

# Economic Development Spotlight 2021-2023



## De Havilland chooses Wheatland County

In September 2022 De Havilland Aircraft of Canada Ltd. Announced that Wheatland County would be the home of a new aircraft manufacturing centre called “De Havilland Field”.

De Havilland Field will consist of a new, state-of-the-art aircraft assembly facility, runway, parts manufacturing and distribution centres and a maintenance repair and overhaul centre. There will also be educational space for workforce training, office buildings and an aircraft museum.

De Havilland Field will be the site of final assembly for the DHC-515 Firefighter aircraft, the DHC-6 Twin Otter and the Dash 8-400 aircraft. De Havilland is also working on bringing the DHC-6 Twin Otter and Dash 8-400 aircraft back into production.

According to the company, “The location of De Havilland Field is ideal, having access to a large, young and diverse labour pool in Alberta, family-friendly cost of living, and a world-class international airport that can support efficient parts distribution to our global customer base.”

The company anticipates that up to 1,500 jobs will be located at the new location.

## CGC Inc. to build Western Canada plant in Wheatland

In July 2022 CGC Inc., the Canadian Division of USG Corporation, announced plans to build a new state-of-the-art wallboard manufacturing plant in Wheatland County.

This \$210 million investment is the result of close collaboration between Wheatland County, CGC, the Government of Alberta and Invest Alberta Corporation to fuel regional economic development by adding more than 100 high-value manufacturing jobs to the local economy at the plant long-term, as well as approximately 200 construction jobs during site build.

According to the company, “Wheatland County was selected as the home for CGC’s Western Canadian wallboard manufacturing plant because of the immediate economic benefits offered by local and regional governments, as well as long-term growth opportunities thanks to its close proximity to Calgary, Alberta.

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## Focus on new energy

In June 2022 Markus Lehmann was contracted as a new energy specialist to develop a hydrogen industry development roadmap and conduct outreach to stakeholders. Mr Lehmann is an industry expert that has decades of experience arranging funding for energy projects and also holds a master's degree from Georgetown University.

Wheatland County is well placed to benefit from new energy and has the intention to become a new energy hub for the region. The county is home to 8,000 oil and gas wells, and currently houses two solar farms (East Strathmore—26 MW and Gleichen—15 MW), with a third project (NOVA—50 MW) seeking regulatory approval.

Rocky Mountain Clean Fuels operates a 500 bpd gas-to-liquids facility that converts natural gas into synthetic fuels with zero sulfur and low emissions and is also a local source of excess hydrogen and wax (for potential use in coatings).

The Wheatland Wind Project a 122.4 MW wind generation project is currently under development in the county.

*“Wheatland County has been laser focused on cultivating a development landscape conducive to diversifying our rural economy and driving job creation through strategic growth”. (Amber Link, Reeve of Wheatland County)*

### Business numbers

Wheatland has over 200 businesses.

From 2020 to 2022 the County issued 90 new Development Permits.

## Alberta Government selects Wheatland for carbon sequestration hub

Reconciliation Energy Transition Inc. (RETI) was selected by the Government of Alberta to evaluate a carbon sequestration hub. The hub will be located east of Calgary, in Wheatland County, and will provide an open access carbon sequestration service for the greater Calgary area.

RETI expects to enter into a carbon sequestration evaluation agreement with Alberta Energy that will allow them to conduct evaluation and testing to confirm the suitability of the East Calgary Region Carbon Sequestration Hub to permanently sequester carbon dioxide in deep saline aquifers at an early rate of up to 5 MTPA, with expectations for increasing to 10 MTPA in later development phases.

RETI believes that the East Calgary Region Carbon Sequestration Hub will be the foundation for a Southern Alberta industrial center focusing on emerging renewable fuels and sustainable hydrogen development.



## Wheatland County is open for business!

Located only 37 km from the Calgary International Airport, Wheatland County is the ideal place for your new build.

- Highways 1, 24, 22x 564, and Glenmore Trail provide convenient access to the City of Calgary and locations farther afield.
- Served by a CP Rail mainline.

Wheatland County has the lowest industrial land costs in the Calgary area. There are two industrial areas.

- Origin Business Park is located on Highway 1, only 13-minutes from the City of Calgary.
- The Goldfinch Industrial area (heavy industrial) is located off Highway 24. A CP Rail line runs through the Goldfinch area providing continent-wide shipping.

Wheatland County's non-residential tax rate is amongst the lowest in Alberta and actually decreased year-on-year from 2021 to 2023! In addition, we also offer a generous municipal tax incentive, with a 40% reduction in municipal non-residential tax for eligible investors.

### 2021 Census

Data from the Statistics Canada 2021 Census of population showed the following:

- Wheatland County's area is 4,505.05 km<sup>2</sup>.
- Total population is 8,738.
- There are 2,842 private dwellings.
- Median after-tax income of families is \$87,000.
- Total labour force is 4,290.
- There are 1,225 self-employed people.

