

DAWSON CREEK EXHIBITION

ECONOMIC IMPACT AND VISITOR SATISFACTION ANALYSIS

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Tourism Dawson Creek

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PROJECT DESCRIPTION

- The Dawson Creek Exhibition Association stages the Dawson Creek and District Agricultural Fair, Rodeo and Exhibition annually - referred to here as the Dawson Creek Exhibition (DCE). The exhibition incorporates a number of features and activities including a midway, parade, fireworks, music performances, chuckwagon races and a rodeo. This year's fair was held from August 10-14, 2005.
- Tourism Dawson Creek retained the Economic Planning Group (EPG) to measure the economic impact of the event and to assess the operations of the fair. Included in the operations assessment was an analysis of the DCE facilities, an analysis of other comparable exhibitions, a visitor satisfaction analysis, and an organizational analysis.

ISSUES AND CONCERNS

- The Dawson Creek Exhibition (DCE) is operated by a group of volunteers who have successfully run the event for several decades. However, the event's success has raised concern about the longer-term evolution of this volunteer-run organization. Concerns were also expressed that if the existing volunteer group were to lose interest, the event could be lost.
- The operating society has done some visioning and planning, but does not have a formal strategic plan nor a scheduled action plan in place. The lack of a strategy to ensure the long-term evolution of the event may jeopardize future economic impacts to the City.
- The DCE was assumed to create a significant economic impact to the city of Dawson Creek. However, no figures existed to document the financial contributions made by the event.
- A re-occurring issue among organizers, spectators and competitors was about the non-roofed grandstand. Inclement weather plays a major role on the attendance of the event. Proponents felt that a roofed grandstand would help generate a more stable attendance and make event planning more predictable.
- Many of the facilities located within the DCE grounds have been in existence for decades. In a number of cases there are safety and structural concerns with some of these facilities. Several of these structures are expected to be near the end of their useful life.

FACILITY ASSESSMENT

- The Indoor Riding Arena, being the most current of the facilities, is in by far the best condition of all of the facilities. The Handicrafts building and the Main Washroom building, although older, are in adequate condition as well. The racetrack itself is also in good condition overall particularly the actual track surface.
- The remainder of the facilities appear to be in fair condition, although most have some structural issues that need to be addressed. The facilities that appear to need the most attention are the Grandstand Beer Garden and Grandstand Washrooms, the Concession Stands, the Horse Stables, and the Watering Hole Beer Garden.

COMPARABLE EXHIBITIONS

- There are twelve communities on the Chuckwagon/Rodeo circuit and four were chosen for direct comparison to the DCE. The information provided by these exhibitions was intended to help guide the operations of the DCE.
- Depending on the age of the event, and the size of the trading area, there is a wide range in the attendance figures. This range is from a low of 4,000 visitors to a high of 64,500. The DCE had slightly fewer than 18,000 visitors for 2005.
- All four comparable exhibitions reported that there were more tourists than locals that attended their events, unlike the DCE, which attracts more locals (56%) than tourists (44%).
- These exhibitions all rely heavily on volunteers to successfully operate the event. However, two of the comparables employ two full time staff members through out the year, while three employ an additional number of part time staff on a year round basis.
- Although all four comparables have dedicated fairgrounds for their events, only three have a roofed grandstand. The remaining event does not have a permanent grandstand, however plans are under way to build a covered grandstand (making Dawson Creek the only non-roofed grandstand on the circuit.)
- The comparable exhibitions generate a range of revenues. These range from a low of \$135,000 to a high of \$1.5 million. The average revenue for the exhibitions in 2005 was approximately \$696,000. The relationship among the categories of revenues was 62% gate revenues and 38% from other sources for the comparable facilities. Interestingly, the proportion of revenues was exactly the reverse for the DCE.

ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

- Spectators spent an average of 2.6 days at the DCE. It was most common for spectators to take in the event for one day, while a limited number of spectators (8%) attended all five days of the Exhibition.
- A total of 17,771 individual tickets were sold to an estimated total of 6,835 individual spectators. Each spectator spent an average of just over \$92.00, for a combined spectator expenditure of \$633,000.
- Total economic impact of the event was estimated at over \$1.3 million. This figure includes the direct impact of \$634,000, indirect impacts of \$608,000, and induced effects of \$77,000.
- Spectators spent money on a variety of items within a number of expenditure categories. Concessions, admissions and automobile/gas were the biggest expenditure categories, responsible for nearly 70% of the total. Restaurant expenses accounted for about 7% of expenditures, while accommodation and shopping accounted for an additional 6% each of spending.
- It is estimated that Chuckwagon competitors spent approximately \$750 - \$4000 per team, depending on the size of their team and how far they travelled to get to Dawson Creek.
- Exhibitor and Rodeo competitor expenditures are similar to those spectators that travelled to Dawson Creek from out of town.

VISITOR SATISFACTION ANALYSIS

- Generally speaking, spectators were very satisfied with the DCE. The average numeric rating for the overall event was 5.7 (out of seven), with the scores ranging from 4.6 to 6.6, depending on the topic. The Chuckwagon races were by far the most popular aspect of the DCE, followed by the rodeo. Experiencing a sense of community spirit also rated high.
- Spectators and volunteers cited two areas of concern, namely, the grandstand lacking a roof, and poor parking conditions.
- Competitors were generally satisfied with the DCE and the amenities provided to them. However, they would like to see some upgrades to the amenities, such as showers and the availability of power.

ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

- The Dawson Creek & District Exhibition Association has been in existence for decades, placing it in the “Stabilization” stage of a non-profit organization lifecycle. While at this stage, it is important to avoid moving into the “Crisis and Decline” stage of the cycle. In order to ensure that this does not occur, the Association should consider ways to strengthen its administrative structure.
- Although the DCE has done some visioning and planning, no actionable strategic plan exists. As the association moves forward, it would be wise to define a formal strategic plan and develop an implementation process.
- The literature researched for this review shows that most all-volunteer organizations have trouble attracting new members, particularly persons with diverse skills. Organizations tend to recycle officers, as few members want to take leadership roles. The survival and continued success of the DC Exhibition will be dependent upon being able to sustain a sufficiently large volunteer pool, as well as ensuring that there are qualified leaders to move in as the organization evolves.
- A number of actions were recommended to help with the long-term success of the DCE Association. These included:
 - Develop a Strategic Plan
 - Develop a Succession Plan
 - Combat Institutional Memory Lapse
 - Implement policies
 - Analyze the President’s position
 - Analyze issues around paying more staff members
 - Investigate bringing in a partner to help run the event

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

The Dawson Creek Exhibition Association stages the Dawson Creek and District Agricultural Fair, Rodeo and Exhibition annually. Promoted as the “Greatest Show in the Peace”, this year’s fair was held from August 10-14, 2005.

The Dawson Creek Exhibition (DCE) incorporates a number of features and activities including a midway, parade, fireworks, and music performances. However, the major focus is the chuckwagon races and the rodeo, which are sanctioned by the World Professional Chuckwagon Association (WPCA) and the Canadian Pro Rodeo Association (CPRA), respectively.

The event has been in operation since 1939, and is part of a multi-stop chuckwagon and rodeo circuit in Alberta, of which the Dawson Creek event is the only British Columbia stop. The DCE is operated by a group of volunteers who have successfully run the event for several decades. However, there appears to be a risk of the event becoming too big to be administered by a volunteer group. There is also a risk that the existing volunteer group could lose interest in carrying on or burn out due to the demands of the event.

Given these issues, Tourism Dawson Creek retained the Economic Planning Group (EPG) to measure the economic impact of the event and to assess the operations of the fair, with the intent of providing options on how the event and its organizing body might evolve.

1.2 PROJECT OBJECTIVES

The overall purpose of the analysis is to provide an operational review of the Dawson Creek Exhibition. The specific objectives were to:

- Conduct a DCE situation analysis.
- Compare the DCE with other agricultural exhibitions.
- Conduct a building suitability review.
- Assess visitor satisfaction with the event.
- Measure the fair’s economic impact.
- Conduct a strategic audit and capacity review of the administering organization.
- Make recommendations on how the fair might evolve into the future.

1.3 RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The research for this project involved a number of specific tasks. These are described below.

Project Start up

- EPG held discussions with Tourism Dawson Creek to confirm objectives, the work plan and scheduling.
- Obtained a list of local and association contacts for interviews.
- Assessed operational logistics to conduct the survey of fair patrons.

Preliminary Organizational Review

- Confirmed buy-in by, and cooperation of, the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association to the objectives for the review.
- Obtained and reviewed relevant descriptive information on the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association.
- Reviewed the mandate, purpose and vision of the organization.
- Reviewed recent budgets and annual report.

Preliminary Facilities Review

- Visually inspected all fair buildings.
- Obtained information from Exhibition organizers on condition and deficiencies.
- Prepared a brief facilities condition write-up.

Comparable Events Analysis

- Confirmed the other communities on the rodeo and chuckwagon circuit for comparison.
- Selected four communities for comparison in consultation with Tourism Dawson Creek.
- Determined the issues to be addressed/assessed.

- Designed a questionnaire to collect information from the four comparables.
- Interviewed representatives from each of the four comparable events.
- Analyzed and wrote up findings.

Economic Impact Analysis

- Designed a survey questionnaire to collect information from fair-goers.
- Developed data collection technique (personal interview) and confirmed logistics.
- Trained interviewers.
- Interviewed approximately 220 spectators, volunteers and participants on Friday, Saturday and Sunday.
- Edited survey forms.
- Undertook data entry and survey analysis.
- Obtained financial information on revenues and expenses from DCE organizers.
- Extrapolated survey findings to total fair attendance.

Situation Analysis

- Determined suitability and capacity of administering organization.
- Obtained information from selected agency representatives.

Organizational Best Practices Review

- Obtained information on the current board structure of the Dawson Creek Exhibition Society.
- Conducted an Internet search of articles and information on volunteer and non-profit organizations.
- Provided a summary of organizational best practices in relation to the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association.

Future Options

- Explored future options for event operations and management after analyzing alternate scenarios.
- Assessed the objectives of the event and its costs and benefits.
- Addressed issues to be considered during future event planning.

Disclaimer

EPG notes that the findings of this study and the associated conclusions are based both on the sources indicated and on experience gained from other projects. Implementation of the recommendations are outside the scope of EPG's involvement and no warranty can be given that the results projected will in fact occur.

2.0 SITUATION ANALYSIS

2.1 HISTORY AND EVOLUTION

An important step in analysing how an organization may evolve is to understand its history. The following is an outline - provided by the Dawson Creek and District Exhibition Association - of the history and evolution of the Dawson Creek Exhibition and Fair (as provided by the DCE).

The first fall fair was held in 1939 in the old Carlsonia Hall (Northland Theatre – now Aspol Motors parking lot). Mr. & Mrs. H.S. Tuck, Mr. H. Giles, Mrs. G. Mallor and Mrs Olive Fynn were the first organizers.

The Second World War and other circumstances forced suspension of the society's activities for the next 11 years. In 1951 the Fair came back with a gigantic Fiesta and Fair, held at the old ball diamond. In 1955 the society came back into its own and purchased the present site of a quarter section of land and started building the racetrack, barns and exhibit buildings.

1956 saw the first Fair in the new site, under president, Ralph Thomsen. In 1957, recognizing his efforts in practically completing the racetrack single-handed, Fred Sandy was elected president. Flat racing and Chuckwagon racing took centre stage for the locals which added the excitement of horse racing to the new Fair Grounds. 1958 saw the project of a grandstand completed and the Fair Board felt that, at long last, it had a permanent home.

In 1959 the fair became a class "B" Fair under President, Efner Johnson. The only time the fair has been cancelled since 1951, was in 1964 when a disastrous storm hit Dawson Creek, flooding the grounds and rendering it impossible to hold a fair. In 1961, the Dawson Creek Rope & Saddle Club under President Herb Norden, built the present Rodeo infield. Ralph Thomsen again assumed the Chair in 1963. With inspiration, drive and foresight, he guided the 1965 Fair through the most successful show ever. Working in co-operation with the Rope & Saddle Club and the Bonanza Days committee, all attendance records were broken and exhibits were well up in numbers.

In 1958 Miller Patterson, founder of Pattersons Auction Mart Ltd., leased 4 acres from the society. The fair board cut a deal for cash payment yearly and an agreement that the Auction Mart would not hold a livestock sale during Fall Fair week. The Auction Mart facilities would be used by the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association as stabling for heavy horses and cattle at no charge.

In later years the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association – land, buildings, racetrack and grandstand were turned over to the City of Dawson Creek for \$1.00. Miller, Art, and Leonard Patterson purchased the 4 acres they had been leasing. The Patterson Family, believed an Agriculture Fair, Chuckwagons and Rodeo played an important part in agriculture and entertainment for the Dawson Creek area. They continued to shut the sale barn down during Fair week, stabling heavy horse and livestock at no charge to the fair. The City of Dawson Creek now owned the land and improvements would guarantee the

property's main purpose was for agriculture activities, such as fairs, rodeos, horse racing, horse shows, cattle, 4H, and horse events.

In 2001 the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association formulated a ten-year plan for the organization that included setting its goals and objectives, and attempting to run the association as a business.

As part of the professional rodeo and chuckwagon circuit, the Dawson Creek Exhibition is the only event in BC (the other 12 are in Alberta, including 10 exhibitions and two final events). It is also reported to be the second largest rodeo type event in the province after the Cloverdale Rodeo. It is further reported to be in the top 12 of the approximately 60 Canadian rodeos in terms of attendance and purse. Of particular significance is that the Exhibition is one of the only rodeo events in North America that combines the Canadian Pro Rodeo Association, the World Professional Chuckwagon Association, and stock provided by Kessler (reportedly the best in North America).

The event and the venue are popular with both the rodeo and chuckwagon competitors. The track is reported to be one of the best on the circuit while the infield rodeo area has good sightlines, as it is located directly in front of the grandstand.

2.2 MANDATE AND VISION

The Board of Directors of the Dawson Creek & District Exhibition has a mandate and a vision to continue the original focus of the individuals who initiated the exhibition several decades ago. They also have a responsibility as citizens of Dawson Creek and area to preserve the history and culture that the fair has brought to the community over the years.

Their purpose is to “assist and encourage the development of general agriculture in Dawson Creek and surrounding area.” Their mandate also includes:

- holding an agriculture fair, horse racing, rodeo and entertainment during August each year.
- raising funds, holding gifts, donations, legacies, and grants for the purpose of the society.
- entering into agreements or contracts to purchase, take or lease, hire or otherwise acquire and hold lands or buildings to operate and maintain any interest therein for the purpose of the society.
- encouraging membership and volunteers for the purpose of the society.
- safe guarding the history and culture of the Dawson Creek Fall Fair for the community and surrounding District of Dawson Creek.

2.3 ISSUES AND CONCERNS

As part of the research and analysis conducted on this project, interviews were conducted with several agency representatives. These interviews included representatives of the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association, the World Professional Chuckwagon Association, the Canadian Pro Rodeo Association, and the City of Dawson Creek.

