



Final Report

Project Name: Canmore – Centre for Wellbeing

Project Number: 077

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1 PROJECT DATES

March 15, 2007 to March 15, 2008

2 BACKGROUND AND CONTEXT

A recently completed community stakeholder process helped the region to develop and update a community economic development strategy that included economic diversification by supporting and growing the health and wellness sector. Three Sisters Mountain Villages (TSMV) is exploring the opportunity to attract a five star spa in Canmore and the community would like to partner with this developer to attract more health and wellness service and to make the area a Centre of Well-being.

2.1 Problem/Opportunity Statement

The purpose of this project is to develop the health and wellness industry in the Bow Valley. Canmore and the Bow Valley want to be known as a Centre of Well-being and leaders in integrated health by the year 2010

Community Futures Centre West (CFCWest) will partner with the Canmore Economic Development Authority (CEDA) to deliver on the objectives outlined in Canmore's Community Economic Development Strategy to diversify their economy by supporting and growing the health & wellness sector. We can do this by:

- Identifying today's assets, equipment, services and products, gaps, key industry segments and community benefits in both Canmore & Banff through a community consultation process with the wellness industry, community, public health, private landowners, & government.
- Establishing self-sustaining tools to increase opportunity awareness & showcase assets through an annual symposium. In the first year or so, use these opportunities to engage the local community & industry and establish successful operating models for these events. Once successful, actively reaching out beyond Canmore, increasing regional participation and using these opportunities to attract investment and business development in the health & wellness industry.
- Building enough momentum and growth within the industry to support continued growth on its own. Do this by engaging and setting up partnerships through the project and through the project outcomes, identify further opportunities and need for partnership involvement to take advantage of the opportunities.
- Working with the private landowners to dedicate lands and get them to develop the built infrastructure necessary to anchor the health & wellness sector.

2.2 Need for Project

1. Capitalizing on current momentum in health & wellness services, activities & community assets

Due to the attractiveness of the mountain environment, Canmore & Banff are attracting people that value wellness, including over 60 doctors, alternative & complimentary health practices, lifestyle development specialties, fitness programs and even sport research. This project will allow us to identify and articulate the assets in the region in order to identify gaps, niches and build around these assets. The focus in health care is shifting towards more emphasis on wellness – another movement that can add to the success of the project.

2. Limited land base:

Canmore cannot expand beyond existing land borders due to environmental & physical realities. Any remaining developable lands within these borders are privately owned. Just as the landowners are reliant on the community for approval on land uses and zoning, the community must partner with these developers to ensure the remaining lands are used to meet community goals and aspirations in wellness & health services. This project will bring that partnership together to work towards the common goal of attracting and building a solid industry base to continue growth in the Health & Wellness Sector. It will also be a model for other mountain communities with similar land restrictions such as Crowsnest Pass or Hinton/Grande Cache areas.

Banff will not see any increases to their landbase within the National Park but if the Banff-Canmore corridor were to become known as a place to rejuvenate, uses in the wellness sector could provide growth opportunities & new markets to existing uses in Banff as well as Canmore.

3. The time is right – the community is involved:

Stage One is already completed. The Canmore community, including the private sector, has already actively participated in this project through a community stakeholder process to develop & update the community economic development strategy. This was corroborated further in a community visioning process conducted in 2006, identifying the creation Centres of Excellence in areas such as Health & Wellness as a long-term vision for the community. It is now time to move beyond the planning stage and start capitalizing on the momentum and timing to actually grow the sector and help diversify the economy in the Western part of our region.

4. Canmore can be a model for community planning:

A community planning model that drives economic development planning ... but only if they can deliver on these plans! So far, Canmore has spent years and dollars of their own to set a direction and plan for their future. They've done this correctly, through community consultation, government participation & organizational development. However, it's time to move from planning to action.

CFCWest can learn from the process to then assist and benefit our other communities in the region. This project will outline the processes and models used to deliver and grow a targeted sector that other communities may follow, in any sector that is appropriate for their community.

3 FINANCIAL INFORMATION

3.1 Actual Revenue and Expenses

Budget as of March 13, 2008

REVENUE	YTD
RCED	45,000.00
TOTAL REVENUE	45,000.00

EXPENSE

GENERAL OPERATING

Advertising	9,105.61
Contractor Fees	30,688.75
Meals	4,652.94
Postage/ Courier	8.49
Administration	1,619.42
GST	3,924.94
TOTAL EXPENSES	50,000.15
NET INCOME	-5,000.15

3.2 Sources of Revenue and In-Kind Contributions from Project Funders

See PDF attachment.

