



2021 TOP 100 GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Title of the Story: Charging Ahead!

Destination Name: *(include any state, province or region)*

Alberta SouthWest Crown of the Continent, Alberta

Country: Canada

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Position: Executive Director

Nomination Category: *(Please check the boxes that indicate the focus of your story)*

Please find detailed information for the categories below in the Top 100 training module 'Good Practice Story'.

- Localizing the destination supply chain
- Decarbonizing the destination supply chain
- Culture & Communities
- Environment & Climate
- Nature & Ecotourism
- Tourism Reset & Recovery

Find detailed instructions for submitting good practices in the Top 100 training module "Good Practice Story".

Should you have any questions on your submission please refer to our FAQ page or contact top100@greendestinations.org

DESCRIBE YOUR GOOD PRACTICE STORY

Address each aspect of your good practice story in the different sections being specific including relevant quantitative and qualitative information.

Issues faced [What was the problem/issue solved with the good practice?]

Indigenous people call the Crown of the Continent “the backbone of the world”.

Alberta SouthWest (AlbertaSW) is a Canadian portion of this two-nation transboundary region, which centers on Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park and includes the adjacent landscapes and surrounding communities in the provinces of Alberta and British Columbia, Canada, and in the state of Montana, USA.

Alberta SouthWest Crown of the Continent is where the prairies meet the Rocky Mountains, where Chinook winds warm the winters, and from where mountain headwaters flow across the continent into three oceans.

Waterton-Glacier is the world’s first International Peace Park (1932) and one of three UNESCO World Heritage Sites within a 100-kilometer radius of each other: Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site (1981) and Writing-on-Stone World Heritage Site (2019).

Southern Alberta is a leader in wind and solar development, offering the opportunity to create business and visitor experiences in accordance with regional strengths and principles of stewardship, innovation, and sustainability.

AlbertaSW is the birthplace of the wind industry in Canada, where the first commercial wind farm was constructed in 1993. The newest solar project (2021) is currently the largest in Canada.

The Issue: Early adopters of electric vehicles (EVs) are plagued with “range anxiety”; the lack of charging stations prevents extended travel to recreation and attractions.

The Opportunity: Deploy a backbone of 20 EV charging stations, with both level 2 and fast charge capacity.

The Objectives of the Peaks to Prairies EV Charging Station Network:

- * Increase electric vehicle adoption and address reduction of GHG emissions;
- * Design a future-forward experience and attract new travellers to explore the region;
- * Create new opportunities for communities and businesses.

Methods, steps and tools applied [How was the good practice implemented?]

Designing, funding, and building an EV charging station network across southern Alberta became a 4-year project that grew to include 40 rural communities and 3 cities.

* Method: Success is built upon a foundation of learning, research, and collaborative leadership.

* Steps and Tools:

1. Engage community leaders: Understand the technology and create a shared vision of the possibilities; workshops and planning meetings were held in the regions, over a period of a year.
2. Address technical challenges: Utilize computer-modelling to map the optimal locations and final design of the network. AlbertaSW has mountain and prairie terrain, and 4 seasons with extreme weather conditions, all of which affect energy use and must be considered in planning.
3. Enhance social well-being and create economic value: Expert research and a process of community consultation served to identify locations for the charging stations that were near amenities, attractions, and culturally significant points of interest.
4. Develop environmental benefits: The network is designed with the ability to monitor and measure usage, emissions reduction, and impacts. The network is 100% powered by renewable energy.



Key success factors [What helped you tackle the issues?]

*** Engaged communities and stakeholders:**

There is no shortcut to building relationships, and the success of any innovative collaboration is dependent upon having leaders who are excited to work together.

By taking more than a year to have information workshops and planning meetings, community and industry leaders were able to identify common goals and strategies. Diligent preparation and community engagement served to identify locations that were near amenities, attractions and culturally significant points of interest.

*** Clear understanding of strengths and values:**

The economy of AlbertaSW is tied to history, and culture and landscapes that support recreation, agriculture, wind and solar development. Social, economic, and environmental aspirations are in harmony with the natural attributes and character of the region.

* Partner resources of \$180K were matched by 3 levels of government and industry to create a \$2.16M project;

* 20 fast charge installations connect 40 rural communities, 3 cities and 1,400km of highway;

* 1,000 participants engaged in 16 launch events.

All 20 sites are in operation, but final celebratory events stalled due to COVID-19.

The project signals the clean, green and forward-thinking ideals of the region.

* Peaks to Prairies represents the continuation of an emerging model. It extends an EV network from British Columbia into Alberta, and, in turn, creates experience and knowledge to share with partners in Montana as networks expand further in the northwest USA.

* COVID-19 has put a new focus on the importance of local products and services and Peaks to Prairies offers a new way to experience our communities and landscapes.

Lessons learned [While implementing the Good Practice what challenges were faced, and how were they overcome?]

*** Partnerships are essential and add to the fun and creativity.**

As one of our members said, "All of us are smarter than just one of us."

