

February 11, 2008



Back to the Future for 4-H Members

Westerose, AB – From February 1-3, 95 4-H members travelled back to the future, or in this case to the Alberta 4-H Centre, to attend Senior Members' Conference 2008. Though temperatures were cold member's spirits could not be deterred as they were treated to a weekend of learning, meeting new friends plus fun and games.

"Senior Members' Conference continues to be one of the biggest events of the 4-H program and this year was no exception," stated Alberta Agriculture and Food 4-H Specialist Janet Kerr. *"It's amazing how this conference has grown and evolved in such a relatively short period of time. It really speaks to the value that our 4-H members gain from this event."*

At Friday night's registration and orientation delegates met new friends and caught up with old acquaintances. After some games, marshmallow roasting, popcorn and a movie, delegates went to bed thinking about tomorrow's activities.

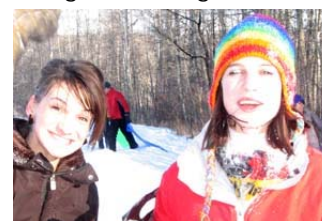
Saturday was a jammed packed day that saw members "enjoy" a 30-minute aerobic activity and a chair-less breakfast before the day's sessions began. In relation to this year's theme – Back to the Future – Mahlon Weir, former Alberta 4-H staff member, discussed with the delegates the changes 4-H has gone through since its inception and where he sees the program going forward.

After enjoying some fun tobogganing and tubing delegates were back in the classroom with select-a-session. This year's sessions focused on financing, nutrition, careers, along with a presentation on the Green Certificate Program and the Ropin' the Web website.

Traditionally the highlight of the weekend revolves around Saturday night's activities and this year was no different. The evening commenced with a word from the program's sponsors and a wonderful banquet. *"It is always a pleasure to address such a fine group of 4-H members,"* stated UFA Cooperative Limited's Tim Church. Immediately afterward, Dr. Frank Robinson left members in stitches



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with his informative talk on everything “chicken”. No “Back to the Future” conference would be complete without an array of costumes to decorate the retro dance that concluded the evening.

Sunday saw Susann Stone of the 4-H Foundation educate the members on the many post-secondary scholarship opportunities that are available. Former Ambassador, Kristen Hedley, then gave a grand speech on the finer points on maintaining healthy relationships. After a quick lunch it was time for everyone to pack up their belongings and say goodbye to their many friends.

Senior Members’ Conference is an annual event that hosts 15-20-year old 4-H members for a weekend of skill learning and applying, socializing and realizing that was created on the initiative of the 4-H Ambassador group who wanted to see a conference geared directly for members who were on the cusp of entering the “real world.” Being that 4-H is renowned for creating leaders for tomorrow, the 4-H Branch paired with Alberta 4-H Ambassadors to ensure that senior member’s learning experiences were taken to the next level—both for those who are participants and those who are planners.

“SMC is an exciting event in the 4-H program that many members look forward to attending,” stated Ambassador and organizing committee chairperson Brianne Bergerud. “It gives members the opportunity to take a look into their future, and provides them with valuable information regarding school, life skills, career opportunities and maintaining a healthy lifestyle. Its success is measured on the quality of information, as well as the recreational events and friendships that are created.”

Major conference sponsors include [EnCana](#), [Alberta Agriculture and Food](#), [ATB Financial](#), [Livestock Identification Services](#), [Olds College](#), and [UFA Cooperative Limited](#). The partnership of government, industry, and 4-H members and leaders enables Alberta 4-H to flourish, and facilitates training functions such as this conference.

For more information on Senior Members’ Conference, contact 4-H Specialist with Alberta Agriculture and Food, [Cameron Horner](#) at 780-427-0753 or visit the 4-H website at www.4h.ab.ca.

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