3.3 Explanation of Discrepancies – Planned and Actual Costs

The overall cost of the project was more than expected. CEDA and the community of Canmore picked up the differences.

Contributor	Original Contract	Project Completion
RCED	\$50,000	\$50,000
Project partners	\$29,550	\$48,115
Total	\$79,550	\$98,115

The Health & Wellbeing Summit in the Rockies was able to generate more revenue through sponsorships than anticipated with final Sponsorship at \$10,500 and further un-budgeted in-kind contributions to advertising, printing and presenter appreciation gifts at \$2,895. The event generated \$2,895 in registrations this year based on an introductory rate for 2007.

In-Kind Contributions for Taos & Lifestyles of Health & Sustainability (LOHAS) Organization delegations were cancelled. See Item 4.3, Project Non-Completed re: TSMV Sale.

In-Kind contributions for CFCWest were lower than anticipated. The Executive Director at CEDA is very experienced with project management and consultant contracting and did not require as much consultation with CFCWest as was originally planned for.

4 PROJECT ACTIVITIES

4.1 Major Project Outcomes

Activities Performed	Results Achieved
Sector Profile Completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Strong asset base confirmed: ex: 55 actively practicing with over 45 more with hospital privileges; more than double the number of physicians per person than the province average.• Baseline established which will allow monitoring of future growth.• Identified serious fragmentation in the industry which will have to be addressed to be successful.• Identified the assets which can be used to develop a “directory” of services/practitioners/ equipment/ events / supports” for the industry. The directory can be used to start drawing industry operators together, reducing the fragmentation. It can also be a tool for career planning as we begin to integrate the directory into other community areas such as education, youth development, etc.• Connections and interest established in land owners. Asked to present to BOWDA (Bow Valley Builders & Developers Association)

	<p>in May 2008.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key land developer changed ownership during this period. The Health & Wellness Sector Profile is one of the documents the new owners are using to inform the direction of their resort plans. • Established ability to monitor use of lands for Health and Wellness sector growth • Identified the key assets and individuals which will need to be engaged in order to build on the identified assets. i.e.: Canmore Hospital's pilot program "Planetree" which will foster patient driven care systems opening the possibility of integrative treatments and therapies in traditional hospital setting – something Canmore can pilot and Calgary Health Region (CHR) is interested. • Identified key trends and niches in which Canmore and the Bow Valley have opportunity to capitalize. More research is required to really hone this information into clearer opportunities – part of the next stages of this project – developing investment attraction strategies. • Identified community models for coming together around the industry. Working in coordination with entire community was key for success and again, clarified the need for a strong community alliance that will connect into other community initiatives and critical for ultimate success. Alliance formation must be given priority. • Bonus: During the course of the research, we identified 2 or 3 key opportunities in which to pursue in the short term: Integrative medicine clinic, campus or learning centre, hands-on surgery demonstration conference centre.
<p>Health and Wellbeing Summit in the Rockies November 9, 2007</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Over 120 participated over the 2 events associated with the Summit. Enthusiasm and support generated in the community. Regularly expressed by participants was the benefits they perceived from meeting & bringing together like-minded individuals active in the industry – "good for my practice, good for my patients, good for me." • Presented preliminary findings of the Health & Wellness Sector Profile generated comments such as "I never knew (so & so) did that in this area." • Introduced concept to Banff through Mayor John Stutz's attendance at the VIP Wine & Cheese. The mayor of Banff expressed enthusiasm. Follow-up meetings to continue cultivating interest. • Interest in establishing a music concert for wellbeing identified. Introduced potential partners, including a well-known Alberta producer, to develop the idea into an actual event. Still in discussion stage. • Health & Wellness Alliance – recognized the need to connect industry operators to strengthen the industry and begin the development of the area as a destination for health & wellbeing. Participants at the Summit felt an alliance was the first step to overcoming the fragmentation in the industry. Established an active volunteer working group to develop a "wellness alliance" – a priority identified out of the Summit working sessions. Over 20 people attended the first meeting, held November 30, 2008. • Established relationships with 2 regions that have been successful and are willing to share their experience: Hawaii & Cliff Communities, South Carolina. • Hawaii Health Guide.com - principal from Hawaii is very interested in helping Canmore establish their own directory. They are also well

