

A Colorful Success!

On what was one of the coldest and snowiest weekends in recent memory, more than 300 Alberta 4-H leaders took to the highways to attend the 68th Annual Alberta 4-H Leaders' Conference. With this year's chosen theme of "Show Your 4-H Colors," the Calgary region planning committee outdid themselves with spirit, speakers and sessions.

For Stacy Price, chair of the conference's organizing committee, all of the hard work put into putting the event on is worth its weight in clovers when it comes to the benefits it brings 4-H leaders. *"I can't say enough about the hard working volunteers who give freely of their time to make 4-H a better program – this conference is for their enjoyment and improvement."*

As always with 4-H, the success of the program was rooted in the strength of the volunteers who came together to put the conference on.

"The conference is a great avenue to meet new friends, connect with old friends and find a wealth of resources for all who attend," reported Sharon Uhrich, member of the Calgary's organizing committee. *"Leaders' Conference 2011 was an opportunity to work with a group of very dedicated 4-H volunteers who put their head, heart and hands into planning and executing an excellent learning opportunity for other 4-H volunteers."*

The scope of sessions offered to leaders ranged from training to informational to personal and professional development, and targeted every demographic of leader, from new to veteran.

And what Leaders' Conference would be complete without recognition? The Alberta 4-H Council's Golden Clover award was graciously received by Henry Wiegman on Friday night of the conference. Henry, who has worn as many 4-H hats – regional and livestock Specialist, Sponsor Liaison, Director of Fund Development – was the visionary behind many of 4-H's current day programs, as well as responsible for advocating for the corporate partnerships that enables Alberta 4-H to continue to be the province's number one rural youth organization.

Erin Shaw, Alberta 4-H's Premier's Award winner, exhibited why she was the winner of Provincial Communications in her well written and delivered speech at Saturday's luncheon. Through anecdotes and personal experiences, she thanked the leaders for their tireless efforts and commitment to ensuring that members got the most out of their 4-H experience.



The Alberta Agriculture and Rural Development's Alberta 4-H Hall of Fame welcomed two more members, numbers 74 and 75, to its walls on Saturday night. Anita Mappin and Maryanne Sandberg, both of whom have served on provincial Council and the 4-H Foundation's Board of Directors, relayed to a packed banquet hall how honoured and humbled they were to be inducted.



"Someone from the media called to interview me about my induction," Anita explained to the crowd, "and one of their questions was if I had ever regretted any of the time that I had dedicated to the 4-H organization. Without hesitation, I answered that I've never regretted one second of the time that I have volunteered with 4-H. I hope to stay involved with the program for as long as I am able."

*"Thank you doesn't seem like an adequate response for being nominated to receive such an honour," Maryanne commented. "As a leader, you never think that what you're doing will one day see you being inducted into the Hall of Fame; you just do what fellow leaders do every day and **"learn to do by doing"** alongside them and your members."*

Saturday night's banquet also gave Alberta 4-H the opportunity to thank its many sponsors, partners and supporters, with 28 of the program's sponsors being in attendance. Five of the six Legacy Builder sponsors delivered messages regarding their dedication to the 4-H program, and their continued enjoyment of being involved with the organization.

While it would seem that every moment of the conference's three days was spoken for, networking, unwinding and entertainment still play a significant part in the success of Leaders' Conference, with leader business cards being swapped, spoons being swapped and dances being shimmied all weekend long.

Leaders' Conference 2011 will certainly be remembered as a colorful success!

Partner Supporters of Leaders' Conference were AMA Insurance, Agriculture Financial Services Corporation, ATB Financial, Encana Corporation, Government of Alberta, Lamble's Western Wear and Tack, Olds College, UFA Co-operative Limited and Viterra Inc.