The following are a number of issues that were brought up by representatives of these organizations.

Issue	Description
Grandstand Roof	The grandstand was built in 1958 (and refurbished in 1985) but does not have a roof. It is the only permanent, non-roofed grandstand on the chuckwagon/rodeo circuit. Inclement weather has a huge impact on rodeo and chuckwagon event attendance and consequently event revenues. Members of the organizing committee felt that a roof would stabilize attendance from year to year and allow much more confidence in event budgeting.
Site Utilities	The site has power, water, and telephone. However, all these utilities are minimal in terms of their capacity and some are temporary (water lines in the chuckwagon staging area). Upgrades and expansions would improve site operations for event participants.
Site Drainage	The fairgrounds are a relatively flat 160-acre field. Drainage in the main visitor areas and in the backlots where the participants are located is a problem during rainy periods.
Infrastructure in the Midway area	The Midway area is a field adjacent to the racetrack. It is effectively unserviced which means the midway supplier (Westcoast Amusements) must bring a mobile power generator. A 200-amp power panel would supply their needs. They also bring portable showers, so being able to connect to piped water is an asset.
Proximity to the new Multiplex	Proximity of the Exhibition grounds next to the new Multiplex may provide some operational efficiencies. This could include parking, maintenance, utilities, etc.

City ownership of the assets	The City of Dawson Creek owns the property and buildings, while the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association Society stages and operates the Fair. Issues occasionally arise concerning areas of responsibility such as building maintenance, operating costs, liability, etc.
Aging Buildings	Most of the buildings were built in the 1950s and are showing their age. Rebuilding or renovation decisions will likely have to be made in the near future.
Limited Use of the Assets	Currently, the Exhibition Society leases the fairgrounds from the City for the duration of the Exhibition (five days). There may be opportunities to utilize the grounds for other events during other times of the year. (eg. horse racing, auctions, etc)
Volunteer Organization	The Exhibition has been very successful in organizing and operating a large and complex annual event. The Association does this with an entirely volunteer board and administrative “staff”. If the organization and the event are to successfully evolve, consideration should be given to board of director roles, techniques to ensure continuity, possibility of paid staff positions, and succession planning.
Strategic Planning	The operating society has done some visioning and planning, but does not have an official strategic plan or a scheduled action plan. A structured plan would assist with buy-in and support by the board of directors, local businesses, and the City of Dawson Creek.

3.0 FACILITIES ASSESSMENT

3.1 BACKGROUND

As mentioned in section 2.1, The DCE operates on land that was purchased in 1955. The racetrack and a majority of the barns and exhibit buildings were all built shortly after the society purchased the land, while the current grandstand was built in 1958. Although a few newer barns and buildings have been built since then, the majority of the existing buildings were built prior to 1960.

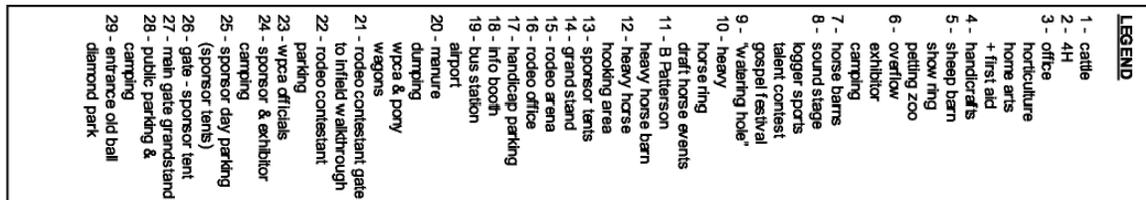
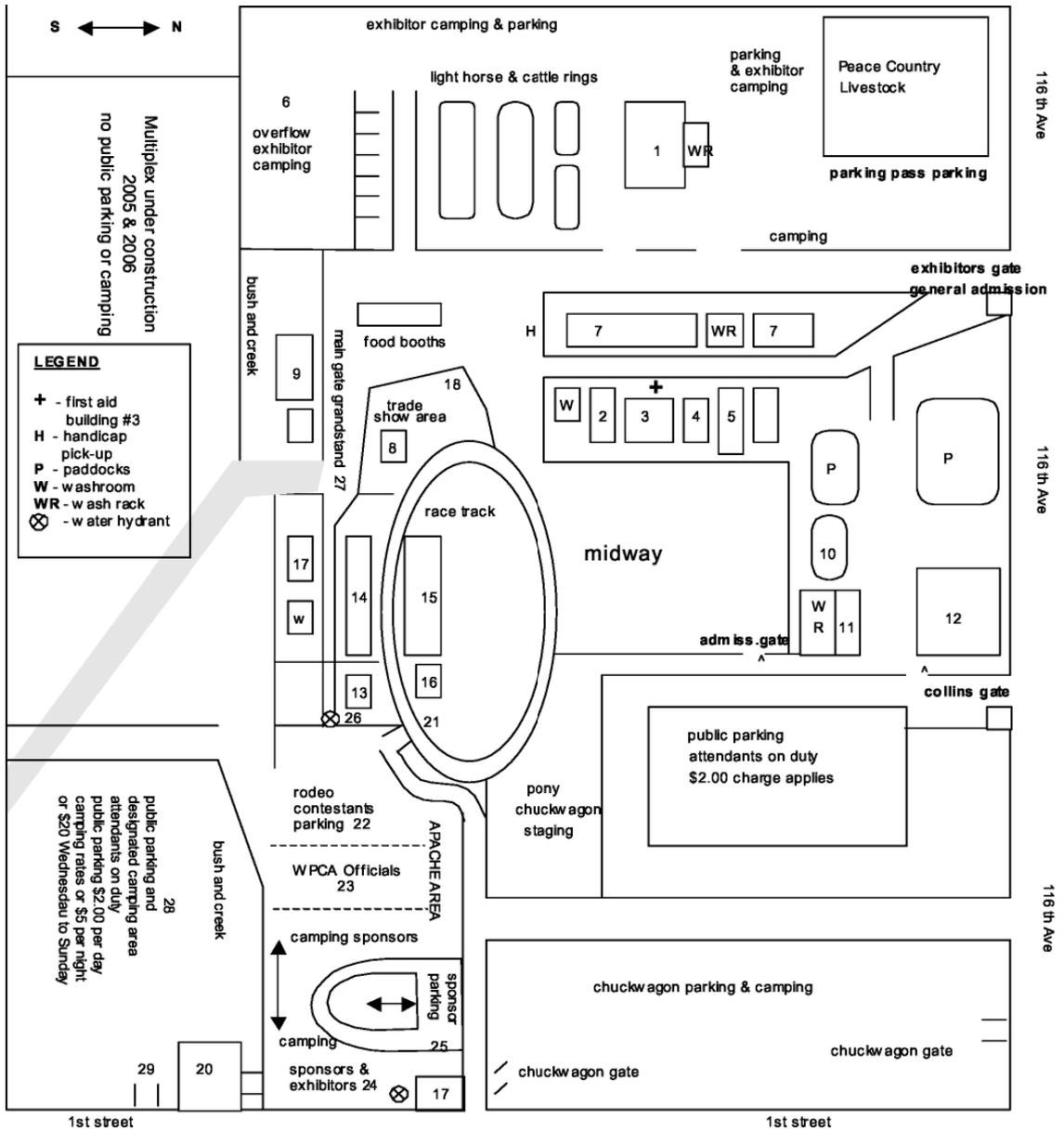
There were two main grounds-related issues that needed to be reviewed. The first issue was that the age and condition of the facilities has lead to speculation that there may be health and safety issues for people attending the fairgrounds. The second issue is that the current grandstand is not only old, it also lacks a roof.

The following section reviews the condition of the facilities used by the Dawson Creek Exhibition and Fair. It is important to note that this review consisted of a visual inspection of the buildings and structures immediately prior to the 2005 Fair (Aug 10-14). The review involved a building features checklist intended to provide a cursory assessment of the building's overall condition. The topics assessed were the overall condition, the roof, the ceiling, the interior and exterior walls, the foundation, the floors, the plumbing, the electrical, health concerns and safety issues. (See Appendix A.)

It is important to note, that the facility review included assessing 15 of the main buildings and facilities that are used during the DCE. Smaller facilities that were not being used and facilities that were not permanent, were not assessed as part of this review. It is also noted that no assessments were made of any of the ladies washrooms.

3.2 FACILITIES REVIEW

The Dawson Creek Exhibition Fairground Facilities



Indoor Riding Arena (1)

The Indoor Riding Arena is approximately 10,500 square feet in size. With the City recently undertaking upgrades in 2003, this building is in good shape overall. The metal roof, aluminium soffits, aluminium siding on the exterior walls, plywood and aluminium on the interior walls, cement foundations, and the dirt floor, has resulted in a very functional building. The electrical system includes 20 large incandescent ceiling lights, ceiling heating for standing spectators, and 200-amp service.

4-H Building (2)

The 4-H building is approximately 30 years old and is approximately 3,500 square feet in size. It is in generally good condition. The metal roof and metal exterior walls are both in fair condition, as is the ceiling, with exposed rafters and the painted plywood interior walls. As with the Administration Building, the foundations are failing as the wood foundation has lead to the floor settling. The actual floor is made of plywood on the front third and 2x4's on the edges for the rest. The electrical system appears in fair shape, with bare light bulbs, several outlets, a ceiling fan and two 100-amp panels.

The Office Building (3)

The Administration Building that is used by the Dawson Creek and District Exhibition Society was purchased second hand by the DCE Association approximately 15 years ago. It is approximately 4,500 square feet and is in fair condition overall. The outside of the building remains in good shape. The roof along with the outside walls, which have new metal siding, both appear to be in good condition. Overall, the inside of the building looks in adequate shape, as the drywall on both the ceiling and the interior walls appear to be adequate. Structurally, the foundations are in poor condition, as the floors along the central corridor floor are heaving. The floor coverings (linoleum and carpets) are also in poor condition. The electrical and lighting systems appear to be modest but adequate.

Handicrafts Building (4)

The Handicrafts Building is approximately 1,650 square feet in size and, being built in the late 1990's, is in overall good condition. There was a renovation to the interior in 2003 that has updated the building. The roof and interior and exterior walls are all made of metal and are in good condition. The ceiling, which is drywall, is in fair condition, and the concrete foundation and asphalt flooring are both in good condition. The electrical system appears to be in good condition, with two rows of fluorescent lighting, a ceiling fan, and a 200-amp panel. The front of the building is fenced with a lean-to shed on the side.

Sheep Barn (5)

The Llama Barn, which is twelve years old, is approximately 7,200 square feet in size and is in overall fair condition. The roof and the exterior walls are both metal, with the walls unpainted. The ceiling has exposed rafters and the interior walls are made of siding boards, and are both in fair condition. The foundation and the floors both appear to be in poor condition, as the foundations are wood and the floors are dirt. There is electricity in this barn, but no water.

Horse Stables (7)

The Horse Stables, which are 48 years old, consist of seven separate buildings that are all approximately 1,950 square feet each in size. Each building has 15 stalls of approximately 110 square feet, plus a tack room. These buildings are all old and in generally fair condition. The roofs, which are metal, and the ceilings with exposed rafters, are both in fair shape. However, the interior/exterior walls and the foundations are all in very poor shape. The exterior walls are made of painted particleboard that is very worn. The interior walls are all made of 2x4s, exposing the backside of the exterior panelling. The foundations are made of wood, and due to the age of the buildings, is susceptible to rot. The floors appear to be in fair shape.

The horse stables have both poor plumbing and electrical installations. The plumbing consists of only a small horse trough and tap. The electrical system has eight bare light bulbs operating from a small panel (likely 50 amps) and only one outlet. There is one hand washing station situated between the middle buildings.

An issue for the society regarding the horse stables is that individuals use the horse stables for ten months of the year. These individuals are to have their horses vacated by June 30 for fair preparation. In many cases, this does not occur.

Horse Wash Building

The horse wash building is relatively recent, being built in 1981. It is approximately 1,350 square feet in size, appears functional, and is in overall fair condition. The metal roof and metal siding on the exterior are both in good shape. The ceiling has exposed rafters and is in fair condition. The interior walls are in poor condition as they are surfaced in arborite and are showing their age. Both the foundation and the floor are in good shape as they are concrete.

The plumbing is in fair shape with hoses in the horse wash rack and showers and toilets in the washrooms. The men's washroom consists of two urinals, three toilets, one shower, and two sinks. This facility is old, tired and lacks ventilation.

Washroom Building

The main washroom building, which is 10 years old, is approximately 1,500 square feet in size and is in good condition overall. The roof and exterior walls are made of metal and are both in good condition. The ceiling is drywall and is in fair condition. The interior walls are made of a drywall type material and are also in fair condition. The foundation and floor that are both wood are in fair condition as well. The plumbing in the men's washroom consists of five urinals, two toilets, and five sinks that all appear to be in good condition. The electrical includes seven fluorescent fixtures and is in good condition as well.

It was only possible to assess the men's washroom facilities. It is assumed that the ladies washroom is in similar condition to the men's.

Food Concessions

There are 4 food concession stands, which range from 25 years old to being newly renovated, and are all approximately 720 square feet in size. They each have an outside area that can accommodate approximately 4 picnic tables. Overall, each of the concessions is in fair shape. They are modest shell type buildings, with two of them having covered roofs for the picnic table area. The roofs are metal, the ceilings all have exposed rafters, the exterior walls are plywood, and the interior walls are the backside of the exterior plywood, and are all in fair shape. The foundations are wood and are in poor condition as are the particleboard floors.

The plumbing appears fair, with all concession buildings having water taps. The electrical also appears fair, with all concessions having bare light bulbs for lighting and propane for the grills.

The DCE has contracts with all concession operators, which include food safe certificates, liability insurance, and health certificates from the Health Unit.

The Watering Hole (Main Beer Gardens) (9)

The Watering Hole is an outdoor area that is approximately 12,000 square feet in size that has a seating capacity of approximately 1,000 people. It is a fenced off area that consists of approximately 25 picnic tables, a band shell that is twelve years old, a small 15 year old concession stand for selling beer, a plywood washroom building, and a couple of portable washrooms.

The overall condition of these facilities is poor. The band shell is approximately 240 square feet. The roof on the band shell appears to be in fair shape and there is a portable tent that covers the dance floor. The ceiling, interior, and exterior walls of the band shell are all plywood and the dance area in front of the band shell is paved.

The concession stand is in overall poor condition as well. The roof, ceiling and interior/exterior walls are all made of plywood and are in poor condition.

The plywood washroom building (men's) consists of outhouse style "toilets" and PVC pipe urinals, and is in very poor condition. There is no running water and there is only a hand washing station located outside of the building.

Grandstand Beer Garden

The beer garden, which is fifteen years old, is approximately 1,500 square feet in size and is located in a fenced off area inside the grandstand grounds. The gardens area includes a small building for selling beer, a few tables, a small bleacher, and can accommodate approximately 200 people.

The overall condition of this beer garden is fair. The building is an adequate concession-style building, which has a metal roof, an open rafter ceiling, particle board exterior walls, a wood foundation, and a wood floor. There is a small asphalt dance floor connected to a 200 square foot band shell that is five years old.