	<p>connected with Tourism Hawaii and are open to the possibility of cross-marketing for wellbeing – ex: “Mountains to Oceans”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Established a “Community Wellbeing” Column, with writer contributors from various wellness activities in the community based on the Canmore Wellness Wheel concept identified in the Health & Wellness Sector Profile. Will run every 2 weeks in the Rocky Mountain Outlook to maintain community interest, engagement and momentum. Intent is to expand use of this column outside Canmore or online through a “health & wellness website/directory” to help market the region as a wellness destination. Established a working group to work together towards a concept for a health campus. This group has developed some serious challenges, particularly around philosophical differences and personal goals that they hope a community campus will deliver for them. We will need very experienced help to either come up with a new way to address this idea or help the existing group by facilitating this concept and maneuvering through the personal agendas.
<p>Joined key industry organization and attendance at international networking events</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> We joined the International Spa Association (ISPA) and the Canadian spa association (Leading Spas of Canada). We attended the ISPA Conference in November in the USA. The purpose was to participate as an observer this first year. However, we were able to meet some of the large resort spa and fitness operators and we certainly identified the movers and shakers in this industry for the future. Preliminary Investment Attraction Materials developed – using media stories, information out of the Health & Wellness Sector Profile and Business Success Stories, we put together a package to provide background information for Canmore’s goals. While this year’s attendance was more as an observer, we felt we should be prepared to take advantage of an opportunity, should it arise. It did... Full meeting with The Sanctuary – wellness community development projects still in the planning stages. They were interested in Canmore and we put them in touch with TSMV.. Identified a contact with the Mayo Clinic that might be a useful speaker for future local Summits - in linking our traditional and alternative practitioner worlds. Conference was an extremely successful model of an international industry conference and association. The ISPA Association is a very strong example of a working and relevant industry alliance – we will use some of their practices and model as we work to develop a local health & wellness alliance. Simply due to time, we weren’t able to stay as connected into Leading Spas of Canada so focused on the international organization. Did make contacts with key Canadian operators and government at the ISPA Conference. With Lifestyle Communities showing up as a key niche to develop, will recommend future association work with the LOHAS Organization.

4.2 Unexpected Successes for the Project

Through the course of the interviewing for the Sector Profile, a number of key relationships were established. Along with this, we un-covered 2 very strong concepts that are already quite well developed and would both be ideal operations to increase Canmore's positioning as a destination for health & wellbeing. One operator was originally interested in the interior of British Columbia, has extensive experience and a strong client base that was willing to follow her wherever she became established. She has since purchased a home in Canmore and is now looking to establish her integrative health clinic here.

We continue to work with the other operators interested in establishing a surgical conference facility in which physicians can travel from around the globe to observe and possibly even participate in actual hands-on applications in a conference facility setting. This set up would be similar to Steadman Hawkins Clinic concept in Colorado. <http://www.steadman-hawkins.com/>

4.3 Activities in Contract Not Completed - Explanation

Community Delegation to Taos, New Mexico

Originally planned in partnership with TSMV, a major resort landowner in Canmore, this development was purchased mid-way through the project by East-West Partners out of Colorado, USA. The new owners bring in a major financing partner through Morgan-Stanley Real Estate Finance.

The new ownership will bring deeper pockets and much experience in resort development. They also have success in building wellness as part of their community development goals. However, their vision for Canmore is under assessment at the moment. They have requested the Health & Wellbeing Sector Profile as part of their information resources into this planning.

As a result of the visioning process they are undertaking, the partnership established between the former TSMV owner group and the El Monte Sagrado Spa in Taos has been put on hold. No delegation, in which TSMV was going to fund (in-kind funding in this project), will take place at this time.

