

From: [Chick Hurst](#)
To: [EconomicFuture Committee](#)
Subject: Stanking committee on Alberta Economic Future
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Standing Committee on Alberta's Economic Future
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The problems or challenges that have prevented the growth of Alberta's agribusiness is not and has not been the ideas, the abilities nor the lack of desire, it is and always has been the lack of money. It is also not just the agriculture or agribusiness sectors that have been a problem. At one time Alberta ran a program, "What Alberta makes, makes Alberta." That effort eventually died and then, not only was there no push to develop businesses in Alberta. The rhetoric increased and there was even public shaming for not investing in Alberta business, but, there was still no money and no support and that subsequently led to massive amounts of money lost by private individuals to the point that we are now in where many people head into retirement with no pensions because they were forced to ravage all assets and savings trying to stay alive.

In the late 1980s, we had put a tremendous amount of work, time and money into a plan to build an industrial contract sewing factory in Edmonton, complete with all of the plans for the building, the equipment, complete with the most modern, state of the art computerization and flow through methods, and signed contracts for over \$14 million in yearly contracts. The plan would have also opened up the textile business in Alberta to expand the production of the sheep, llama, alpaca and other fiber production, cleaning, processing and the introduction of a yarn spinning, thread production, and full textile manufacturing industry. I had personally invested \$100 thousand on the initial research and independent study to back up the work and to prove that we can produce clothing, at union wages, just as cheap as anywhere in the world. At first, I presented it as a Worker Cooperative and then I tried to seek private financing and then merging it with a Junior Capital Pool, a concept the Conservative government created in the 80s. We just simply could not raise the capital necessary to make it work. We were even told, in no uncertain terms, that that kind of thing would never be allowed in Alberta.

When the BSE hit Alberta in 2003, I worked with Don Thompson to bring the cattle producers together to create Producer-owned and Cooperatively Operated Abattoirs. We worked with farmer groups across Canada, but, in Alberta, I incorporated 3 or 4 Producer-owned Cooperative groups and there was another one in Southern Alberta that joined together to produce one voice to try to get the Conservative Government to assist the farmers. The industry was dictatorially controlled by two or three groups at that time. We developed plans to be able to track the animals and then the meat produced from the pasture to the plate, from birth to consumption. We created plans to build facilities that would have state of the art equipment and planned from the minute the animals are brought to the facility and for the most humane handling. This would also allow the facilities to be able to produce meat that would meet Kosher and Halal standards.

The plans also included locating these smaller plants that could still produce high volumes without the obtrusive nature of the present slaughter houses of the big, corporate owners. The plan was to construct facilities throughout the province and

allow for less travel distance for the animals to control the stress on the animals. Facilities could be produced that could also facilitate the smaller animals, such as sheep, goats, and deer, as well as elk and bison. The plans also included the establishment of spin-off industries for value added, sausage, bacon, jerky, and any number of other products. In the process, we were gathering local business, hotels, restaurants etcetera, that were committed to Alberta grown products.

The problem was the lack of funding. Even the AFSC, at that time, demanded massive investments from the producers and was very reluctant to work with Cooperatives. We showed them how we could structure the investment so that a portion of every animal brought into the facility could be paid into the share ownership so that eventually the producers would pay off any membership acquisition loans. Between the hold that the industry owners had and the pressure from the international financial community to prevent cooperatives and to prevent small business, there just was no money.

Both concepts mentioned above, could be developed now as well as the multitude of others that are presently attempting to get established.

In 1965 there were milling facilities for over 37% of the grain grown on the prairies and now it is something under 10%.

There are truck garden producers that would be very happy to work alone or together as a group to create a canning industry in Alberta. The Innisfail Growers Coop is one such group. There are fruit growers, wine producers, commercial gardens and any number of other individuals or groups that would be very interested if the money was there to get the kick start needed to create an industry and their individual facilities needed to convert their production into marketable products.

