



## Creating Rural Connections

THROUGH NETWORKING

Networking is the creation of relationships and the exchange of ideas and information. By creating connections with each other, rural communities gain access to more ideas and stronger support. It is through these relationships that rural Albertans get the energy and assistance that they need to contribute to their communities.

Though networking is important, it is not always easy; it is often difficult for rural citizens to meet with leaders in other communities. The Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) gives post-secondary institutions (PSI) and other rural stakeholders opportunities to connect, virtually and in person. We do this by facilitating networking events, providing a virtual meeting place, and stimulating discussion on rural issues.

ARDN facilitates and hosts events to give people the chance to create new relationships. In May 2010, we held our first conference: *Creating Rural Connections*. This event brought together researchers, academics, government representatives, farmers, community organizations, and rural citizens. All of these people got the chance to connect with others they normally would not meet. We also host and facilitate workshops and conferences with specific themes, such as agriculture, employment, and education, to bring together people with similar interests.



ARDN's website ([www.ardn.ca](http://www.ardn.ca)) is of interest to all rural stakeholders and it encourages virtual networking. It is a place where people with credible rural development research or projects can post their information for everyone to access. Here, we collect and share quality rural research and related information on best practices. The website is where people can meet others through the forum, comment on projects, and discuss ideas.

The ARDN website also inspires networking through its interactive forum, promoting discussion on projects and research and the effects on rural communities. It also features a research blog. Written by ARDN's research director, the blog gives readers a chance to discuss the purpose and importance of research for rural citizens. ARDN welcomes everyone's thoughts and ideas on any rural topic.

ARDN's networking goal is to increase communication among PSIs, rural communities, and citizens. We create working connections among all of rural Alberta's stakeholders. The best outcomes are effects of strong connections – connections that ARDN works to create.



[www.ardn.ca](http://www.ardn.ca)

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