5 BENEFITS RESULTING FROM PROJECT

Performance Indicator	Baseline	Measurable Benefits	Target	Achieved
# of project partners	4	CEDA/ Tourism Canmore / Town of Canmore / Calgary Health Region /	4	4
Communication with Rural Economic Development Associations (REDA) (# of meetings, email, etc)	1	Calgary Regional Partnership (CRP) supported the project at the outset. As part of the CRP Economic Developer's Forum, we have regularly reported on the project. Calgary Economic Development has since launched a health & wellness initiative, somewhat different but in partnership with the Province of Alberta and Edmonton. We have communicated and will share our information to their project as it develops.	not specified	5

# of best practices identified	0	Summit Event Guide Business Success Profiles Community Business Case Models	not specified	3
Communication with other CF's (meetings, email)	0	Sector Profile Summary and Detailed reports are available to share. The Summary will be distributed within CFCWest to provide background for business and community development planning at the Community Futures (CF) level. (see section 7 – Reflections & Lessons Learned)	not specified	0
# of services, products and practitioners in health and wellness	unknown	See Canmore's Health & Wellness Sector Profile, final report 5.0 Canmore's Asset Inventory for detailed benchmark to measure future growth.	not specified	Sector Profile Report
# of participants in the summit	0	105 Participated: 80 participants at Full Day, 60 at VIP (Attendance over the 2 days was 120 total counting the overlap)	100	80
Delivery of sector profile at summit	0	Delivered to 80 at the Full Day session. Will be presented at CEDA AGM, Apr. 22, 2008 & BOWDA Lunch, May 15, 2008	1	1 complete 2 scheduled
# of volunteers that are interested in Phase 3 of this project (i.e., wellness festival)	10	28 participated in the November 30 follow-up meeting. Over 40 volunteers on the working group contact list, expressing interest in helping move this forward	5-10	40
List of wellness industry contacts	0	See Health & Wellness Sector Profile	not specified	

5.1 Additional Benefits Not Listed Above

Community Participants – Of the over 100 participants in the Health & Wellness Summit, there were 29 from the community, not directly involved in the industry. Of these, there were 8 general community members that participated the full day just out of interest.

New Business Development – identified 3 strong concepts, 2 of which are already well-developed that we will pursue to bring partners together and move forward. One is already underway. One will require continued support. A third involves a hotel with over 20,000 sq. ft. of under-developed commercial space ideal for use as a medical clinic or operation. Possibly our first “medi-hotel”?

Sector Profile Research Users – Requested by new major developer and will be used to inform their own visioning process. The real test will be whether health & wellness continues to be a strong component of their vision, once publicly released. We have also been asked to present the findings of this research to our “Bow Valley Builders & Developers Association” which is a

very influential industry support and lobby organization. The monthly luncheon speaker program draws 70 – 120 participants monthly, from the planning, real estate, building and development and government community in Canmore.

Health & Wellness Stories – Media material and stories were used to engage and excite community leading up to the Health & Wellness Summit. The business success stories were also incorporated into a preliminary investment attraction package used at the ISPA conference and follow-up meetings with a lifestyle development group out of the USA. These materials are intended to be incorporated into future strategic investment attraction materials or information.

6 MEDIA COVERAGE

NEWS ARTICLES & COVERAGE

August 30	Rocky Mountain Outlook	News Article	CEDA preparing health & wellbeing fall summit
Oct 29 – Nov 8	Mountain FM Radio	Valley Events Local Happenings	Health & Wellness Summit info
November 14	Canmore Leader	Editorial	Health and wellness of the future
November 14	Canmore Leader	Editorial Cartoon	Health & Wellness Vision for Canmore
November 14	Canmore Leader	News Article	Transforming area into a health destination
November 14	Canmore Leader	News Article	Futurist promotes health care shopping
November 22	Rocky Mountain Outlook	News Article	Canmore could become healthcare hub
November 22	Rocky Mountain Outlook	News Article	Springs hospital goes space age
December 10	CBC French	Interview	Health Tourism
February 2008	Rocky Mountain Outlook	Regular column	Community Wellbeing – every 2 weeks

ADVERTISING

July 4	Canmore Leader	¼ page	Event Coordinator Call for Proposal
July 3	Rocky Mountain Outlook	¼ page	Event Coordinator Call for Proposals
July 11	Canmore Leader	¼ page	Event Coordinator Call for Proposal
Fall Edition	Trends Business magazine of the Bow Valley	1/3 page	Community Summit
September 27	Rocky Mountain Outlook	Full Page colour	What is Your Vision for Health & Wellbeing?
October 11	Rocky Mountain Outlook	Full Page colour	It's Time to Identify Your Opportunities
October 25	Rocky Mountain Outlook	Full Page colour	Everybody Can register
November 1	Rocky Mountain Outlook	Full Page colour	Goal – 3 – 5 actions
November 15	Rocky Mountain Outlook	Full Page colour	Thank-You
November 29	Rocky Mountain Outlook	1/3 page colour	Follow-Up Meeting November 30

e-News

July 6	Health & Wellness Plans	CEDA's Strategic Approach Launched
July 10	Summit Coordinator	Call for Proposals – Summit Coordinator
July 18	Golf with the Premier	...and Plant the Seed of Canmore as a Community of Wellbeing
October 18	Open Invitation	Health & Wellbeing Summit in the Rockies November 9
October 25	East Meets West	Is This Canmore's Opportunity in Health?
October 31	What Exactly Is This?	Health & Wellbeing Summit in the Rockies
November 27	Moving Forward	Follow-Up Meeting Summit in the Rockies