## Agricultural feedstocks

Wheatland County has a well-developed value chain with ag-input suppliers, food and beverage processors, feedlots, seed cleaning plants, grain handling companies and fertilizer plants. Many large agribusiness companies such as Cargill, Richardson Pioneer, Paterson Grain, Canada Malting Co., Parish & Heimbecker, and Nutrien are represented in the county.

2021 Statistics Canada Census of Agriculture statistics indicate the following:

- 825 farms
- 1.3 M acres of farmland
- 172,000 head of cattle
- 323,000 acres of wheat
- 260,000 acres of canola
- 165,000 acres of barley
- 82,000 acres of dry field peas

## County broadband initiative

On August 19, 2022 Wheatland County announced a partnership with Shaw Communications in bringing broadband connectivity into the County's West Highway 1 and Goldfinch Industrial areas! Shaw Communications has officially been awarded Wheatland County's Rural Broadband contract to bring connectivity into selected areas of Wheatland County.

Shaw will provide a fibre network solution to the West Hwy #1 industrial area, Goldfinch industrial area, connect fibre to the home for residents in Cheadle, and construct a connection point within Carseland for potential future residential services.

Wheatland County's Rural Broadband initiative will provide a reliable and scalable high-speed network, with broadband speeds and capacity capable of supporting diverse business needs. Wheatland County's industrial areas will allow business customers to lever-

age Canada's fastest fibre network speeds, while also increasing the possibility of future network expansions into residential areas.

The industrial build will be completed by the summer of 2024, with Wheatland County's portion of the cost at \$2.6 M.



## Municipal tax incentive approved

In September 2021 Wheatland County Council approved a bylaw to offer a municipal tax incentive to large investors. The bylaw provides eligible investments with a 40% exemption on municipal property tax for non-residential improvements, for 3 years from the first fully taxable year. Eligible investors must have an increase in assessable improvements and/or machinery and equipment of \$10,000,000 over the base assessment year. The bylaw applies to both new investments and expansions. Reeve Amber Link stated that, "The tax incentive is a vital part of positioning Wheatland County as being the best investment destination for business. Wheatland County Council has been laser focused on cultivating an environment that fosters economic growth. It will contribute to financial sustainability of Wheatland County by diversifying our rural economy. This is an example of putting plans into action".

For further information, visit <https://wheatlandcounty.ca/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/Bylaw-2021-23-Wheatland-County-Non-Residential-Tax-Incentive-Bylaw-signed-copy.pdf>.

## Regional partners

Wheatland County closely collaborates with regional partners such as Community Futures Wild Rose, the Strathmore Wheatland Chamber of Commerce and Prospect Human Services.

Community Futures Wild Rose has worked hard to deliver services and programs to local businesses including loans, training in marketing and digital presence. Highlights include delivery of the Digital Economy and Mastering Your Recovery—Marketing Programs. Community Futures is also the lead on a regional workforce strategy.

The Strathmore Wheatland Chamber of Commerce is a business organization formed to advance the commercial, financial, industrial, and civic interests of our community. The Chamber is involved in promoting tourism and small business, organizing the inaugural Tour 564 tradeshow, and delivering the Business Excellence Awards.

Prospect Human Services assists Wheatland employers with connecting to good candidates as well as offering job seekers assistance all at no cost. Prospect arranges job fairs for regional employers and is a steering committee member on a regional workforce strategy.

## Branding for success

As part of a municipal rebranding program called the Next Level Project, in 2022 Wheatland County installed new gateway signage on Highways 1, 564, 22x, 56, and 21. In 2023 signs will be installed on Highways 24, 901 and 22x.

The county wanted a look with a cleaner finish that could attract investment while staying true to the county's identity. The new county logo is a different take on Wheatland's identity as a rural community. It features the county name along with a wheat sheaf to the left.

New signs and logos will be installed as the old ones need to be replaced. The County's priority is getting the new logo on display where the greatest number of people can see it. Eventually signage on all major highways, as well as municipal buildings, will be replaced with the new design.



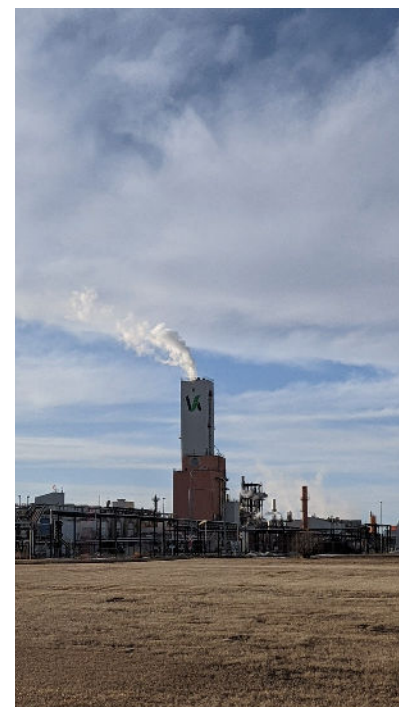
*“At Nutrien, our purpose is feeding the future, and we’re proud to do our part from our Carseland Nitrogen facility here in Wheatland County. Together with our over 150 employees at the site, we have the capacity to safely produce 535,000 tonnes of ammonia and 680,000 tonnes of urea each year.” (Katrina Hauck Miller, GM, Nutrien Carseland Nitrogen)*

## Focus on large employers—Nutrien

With over 150 employees at their Carseland site, Nutrien is one of Wheatland County's largest employers.