A portion of the grandstand is also used as a beer garden. The far eastern section of the grandstand is licensed and can accommodate approximately 800 people.

The Grandstand Concession

The concession stand behind the grandstand is 20 years old, approximately 720 square feet in size, and is similar to the ones located outside the grandstand. Although it is in fair shape, the roof over hang that covers the eating area is very low, and may be a safety hazard.

The Grandstand Washroom

Located behind the grandstand, this washroom building is a permanent men's and ladies washroom. It is approximately 700 square feet in size and is fifteen years old. The men's washroom has three urinals, one toilet, and one sink. This washroom facility is in fair shape overall. There is lighting in each washroom and the plumbing appears to be adequate.

As with the main washroom building, it was only possible to assess the men's washroom facilities. It is assumed that the ladies washroom is in similar condition to the men's.

The Race Track

The racetrack was first built in 1956 and the overall condition of the racetrack is reported to be very good. There is a good track surface and a large infield with good paddocks. There are some outhouses in the infield and lights surrounding the rodeo area.

An issue on concern with the current infield is that the gates on the animal pens need to open flat and do not currently do so. This is a safety issue for the animals and the riders. It was also reported that the gates need to be moved back approximately 10-15 feet to enlarge the rodeo area.

The Grandstand (14)

The grandstand is approximately 36,000 square feet in size and can hold up to approximately 4,000 people. The grandstand was first built in 1956 and was upgraded to a steel structure in 1985 with wood seats. It is functional and in fair condition overall. The seating area is supported by a tubular steel structure that has a foundation of steel railway rails. The actual seats are made of 2x8 planks without backrests. There is limited handicapped seating and there are three entrances in the middle of the stands, as well as access at the bottom of the stands at either end. There is currently no roof structure on the grandstand.

Table 3-1: Facilities Assessment Summary

Building (Map No.)	Overall Condition	Roof	Ceiling	Walls		Foundation	Floor	Plumbing	Electrical	Health Issues*		
				Exterior	Interior					Animals	Humans	Ventilation
Indoor Riding Arena (1)	G	G	G	G	G	G	G	F	G	G	G	NA
4-H Building (2)	F	F	F	F	F	P	F	NONE	F	G	G	G
Office Building (3)	F	G	G	G	G	P	P	NONE	F	NA	F	F
Handicrafts Building (4)	G	G	F	G	G	G	G	NA	G	NA	G	NA
Sheep Barn (5)	F	F	F	F	F	P	P	NONE	F	F	F	F
Horse Stables (7)	F	F	F	P	P	P	F	P	P	F	F	F
Horse Wash Building	F	G	F	G	P	G	G	F	P	G	P	P
The Watering Hole (9)	P	F	P	P	P	P	P	P	F	NA	F	NA
Washroom Building	G	G	F	G	F	F	F	G	G	NA	G	P
Food Concession	F	F	F	F	F	P	F	F	F	NA	F	F
Grandstand Beer Garden	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA
The Race Track	G	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	G	NA	NA	F	NA	NA
The Grandstand (14)	F	NA	NA	NA	NA	F	F	NA	NA	NA	G	NA
The GS Concession	F	F	F	F	F	P	F	F	F	NA	F	F
The GS Washroom	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	NA	F	P

Notes:

1. Legend: G = Good, F = Fair, P = Poor, NA = Not Applicable
2. *Health issues such as sanitary conditions for humans and animals were assessed, as well as the amount of ventilation that existed.
3. **Management from the DCE Association provided information that all facilities and buildings that were used during the DCE had appropriate fire extinguishers.

3.3 FACILITY SUMMARY

There are a number of individual buildings located on the DCE fairgrounds and they are in various states of repair. Time and wear and tear have resulted in some facilities being in worse shape than others.

The Indoor Riding Arena, being the most current of the buildings, is by far in the best condition of all of the facilities. The racetrack itself is also in very good condition overall. The Handicrafts building and the Main Washroom building, although older, are in adequate shape as well.

The remainder of the facilities appear to be in fair shape, although most have some structural issues that need to be addressed. For instance, although the Administration building has some adequate components like the roof, ceiling and walls, the foundation and flooring are in poor shape. The facilities that appear to need the most attention are the Grandstand Beer Garden and Grandstand Washrooms, the Concession Stands, the Horse Stables, and the Watering Hole beer gardens.

4.0 COMPARABLE EXHIBITIONS

An important step in an operational review is to obtain information from other comparable events. This is intended to guide the analysis by illustrating strengths and weaknesses, and operational successes and failures that other events have experienced or are experiencing. This section contains a description of four exhibitions that have some similarities to the DCE and that are on the chuckwagon and pro rodeo circuit, all located in Alberta.

A variety of information was obtained on each of these exhibitions and used for comparison. This included event management, staffing, facilities, attendance, revenues, admission fees, any measured economic impacts, concerns/issues with hosting the event, success factors, and a vision for the next 5-10 years. Described below are the exhibitions staged in Grande Prairie, Ponoka, Strathmore, and Drumheller, each compared to the DCE.

4.1 DESCRIPTION OF EXHIBITIONS

The **Grande Prairie Stompede** took place from June 1 to June 5, 2005 (5 days) and has been in existence since 1977. The event occurs over five days with two half-day events, and includes the WPCA and CPRA competitions. It also includes a midway, BBQ, tarp auction, wagon train, and numerous community events. The Grande Prairie Stompede has been associated with WPCA since the exhibition began in 1977, while it has been associated with the CPRA since 1993.

The **Ponoka Stampede** took place from June 28 to July 3, 2005 (6 days) and has been in existence since 1936. This exhibition is a six-day event featuring the WPCA and CPRA. The exhibition also includes a beer garden, farmers markets, a midway, agricultural exhibits, fireworks, and a number of music concerts. It positions itself as a stampede that offers events true to western Canadian rodeo heritage. The Ponoka stampede has been associated with the WPCA since its inception in 1987, while it has been associated with the CPRA since the rodeo's inception.

The **Strathmore Heritage Days** took place from July 28 to August 1, 2005 (5 days) and has been in existence since 1980. The event incorporates children's entertainment, local entertainment stage, craft show, country fair, livestock show, beer gardens, an outdoor family entertainment ring, trade show, parade, midway and rodeo. It also includes the Pro Rodeo and Chuckwagon racing events. Strathmore Heritage Days has been associated with the WPCA since 1997, while it has been associated with the CPRA since 1985.

The **Drumheller Badlands Dinosaur Derby** took place from August 5 to August 7, 2005 (3 days) and has been in existence since 2001. Included in this three-day event are the WPCA and CPRA events, along with a tarp auction, dance, and agricultural exhibits. The Drumheller Badlands Dinosaur Derby has been associated with the WPCA and the CPRA since its inception.

4.2 DESCRIPTION OF ISSUES

Event Management

All four of the comparable exhibitions are run by non-profit organizations that are overseen by a board of directors. Two of the events - the Grande Prairie Stompede and the Ponoka Stampede - have 14 members on the board of directors, while the Strathmore Heritage Days has 12 members, and the Drumheller Dinosaur Derby has only 4 members on its board.

Three out of the four comparables reported that no specific agencies are represented on their board. The directors are usually individuals from the community, such as business people, ranchers, and/or farmers. In addition to these local individuals, the Strathmore and District Agricultural Society also includes two city councillors on their board as well.

Table 4-1: Event Management

Event Name	Who runs the event?	Is it a non-profit agency?	Is there a board of Directors?	How many directors on the board?
Grande Prairie Stompede	Grande Prairie Stompede Committee	Yes	Yes	14
Ponoka Stampede	Ponoka Stampede Association	Yes	Yes	14
Strathmore Heritage Days	Strathmore & District Agricultural Society	Yes	Yes	12
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby	Drumheller Stampede and Agricultural Society	Yes	Yes	4
<i>Dawson Creek Exhibition</i>	<i>Dawson Creek Exhibition Association</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>6</i>

Population and Event Attendance

The four comparables have a wide spread in both population and attendance. Grande Prairie has the highest population at 40,226, while Ponoka has the smallest population at 6,330. However, they both have a relatively large surrounding population, with Grande Prairie drawing on an additional 200,000 people while Ponoka draws on an additional 100,000 people. The remaining two comparables, Strathmore and Drumheller have city populations of 9,115 and 7,800 respectively, while they both draw on an additional 30,000 people from their surrounding areas.

The population/attendance ratio is an index intended to measure the relative success of the gate against the size of the host community. Ponoka has the smallest population and the highest attendance, with a population/attendance ratio of over 10 to 1. Also of note, the Ponoka Stampede has been around the longest of these comparable exhibitions and they have the longest event at six days.

Table 4-2: Comparable Events Population and Attendance

Event	City Population*	Surrounding Population**	2005 Paid Attendance	Event Duration (days)	Population/Attendance Ratio
Grande Prairie Stompede	40,226	100,000	26,000	5	0.6
Ponoka Stampede	6,330	100,000	64,500	6	10.2
Strathmore Heritage Days	9,115	30,000	35,000	5	3.8
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby	7,800	30,000	4,000	3	0.5
Dawson Creek Exhibition	11,290***	60,000	17,771	5	1.6

* Albertafirst.com/Community Profiles: 2004 Figures

** Estimated from Exhibition representatives. These figures likely overlap.

*** <http://www.bcstats.gov.bc.ca/data/dd/facsheet/CF262.pdf>

It is important to note that the DCE has been growing in attendance over the last few years. Attendance has increased from just over 12,300 in 2003 to over 17,700 in 2005.

<u>Year</u>	<u>DCE Attendance</u>
2005	17,771
2004	16,325
2003	12,322

Tourist/Local Split

The percentage split between tourists and locals was also evaluated for these events. Overall, all four of these events have similar ratios of approximately 70% tourists and 30% locals. Noteworthy is the much lower tourist proportion (44%) at the DCE.

Table 4-3: Tourist/Local Split

Event	Tourist Proportion	Local Proportion
Grande Prairie Stompede	65%	35%
Ponoka Stampede	75%	25%
Strathmore Heritage Days	60%	40%
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby	80%	20%
Average	70%	30%
<i>Dawson Creek Exhibition</i>	<i>44%</i>	<i>56%</i>

Staffing

All four of the comparable events share similar trends for their staffing levels. The most obvious factor is their reliance on volunteers to run the events. Three of the four events rely on an average of over 600 volunteers to make their events successful. Like the other three, Drumheller also relies on volunteers, however, due to their relative newness and their lower attendance, they only utilize approximately 30 volunteers.

Two of the events - the Ponoka Stampede and the Strathmore Heritage Days - have two full time paid staff who work year round. The Ponoka Stampede has an additional two part time staff that work year round, while the Strathmore Heritage Days has approximately four-five part-timers who work year round. The Strathmore Heritage Days also adds an additional 10-11 part-timers during the event itself.

The Ponoka Stampede reported that their paid staff consists of one secretary, one full time and two part time grounds keepers.

Consistent in all these events are the modest numbers of full time staff and large numbers of volunteers, suggesting that it would be impossible to run an event without the aid of a strong volunteer base.

Table 4-4: Staffing

Event	No. of Full Time Staff		No. of Part Time Staff		No. of Volunteers	
	Year Round	During Event	Year Round	During Event	Year Round	During Event
Grande Prairie Stompede	0	0	0	0	14	800
Ponoka Stampede	2	Same 2	2	Same 2	Varied	700
Strathmore Heritage Days	2	Same 2	4-5	10-11	Varied	400
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby	0	0	1	1	Varied	30
<i>Dawson Creek Exhibiton</i>	0	7	0	0	36	550

Facilities

Although all four of the comparable exhibitions have dedicated fairgrounds for their events, only three of the four have a dedicated grandstand. The Drumheller Dinosaur Derby does not have a grandstand and relies on bleacher seating for their event.

The remaining three comparables all have a dedicated roofed grandstand. The average seating for the three grandstands is 4,900 seats, with Ponoka having the largest of the grandstands (6,500) and Grande Prairie having the smallest (4,000). In the case of Ponoka, they also have a second smaller grandstand at the bucking chutes that can hold up to 900 people.

Representatives of the comparables were also asked about any future expansion plans they have for their grandstands or facilities. The Grande Prairie Stompede reported that they will be working on an expansion of their grandstands, taking place over the next four years. The Ponoka Stampede has just finished renovating both of their grandstands and has no further plans. Although the Strathmore Heritage Days reported no direct expansion of their grandstand, they are planning on moving their entire site over the next one to three years. The Drumheller Stampede and Agricultural Society is looking to build a dedicated grandstand, but financing has not been secured.

Table 4-5: Facilities

Event	Dedicated Fairground?	Size (Acres)	Grandstand?	Size of Grandstand? (seats)	Grandstand Roofed?	Other Seating	Total Seating
Grande Prairie Stompede	Yes	50	Yes	4,000	Yes	Yes	4,000+
Ponoka Stampede	Yes	70	Yes	6,500	Yes	1,900	8,400
Strathmore Heritage Days	Yes	100	Yes	4,200	Yes	3,000	7,200
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby	Yes	160	No	No Grandstand	No Grandstand	1,100	1,100
<i>Dawson Creek Exhibition</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>80</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>4,000</i>	<i>No</i>	<i>Yes</i>	<i>3500+</i>

The Grande Prairie Stompede, the Ponoka Stampede, and Strathmore Heritage Days all have other facilities on their grounds for their events. These include barns, agricultural buildings offices, meeting rooms, food booths, washrooms, and a campground. They all utilize portable tents and washrooms for their events as well.

The Drumheller Badlands Dinosaur Derby has one building, called the “barn” that houses all of the events. This includes the dance, washrooms, and beer gardens. They also bring in portable toilets for the event.

Admission Rates

One of the biggest differences among the comparables is their admission charges. There is no set standard and each event has their own pricing strategy. They range from a very simple pricing strategy for the Strathmore Heritage Days and Ponoka Stampede up to a more complex pricing structure for the Grande Prairie Stompede. The following is a description of the four pricing structures.

Grande Prairie Stompede:

Day Pass – Thursday

Family \$35

2 Adults –2 Children (17 and under)

Day Pass – Friday and Sunday

Family \$50

2 Adults –2 Children (17 and under)

Day Pass – Friday and Sunday

Adults \$18, Children (12 and under) \$13, and Seniors (65+) \$13

Weekend Pass – Friday and Sunday

Adults \$55, Children (12 and under) \$40, and Seniors (65+) \$40

Wagon Pass – Wednesday

Adults \$5, Children (12 and under) \$free, and Seniors (65+) free

Wagon Pass – Thursday to Sunday

Adults \$12, Children (12 and under) \$10, and Seniors (65+) \$10

Rodeo Pass – Friday to Sunday

Adults \$10, Children (12 and under) \$8, and Seniors (65+) \$8

Midway Ground Admission. \$3 Friday June 3rd – midnight madness

Ponoka Stampede:

Adults \$15.00 main grandstands, \$14.00 infield

Children: (12 and under) \$7.00

Adult package: \$155.00, Children: \$101.00

Strathmore Heritage Days:

\$15/per event for grandstand, \$13/per event for rush tickets.