PRINT COLLATERAL

Golf Tees Recycled Product	Attached to cardstock with website address. Distributed at August golf tournament for conservatives Janis Tarchuk – Premier Stelmach received
Sponsor Package	Directed/targeted via email
General Invitation Letter	Direct targeted mail – included Brochure Card
Print Brochure	Brochure Card – Invite to attend – Direct targeted mail & hand delivered
VIP Invitation Letter	Direct targeted via mail
Summit Participant Package	Distributed to all participants on November 9 Summit working day
H/W Attraction Package	Preliminary package developed from preliminary results of sector profile for distribution as required at ISPA Conference, Nov 11 - 16

- Regular Community Wellbeing Column Established – February 2008

7 REFLECTIONS AND LESSONS LEARNED

Full & Integrated Community Engagement

Essential!!!

This project was originally submitted based on input taken out of community visioning processes related to health & wellbeing as a community value and information submitted ad hoc through the community.

With this information, a strategically thinking committee developed a process around an industry growth strategy that would tie into community benefits but was focused around the economic development benefits and investment attraction. This was driven in part by the sources of funding that were available for these kinds of rural projects.

Very quickly into the project, the committee realized that the project would not reach full potential without broader community engagement. In other words, this was a community development project that would have economic benefit spin-offs, not the other way around as this was approached.

The project re-focused the initial phases on establishing an engaged and united community and sector. Through this project, we were very successful in the community engagement component, exciting and driving volunteer participation not only from industry but from general community as well. We also realized that we would need to build an infrastructure and action plan that would unite and support the industry internally – an “alliance” as outlined in this report. The “alliance” has now become a priority step before successful investment attraction can be pursued.

While we will work with the private business concepts that emerged through the course of the research, our focus will be on forming the “alliance” using the successful “Summit” for the industry as a tool to bring volunteers together around a project and complete the visioning component required to develop a strong alliance.

How to engage?

1. We encourage other communities to carefully analyze what they consider community engagement – we thought we had but realized that even though we “heard” support, we hadn’t tested this in the community. We also had not established links into the community that would enable full participation. These are key and must be established before considering investment attraction seriously.
2. Use a community-wide forum that has speakers or presentations that will interest and challenge participants to work together to develop next steps. We used the Summit to start developing this interest.

Including the VIP reception & Workshop Day of the Summit, we had 105 participants, some which attended both days.

- a. 29 from community, comprised of organizations that would support or be interested from a community level such as ourselves, Tourism *Canmore*, Bow Valley College, etc. From this, we had 8 general community participants who simply had an interest as a resident of the community.
- b. 18 from the land/development industry
- c. 10 from Government including a representative from Alberta Health & Wellness, the mayors of Banff & Canmore.
- d. 38 from the Health & Wellness Industry. We only had about 6 from the traditional health field. This challenge is consistent with CHR and the province’s efforts to engage the traditional health care field in this realm. Challenges relate to a number of issues including worker shortages and stress that doesn’t allow them the time to participate. However, the significant lack of willingness to participate based on credibility of health service from a wellness approach is also a challenge that CHR is experiencing. As a community, we will participate and work with CHR as well as leaving the invitation open. We will look for the spark-plugs and openings and take advantage of them where possible. This is a huge challenge that will not be addressed overnight but will be critical to success.
- e. 3 from media newspapers
- f. 5 organizers

The challenge with this is the financial resources and time required to successfully carry out this process. Because there isn’t immediate investment or business development success, it is often not eligible for community economic development funding support. **We credit the Rural Community Economic Development (RCED) program for recognizing and assisting communities in this critical component of successful economic development.** Without RCED, Canmore could not have launched this effort. We urge continued recognition and support for these kinds of efforts particularly in rural communities

where capacity and endorsement usually requires much more nurturing and assistance.

