



RBC Future Launch



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RDN PARTNERS WITH THE BUSINESS + HIGHER EDUCATION ROUNDTABLE AND POST-SECONDARY INSTITUTIONS TO INCREASE RURAL ACCESS TO VIRTUAL WORK INTEGRATED LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES FOR STUDENTS

The Rural Development Network (RDN) is partnering with the Business + Higher Education Roundtable, Mount Royal University, MacEwan University, Portage College, and Medicine Hat College to connect rural businesses with post-secondary student talent. Rural Roots is a Work-Integrated Learning (WIL) initiative that equips students with hands-on, practical experience in their fields of study as they work with rural businesses to expand and improve their operations.

WIL connects students and employers through an online platform where businesses submit specific tasks they've identified as a need, while students can pick and choose projects that spark their interest.

Examples of potential projects:

- Creating a social media campaign to boost storefront traffic;
- Taking high-quality photos to promote products and services;
- Bookkeeping and finance-related work; or
- Developing a landing page for an upcoming event

Rural Roots aims to facilitate over 750 placements in communities across Alberta and throughout Canada by August 2022. As we slowly get through the COVID-19 pandemic, this initiative aims to tackle youth unemployment, as well as connecting youth with the necessary skills they need to prepare them for the workforce.

"BHER is thrilled to work with the Rural Development Network as they create meaningful WIL opportunities for post-secondary students in rural and remote areas across Canada," says Dr. Valerie Walker, Chief Executive Officer of BHER. "By harnessing the strength of both of our organizations, we are collaborating to build Canada's capacity to prepare students for the challenges of the future with high-quality WIL."

"There is a gap in having WIL students work in rural-based businesses and organizations, and we aim to fill it. The WIL program will support rural capacity building through virtual placement opportunities, facilitating an easy-to-use platform for both businesses and talented students," says Dee Ann Benard, Executive Director for the RDN. "By increasing awareness and use of WIL, rural communities will be better equipped to thrive in a variety of business functions."

WIL Highlights

WIL placements can lighten current workloads, help complete projects on the backburner, or transform your digital and communication spaces. Work with a student to:

- Engage the future workforce and showcase the benefits of working in your industry.
- Enhance your human resource and operational capacity.
- Access fresh and innovative perspectives and practices.

“Expanding Canada’s work-integrated learning ecosystem is fundamental to the success of our future leaders, and RBC is proud to support BHER in facilitating an additional 15,000 experiential-learning opportunities for students through organizations like the Rural Development Network,” says Dave McKay, President and CEO of RBC. “Throughout the pandemic, young people have proven their adaptivity, creativity and resilience, and as we emerge from the pandemic, we must empower Canadian youth, equipping them with the skills needed to meet the demands of tomorrow’s workplace.”

For more information about the Rural Roots program and how you can participate, please visit: https://learn.riipen.com/ruralroots/?utm_campaign=rep_2021_rural-roots-program_leads_employers_ca&utm_source=referrals&utm_medium=rdn-website&utm_content=rdn-website-link

About RDN: The Rural Development Network (RDN) is a not-for-profit partnership of five Alberta post-secondary institutions dedicated to addressing key issues in rural communities at a local level. RDN supports the sustainability of rural communities by amplifying the “rural voice” and collaborates to identify and bring focus to rural issues, build local capacity, and find innovative, rural-based solutions to unique issues.

Media Contact:

Dee Ann Benard
Executive Director
Rural Development Network
T: 780-964-2736 x 7
exec.dir@ruraldevelopment.ca