Drumheller Badlands Dinosaur Derby

Event Pass

Rodeo or Chuckwagons

Adult: \$10.00

Youth: (13-17) \$5.00

12 and under free

Family Pass: \$25.00

Day Pass

Rodeo and Chuckwagons

Adult: \$20.00

Youth: (13-17) \$10.00

12 and under free

Family Pass: \$45.00

Weekend Pass

All

Adult: \$45.00

Youth: (13-17) \$20.00

Family Pass: \$80.00

Dawson Creek Exhibition

	ADULTS	7-12 YEARS
Fair/Rodeo/Chuckwagon	\$ 20.00	\$ 10.00
Chuckwagon only (4:00 PM)	\$ 12.00	\$ 8.00
5 Day Weekend Pass	\$ 60.00	\$ 40.00

CHILDREN: Under 6 - All Events Free

	<u>FAIR ONLY</u>	
Adults		\$ 5.00
Children (7 - 12 Years)		\$ 3.00

Although it is difficult to compare the admission rates between the different fairs due to the large range of prices, the following is a comparison of Adult Day Passes.

- Grande Prairie Stompede: \$18
- Ponoka Stampede: \$15
- Strathmore Heritage Days: \$15
- Drumheller Dinosaur Derby: \$20
- *Dawson Creek Exhibition:* \$20

Revenues

The comparable exhibitions cited in this analysis have generated a range of revenues. These range from a low of \$135,000 to a high of \$1.5 million. The Grand Prairie Stompede and Drumheller Dinosaur Derby share similarly low revenues, while the Ponoka Stampede and Strathmore Heritage Days report higher revenues.

The Ponoka Stampede exceeds the Strathmore Heritage Days by \$600,000 and far exceeds the other two exhibitions by approximately \$1.2 million.

With the exception of the Drumheller Dinosaur Derby, the gate revenue exceeds all other revenue combined. In all likelihood, this is because the Dinosaur Derby is only 5 years old and has a small attendance figure compared to the other exhibitions.

The average revenue for the exhibitions in 2004 was approximately \$696,000. The relationship among the categories of revenues was 62% gate revenues and 38% from other sources.

It is noteworthy that the DCE revenue proportions are exactly the reverse of the comparable facility average, with 38% from gate revenue and 62% from other sources.

Table 4-6: Exhibition Revenues

Event	2005 Gate Revenue	Other Revenue	Total Revenue
Grande Prairie Stompede (5 days)	\$150,000	\$100,000	\$250,000
Ponoka Stampede (6 days)	\$850,000	\$650,000	\$1,500,000
Strathmore Heritage Days (5 days)	\$700,000	\$200,000	\$900,000
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby (3 days)	\$28,000	\$107,000	\$135,000
Average Total	\$425,007	264,250	\$696,250
Percentage Average	62%	38%	100%
<i>Dawson Creek Exhibition Total (5 days)</i>	<i>\$175,329</i>	<i>\$290,150</i>	<i>\$465,479</i>
<i>Dawson Creek Exhibition Average</i>	<i>38%</i>	<i>62%</i>	<i>100%</i>

Measured Economic Impact

Attempts were made to determine the measured economic impact of each event on the host communities. Out of the four comparables, no organization had ever done a formal economic impact study. However, some of the comparables were able to offer anecdotal information on the economic impacts of their events.

The Grande Prairie Stompede said that, although no study has been conducted for their event, the amount of money coming into the city is “incredible”. As this is a large community event, all hotels are full during the event, restaurants are at their busiest, and big box stores and local businesses have their busiest time of the year during the Stompede.

The Ponoka Stampede committee believed that an estimated \$3 million is brought into the city’s economy during the six days of the stampede. Representatives of the Strathmore Heritage Days indicated the event brings in approximately \$2 million dollars into the city. The Drumheller Stampede and Agricultural Society was unsure how much money was brought into the city during the event.

Biggest Concerns/Issues in Hosting the Event

Representatives of the comparable events were all asked what their biggest concerns/issues are with hosting their event. The following are their responses.

Event	Concerns/Issues in hosting the event
Grande Prairie Stompede	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Insurance Liability...the opportunity for incidents to happen is great. You need to have the appropriate insurance in place. • Controlling traffic and pedestrians. • Trying to attract the right type of people. (Western culture and family oriented) • Weather is always a major concern. • Making sure sponsorship money is all in place prior to the start of the event. If sponsorship money is not collected and it rains, gate revenues will be down. • There is a very fine line between having paid staff and volunteers in a non-profit organization. (They pay a per diem to volunteer organizations.)
Ponoka Stampede	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security...they have had to bring in paid staff for the beer gardens due to security issues and liquor license requirements.
Strathmore Heritage Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Weather...huge negative impacts for the event. • Incorporate the correct type of entertainment venues... “they need to be western”. • Do not fragment sponsorship...make sure that the recognition offered to sponsors is consistent. • Routing...make sure to work with other events to save on costs...Try to have suppliers work weekend to weekend to save on travelling costs.
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • By far, lack of community support

Success Factors

The comparables were also asked what makes their events successful. The following are their responses.

Event	Success Factors
Grande Prairie Stompede	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “We’re the stompede”...if the crops are in they will have a successful event. If they are not, it affects attendance. • People in and around GP are hungry for entertainment. • Pre-sales of tickets is very important to the success of the event.
Ponoka Stampede	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Free camping and parking...this entices many visitors. • The event is a traditional western heritage rodeo. (They have stayed away from anything that is not traditional. e.g. motorcycle exhibits.) • Very low ticket prices. • The grandstands allow visitors to be right in the action. (There is no track around the ring.)
Strathmore Heritage Days	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Chuckwagons help make it successful. • Catering to all demographics...but especially attracting young children...they implemented bike give-aways, which brought more children in, which in turn brought more adults in. • Beer Garden is a large money maker. • Sponsorship is a huge operation...they have hired one person during the event to look after the sponsors... “Treat sponsors like royalty, it will pay off!”
Drumheller Dinosaur Derby	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The draw of the Chuckwagons.

Expansion Plans

Each of the four comparable events was asked “Where do you see yourselves in 5-10 years?” The following is a summary of their responses.

The Grande Prairie Stompede Committee is trying to expand their events. They would like to see their Chuckwagon event go to six days and their rodeo event move to four days.

The Ponoka Stampede Association has just completed a \$3 million indoor riding ring. They would like to move towards a purse of over \$1 million and extend the rodeo to a full 10-day event.

The Strathmore and District Agricultural Society is moving the Strathmore Heritage Days to new grounds over the next one to three years. They would like to get partners involved in running the events and to make it a world-class rodeo, and are always looking into continued expansion.

The Drumheller Stampede and Agricultural Society would like a complete renovation of their seating area. This would include adding a grandstand with a roof, which would only occur if money permits.

5.0 ECONOMIC IMPACT ANALYSIS

One hundred and eighty two spectators and seventeen competitors were interviewed as part of this study. Virtually all of these spectators and competitors indicated they spent some money to attend the event. These survey respondents were asked how much money they spent or expected to spend while attending the DCE. Respondents were asked to allocate their spending by category and to provide the total. The following is a summary of the responses.

5.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

Spectators: The number of spectators attending the DCE was obtained from the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association. Total spending was estimated by interviewing a sample of spectators and surveying them about their exhibition related expenditures. In order to capture a representative sample of spectators, interviewers were stationed inside the fairgrounds, as well as inside the grandstand area, from Friday to Sunday. A total of 182 questionnaires were completed, representing approximately 3% of the total spectators. This sample size is considered accurate to within +/-7.5%. (See Appendix B for questionnaire)

Average spending was calculated from this spectator survey sample and was multiplied by the total number of unique individuals to obtain total spending. A unique individual is determined by dividing the total number of tickets sold by the average number of days an individual attended the exhibition. An estimated total of 6,835 unique individuals attended the Exhibition.

Competitors: Average spending was also estimated for competitors as well. However, with a small sample of only 17, and expenditures varying significantly between Chuckwagon/Rodeo competitors and Exhibit competitors, the average expenditures produced were not considered to be reliable. Consequently, an anecdotal analysis on competitor expenditures is provided using information collected from the limited number of surveys, as well as from interviews conducted with competitors.

5.2 SPECTATOR CHARACTERISTICS

As noted in Section 5.1, spectators were queried on information descriptive of them and of their trip to the DCE. These spectator characteristics are described below:

Spectator Origin (Dawson Creek vs. non-Dawson Creek)

The spectator attendance was slightly higher for those living in Dawson Creek (56%), compared to those living outside of Dawson Creek (44%).

Visitors to Dawson Creek – Area of Origin

The vast majority of DCE spectators were from British Columbia or Alberta. The majority of non-Dawson Creek visitors originated from Alberta's North Peace region (46%), followed by BC's North Peace Region (26%). The distribution of area of origin was as follows:

Table 5-1: Non Dawson Creek Visitors – Area of Origin

Country of Origin	Total Spectators
North Peace Region – Alberta*	46%
North Peace Region – BC**	26%
Northern BC	16%
Other BC	6%
Other Alberta	3%
Other	3%
Total	100%

Source: DCE Spectator Survey

Notes: * Northwestern Alberta, including Grande Prairie, High Prairie and Peace River.

**Peace River Regional District

Reason for being in Dawson Creek

Of the out of town spectators, 91% were in Dawson Creek solely to attend the DCE. The remaining 9% were already in Dawson Creek and arranged to watch the event while in town.

Days at the Dawson Creek Exhibition and Fair

Overall, Spectators spent an average of 2.6 days at the DCE. Dawson Creek residents spent a slightly higher amount of time at the DCE (2.8 days), while visitors to Dawson Creek spent an average of 2.3 days at the DCE.

It was most common for overall spectators to take in the event for 1 day (31%), while 16% attended all five days of the events. Nearly four out of ten (39%) out of town visitors attended the event for one day, while 25% of Dawson Creek residents attended the DCE for 1 day.

20% of Dawson Creek Residents attended all five days of the event, while only 12% of out of town visitors attended all five days of the DCE.

The high percentages in people attending one, two, or three days of the event, is reflected in larger crowds attending on the weekend.

Table 5-2: Number of Days at the DCE

Number of Days	Percent of Dawson Creek residents who attended	Percent of Visitors who attended	Percent of All Spectators who attended
One	25%	39%	31%
Two	24%	23%	23%
Three	21%	23%	22%
Four	11%	4%	8%
Five	20%	12%	16%
Average	2.8 days	2.3 days	2.6 days

Source: DCE Spectator Survey

Events Attended

On average, the Chuckwagon races (68%) and the Midway (68%) attracted the largest number of spectators during the DCE, followed closely by the Rodeo at 65%, while 64% took in the fireworks and the livestock pavilion. The logging competition had the lowest attendance rating at 18%.

The Chuckwagon races (78%) attracted the largest number of Dawson Creek residents, while watching the fireworks attracted the largest proportion of out of town visitors (74%).

Excluding the Logging Competition, as it had the lowest attendance for any event, watching the parade had the lowest attendance for Dawson Creek residents (30%), while watching music on the outdoor music stage had the lowest attendance for visitors (58%).

The average spectator attended just over four of the events being offered at the DCE.

Table 5-3: Events Attended at the DCE

Event	Percent of Dawson Creek Residents who Attended	Percent of Visitors who Attended	Percent of Overall Spectators who Attended
Chuckwagon Races	78%	60%	68%
Midway	63%	71%	68%
Rodeo	71%	61%	65%
Fireworks	51%	74%	64%
Livestock Pavilion	60%	66%	64%
Outside Music Stage	53%	58%	55%
Parade	30%	72%	53%
Loggers Competition	19%	18%	18%
Other (Beer Garden, Exhibits, Horsepull, Equestrian)	15%	29%	23%
Average	4.3 events	4.5 events	4.4 events

Source: DCE Spectator Survey

5.3 SPECTATOR EXPENDITURES

Distribution of Expenditures

The following chart indicates the distribution of per person spending on a variety of categories.

Table 5-3: Spectator Expenditures by Category

Category	Percentage by Expenditure Group												Avg. Exp.
	\$0	\$1-10	\$11-20	\$21-30	\$31-40	\$41-50	\$51-60	\$61-70	\$71-80	\$81-90	\$91-100	\$101+	
Accommodation	90	4	0	2	1	1	1	1	0	0	0	1	\$5.23
Admission	14	27	23	11	11	2	9	1	2	1	1	0	\$22.09
Auto/Gas	40	30	14	3	7	3	2	0	1	0	1	0	\$11.36
Concession	2	34	28	11	5	6	4	1	3	1	2	3	\$29.58
Gifts	84	7	4	2	2	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	\$3.59
Local Trans.	100	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$0.04
Groceries	94	1	2	2	0	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	\$1.70
Restaurant	77	7	5	4	1	3	0	1	0	0	2	0	\$6.86
Rec./Ent.	88	3	2	2	1	1	1	0	0	0	2	0	\$4.16
Shopping	90	0	3	1	2	2	0	1	1	0	1	2	\$6.12
Other	94	4	1	0	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	\$1.70
Total	0	2.8	10.5	9.9	13.3	7.7	5.5	6.6	4.4	1.1	2.8	35.4	\$92.72

Source: Interviews with 182 Exhibition spectators

Notes:

1. Figures are Row Percentages (i.e., they add to 100% horizontally).
2. Numbers in the Average Expenditure column are the average dollar amounts spent in each expenditure category.

Spectators attending the Exhibition had an average expenditure of **\$92.72**. This figure is based on the following averages of residents and visitors:

- Average spending by visitors \$123.95
- Average spending by Dawson Creek residents \$68.59

Total Expenditures

Applying the average expenditures to the total number of spectators results in a spectator spending total of **\$633,741** (i.e., \$92.72 x 6,835). This is based on the number of tickets sold divided by the average number of days attended by each individual, as follows:

Number of tickets sold:	<u>17,771</u>
Average days attended:	2.6
Number of unique individuals:	6,835

It is noted that the \$634,000 figure represents direct spending. Indirect and induced economic effects are incremental to these direct impacts and effectively double the overall impact. These estimated economic impacts are tabulated below:

Table 5.4: Dawson Creek Exhibition - Total Economic Impact

Direct	\$634,000
Indirect	\$608,000
Induced	<u>\$77,000</u>
Total	\$1,319,000

Source: Economic Planning Group estimates

Notes:

- **Direct impacts** measure the change in provincial economic activity resulting from the initial expenditures made at the DCE. This includes the actual expenditures made by the persons attending the event.
- **Indirect impacts** measure the change in provincial economic activity generated by the event within sectors that supply goods and services used in the direct activities. This includes businesses that sell to the DCE and to the companies that supply services to visitors.
- **Induced impacts** measure the effect of more income accruing as wages and salaries. It reflects the salaries paid to persons working at the DCE and persons working in businesses that cater to visitors to Dawson Creek.