3. **Identify your sparkplugs!** We missed a key leader in the alternative health area that we knew existed but didn't credit with the amount of influence held. As a result, we had to deal with a backlash from that sector, initiated by this leader. We immediately met with the person, shared and developed a common understanding of goals and developed a process to deal with the relatively small backlash but with potential to be quite damaging if we didn't address. Most importantly, simply by acknowledging their importance, we developed another incredible community resource, leader and form of support actively involved and continuing to champion the efforts today.

Full Community Integration

One of the key learning's out of the final Sector Profile research was based on successful community models we examined. In order for a sector to be successful, it must be integrated into all aspects of the community. As a stand-alone industry "silo" it will only be moderately successful and will end up competing with other valuable community efforts for attention and resources.

The better this integration, the more successful the project. For example, we will be contributing some of the "stories" to Tourism Canmore to use as part of their marketing and promotional materials such as the Canmore Visitor Guide. We should be building in a component of health & wellbeing into our international sporting competitions and national team development. We could also be building in music or art therapy demonstrations into the annual "ArtSpeak Festival". While Tourism Canmore has committed to the project, the actual tourism product must start to include such activities as Wellness Weekend packaging, or wellness retreat products in order for Tourism Canmore to actually have something to market.

This integration will happen through the "alliance" and their efforts. And it will not happen overnight. Building in the concept of integration into the vision of the alliance will be essential.

Regional Communications & Sharing of Best Practices

Best Practice Materials will be available through the CFCWest Office. Sector Profile results will be available within and beyond the region.

Sharing of this information was achieved and is ongoing through communications at the CRP REDA level, which is happening at the Economic Developer's Forum.


The Crowsnest area has been identified as interested in this initiative. Invite Crowsnest representatives to any event, should we decide to invite someone with a lifestyle community background to speak in Canmore. i.e.: Cliff Communities. Share niche market particularly "lifestyle communities" info with Crowsnest area.

As a Community Economic Development (CED) coordinator at CFCWest, other than the occasional meeting at a training opportunity or conference, there is no defined way of sharing a project with other CF's that are currently under way. Possibly with the new

Rural Diversification Initiative (RDI) project a quarterly CED "Bulletin" could be started. All CF's with a project can contribute their "in-progress" information for better sharing. Something very brief – and then a phone number/email to contact for more information.

8 APPROVALS

Approved by



Patti-Jay Callaghan
Executive Director
Community Futures Centre West

9 APPENDICES

9.1 Health & Wellness Story *Samples*

Health and Wellness – they keys to Canmore's future
East Meets West – Integrative Health Connections

9.2 PDF Attachments

Canmore Health & Wellness Sector Profile Executive Summary & Conclusion
Canmore Health & Wellness Sector Profile

Best Practice Attachments
Event Guide
Business Success Profiles – A template

Invoice # 11108

Financials - Sources of Revenue and In-Kind Contributions from Project Funders

Health and Wellness Story Samples

Health and wellness – the keys to Canmore’s future

If all the “visioning” Canmore has done over the past few years were boiled down to its essentials, three simple, powerful words would emerge: “healthy, wealthy, and wise.”

We all want to live in a place that embodies these characteristics. Compared to most other towns on the planet, Canmore is already well on the way. We have an amazing location, a well-educated and active population, and a booming economy. But plenty of wisdom is needed to continue building the community’s health and wealth.

Canmore has always been a bit of a one-industry town. Back in its early days, the town’s primary industry was coal extraction, and pretty much everyone in town made their money – either directly or indirectly – from the presence of the mines.

After the mines closed, the push to promote Canmore as a vacation destination gathered steam. By the late 1990s, it was clear to most residents that the town’s primary economic driver had become tourism. Again, most of our incomes were derived from tourism, whether directly or not. Different eggs, same basket.

Clearly, it’s time for a new basket.

Canmore’s ongoing building boom, both residential and commercial, will continue to be a strong and steady partner for tourism for at least another decade. But Canmore’s Economic Development Authority (CEDA) is working to diversify the local economy well before that. “Our role is to plan for the future, for the day when the construction boom is over,” says Bob Ennis, CEDA’s chairperson.

That’s where health and wellness comes in. CEDA has been interested in this growing industry for some time, since it complements our existing industries and offers plenty of room for economic growth without requiring a lot of land.