Throughout the years, after the creation of the Bank of Canada, from 1939 to 1974, Canada accomplished many things without creating massive debts. In addition to the massive infrastructure programs of things like the Trans-Canada Highway and the St. Lawrence Sea Way, money was available to build hospitals and libraries and hundreds of peace-time homes in virtually every city in Canada, but also money was invested in major projects as well, such as the aluminium mines at Prince Rupert, BC, and the asbestos mines in Quebec. There were, however, many other projects that were joint efforts between private investments and provincial governments, but, by 1974, Canada's debt level was very low.

There was a time when manufacturing was a high priority for the Alberta Government with programs like, "What Alberta makes, makes Alberta." However, the present system eventually bought out or killed off so many of those once thriving industries. Now, not only does the present system force our economy through boom and bust cycles that allow so many good businesses to be destroyed, it has allowed many to be closed and moved off-shore. To make matters worse, the large corporations went off-shore in search of facilities to manufacture their products cheaper and cheaper, many through unscrupulous means. Now China is back trying to squeeze Canadian producers in the same fashion, as well as buying out our businesses. China, like Canada, owns its own central bank and most of its banks, so, it can do what it wants or needs to do to meet its objectives. Since 1974, however, Canada has allowed the chartered banks to take over the money supply and the running of the economy. Only cooperatives and steadfast small business owners will be able to prevent the total takeover of our businesses and our business community.

If we want control of our land and our businesses, we, as a province, as a nation and as a people, are going to have to make sure that our ownership rules and corporate

structures are designed to keep control of our land and keep the ownership of our businesses local and resident.

We, as a province and as a nation, are going to have to make the money available to allow people to build the nation and business structures that will allow us to grow our economy and keep capital in circulation at the ground level. That process will also go a long way to eliminate, and / or prevent poverty and homelessness and if we can get the federal government to get the Bank of Canada back on track, we can eliminate poverty and homelessness.

Our economy both in Canada and in Alberta should be able to function with bouncy and sustainability with relying on natural resources, in every corner of the province, small town and big.

R. (Chick) Hurst



From: [Chick Hurst](#)
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Because of the state of the economic situation for so many seniors, there is a need to make some necessary changes that would create opportunities to that sector of our society.

There is a small town in Southern Alberta that has lots surveyed and ready to be serviced and some are serviced and this town would like to make seniors the focus of attention.

Because so many seniors have been and are being forced to move out of the cities because the economy has destroyed their pensions and savings, and move to small towns and even out of province and out of the country in search of a comfortable and cost effective place to live out their retirement.

The town of which I write is not only in a very enviable position, to make "seniors' life plans" an industry through a daring and comprehensive program. Making Seniors the main attention will allow the town to focus on senior housing, as well as entertainment, life activities and interests, health and a general well being and activity focus.

You want to live here!

The lots that are presently available, combined with additional land that is available for development, make it possible for the town to sell lots at reasonable prices for seniors and for investors and developers to build rental facilities. Together with the builders, developers and the citizens themselves, the plan is to develop interest and activity industries, such as gardening, vehicle and machinery rebuilding and museum building. Entertainment facilities will be built that would not only make entertainment available for the locals but, it will also attract audiences from across Southern Alberta, as well as entice the local citizens into becoming involved in entertaining others and developing their own talents and abilities.

You want to stop here!

An ongoing program will be developed to entice visitors to the town and to its museums and entertainment facilities and events. The plan is also to include developing the town itself into a production facility for the movie industry.

The town is situated on a secondary highway that is vital to Alberta and the desire is to include all other towns in the same section of the province and the same route, to join in the plan for development and the development of a transportation corridor and establish an advanced and efficient, and cost effective, transportation system to get seniors, as well as all other locals, to and from family and health facilities that they do not have locally.

The development of the town, as a beginning, will also attract interested

entrepreneurs and cooperatives to establish spin off businesses that will fit with the community and its needs.

This project will not only provide living situations for seniors but, for all those who are interested in assisting in developing a strong and effective community as well as innumerable jobs from the beginning and into the future.

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