



**Pembina County
STRATEGIC PLAN 2019-2024
Adopted on June 12, 2019**

BACKGROUND

The Pembina County JDA was established in 1991 to support economic growth and vitality of Pembina County. Today, Pembina County is home to more than 600 manufacturing and food processing jobs. The County is also in proximity (within two hours) to 1.2 million people (aka potential visitors). Over the past five years, the JDA has increased its focus on outdoor recreation and cultural amenity development to enhance the quality of life as well as attract more visitors to the area to support main street businesses.

As result of strategic planning completed in 2014, the JDA has also created workforce development and entrepreneurship initiatives and formed the NE Manufacturing Group with companies and educational providers in Pembina and Walsh counties. The JDA also resurrected the 25-year old Rendezvous Region Tourism Council and expanded it from four cities to three counties with a goal of a \$60,000 annual budget supported by the three county JDAs as well as public and private members – of which there are more than 100 members today. One of the goals of the RRTC is to create a positive image of the area to attract visitors and instill a sense of community/regional unity and pride.

The primary struggle Pembina County has is a nearly 80-year trend of population loss. Between 2000 and 2017, the county's population dropped from 7,396 to 6,972 or 424 people or approximately a 6% decrease. Over the past 30 years since 1990, the county's population has dropped from 9,238 to 6,972 (2,266 people or a 25% decrease). The loss of population threatens community vitality. Interestingly, there has been growth in the 30-39 age bracket and the county's youth population of under 18 is near the national average. A high priority of the county must be to attract and retain young families to support population stabilization.

The 2019 strategic plan has been developed as result of 1.5 days of planning with community leaders in Pembina County during the spring of 2019.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Pembina County Job Development Authority shall use its resources to seek and promote new and expanded opportunities within the region. The communities and the JDA will work together to create, support, and sustain employment opportunities and develop healthy vibrant communities to strengthen the regional economy.

GOAL #1: CONTINUE TO SUPPORT BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Strategy 1A: Align businesses and communities with access to capital.

- Provide technical expertise on project development and capital options for optimum financial package.
- Maintain strong working knowledge and relationship with public and private resource providers.
- Provide funding for business growth and development with JDA resources.

Strategy 1B: Explore the southern Manitoba growth model.

- Put together a coalition of leaders to meet bi-annually with southern Manitoba leaders to learn best practices and strategies for successful growth.

GOAL #2: WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT / ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Strategy 2A: Continue leading the 21st century workforce development and youth entrepreneurship initiative.

- Continue to cultivate relationships between students, education institutions and employers through series of student/business related events for exposure and training.
- Provide a link between students and cooperative education/work experiences to provide exposure.
- Create and/or support programs that encourage and assist entrepreneurship.

GOAL #3: CONTINUE TO DEVELOP TOURISM/VISITOR DESTINATIONS

Strategy 3A: Continue the development of the Rendezvous Region Tourism Council.

- Provide education, marketing and amenity development support.
- Provide project development support.
- Be a link between regional projects and state and federal resources.

Strategy 3B: Continue to support the redevelopment and expansion of Frost Fire Park as a vital regional outdoor recreation and cultural amenity.

- Serve as an ex officio member of the Pembina Gorge Foundation Board of Directors.
- Provide technical expertise on project development, marketing and funding.
- Provide a link between the PGF, Frost Fire Park, ND Parks and Recreation Department, ND Department of Commerce – Tourism Division, the Rendezvous Region Tourism Council and other state and federal partners and provide ongoing advocacy and education on the project.

Strategy 3C: Advocate the implementation of the Pembina Gorge State Recreation Area Master Plan (2014) and continued development at Icelandic State Park.

- Maintain strong working relationships with ND Parks and Recreation Department, ND Department of commerce – Tourism Division, Governor’s Office and regional legislators to advocate planning, budgeting/funding and implementation of the master plan to assure high-quality user experience as well as user-friendly amenities.

Strategy 3D: Support development and marketing of amenities, niche businesses and activities.

- Link historic preservation to tourism development.
- Encourage the development of unique overnight lodging and activities.
- Research potential partnership(s) with southern Manitoba businesses and public entities related to tourism and cultural development for potential international collaboration and market capture.
- Cultivate and support and additional recreational assets.

GOAL #4: NORTHEAST MANUFACTURING GROUP

Strategy 4A: Continue to develop the Northeast Manufacturing Group.

- Provide coordination and meeting planning for quarterly meetings of manufacturing companies, North Valley Career and Technology Center, and higher education in Walsh and Pembina County to network, learn, and solve common issues.
- Conduct strategic planning between industry and education systems to align workforce development needs.
- Develop marketing materials which showcase career opportunities.

GOAL #5: SUPPORT VIBRANT COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Strategy 5A: Help improve the visual appeal of our rural downtowns.

- Potentially create and allocate funds to a storefront improvement program.
- Advocate the development of a vision and action plans to enhance downtowns.
- Link communities with professional resources.

Strategy 5B: Encourage and support community enhancement projects such as trails, beautification, recreation amenities and programming.

- Provide project planning and funding expertise.
- Encourage resource development allocation toward these types of projects.

Strategy 5C: Support housing rehabilitation and development.

Strategy 5D: Continue to support maintaining and enhancing healthcare.

- Participate in planning and health needs assessment activities.
- Advocate on the importance of high-quality healthcare systems in the county.
- Provide project development and funding support.

Strategy 5E: Assist communities and/or private entrepreneurs with developing or maintaining childcare facilities.

- Provide technical expertise on project development, funding and implementation.
- Provide referrals for appropriate resources which may exist.

Strategy 5F: Consider the development of a leadership development program to encourage more potential leader candidates.

GOAL #6: MANAGEMENT AND PUBLIC RELATIONS

- Continue to prudently manage the JDA resources and loan portfolio to invest in quality projects and leverage funds as possible.
- Manage the Board of Directors
 - Solicit new members as vacancies arise.
 - Schedule and hold bi-monthly meetings.
 - Provide financial reports.
- Continue strong public relations to relay the value of the JDA including press releases and social media. Design and distribute annual report.
- Provide annual update to County Commissioners.
- Invest in professional development of staff through Economic Development Association of ND, Travel and Industry Conference, webinars and other related opportunities.