Thanks to its location and activities, Canmore already has an enviable supply of medical doctors and alternative practitioners. CEDA’s plan is to build on this existing network by helping local businesses expand their health and wellness focus. “Then, we’re going to go out and attract more businesses until we have enough product that we are truly known as a destination for health and wellness services,” says Teresa Mullen, executive director of CEDA.

“Health and wellness jobs can replace those which will be lost by the slowdown of construction, which we all know is inevitable,” continues Mullen. “Embracing health and wellness has the potential to diversify our economy, reducing our dependence on one industry (tourism).”

At the same time, it can enhance our attraction as a tourism entity. There is a growing international trend towards health and wellness tourism – in fact, it’s one of the travel industry’s fastest-growing sectors. John Samms, Tourism Canmore’s executive director, is an ardent fan of health and wellness tourism, which he sees as a natural fit for our destination. “The community already embraces health and wellness as a lifestyle,” he comments. “But it’s not just physical; the healing starts mentally. Canmore’s location begins to heal the visitor immediately. There’s a natural force in Canmore, and it only makes sense to evolve a community that embraces the force.”

Canmore's biggest developer, Three Sisters Mountain Village, aims to become North America's premier health wellness adventure resort, with an exceptional destination spa set amongst its golf courses and luxury homes. This alone will offer plenty of jobs for local people.

"Community members can offer services to the resort or take advantage of the resort clientele to build their own opportunities and benefits," enthuses Mullen. "And locals will benefit from increased access to services and activities that benefit their own health."

Natalie Gibson is a consultant who is helping CEDA with its health and wellness planning initiative. She says the concept of health and wellness is about improving "all aspects of daily living to the highest quality of life." This is something every community should aspire to.

With this focus, building health and wellness means more than just growing an industry – it's building a community. Mullen states it unequivocally: "We want to attract people to live here who are dedicated to their own health and well-being, who will then add to a community that is already strong."

Healthy, wealthy and wise indeed.

To get involved with CEDA's health and wellness initiative, plan to attend the Health and Wellbeing Summit in the Rockies, an all-day event on November 9th. Visit www.rockieswellbeing.ca for details.

East Meets West – the Canmore connection to health

If you're like most North Americans, your definition of health is how you feel when you don't need a doctor. Simply put, you generally feel all right. You consult a doctor if you're injured or sick, hoping that your symptoms will be relieved by a prescription or surgical procedure.

While it's not good to be sick anywhere, Canmore is a better place than most to fall ill. "Opportunities for access to healthcare in this community are so wide, compared to other communities of this size in Alberta," says Barb Shellian, Senior Manager for Bow Corridor Regional Health for the Calgary Health Region. There are 64 physicians who currently have privileges at the Canmore Hospital. This means an enviably low doctor-patient ratio, and shorter wait times for medical help. This includes access to specialists in psychiatry, orthopedic surgery, plastic surgery, neurology, and many more disciplines.

On the other hand, there is an ancient medical tradition practiced in Asia, where you see your doctor regularly in order to **prevent** illness. From this point of view, "once you're ready to go to the doctor, it's already too late," warns Christian Perez, a doctor of natural medicine and the founder of Amatsu Eastern Healing Arts Clinic in Canmore.

Paying careful attention to your body will keep the energy flowing freely within your system, preventing major problems in the future. "It's like giving a car regular oil changes," notes Perez. "The body's no different – you have to maintain the parts."

Interest in natural medicine, with its emphasis on prevention rather than treatment, is gathering steam in North America. A recently released report from the Fraser Institute shows that 54% of Canadians reported using at least one alternative therapy in 2005, and over 84% of Albertans have used alternative treatments in their lifetimes.

Fortunately, Canmore is a great place for people in pursuit of wellness, too. There is a wide range of complementary and alternative medicine (CAM) practitioners here, from doctors of natural medicine, through chiropractors, acupuncturists and massage therapists, and on into softer disciplines such as aromatherapy.

“Our environment attracts individuals who are very focused on a healthy lifestyle. That opens up your mind and options to more possibilities beyond traditional medicine,” comments Shellian. A typical Canmore resident with back pain, she adds, might choose to see their GP, or might immediately head to a local acupuncturist or sports therapist instead.

One reason for this may be that Alberta is among the most liberal provinces in Canada when it comes to regulating alternative practitioners. Insurance companies in Alberta reimburse for many more CAM practitioners than they do in the rest of Canada, so fixing your back pain won't hit you in the wallet.