Distribution of Spectator Spending

Spectators spent money on a variety of items within a number of expenditure categories. Concessions, admissions and automobile/gas were the biggest expenditure categories, responsible for nearly 70% of the total. Restaurant expenses accounted for about 7% of expenditures, while accommodation and shopping accounted for an additional 6% each of spending.

Complete distribution of the \$633,741 total was calculated as follows.

Table 5-4: Distribution of Spectator Expenditures

Expenditure Category	Average Amount Spent	Distribution	Expenditure by Category
Accommodation	\$5.23	0.06	\$38,024
Admission	\$22.09	0.24	\$152,098
Automobile/Gas	\$11.36	0.13	\$82,386
Concession	\$29.58	0.31	\$196,460
Gifts	\$3.59	0.04	\$25,350
Local Transportation	\$0.04	0.00	\$0
Groceries	\$1.70	0.02	\$12,675
Restaurant	\$6.86	0.07	\$44,362
Recreation/Entertainment.	\$4.16	0.05	\$31,687
Shopping	\$6.12	0.06	\$38,024
Other	\$1.70	0.02	\$12,675
Total	\$92.72	1.00	\$633,741

Of note are the changes that occur in each category when the surveys that included a zero in a category were eliminated from the analysis. The most significant changes are in accommodation, groceries, restaurants, gifts and shopping, reflecting the spending of out of town spectators. The table below provides a comparison of each category with the zero responses taken out of the analysis

Also of interest, were the spending averages of those people who actually spent money within a particular category. (The tally on the previous page includes all those persons who spent nothing in order to calculate an accurate average spending.) The table below provides a comparison of each category with the zero responses taken out of the analysis.

By way of illustration, the accommodation amount of \$5.23 is the average of all respondents, even those who did not stay overnight. The \$49.84 figure for accommodation is the average for those who did stay overnight (i.e. spent something on accommodation.)

Table 5-5: Average Expenditures for all Respondents versus Average Expenditures for those who actually spent money in each category

Expenditure Category	Average Amount Spent	Average Amount Spent (Excluding 0's)
Accommodation	\$5.23	\$49.84
Admission	\$22.09	\$25.80
Automobile/Gas	\$11.36	\$18.93
Concession	\$29.58	\$30.25
Gifts	\$3.59	\$22.41
Local Transportation	\$0.04	\$7.00*
Groceries	\$1.70	\$27.91
Restaurant	\$6.86	\$29.40
Recreation/Entertainment.	\$4.16	\$35.86
Shopping	\$6.12	\$61.22
Other	\$1.70	\$13.30

*One person only

5.4 COMPETITOR EXPENDITURES

As part of the analysis process, attempts were made to survey a sample of competitors. However, given the nature of the event, accessing competitors was difficult, and only seventeen competitor surveys were completed. Competitors included Chuckwagon drivers, Pony Chuckwagon drivers, Outriders, Rodeo participants, and Exhibitors. With a small survey sample, it was not statistically reliable to include competitor expenditure averages as part of this analysis. However, important anecdotal expenditure information was gleaned from surveying these competitors.

The competitor group that appears to spend the least amount of money was the Exhibitors. In most cases, Exhibitors listed concessions as their main expenditures. As most of the exhibitors would have originated from Dawson Creek or the region, there were no other large expenditures necessary, (such as accommodation). As exhibitors were working during the fair, there was also little time to take in any other events. If they were to take in an event, it is likely that they purchased tickets for either the Rodeo or the Chuckwagon races. It appears that Exhibitor expenditures are very similar to a spectator's expenditures who lived in Dawson Creek

Competitors taking part in the Rodeo appear to have similar expenditures as out of town spectators. However, in many cases the Rodeo participants seemed to utilize the camping grounds that were provided. Remaining expenditures included groceries, concession stands, and eating out at restaurants.

The competitor group that seemed to have the highest expenditures were the Chuckwagon Teams, which includes outriders, and in many cases, family members of the wagon driver. It was noted that some teams travelled with as little as three crew members, while other teams had between 5-10 crew, including family members and hired staff. Chuckwagon teams come in two groups, full Chuckwagon Teams and Pony Chuckwagon Teams.

An opportunity arose to interview one of the Chuckwagon drivers who ran his own team. He was queried on his team's expenditures. This competitor originated from Northern Alberta and was in Dawson Creek for a total of seven days, accompanied by two other team members. He reported that restaurants meals were his main expenditure, with retail shopping and groceries following. Combined for the 7 days, it was estimated that his team would spend approximately \$4,000 in the Dawson Creek area.

Other Chuckwagon drivers, with larger crews reported spending as little as \$750 for a five day duration. One large difference was that some teams have already pre-purchased their groceries and do not go out for any restaurant meals in Dawson Creek. Gas bills are also significantly different, depending on where a team originates.

A number of Pony chuck drivers were interviewed as well. It appeared that their expenses, although similar in nature, were not as high as a full Chuckwagon teams. From

the limited number of surveys, it appears that Pony Chuckwagon teams tend to spend approximately \$750-\$1,250 for the duration of the event.

From the limited number of surveys completed, as well as interviewing drivers, it is evident that competitor expenditures can vary greatly from a range of \$750-\$4500. Factors such as distance travelled, number of people in each team, purchasing goods prior to coming to town, and eating at restaurants or not, make it difficult to determine an average expenditure figure for this competitor category.

With 36 Chuckwagon teams, several Pony Chuckwagon teams, dozens of rodeo participants, and a large number of exhibitors, it is evident that competitors play a large role in the economic impact of the DCE.

6.0 VISITOR SATISFACTION

As part of this economic impact study, analysis was undertaken on visitor satisfaction. The focus was on selecting a range of respondents from both Dawson Creek and from out of town. A total of 182 Visitor Satisfaction surveys were completed for the Spectators and 17 were completed for the competitors. As the number of surveys for the competitors was limited, the competitor analysis relies on competitor comments provided verbally to the interviewers.

6.1 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROCESS

As mentioned above, the technique used to evaluate respondent's level of satisfaction with the DCE was a satisfaction survey. Respondents were asked to rate a number of factors such as the DCE facilities, admission charges, events offered, and their overall experience. The questions asked respondents to rate their level of satisfaction on a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 indicated a low level of satisfaction and 7 a high level of satisfaction. If respondents offered a sub par rating (i.e., less than "three"), they were then queried as to why, and how the DCE Association could make improvements.

6.2 EVALUATION OF ISSUES

The following table outlines the average responses given to the DCE visitor satisfaction survey:

Table 6-1: Visitor Satisfaction by Category

Category	Level of Satisfaction							Avg.
	Low	1	2	3	4	5	6	
Fairgrounds	0	0	2	6	22	33	38	6.0
Grandstand	2	1	16	10	23	28	21	5.2
Event Parking	9	4	18	19	12	18	22	4.6
Food Concessions	0	1	1	3	19	38	39	6.1
Washrooms	1	0	5	7	23	36	30	5.7
Midway	0	0	4	16	32	26	22	5.9
Agricultural Displays	0	0	4	4	23	27	43	6.0
Gate Adim Charge	4	1	8	13	13	27	35	5.5
Rodeo Admin Charge	4	2	10	14	16	29	26	5.3
Chuckwagon Admin Charge	4	1	10	11	17	30	27	5.4
Rodeo Event	0	0	4	1	10	27	58	6.4
Chuckwagon Races	0	0	1	2	6	25	67	6.6
Overall Value for Money	1	0	2	5	22	32	37	5.9
Overall Cleanliness	0	1	0	3	22	45	30	6.0
Variety of things to do	0	0	1	3	15	46	35	6.1
Evening performance	1	0	0	3	11	39	46	6.2
Watering Hole	3	0	1	6	13	32	46	6.0
Other	0	0	0	0	7	21	71	6.6
Average	1.6	0.6	4.8	7.0	13.9	31.1	39.0	5.7

Source: Interviews with 182 Exhibition spectators

Note: Figures are Row Percentages (i.e., they add to 100% horizontally). Numbers may vary slightly due to rounding.

Generally, respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the services and facilities of the DCE. The scores were in a relatively tight range from about 4.5 to about 6.5. If 4 is considered the average or mid-point in the scale, most ratings are on the positive side. However, the scores indicate that improvements could probably be made in a number of categories. It is important to note that these scores are rating averages and they are comprised of a range of responses. Typically, a few respondents were not at all satisfied (which tended to lower the average), while most respondents were quite satisfied.

Watching the Chuckwagon races (6.6) and the rodeo events (6.4), offered the highest level of satisfaction for the majority of spectators, while the condition of the grandstand (5.2) and event parking (4.6) offered the lowest level of satisfaction.

6.3 VISITOR SATISFACTION COMMENTS

As mentioned above, spectators were queried as to why they gave a rating of less than three on any of their responses. There were a total of 171 questions that received a rating of less than three, representing 5% of the questions that were asked.

Approximately one-third (30%) of the comments that were given a sub par score (<3) focussed on two main complaints. These were about the lack of roof for the grandstand and that the grandstand was not in good condition. A recurring issue was that on an extremely hot day, there is no shade and during inclement weather there is no protection from the rain. Both of these circumstances produced an uncomfortable situation for guests. The majority of people surveyed suggested that they would have scored the grandstand with the highest satisfaction level if there was a roof.

Parking for the event produced just over 30% of the sub par comments. These included distance of parking lots from the venue, lack of parking, lack of shuttle buses, and inadequate seniors parking.

It is interesting to note that the gate admission charge, rodeo event charge, and the chuckwagon admission charge, all received similar satisfaction scores. Although they fell between 5.0 and 5.5, there were a number of comments made about the admission fees (just under 20% of the sub par comments). A number of respondents were not pleased with the fact that you had to pay the gate charge if all you wanted to see were the rodeo and the chuckwagons. Although it was a nominal fee, they felt that this was unfair. They could see that if you had a family that was going to be attending other parts of the exhibition, paying the gate charge was fine. However, if it was just an individual or a couple with rodeo or chuckwagon tickets, they felt they you should be able to by-pass the gate fee.

The remaining comments focussed on such areas as broken rides in the midway, high prices for midway rides, and minors being present in the beer gardens. (See Appendix B for a list of verbatim comments.)

6.4 VISITOR SATISFACTION QUESTIONS

Spectators and competitors were also asked three specific open-ended comment questions. The first was aimed at determining what they like the most, and least about the exhibition. The second comment question was aimed at finding any improvements that could be made to the DCE. The third comment question was general in nature, aimed at collecting any other or additional input from the visitors.

Spectators:

The following table provides a list of the top comments for what is liked most about the DCE:

Table:6-2: What is liked most about the DCE

Category	% of spectators who liked it the most
Chuckwagon Races	31%
Rodeo Events	15%
Community Feeling	10%
Midway	5%
Concession Stands	4%
Cleanliness	3%
Exhibits	3%
Variety of things to do	3%
Parade	1%
Other*	24%

* Other includes categories that only received one response.

The Chuckwagon races (31% of the spectators) were by far the most prevalent answer when asked what was liked most about the DCE, followed by the rodeo events (15%). Overall, people responded with very positive responses towards the DCE. Community spirit was also mentioned a number of times as an area that spectators liked most about the DCE.

When it came to improvements or issues, the three questions produced similar results as the comments from the rating scales. Having no roof on the grandstand, poor parking, and issues with the admission fees were the most prevalent answers for items that are least liked or areas that need improvement.

Competitors:

Overall, competitors seemed very pleased with the DCE. A number of competitors mentioned that they liked the size and quality of the area provided for the competitor's trailers and campers. A number of small issues were raised, which included not having any showers over by the competitors area, not having concession stands close to the competitors area, and not having power in the competitor's area.

(See Appendix C for a list of verbatim comments.)

7.0 ORGANIZATIONAL ANALYSIS

7.1 EXISTING SITUATION

As mention in section 2.1, The Dawson Creek Exhibition and Fair has been taking place in Dawson Creek dating back to 1939. Although there was a disruption of the fair's activities for the next decade due to the Second World War, the fair has only been cancelled once since then in 1964 due to a storm that caused major flooding to the fair grounds. Over the years the fair has grown to become one of the major events, not only for the City of Dawson Creek, but the entire Peace Region.

The Exhibition has evolved to include a number of features and activities including a midway, parade, fireworks, and music performances. However, as mentioned earlier, the major focus is the chuckwagon races and rodeo that are part of a multi-stop chuckwagon and rodeo circuit in BC and Alberta. The World Professional Chuckwagon Association and the Canadian Pro Rodeo Association sanction these events.

Dating back over sixty years, the exhibition has always been operated by a group of volunteers. The popularity of the event has lead to the exhibition's continued growth over the years. However, due to a decrease in the number of volunteers to help organize and operate the fair, and the amount of time and effort required by the volunteer committee, there is a risk that the existing volunteer group could burn out. The possible outcomes could range from a decline in the quality of the event to losing the Exhibition altogether.

The issues being faced by the organizing society are not unique, as many volunteer organizations experience similar evolution problems. In an effort to shed some light on the issues and possible solutions, a review of best practices has been conducted.

This information has been gleaned from a number of articles and case studies that analyze the nature of volunteer organizations, the need for strategic planning for non-profit organizations, the need for institutional memory, recruiting and retention, and the importance of implementing policies for volunteer organizations.

7.2 BEST PRACTICES

7.2.1 Nature of Non Profit Organizations

Non profit organizations share a number of similarities in their operations and their evolution. The Western States Centre produced the following article.¹ The article focuses on the distinct stages that a non-profit organization moves through over its life span.

Characteristics of the Various Stages

Start-Up: Proactive Vision

Groups usually start with a proactive vision. Because the specific purpose of the group is often to build an organization, they devote much attention to thinking about structure (e.g., accountable membership and leadership structures, filing for non-profit status). These groups are more likely to be thinking long-term so the systems and processes they create are more likely to function well as the organization grows. Still, groups of this type typically have little infrastructure or paid staff in this stage, unless they received a substantial grant as part of their formative process.

Expansion Stage

In this stage, the organization sees significant increases in membership, staging, funding, public recognition, and institutional relationships. Often this growth is unmanaged growth. It happens quickly without a comprehensive plan for spending new money, supervising new staff, developing new leaders or coordinating new relationships.

This stage can be characterized by significant internal tension or frustration. Tensions can stem from unclear relationships among programs, staff or members. Communication throughout the organization can be inconsistent and unregulated because organizational processes or structures were not developed for the current size and configuration of the organization.

In this stage, the organizational understanding of its issue-focus often broadens and deepens. Consequently, the work and niche of the organization can become either clearer or more confused. Newfound awareness of the organization's scope and potential can overwhelm a group and make it difficult to find a strategic focus. In this stage an organization may still be working in a responsive mode rather than with a long-term, strategic agenda.

Stabilization Stage

As organizations reach the stabilization stage, they may have developed programs and hired staff but still lack organizational processes and structures that best facilitate the work. This is the stage where an organization might create personnel policies, revise its board and membership structure, and think in new ways about the interrelationships between programs. This is also a time to develop supervision skills and staff and program evaluation procedures.

