

## **Heartland 101: Resident Relocation Program Meets Objectives**

*November 2015*

In the 1950s, Sherritt Gordon Mines began constructing the first industrial facility in the region. A \$25 million nickel refinery was built in Fort Saskatchewan, which had a population of just over 2,500 residents at that time.

### **An Innovative Approach to Industrial Growth**

The next several decades saw industrial and population growth flourish. Companies took advantage of the synergies, infrastructure, and reduced footprint of locating within an already industrialized zone. Alberta's Industrial Heartland became an economic and employment hub.

Communities grew in size alongside industry. Some citizens expressed concern over the impacts of living nearby industrial facilities. As plans progressed for several new upgraders and hearings proceeded, it became clear there was a need to address resident relocation. After consultation with residents, government, and industry, a unique program was established to purchase property in close proximity to industry from those who voluntarily wished to sell.

### **Beginnings of the Land Trust Society**

In 2006, Alberta's Industrial Heartland Land Trust Society was created. Initial funding came voluntarily from local industry and municipalities, both of whom still contribute today.

The Society's main task is to operate the Voluntary Residential Property Purchase program (VRPP). The benefits include:

- **Residents** have an option for an equitable and efficient process to relocate
- **Industry** conflict with citizens is alleviated with fewer residents in close proximity
- **Governments** can guide orderly development and address regulatory concerns

### **Nearly Ten Years Later**

Since 2006, the Land Trust Society has conducted five rounds of the VRPP. Through the program, twelve families have successfully relocated outside the heavy industrial boundaries of Alberta's Industrial Heartland.

Due to the five rounds of the VRPP, most residents living in close proximity to industry who were interested in relocating have been moved. Achieving this objective is a notable milestone for the Land Trust Society.

### **Future Plans**

The Land Trust Society is currently under review to determine if and how the program is necessary in the future. For more information about the future of the Land Trust Society, call Ryerson Christie, Program Manager at 780.998.7453 ext 4 or ryerson@industrialheartland.com.

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*Heartland 101 is a monthly print and on-air (Mix 107.9 FM) series brought to you by **Life in the Heartland**, a partnership of five local organizations improving access to information, resources, and contacts for communities in and around Alberta's Industrial Heartland.*