The outcome of such liberality, Perez believes, is that the public has more options for treatment, and there is a significant reduction in the cost of public health care. Since Alberta had the highest per capita provincial spending on health care in 2006, according to a study recently released by the Canadian Institute for Health Information, this can only be a good thing. (The amount spent was \$4,924 per person.)

“Canmore is unlike any other place in Canada in the sheer number of genuine experts, qualified and trained,” remarks Perez. “It’s one of those unique places where you have a choice of what kind of treatment you want to access.”

Canmore is poised to take advantage of this unique position to promote itself as a world-class destination for health and wellness. Perez enthuses about the “culture of hard play and recreation” that the community already embraces, and which attracts a certain type of individual. This refers not only to the average resident or visitor, but also the medical and CAM practitioners who live in our community, either full- or part-time. For example, many specialists associated with the hospital do so because they have a second home in Canmore.

“The mountains are probably the initial draw,” remarks Shellian, “but once medical staff arrives in Canmore, the quality of service and staff [at the hospital] help to keep them here. We have a tremendous group of staff who are very skilled, knowledgeable, very enthusiastic, and love what they’re doing.”

There can sometimes be antagonism between the paradigms of eastern and western medicine, but it’s not apparent in Canmore, where the practitioners interviewed for this story were respectful of each other’s disciplines. This respect may prove to be one of Canmore’s most valuable tools in its quest to promote health and wellness, since it offers the possibility of pursuing the health sector known as integrated medicine, or integrative healthcare.

According to the Fraser Institute report, most Canadians appear to be eager to take part in integrative healthcare, whether they are familiar with the term or not. This emerging way of treating patients takes the best elements of western medicine and combines them with the best elements of complementary medicine.

So far, there are very few places where Canadian can go for a one-stop healthcare experience, because few MDs are versed in complementary practices. Western medicine tends to focus on the speedy treatment of disease with less concern on prevention, thus missing out on potential healing strategies—such as amending diet and emotional factors—that come from natural health modalities.

In its perfect expression, integrative healthcare would include MDs working with CAM practitioners to treat the whole patient, offering whichever treatment is deemed most likely to work and using the body’s innate ability to heal. Your clinic would have all your information on file, tracking your treatments from each practitioner. It would focus on promoting health and wellness

as tools to prevent disease, encouraging the patient to take basic responsibility for his or her own health.

“There is an overall increasing trend in North America towards supportive therapies, self-education and natural preventative healthcare,” says Neil Blacklock, a doctor of natural medicine and acupuncturist based in Canmore. “We have some excellent family physicians in Canmore and have a very effective medical support system in place,” says Blacklock, “but there is an increasing demand for natural medicine services.”

Blacklock established the Canmore Health and Wellness Centre two years ago to tap into that growing interest by providing a professional, high-quality environment specializing in natural medicine. At the centre, therapies can be combined in order to offer the best treatment for the patient’s particular issue. While no MD is associated with the clinic at present, it is still our best local example of integrative medicine.

With its highly qualified medical practitioners (both western and eastern), and its intrinsically healing natural environment, Canmore is perfectly placed to become a world-class centre for integrative healthcare.

“If people really need you, they’ll come from anywhere,” says Perez. Like many other practitioners here, he has patients from all over the place. About 45% of his clients fly in from places like Miami, Texas, the UK and eastern Canada. “They spend their time and money here while undergoing treatment. And then they see what Canmore is actually like – and in some cases, they move here! These are high achievers, motivated and inspired to live a healthy life.” What an addition to the community.

Canmore Economic Development Authority aims to promote health and wellness as a leading economic strategy for the town in the years to come. To that end, it is hosting a Health and Wellbeing Summit on November 9th, where the public is invited to comment the future of health and wellness in the community.

Natalie Gibson, a business development consultant working with CEDA on this initiative, says that the direction the town chooses to take has yet to be determined. “Do we wish a medical model for health and wellness promotion,” she asks, “or will there be a more holistic model chosen?”

The benefits of becoming a centre for integrative healthcare would seem to speak for themselves, but the ideal may be years from fruition. What’s clear is that in the meantime, people will still come to Canmore to pursue their own quests for healing body, mind and spirit.

To get involved with CEDA’s health and wellness initiative, plan to attend the Health and Wellbeing Summit in the Rockies, an all-day event on November 9th. Visit www.rockieswellbeing.ca for details.