¹ [Http://www.westernstatescenter.org/resource/orglifecycle.pdf](http://www.westernstatescenter.org/resource/orglifecycle.pdf)

Stabilization means trying to avoid the crisis and decline stage. Finding new and more dependable sources of income often requires building a base of support among a constituency that is committed to the organization and not just to an issue or a charismatic leader. This is when an organization should develop a long-range, strategic plan.

Emerging from the expansion stage may force an organization to acknowledge that its new size is, in fact, unsustainable. In this case, the organization may have to lay-off staff and cut its budget in order to stabilize.

Crisis and Decline Stage

Crisis and decline can be characterized by loss of energy, leadership, money and/or a sense of relevancy. It can be caused by a drought in funding, particularly if the organization has been supported by a limited number of sources. New projects and organizations, riding the wave of a trend in the funding world, often receive a large grant from one funder. After several years, foundations often lose interest in certain issues and curtail their funding.

Community support and interest can wane much like foundation interest, particularly if people don't have a sense of progress. If this happens, groups need to develop new ways to articulate or shape their work that will renew their constituency's interest. If this does not happen, they group may need to dissolve.

Changes in leadership can also be a source of crisis and decline. If the organization was guided primarily by one person or a small group of people without developing new leadership with shared responsibilities and vision, the organization is incredibly vulnerable. Organizations should ask themselves:

- How deep is our leadership base?
- Is our board big enough to manage significant attrition?
- Are people feeling burnt out?

Dissolution or Re-Creation Stage

This is the make or break stage where it is critical to re-examine the mission of the organization and test the relevancy of its program goals with its constituency and funders. This is a time to envision new work or new ways to articulate old work. This is a time to build new leadership and engage new constituencies. This visioning and planning can be integrated into a long-range, strategic planning process. If that process doesn't happen or isn't successful, it can signal a fatal lack of vision, leadership, commitment, or funding.

7.2.2 Strategic Planning for Non-Profit Organizations

The following article is taken from the Non-profits.org website.² The article describes the purpose, the process and the importance of having a strategic plan for an organization.

Strategic planning is a management tool, period. As with any management tool, it is used for one purpose only: to help an organization do a better job - to focus its energy, to ensure that members

² [Http://http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/03/22.html](http://www.nonprofits.org/npofaq/03/22.html)

of the organization are working toward the same goals, to assess and adjust the organization's direction in response to a changing environment. In short, strategic planning is a disciplined effort to produce fundamental decisions and actions that shape and guide what an organization is, what it does, and why it does it, with a focus on the future. (Adapted from Bryson's Strategic Planning in Public and Non-profit Organizations)

A word by word dissection of this definition provides the key elements that underlie the meaning and success of a strategic planning process: The process is strategic because it involves preparing the best way to respond to the circumstances of the organization's environment, whether or not its circumstances are known in advance; nonprofits often must respond to dynamic and even hostile environments. Being strategic, then, means being clear about the organization's objectives, being aware of the organization's resources, and incorporating both into being consciously responsive to a dynamic environment.

The process is about planning because it involves intentionally setting goals (i.e., choosing a desired future) and developing an approach to achieving those goals.

The process is disciplined in that it calls for a certain order and pattern to keep it focused and productive. The process raises a sequence of questions that helps planners examine experience, test assumptions, gather and incorporate information about the present, and anticipate the environment in which the organization will be working in the future. Finally, the process is about fundamental decisions and actions because choices must be made in order to answer the sequence of questions mentioned above. The plan is ultimately no more, and no less, than a set of decisions about what to do, why to do it, and how to do it. Because it is impossible to do everything that needs to be done in this world, strategic planning implies that some organizational decisions and actions are more important than others - and that much of the strategy lies in making the tough decisions about what is most important to achieving organizational success.

The strategic planning can be complex, challenging, and even messy, but it is always defined by the basic ideas outlined above - and you can always return to these basics for insight into your own strategic planning process.

Strategic Planning and Long Range Planning

Although many use these terms interchangeably, strategic planning and long-range planning differ in their emphasis on the "assumed" environment. Long-range planning is generally considered to mean the development of a plan for accomplishing a goal or set of goals over a period of several years, with the assumption that current knowledge about future conditions is sufficiently reliable to ensure the plan's reliability over the duration of its implementation.

On the other hand, strategic planning assumes that an organization must be responsive to a dynamic, changing environment (not the more stable environment assumed for long-range planning). Certainly a common assumption has emerged in the non-profit sector that the environment is indeed changeable, often in unpredictable ways. Strategic planning, then, stresses the importance of making decisions that will ensure the organization's ability to successfully respond to changes in the environment.

Strategic Thinking and Strategic Management

Strategic planning is only useful if it supports strategic thinking and leads to strategic management - the basis for an effective organization. Strategic thinking means asking, "Are we doing the right thing?" Perhaps, more precisely, it means making that assessment using three key requirements about strategic thinking: a definite purpose be in mind; an understanding of the environment, particularly of the forces that affect or impede the fulfillment of that purpose; and creativity in developing effective responses to those forces.

It follows, then, that strategic management is the application of strategic thinking to the job of leading an organization. Dr. Jagdish Sheth, a respected authority on marketing and strategic planning, provides the following framework for understanding strategic management: continually asking the question, "Are we doing the right thing?" It entails attention to the "big picture" and the willingness to adapt to changing circumstances, and consists of the following three elements:

- formulation of the organization's future mission in light of changing external factors such as regulation, competition, technology, and customers
- development of a competitive strategy to achieve the mission
- creation of an organizational structure that will deploy resources to successfully carry out its competitive strategy.

Strategic management is adaptive and keeps an organization relevant. In these dynamic times it is more likely to succeed than the traditional approach of "if it ain't broke, don't fix it."

What Strategic Planning is Not

Everything said above to describe what strategic planning is can also provide an understanding of what it is not. For example, it is about fundamental decisions and actions, but it does not attempt to make future decisions (Steiner, 1979). Strategic planning involves anticipating the future environment, but the decisions are made in the present. This means that over time, the organization must stay abreast of changes in order to make the best decisions it can at any given point - it must manage, as well as plan, strategically.

Strategic planning has also been described as a tool - but it is not a substitute for the exercise of judgment by leadership. Ultimately, the leaders of any enterprise need to sit back and ask, and answer, "What are the most important issues to respond to?" and "How shall we respond?" Just as the hammer does not create the bookshelf, so the data analysis and decision-making tools of strategic planning do not make the organization work - they can only support the intuition, reasoning skills, and judgment that people bring to their organization.

Finally, strategic planning, though described as disciplined, does not typically flow smoothly from one step to the next. It is a creative process, and the fresh insight arrived at today might very well alter the decision made yesterday. Inevitably the process moves forward and back several times before arriving at the final set of decisions. Therefore, no one should be surprised if the process feels less like a comfortable trip on a commuter train, but rather like a ride on a roller coaster. But even roller coaster cars arrive at their destination, as long as they stay on track!

7.2.3 The Need for Institutional Memory

The Need for Institutional Memory³, was written in 2003 by Susan J. Ellis and looks into the importance of “Why and how did we end up where we are now” within volunteer organizations. This article reports on the importance of keeping up to date on an organizations past endeavours, while moving in different directions in the future.

One of the most frustrating aspects of change in organizations is that new ways of doing things seem to spring up without any consciousness of what happened in the past. This is particularly relevant to volunteerism, since agencies have high turnover in volunteer program management positions and all-volunteer associations rotate officers with every election. Too often the newcomers initiate change simply because of their own preferences or the wish to establish a “new administration.” They fail to ask an important question first: *Why and how did we end up where we are now?*

No one wants to be immobilized by resistance to change based on “we tried that ten years ago and it didn't work.” On the other hand, we are all too busy to reinvent the square wheel or duplicate the hard efforts of predecessors. The key is to do some research before we set off in a new direction. I suggest that we consider assigning someone the role of “Continuity Officer.” This idea would work both for a board of directors and in an agency-based volunteer program.

Boards of Directors

Everyone understands the roles of president, treasurer, secretary and the other age-old officer positions. But *Robert's Rules of Order* and other traditional references for how to run an organization have missed the boat by not recommending a Continuity Officer to assure that the organization understands its history and why earlier decisions were made. True, the Secretary generally has possession of the meeting minutes book, but how often does anyone ask for a search of historical information? Also, past minutes are often incomplete or hard to search because information is buried within long paragraphs.

A Continuity Officer would have the following position description:

- Upon taking office, will read the entire minutes history, including any written policies and procedures. [The very first Continuity Officer might agree to create an index for the minutes and policies, which would help successors enormously. In fact, given today's technology, it might be possible to scan all the minutes into a computer so that word searches for certain topics can quickly be done.]
- When discussion occurs about a subject on which board/group action has been taken previously, will make sure the group knows what was done earlier. *The point is not to stop discussion!* But if the group wants to make a new decision, they ought to do so in the full awareness that: a) they are indeed making a change; and b) they have considered the reasoning of the previous group and feel the situation has changed sufficiently to warrant the new course of action.
- Be the "keeper" of the Policies and Procedures list (those items that do not require any bylaw changes but affect the daily working of an organization), again bringing inconsistencies or changes to the attention of the current leadership. Make note of new policies discussed and agreed to, in preparation for the next Continuity Officer.

³ <http://www.energizeinc.com/hot/2003/03dec.html>

- Monitor the “passing of the baton” between outgoing and incoming board members. Is there an effective Board Member Orientation process to teach how the organization operates? Are all necessary records transferred from each board member to his/her successor? Has the newcomer been informed about projects underway that will require picking up the reins of leadership?

Volunteer Programs

Volunteer program managers also ought to think about “succession planning.” If you were to win the lottery and leave your job, would your replacement know how the program works – and *why* you set it up this way? This is an important component of a policies and procedures manual, beyond the rules themselves: record the reasoning behind certain decisions made (and date them, too). Organize your files (in cabinets and on your computer) in a logical way so that historical materials can be located easily.

If you take a job as a Volunteer Program Manager (VPM) in an existing program, value continuity – at least initially – as a sign of respect to both your predecessor and all the volunteers who have come before. Start by talking to long time participants and comparatively new ones, too. What do they like and dislike? Who made decisions about these things in the past? What led to these decisions? Does anyone know if there is documentation of past actions? You will learn more about this program aspect and begin to understand the reasoning behind the present situation. Three options will present themselves:

- You'll determine that, despite your initial reaction, there is indeed some validity to continuing without a change here.
- You'll be confirmed in your sense that a change is needed, but you'll be able to find a way to implement it with the participation of those who are most involved. Ideally, they should feel appreciated for their previous work and see the new methods as building on that, not superseding it.
- You'll discover that no one alive has any idea why something is being done and that you can initiate change without a problem (but based now on good reasoning!).

Usually the VPM will act as the proposed Continuity Officer, but this can also become a valued volunteer position to advise the VPM and to represent views of the various program constituencies whenever change is contemplated. Those who fight the hardest against new things, whether they be volunteers or employees, may wrongly feel that the change is a negative response to their past work. If they can be confident that someone is monitoring past decisions as well as future needs, their resistance will be less. Respect for institutional memory can actually become a form of recognition.

7.2.4 Recruiting and Retention

Selecting Volunteer Leaders⁴ was written in March 2005 for the Volunteertoday.com. This article discusses the importance of, and outlines a set of guidelines for, selecting a new leader for a volunteer organization.

Volunteers are often placed in positions of leadership over other volunteers and with responsibilities for large projects. The selection of individuals to lead those teams is often

⁴ <http://www.volunteertoday.com/ARCHIVES2005/March05recruit.html#Selecting>

haphazard, not planned, and rarely done in an intentional way. Selecting the right volunteer leaders is as critical as selecting the right direct service volunteer. Here are some tips to reorganize the way you find the right people to be in charge of those large projects.

- Write descriptions. Be sure you have a description of the work of the project or committee they will be leading. It should include a list of the things to be accomplished, dates things should be done, to whom they report, number of people needed, etc. But, you also need a position description for the leader. List the qualifications and requirements of the position and be honest about the time required.
- As a position comes open circulate the descriptions, both kinds mentioned above, to people who are likely candidates for the position. Think outside previous members. Ask someone who is moving up in the organization and has chaired another event or project of lesser intensity. It is risky to simply allow people to serve on a committee or project and move ahead. Workers are not always leaders. Opening all positions to everyone could make for re-energized committees.
- Organize an interview committee. Ask two or three people, who are perceived as neutral, to sit on a panel to talk with people interested in the position. Conduct informal discussions with potential leaders about the positions and what is expected. Prioritize the possible leaders.
- Let people know the decision of the committee and if not selected, how you hope they will continue to work on the various projects of the organization. Never just select someone and neglect others who showed an interest.
- The next step is to work with the new leader to develop plans for the project or event.

7.2.5 Implementing Policies

Benefits of Policies⁵, By Linda L. Graf, from *By Definition: Policies for Volunteer Programs*, is an article that focuses on the benefits of implementing policies within volunteer organizations.

Many organizations simply have not had the time to attend to defining the values and policies within which volunteering takes place. Given the current situation wherein everyone is trying to do more and more with less and less, this is understandable. Yet, this is an area must be attended to. This is not to say that policies will resolve all problems and eliminate all hazards. However, policy development and implementation will go a long way to reduce the dangers and risks that currently exist in the field of volunteering.

There are many other good reasons to define policies for volunteer programs. Here are some examples:

- All organizations make policy decisions regularly. They just do not call them policies, and they often do not write them down. So, writing your policies can be a simple matter of formalizing decisions which have already been made.
- Writing decisions in the form of policies and distributing them to paid and volunteer staff can lend them greater import and perhaps better ensure compliance.

⁵ <http://www.energizeinc.com/art/abyd.html>

- Many policies are developed because of crises or problems. When something goes wrong, it becomes apparent that a position or policy is needed, either to decide what to do now, or to prevent the situation from recurring. So policies determine action and set boundaries beyond which one cannot go.
- Policies clarify responsibilities and define lines of communication and accountability.
- Policies provide a structure for sound management. Since they often identify the 'what' and sometimes even the 'how,' they can bring about program improvements and increase effectiveness.
- Policies ensure continuity over time and from staff to staff. In this sense, policies endure. They promote equity and standardization.
- Policies establish values, beliefs and directions for volunteer involvement. They connect the volunteer program to the larger organization and its mission.
- Policies can be a source of pride and satisfaction for managers of volunteers in a well-run program. They articulate the importance of volunteers and form an important, concrete, ongoing element of volunteer recognition. Policies thereby contribute to increased volunteer satisfaction and productiveness, and enhance volunteer retention.

Principles of sound and professional volunteer program management are equally important. In fact, policies and good management inform and support one another. Both are critical to successful, responsible, and safe voluntary action.

7.2.6 Summary and Lessons for the Dawson Creek & District Exhibition Association

The preceding articles have been quoted here to provide some input from knowledgeable individuals on various aspects of organizational management. They are intended as “food for thought” for the operating society.

To aid in interpreting these articles, the following summary of possible lessons learned has been prepared.

