

CRAIK

SUSTAINABLE LIVING IN RURAL SASKATCHEWAN

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The Craik Sustainable Living Project is finding innovative ways of revitalizing Saskatchewan's declining rural economy. The project formed as a partnership between the Town of Craik, Saskatchewan and the Rural Municipality of Craik #222, in 2001, to create a real-world example of a sustainable living community. The project used energy and water efficient technologies and green construction principles in the building of its community Eco-Centre. The same principles are being applied to the Eco-village that will co-operatively house ten families.

Eco-village families will also have access to land to farm for a living, and hemp may be the crop of choice. Craik has formed a relationship with Vancouver's Hemptown Clothing—the world's largest hemp T-shirt brand, which plans to build a hemp-processing mill in the community by 2008.
www.craik.ca

Reclaimed grain elevator beams and old school house bricks mix with local hay bales and cutting-edge sustainable energy technologies to create the new Craik eco-centre. The eco-centre is the visual focal point of the Craik Sustainable Living Project (CSLP) that is designed to revitalize this south-eastern Saskatchewan town.

The construction of an ecovillage, education and outreach, and community action are the other core activities of the CSLP. The project, now in its third year, is being guided by Craik's strong community leadership and commitment to sustainability. This drive has resulted in two new partnerships for Craik: the One Tonne Challenge Initiative and Hemptown Clothing Inc.

"Hemptown will be building a hemp-fibre processing mill in Craik", says Glenn Hymers project steering committee chair and One Tonne Challenge Initiative project manager, "this is a very big thing for our small community and it wouldn't have happened without the CSLP".

The One Tonne Challenge Initiative is also a big deal for Craik. Regina and Craik are the only two Saskatchewan towns coordinating regional education activities and getting individuals to commit to reducing their green house gas emissions. This initiative is part of the CSLPs education and outreach activities that involve a local schools program and an adult seminar series.

"Future symposiums and conferences will focus on topics including backyard composting, low water landscaping and straw-bale construction", says Hymers.

These workshops will take place at the eco-centre. The centre acts as an interpretive teaching tool to explain the CSLP project and its sustainable alternatives to workshop guests and tourists. The centre has integrated heating, cooling and renewable energy systems and provides examples of energy and water efficient technologies including using solar, wind and geothermal

energy and composting toilets.

The same green construction elements will also be utilized in the planned ecovillage which will house up to 10 families. Each family will have a separate living space, but will share integrated heating, cooling and renewable energy systems as well as a kitchen area and meeting space. Ecovillage families will also have access to land in order to earn a sustainable livelihood. And hemp may be a crop of choice.

Hemp requires few agricultural inputs, which is good for the environment. And the Hemptown mill in Craik may one day require up to 10,000 acres of locally supplied hemp. Hemptown is a Vancouver-based SME that is the world's largest hemp T-shirt apparel brand. The company's strong commitment to social and environmental sustainability make them a great fit with Craik. The mill will be processing hemp fibre for clothing, along with by-products including a new insulation material named *Crailar* (after Craik). The mill will also benefit the local economy by providing many jobs directly and indirectly. "We are hoping to attract auxiliary businesses to Craik, including a biodiesel fuel plant", says Hymers.

The Hemptown mill and the eco-centre will stand as sustainable symbols of rural vitality in Craik.