The Carseland facility (which is located in the Goldfinch Industrial ASP area) manufactures nitrogen fertilizer, with the end-use products being anhydrous ammonia, granular urea, and coated urea. On an annual basis 350,000 tonnes of ammonia and 680,000 tonnes of urea are produced.

Nutrien is undertaking a significant expansion with the goals of increasing capacity, improving reliability, increasing energy efficiency and decreasing emissions intensity. The project will expand urea production capacity by 6% and ammonia production capacity by 10%. The project is slated for completion in 2024 and has an estimated total installed cost of \$170 M.



## Rocky Mountain Clean Fuels expansion



In April 2023 Rocky Mountain Clean Fuels Inc. and Expander Energy Inc. announced they had reached a long-term binding agreement in which Expander will provide renewable syngas to the Rocky Mountain facility where it will be converted into renewable Bio-SynDiesel™ fuel in conjunction with Rocky's current SynDiesel® and hydrogen production.

Expander will install a biomass gasification unit adjacent to the Rocky facility near Carseland, Alberta. The new gasification unit will convert biomass (construction wood waste) which has been diverted from landfill to produce renewable hydrogen and carbon monoxide (syngas). The renewable syngas will be processed by Rocky to produce low carbon intensity (CI) renewable Bio-SynDiesel® and

hydrogen.

Installation of the Expander gasifier at the Rocky facility will result in the production of over 6 million liters of low carbon intensity renewable Bio-SynDiesel®. Expander anticipates that production could be available as early as mid 2025.

Expander's Bio-Energy Carbon Capture and Sequestration (BECCS) solution utilizes cellulosic biomass to produce next generation low CI synthetic fuels while efficiently capturing bio-carbon for geologic sequestration.

*"De Havilland Field will be the home of assembly and production of reliable and rugged Canadian aircraft that serve missions around the world. This is the start of a new chapter for both De Havilland Canada and Canadian aerospace and we are excited about beginning the process with Wheatland County to provide new aviation opportunities for Canada and Alberta." (Brian Chafe, CEO De Havilland Canada)*

### Housing developments

Wheatland County has two new golf-course communities, The Lakes of Muirfield and Speargrass. Both feature executive style homes based around world-class 18-hole golf courses and rural settings.

- The Lakes of Muirfield is situated on an 18-hole golf course only 20 minutes from The City of Calgary. The community has an approximate population of 480.
- Speargrass is located on the Bow River only 35 minutes from the City of Calgary and minutes from the hamlet of Carseland. The community has an approximate population of 275.

## Goldfinch Industrial Area

An area of 2,850 hectares, the Goldfinch Industrial area is Wheatland County's heavy industrial hub and home to large industrial facilities, including: Orica; Nutrien; Federated Coop; Cargill; Pioneer; and Stella Jones. CGC Inc. (a division of USG) has also committed to build a plant in the area.

The Goldfinch area is part of Wheatland County's Goldfinch Industrial Area Structure Plan. This is the only heavy industrial area in Calgary region.

The area is located near the western border of the county and is serviced by CP Rail and the Highway 24 corridor. It is also a short distance from both Highway 1 and Highway 22x. The CP Rail Calgary-Saskatoon line runs through the area providing continent-wide shipping on a single carrier.



## Origin Business Park is growing

Located on Highway 1 and the Wheatland County/Rocky View County border, Origin Business Park is directly next to the future De Havilland Field site. Origin Business Park is a mere 13-minute drive from the intersection of Highway 1 and Stoney Trail. The business park is part of Wheatland County's West Highway 1 Area Structure Plan and is filling up fast.

Businesses currently located in the park include Athabasca Oil, Midstream Electric, Pumptrac, an RV storage lot, and an Esso service station with food court. Several logistics and transportation companies are also at various stages of development. Lot prices in Origin Business Park start at \$350,000/acre. This includes gas, 3-Phase 400 A power, and telephone.

Lots are typically 2 to 5 acres in size although larger pieces are available to the south and adjacent to the business park.

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### Other new businesses

Some other new businesses that have established in Wheatland County recently include:

- Willow Creek Organics
- Esso
- Rocky Mountain Clean Fuels
- East Strathmore Solar Project
- Outback Trailers
- KFC
- Burger King