- The Dawson Creek & District Exhibition Association has been in existence for decades, placing it in the Stabilization Stage of a non-profit organization life cycle. While at this stage, an important issue is to avoid moving into the Crisis and Decline stage of the cycle. In order to ensure that this does not occur, the Association should consider ways to strengthen its administrative structure.
- In order to ensure that the Association does not move into the dissolution or re-creation stage, the board should answer the following questions.

How deep is our leadership base?
Is the board big enough to manage significant attrition?
Are people feeling burnt out?

If there are concerns with the answers to any of these questions, there is the possibility that there may be future troubles for the board in regards to continuing to exist.

- The Dawson Creek & District Exhibition Association staged a seminar session in 2001 to set their goals and objectives, to envision running the association as a business, and to set long and short-term goals. Although some direction came out of this seminar, the importance of having a sound strategic plan cannot be underestimated. As the association moves forward, it would be wise to define a formal strategic plan and to develop an action plan to achieve the goals that are outlined in the plan.
- Evidence shows that all-volunteer organizations have trouble attracting new members, particularly persons with diverse skills. Organizations tend to recycle officers, as few members want to take leadership roles. The survival and continued success of the DC Exhibition will be dependent upon being able to sustain a sufficiently large enough volunteer pool, as well as ensuring that there are qualified leaders to move in when current leaders step down.
- A possibility exists of having a paid manager/executive director run the Dawson Creek Exhibition. This may potentially help with the long-term survival of the Association. However, as it has been a volunteer run organization for so long, there may be potential for conflict between paid employees and the volunteers. If

the board chooses to have a paid position, it must prove to the employee and the volunteers that this situation is “best” for the survival of the exhibition and that they are all working towards the same goal.

- The DC Exhibition Association will continue to experience turnover within its board membership. It will be important for the new members to learn from past experiences (both positive and negative). New members bring new ideas, so it will be important for the board to have a person who acts like a “Continuity Officer”. This will help to ensure that past failures are not duplicated and that successes are carried on into the future.
- The DC Exhibition Association will need to recruit and select new volunteers over the years to come. It is important that this is done in a formal manner, so as to make sure volunteers are filling appropriate positions.
- Although, in many cases there may be a member who already exists on the board to fill a position, it is also a good idea to advertise and possibly choose someone new to the Association for a particular position. By going outside the organization, the board may find a person with a different skill set, or someone who brings fresh ideas to the table.
- There are a number of reasons why formal policies should exist within the DC Exhibition Association. One of the more important reasons is that policies clarify responsibility and define lines of accountability. With a small association running a growing exhibition, it is important that everyone on the board understands their responsibilities. If this is not clearly defined, conflict may occur between members or jobs may not get completed.

8.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study of the Dawson Creek Exhibition has covered a variety of topics. It included a review of the physical condition of the fairground buildings; an assessment of customer satisfaction; a measurement of the fair's economic impact; and a review of organizational and administrative issues. This analysis is intended to provide the community and the event organizers with sufficient information to allow the DCE to evolve and improve.

Not to be ignored in this analysis is that the DCE is a very successful operation. It has been in existence for decades and provides a very high quality sporting and entertainment product for Dawson Creek residents and their visitors. The organization runs virtually exclusively on volunteer labour and has done a commendable job in staging what is a significant "professional" event. In fact, the World Professional Chuckwagon Association has awarded the DCE organizers the "Committee of the Year" award for the last two years.

However, as Dawson Creek grows and as the event matures, there are improvements that could be made to the event and its operation. The following are the key conclusions:

Site Building and Facilities:

The DCE buildings and site facilities are functional but generally are showing their age. The racetrack itself is in very good condition, due to its regular maintenance. The Indoor Riding Arena, is the best condition of all of the buildings, while the Handicrafts Building and the Main Washroom building are in adequate condition.

The remainder of the facilities are deemed to be in only fair condition, and several have structural issues that will need to be addressed soon. The facilities that appear to need the most attention are the Grandstand Beer Garden and Grandstand Washrooms, the Concession Stands, the Horse Stables, and the Watering Hole Beer Garden.

Visitor Satisfaction:

Generally, respondents indicated a relatively high level of satisfaction with the services and facilities of the DCE. The average rating score was 5.7 (out of seven), and the specific topic scores were in a relatively tight range from about 4.5 to about 6.5. The Chuckwagon races were by far the most popular aspect of the DCE, followed by the rodeo. Experiencing a sense of community spirit also rated high as a reason for visiting the Exhibition.

Spectators also cited a number of concerns and the two main issues were the lack of a covered grandstand and poor parking conditions.

Economic Impact:

A total of 17,771 individual tickets were sold to an estimated total of 6,835 individual spectators. Each spectator spent an average of just over \$92, for a combined spectator expenditure of \$633,000.

Spectators spent money on a variety of items within a number of expenditure categories. Concessions, admissions and automobile/gas were the largest expenditure categories, responsible for nearly 70% of the total. Restaurant expenses accounted for about 7% of expenditures, while accommodation and shopping accounted for an additional 6% each.

Spectators spent an average of 2.6 days at the DCE. However, the most common length of stay for spectators was one day (31%), while a small number of spectators (16%) attended all five days of the Exhibition.

Action Items:

The following are action items that resulted from the analysis. Each of these “issues” has been described with a corresponding discussion and recommendation for action.

Issue	Discussion and Recommendation
Conduct a Detailed Site Facility Assessment	The facility assessment presented herein was based on cursory visual inspections intended to reveal the general condition of buildings. The DCE Association Board of Directors should structure a committee to conduct a more detailed and thorough assessment of the facilities. This committee should include participation by the City of Dawson Creek (owners of the buildings). Priorities for action and budgets should be established.
Site Improvements	The DCE site contains a range of buildings, related structures and utilities. Spectators were most interested in a roofed grandstand and improved parking. Competitors and exhibitors were interested in the provision of power and showers. The DCE board should assess these needs and determine budgets for improvements. Depending on the dollar amounts and the possible timing, funding sources should be identified and approached. The plan should include partnerships and sponsorships.
Review the Event Pricing Structure	The DCE has a relatively complex admissions structure and admission prices generated a number of negative comments during the satisfaction survey. However, they are similar to the other comparable events on the Chuckwagon circuit. Efforts should be made to simplify the tariff structure and strive

	to improve the customer's impression of value for money.
Improve Site Utilization	Some of the events staged at the DCE are more popular than others. Based on the customer survey, the logger's competition and some of the other equestrian events were poorly attended. This could have been a result of a lack of interest or perhaps was the result of scheduling conflicts. The DCE should explore the issues that affect attendance of these events to determine if improvements can be made.
Customer Services	The DCE operates very successfully given all the elements of this exhibition that need to be put in place and coordinated. This is a testament to the board and the persons involved in running the event. Given the continuing need to be successful at the gate, continued emphasis should be placed on customer service to ensure that the experience is as advertised. The DCE should confirm the level of training of contractors and volunteers, and the systems that are in place to manage the exhibition's operation.
Marketing	The DCE generates a smaller proportion of visitors versus residents than is the case with the other comparable fairs. This may be a function of the local trading areas and the definition of a tourist, but there may be more the DCE can do to encourage greater attendance from out of town. The DCE should review its marketing program and consider devoting greater emphasis to the visitor markets – specifically from the easily accessible northern BC and Alberta markets.
Relationship Building	The DCE operates over a five-day period in August each year. For much of the rest of the year the fairgrounds are not used or used modestly. There may be opportunities to develop relationships with related agricultural and equestrian groups to generate increased use of the site. There also may be opportunities to strengthen the relationship with other civic and business organizations for mutual benefit. The DCE should explore the possibility of increasing site use and revenue generation. The DCE should also explore the opportunities of coordinating with other Dawson Creek organizations in order to maximize the community benefit from the fair.

<p>Relationship with the new Multiplex</p>	<p>Dawson Creek’s new recreational and entertainment Multiplex is under construction and will be operational in 2006. Given that it adjoins the DCE site, there are likely beneficial arrangements that could be made to enhance the operations of both the fair and the multiplex. These might include marketing, access, parking, security, maintenance, etc. The DCE should commence discussions with the Multiplex operators and the City of Dawson Creek to explore opportunities.</p>
<p>Strategic Planning</p>	<p>Although a 10-year visioning plan was conducted in 2001 by the board, this did not result in a formal Strategic Plan to guide the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association. A Strategic Plan would formalize the roles of the board members, the goals and objectives of the board, guide the members and volunteers into the future years, and set a plan as to how the board and fair will remain viable in the years to come. The DCE should formalize this strategic planning process.</p>
<p>Succession Planning</p>	<p>As part of developing a Strategic Plan, a Succession Plan for the Dawson Creek Exhibition Association should be considered. Long-term success of the exhibition will be dependent on having an effective board to run the fair from year to year. A succession plan should help to ensure that the correct individuals are in place as the organization evolves. Failure to have a Succession Plan may lead to the dismantling of the association and loss of the Exhibition. The DCE should produce a Succession Plan.</p>
<p>Institutional Memory Lapse</p>	<p>Once the board has implemented a plan for the future, it will be important that they take the necessary steps to monitor progress. A way of doing this is to appoint a board member as the “continuity officer”. This position can be held by an individual board member, the president or the manager. The intent of this position is to document and track the operations of the board and to pass on this information to new members of the board, when turnover takes place. The DCE should review its board appointment and termination practices with the aim of maintaining continuity.</p>
<p>Implement policies</p>	<p>In order to formalize operations of the board and strengthen the organization, it will be beneficial to have written policies in place. Policies that may be beneficial include: board structure, board governance, communication structure, volunteer recruitment and retention, etc. The DCE should review its policies and decide how to formalize and maintain them.</p>

<p>President's position</p>	<p>The Dawson Creek Exhibition Association currently has a very effective volunteer president. There may come a time when this individual chooses to step aside. As part of the Succession Plan, the board should investigate further the viability of a paid person in this position. This may be a possible solution to ensure the long-term survival of the fair.</p> <p>The DCE should evaluate the pros and cons of a paid president's position.</p>
<p>Paying more than one person</p>	<p>In order to achieve long-term survival of the Exhibition, not only is having a paid manager an option, but possibly having paid staff as well. Other fairs on the WPCA and CPRA tour, utilize part-time paid staff throughout the year for planning and operational purposes. Having paid staff places more responsibility on individuals to ensure jobs are getting done and the fair is as large and successful as possible. Paid staff would also reduce turnover and improve operational efficiencies.</p> <p>The DCE should explore the pros and cons of at least on full time staff position.</p>
<p>Partner(s) to help operate the event</p>	<p>Although an event such as the Dawson Creek Exhibition and Fair relies heavily on sponsorship funding, there may be an opportunity to attract a community business to partner with the Society to help finance and operate the fair. This option would need to be studied further, as any potential benefits may be complicated by the Association's non-profit status.</p> <p>The DCE should assess the merits of forming an ongoing partnership with a compatible business or other community organization.</p>

APPENDICES

A – Facility Evaluation Checklist

B – Economic Impact and Visitor Satisfaction Questionnaire

C - Verbatim Comments

Appendix A

Facility Evaluation Checklist

2005 DAWSON CREEK EXHIBITION FACILITY EVALUATION CHECKLIST

Building: _____ Year Built: _____

Dimensions: _____ Square Footage: _____ Number of Stalls: _____ Seating Capacity:

Zoning: _____

Facility Condition Evaluation

Attribute	Good	Fair	Poor	Comments
Overall Condition				
Roof				
Ceiling				
Walls Exterior				
Walls Interior				
Foundations				
Floors				
Plumbing Water Waste Removal				
Electrical Lighting Power				
Health Concerns				
Animals				
Humans				
Ventilation				
Safety Concerns ▪ Emergency Awareness				
Other				

Replacement Cost: _____ Cost of repairs: _____

Comments:

Appendix B

Economic Impact and Visitor Satisfaction Questionnaire

8. Please indicate your **level of satisfaction** with the following aspects of the Dawson Creek Exhibition. A “1” indicates a low level of satisfaction and a “7” indicates a high level of satisfaction. (*Circle the appropriate number.*)

Exhibition Issues	Not at Satisf							Very Sa	Not Appli
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7		
The fair grounds	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
The grandstand	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Event parking	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
The food concessions	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
The washrooms	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
The midway	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Agricultural displays	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Gate admission charge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Rodeo admission charge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Chuckwagon admission charge	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Rodeo event	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Chuckwagon Races	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Overall value for money	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Overall cleanliness	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Variety of things to do	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Evening Entertainment	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Watering Hole (Beer Gardens)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	
Other _____	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	NA	

Note to Interviewers: For satisfaction ratings of 3 and less, probe as to why.

9. Overall, what did you like the most, and the least, about the Exhibition?

Liked Most: _____

Liked Least: _____

10. What improvements to the Dawson Creek Exhibition would you suggest?

11. Do you have any other comments that would help the organizers improve the event?

Thank you for your assistance.

Appendix C

Verbatim Comments

DAWSON CREEK EXHIBITION SPECTATOR COMMENTS

Question 8: Spectators were asked to comment on “why” they rated a category a 3 or less.

Grandstand should be covered. More handicapped parking needed

1 – way too high

2 – way too high – family price, seniors price

Rides not all working

Midway a bit pricey

Parking congested

Need parking lots – designated areas

Better walkway around ditches – lighting

Need a senior rate for day pass

Parking: too far (moderate difficulty but not handicapped designation)

Need a roof, no senior rate for rodeo!

Hard to find a place! Muddy

Needs roof and expanded/ we were cramped in stands

Parking – too congested

Prices = need to all be individual

Roof needs to be added

Roof on stand would be nice

Need a roof – parking congested

Roof/Parking

Beer Gardens – lines are too long

Roof – must have, need seniors discount

Roof

Parking too congested

Have to pay for all events to get to rodeo

Parking congested, too far away

Roof

Being charged twice isn't fun

No parking because of multiplex

Livestock had already started being taken away.

