north-central Alberta. Programs range from upgrading to careers, from university to apprenticeship trades. Flexible learning opportunities include full time or part time options. Many classes are offered to students online or using various technologies including video conferencing.*

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