Not in favor of beer gardens

Teens were drinking in Watering Hole

Roof on grandstand

Bigger grandstand

Roof for grandstand

Most rides broken down

Charge to walk from gate to grandstand for chuckwagons (\$17.00)

Back gate said could have paid \$5 to get in and then \$7 to get into chucks – different than front gate said

No toilet paper in portables on Sat. If decide to go into rodeo/chucks – still have to pay \$20 but already paid \$5 at main gate: \$25

Isn't much

Roof – needs one badly

Admission for chucks and rodeos only – should not have to pay at gate

Roof and backrest (Grandstand needs to have backrests)
 Need a roof – otherwise good
 Big midway rides broken down – Sat night
 No handicapped parking! No clear directions for handicapped parking
 Couldn't find a space – ended up 4 miles away
 Parking – the best they could – missing the back door parking
 Too crowded, too full – couldn't sit with family.
 Beer gardens not enough, washrooms, dirty – no toilet paper.
 Rodeo too expensive for a family
 Too far away, parking really rough
 More parking lots
 Rides not all working
 Midway pricey when you've got kids
 Chuckwagon – too quick, too much \$
 Scary people in there
 Parking could be better
 Parking – no free parking – to pay \$5 is too much
 Better parking needed
 Poor parking
 Admission too high
 Too expensive
 Muddy – wood chips would be good
 Fell in a hole
 Not safe – need railings/new stairs/roof
 Family pricing
 Security is terrible for evening entertainment
 Rides are not as good as last year
 “Midnight Madness” poor because so much broken rides
 Need a roof – have been burned and soaked
 Parking is awful – too compact
 Parking too congested
 Needs a roof
 Need more food booths
 Need more bathrooms
 Parking too far away
 Need double stairs at brand stands – NOT safe
 Roof – it would be perfect
 Too many tickets for events. Should be able to get in to separate events without buying entrance into fair
 Needs a roof
 Not enough parking
 Need a covered grandstand
 Too expensive
 Parking/way too far of a walk
 No discount for seniors
 Need a roof and work to upgrade – very old
 Parking is too congested
 Prices are too steep for a family
 Need roof – but grandstand is good otherwise
 Price are too high for all events
 Prices too much for all events

Grandstand – too tight
Grandstand needs improvements in all areas
1 day price is too much,
Rides are poor
Raw burger – made me very sick
More parking – needs organization
Roof
Washrooms – do not smell good at all
Handicap sticker – had to walk too far to come to work as a volunteer
Music too loud – tone down a little
Wood sidewalks great improvement
Don't like seeing underage kids coming out of Watering Hole
Stench in morning at breakfast from beer gardens bad for booths near it
Too far to walk, not enough parking
More dumpsters for concession booth
Parking – very good with non-profit group doing it!
Parking congested – too far away
Covered Grand stand
Need more parking
Need more livestock
Grandstand – not enough/tight
Roof
Parking – congested
No roof, needs to be fixed
Parking
Gate and parking too much
Needs a roof
Not enough parking
Fair grounds – needs to be made to look nicer

**DAWSON CREEK EXHIBITION
SPECTATOR COMMENTS**

Question 9: Overall, what did you like the most, and the least, about the Exhibition?

Liked Most

Fair
Agricultural
Very clean
Variety
Rodeo
Chuckwagons
Chucks
Craft exhibit
Midway
Chuckwagons
Rodeo
Meeting people
Chuck races
Hand washing in porta potty
Chuck races
Liked hygiene / cleaner
Chuckwagons
Exhibits
Food
Monster ride
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Cleaning sweeping picking up garbage is great
Rodeo
Chuckwagons
Community spirit/seeing people
Rodeo chucks
Horse show
Rodeo
Chuckwagons
Chance to see people
Midway
Show rings/cattle barns
Chuckwagons
In town – local
Bull riding/chuckwagons
Bull riding/chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Everything
Rodeo
Variety
Rodeo/chuckwagons
Parade

Good weather for the most part
Fireworks were awesome this year
Rodeo
The horse drawn carriages were a wonderful idea
Kids liked the carriages and chuckwagons
Parade, rodeo events
Corned dogs/midway
Crowds visit
Chuckwagons
Exhibits/Fireworks
Rodeo
Carriages rides/food
People picking up garbage all day and boardwalk
Quilts/Rodeo
Rodeo
Rodeo
Everything well organized
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Light horse show
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Storefronts/boardwalk cool
Rides
Rodeo
Rodeo
Saddle Bronc riding
Chuckwagons
Everything
Atmosphere – lots to do
Well organized/ ground good/ bleachers clean
Chuckwagons
Small town – kids exhibit/stroller ability in midway
Rodeo
New facades
Chuckwagons
Mini donuts
Floral exhibit
Good variety
Outside stage show
Livestock
The people
Midway
Rodeo
Fellowship
Chuckwagons
Everything
Community feeling
Organization
Chuckwagons

Chuckwagons
Overall spaciousness/ chuckwagons
Rodeo/chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
People
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons/entertainment
Friendliness at people/volunteer
Situated perfectly for DC great location
Chuckwagons/rodeo
Rodeo facilities
Good community events
Chuckwagons
Great overall show
Chuckwagons
Concessions are cancelled
Rodeo
Rodeo
Concessions are excellent
Visiting with people
Fact that there is still a fair/community
Rodeo
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Rodeo/chuckwagons
Livestock
Chuckwagons
The animals
Safety/family event
Beer gardens
Outside events
Bathrooms very improved compared to past
Well organized
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
Midway
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons/agricultural
Chuckwagons
Chuckwagons
More organized
Great fireworks
Saddle bronc ride
Exhibits esp handcrafts and horticulture
Rodeo
Food – fish and chips
Chuckwagons
Community event
Barrel racing

Country feeling – no blacktop
Exhibits
Exhibits
Midway
Walk in – easily accessible for all events
Volunteer participation
Excitement

Liked Least

Parking and Dust
None
There is no coat check
No roof on grandstand
Carnies in midway rude and aggressive
No senior rates
Boardwalks
Price of midway when you have kids
Stinky animals
Grandstand
Dust
\$20 day fee- steep for a senior, need a senior rate
Parking
No graviton this year – where is it?
2004 events had better events for kids
Security
Need cleaner washrooms
Parking indicators for rodeo and directions to get to grounds
Highway
Parking
Can't pay just for chucks
Use all day Friday for horse show
Raining – no roof
More seating around stage/stands for talent show
Need more garbage cans
Parking
Poor handicapped section
Grandstand
No roof – poor access for disabled parking
Too hot
Being charged twice
Pavilion needed better explanation
No zipper
Prices
No senior rate and gate charge
Parents hated the gate charge
Nothing much
Dusty in midway
Noise

Midway
Midway
Rides too expensive
Beer garden
Watering hole
Mud
Not too much, maybe parking
No Zipper
Parking
Mud on rainy day
Nothing
Grandstand need roof
Covered grand stand
Outside of town campers need to reserve closer to site – town park 4 – 5 days
early
No amateur rodeo
No roof – its pouring rain today
Price, dirty bathrooms, no toilet paper, overflowing garbage cans
Price of midway
Rides shut down half of the time
Line ups
Washrooms – need another set
Parking
Weather
Beer garden
Midway too expensive & broken rides
Parking – needs to be organized better
Too many strollers blocking walk – ways in Grandstand dangerous
Security
Midway was very poor this year
Parking – huge walk to get here
Level the grounds – hard to walk on
Fix long lines at concessions
Roof
More food booths
Roof
Tickets
More local entertainment
Parking
Need paving/too much dust
Everything is good
If its wet, it's a mess
Nothing (make it more western)
Better parking
Needs roof
Enlarge
Prices too much for kids
No discount for seniors
Grandstands
More raffles needed
Prices

Parking
No senior pricing
Admission – no senior prices
Admission charge
Prices should include everything
Too loud
Price
Ticketing – (can't get to chucks without paying)
Stinky workers
Nil
Washrooms
Garbage
Parking tight on one side
Bird exhibitors noticed birds on top messing on birds underneath
Parking
Mayor not picking up garbage he dropped
Midway rides were broken
Crowds on road at ticket booths are dangerous
Dust
Dust
Amount of money to spend on all 5 days

DAWSON CREEK EXHIBITION SPECTATOR COMMENTS

Question 10: What improvements to the Dawson Creek Exhibition would you suggest?

Lower the price
More handicap parking and for RVs – keep RVs separate
Drinking fountains would be nice
Need more washrooms but very clean!
No double charging
Roof on grandstand!
More color on fronts of concessions
Bring in different rides
Suggest reserve seating in grandstand
Boardwalk rough and uneven – suggest add a stretcher down the middle
Improve grandstand more like Grande Prairie (roof)
Little crowded when full – seats hard
Parking far away, esp. as person has a bad knee, maybe add more entry gates
Parking – real lot of supply a city bus, rode fare \$7 a little high
Washrooms cleaner and more of them
Entry just for the fair (weekend pass)
Better rides on midway – some broken down, real downer from last year
Pavement – roads gross
Few more bathrooms
Picnic tables heaped with garbage – have to clean yourself
Light handicap parking inside gates
Bus service to the mall and back, regularly hourly basis
Rodeo and chucks are top notch, no changes needed
More livestock
Senior rate for admission
Good to having wagon rides for seniors
Continue with building boardwalks
Need a shuttle bus – too far of a walk for seniors – from downtown into the yard
Grandstand needs roof
Needs to be more exit/entrances into Grandstand
Keep growing
Bring the zipper back
Easier access to the grandstands from underneath
More focus on the horse showing/livestock arenas
Keep expanding on the food concession boardwalks
Pretty good
Fix deep ditches by livestock barns – dangerous!
Roof on the grandstand, sidewalks uneven
Bigger name bands
Roof on grandstand
More food outlets
Cover for grandstand
More beef exhibitors and more animals

More exhibits (hand work)
 More advertising on TV and radio for times of events
 Continue with boardwalks
 Shelter for judges
 More entries in agricultural displays
 There were more food booths last year, not enough different foods
 Washrooms were kept clean, more needed for women
 Crochet and knitting
 Exhibits – very unhappy, \$3 to enter
 Prizes should be higher – 1st prize \$5 – need more entrants
 Displays could be improved (handicrafts etc.)
 Boardwalk
 More covered areas around food court and seating
 Total gate admission a little high
 Facades are too low. Boardwalks nice
 Handicraft pavilion didn't seem organized. Had to look for classification/age groups.
 Less rocks/piles of crap/soil – dangerous for walkers on roads
 More bathrooms
 Grandstand – more entrances/exits
 Parking
 Balloon animal guy / clowns
 Better rides
 Cover charge in beer gardens may be better
 Stagger events so one can attend them all
 Improve parking
 Improved parking
 Cover over grandstand
 Put in more walkways
 More activities for kids
 Roof over grandstand
 More organization for parking
 Need park and ride
 None, way better than Grande Prairie
 Need seniors discount
 Fri, Sat, Sunday pass
 No arrangement for the camping/ no management for camping parking
 Need a roof for grandstand
 Prices need to be better for large families
 More variety of good ex: Chinese
 Recycling/garbage
 Roof
 Need to clean up /empty cans more
 Few more garbage cans in food area
 Crushed gravel on road - due to mud
 Parking a big problem – everyone coming down same road and nowhere to park
 Parking out back needs to improve
 Feel society has done a good_____, comes every year
 Arts and crafts to buy i.e. Flea market type
 Dress code/cover up
 Need more livestock
 Roof

DAWSON CREEK EXHIBITION SPECTATOR COMMENTS

Question 11: Do you have any other comments that would help the organizers improve the event?

Everything is good
Pass out sheets – surveys for people to mail back
Need more hand washing stations
Grandstand needs roof and painting, better family plan rate? Carnies in midway ride
Sidewalks uneven – people and kids falling
Food booths out of burgers at 8pm on Friday night
Cleaned between shows good!
Rude carnies – rough with kids – don't help
Seniors require shuttle rides to and from grandstand
Horse drawn wagon not suitable for all seniors (i.e. walkers, etc)
Food concessions – add more and more variety
Add more washrooms and better maintained
Add more adult activities – bingo and games
Come every year
More things for young kids to do, felt last year's exhibit was better
No clown at the rodeo show
Rodeo too expensive for large family
Rides too expensive for big family
Midway – great rides for younger children
Very little security – needs more
Grubby no toilet paper
Grandstand needs roof
Garbage cans – need more of them
Fair grounds are nice and tight – easy to get around
Everything was great
Keep up the good work
Roof on grandstand
Dust in midway
Haven't been to rodeo because of price
Not enough food concessions
A good job done. Really enjoyed the parade
Good schedule of events for times – only saw a general schedule in paper – i.e. put schedule at ticket booth where enter
Cost too much for rodeo and Chuckwagons, I want to see chucks, shouldn't have to pay front gate fee
No toilets in back of the watering hole – had to go through crowd
Rodeo too expensive
Long waits – 35 minutes for food on Saturday
More entries need in agricultural displays
Doing well
Would like to see amateur events “morning rodeo”
Need 2 judges for light horseshow and 2 rings going – too slow!
Need major parking improvements – loss of back parking a problem, miss the elks

booth
Carnies very rude! (on merry go round)
Washrooms – do they have to be closed to clean?
Deal for buying both rodeo and chucks
Rodeo needs more entries
Too expensive
Shuttle service great
Carnies rude and dirty
Just getting expensive
Should have a tent to sit under when hot or raining
If you only want coffee, lines need to be shorter
Good improvements with community cleanup
Boardwalks are great
Boardwalk is great, expand and make bigger
Better than any fair in the Peace – best fair all summer
Need more raffles – trucks, cars, trips
Good fair
Prices should include everything
Stop traffic for parade
Bathrooms much improved
Admissions must stay down/ full family prices and parking is too much
Pricing out of market
Very good. Done a lot of good work
Good job
Horse shuttles – great
Storefronts great!
Prizes awarded should be in front of a crowd with photos for people
Poorly done for awards
Good diversity for concessions
Do not charge workers at food stalls for entrance and kids that clean up ie. “Junior Rangers”
Family rate would be nice
Overall great
It’s great

DAWSON CREEK EXHIBITION COMPETITOR COMMENTS

Question 8: Competitors were asked to comment on “why” they rated a category a 3 or less.

Needs Roof
Rodeo is way to expensive
Carnival is dirty
Roof on grandstand
As an exhibitor, not allowed to take vehicle off grounds before 10 pm- confines to much, wanted too go to town.
Grounds to congested (heavy horse area)
Should be able to camp with horses like last year
Roof for grandstand
Exhibitor for the horse shows had to pay for parking
Need showers for competitors
Washrooms-spread them out more
Need more showers “skid shacks”
Laundry
All great
Needs better parking – off street
No roof, but the rest is OK
None, but grandstand needs a cover
Wagon area needs concession

Question 9: Overall, what did you like the most, and the least, about the Exhibition?

Liked Most

Steaks in beer garden
Livestock
Level and lots of grass
Atmosphere/security has been great
Length
Lots of room facilities
Set up for trucks/campers
Chuck wagons
Hospitality is great
Committee puts on a great show
Rodeo and midway
Lots of space
Grandstand is by far the best, close to action
Rodeo/chuckwagons

Liked Least

Carnival
Showers
People not going back to allotted slots
No close concession
Wagon area needs concession stands (no coffee)
No cover on grandstand
Track

Question 10: What improvements to the Dawson Creek Exhibition would you suggest?

All good rides broken on Friday night
Extend shuttle to out on 116th for seniors and kids
Shorten barrier on team roping box, it was too long and the ropers couldn't catch it
Heavy horse – midway very loud, scares horses and can't hear commands
Washrooms not open until 9am – need to be open earlier
Dirty, no toilet SAT
Bigger home stretch on track
Showers, need place to clean up
Shower/bathroom for competitors
Splendid job
They're working the track too much

Question 11: Do you have any other comments that would help the organizers improve the event?

Put exhibitors gate fee into entry fee – had to pay gate fee to pick up winnings at office
More waiting on log and heavy horse competition
More advertising for location of heavy horse events, signage to follow
Gate admission charge too much for exhibitors
Rodeo too much \$20
Chucks should be at least \$10, would have gone every night if price lower
Music shut down earlier for campers on the grounds
Power pole would make nicest facilities of all rodeos.
Adding water made such a great addition