*** Learning is exciting and inspiring!**

Success grew from initial steps to hold information workshops, utilize the best experts we could find, and educate our communities and businesses. Coming together at workshop and planning events imparted an understanding of the technology and generated increased enthusiasm for the possibilities.

*** Creating a shared vision is powerful.**

There is no shortcut to forging alliances. The workshop events created the time and space to build relationships and spark creativity. With a common goal shared by many stakeholders it was possible to secure the funding and resources to implement the project. Good ideas attract the resources needed.

*** Research supports sustainability.**

Municipal leaders value data and numbers to demonstrate a return on investment, in both dollars and community benefit. The feasibility of a project demands defining the logistics, the process, and the steps to expected outcomes. "Peaks to Prairies" has successfully met those new challenges.

It is exciting to be working with partners, learning, problem-solving and getting a "charge" out of it!



Results, achievements and recognitions

[What were the qualitative and quantitative results of the good practice? Has it received any rewards?]

The Peaks to Prairies initiative is just one of many project successes for the region.

Alberta SouthWest Crown of the Continent region is pleased to be named to the Green Destinations Top 100 Sustainable Global Destinations - 2018, 2019 and 2020; and ITB Berlin 2020 Top 3 Best of the Americas.

Since 2009 AlbertaSW has received over 30 provincial, national, and international recognitions including:
2017: International Economic Development Council (IEDC) Organizational Leadership Award
2014: Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC) Award for best national project

What gets measured gets managed.

The installations are networked and provide valuable data on environmental impacts and also the ability to extrapolate social and economic trends.

Some pre-COVID-19 data has been captured. Ongoing monitoring will serve as a seasonal barometer to measure patterns of steadily increasing sustainable travel.

* Some cumulative measures from January 2020 to March 2021

(This captures the first 15 months of network operation, including periods of reduced travel, due to COVID-19):

Total GHG Avoidance: 44,330 (kg CO₂e)

Gasoline Avoidance: 19,273 (L)

Electricity Grid Displacement with Renewables/GHG Avoidance: 6854.00(kg CO₂e)

Number of Unique Drivers: 1370

* 260,000km of pure electric travel enabled.

* Peaks to Prairies is 100% powered by renewable energy sources.

* Peaks to Prairies is the most extensive network of its kind in Alberta, building awareness and encouraging adoption of new technology by demonstrating the increasing ease of EV travel.

Additional references

Provide links to further information. Pictures and videos should be available for download either from Youtube, Vimeo or other Cloud-based (Google/ One Drive) download URL.

Three UNESCO World Heritage Sites

Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump World Heritage Site

<https://headsmashedin.ca/>

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/158/>

Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park World Heritage Site

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/culture/spm-whs/sites-canada/sec02>

<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/354/>

Writing-on-Stone / Áísínai'pi World Heritage Site

<https://albertaparks.ca/parks/south/writing-on-stone-pp/park-research-management/world-heritage-designation/>



<https://whc.unesco.org/en/list/1597/>

Regional Initiatives, Destinations and Designations

Crown of the Continent Transboundary Geotourism Council

www.crownofthecontinent.net

Crown of the Continent Mini-documentary (8 minutes; YouTube) tells the story of formation of the world's first international peace park, Waterton-Glacier International Peace Park in 1932,

<https://crownofthecontinent.net/entries/crown-of-the-continent-ksps-documentary/5454828c-a61e-4d7a-9112-1a896e3bc3ab>

First Provisional International Dark Sky Designation (Waterton-Glacier-2017)

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/voyage-travel/experiences/ciel-sky>

Waterton Lakes National Park

<https://mywaterton.ca/>

<https://www.pc.gc.ca/en/pn-np/ab/waterton/>

Waterton Biosphere Reserve

<https://www.watertonbiosphere.com/>

Castle Park and Wilderness Area

<https://www.albertaparks.ca/parks/south/castle-pp/>

Alberta SouthWest Regional Economic Development Alliance

www.albertasouthwest.com

Directory of Summer Events and Attractions

www.myalbertasouthwest.com

Other Cultural and Historical

Siksikaitsitapi - Blackfoot Confederacy - Tribal Council for the Blackfoot Confederacy Nations of Kainai-Blood Tribe, Siksika, Peigan-Piikani and Aamskapi Pikuni.

<https://blackfootconfederacy.ca/>

Peigan-Piikani First Nation

<https://piikanination.wixsite.com/piikanination>

Hutterian Brethren

<http://www.hutterites.org/>

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints

<https://news-ca.churchofjesuschrist.org/facts-and-statistics/province/alberta>

Remington Carriage Museum

<https://remingtoncarriagemuseum.ca/>

Frank Slide Interpretive Centre

<https://frankslide.ca/>



Industry Partnerships and Resources

Southern Alberta Alternative Energy Partnership (SAAEP)

Established 2007 to foster innovation and development in wind, solar and bioenergy.

<https://saaep.ca>

Renewable Energy: Economic Impact of projects in southern Alberta

<https://saaep.ca/2019-regional-economic-impact-report/www.saaep.ca>

Capstone Solar project is currently the largest in Canada.

<https://www.capstoneinfrastructure.com/our-businesses/in-development/claresholm>

<https://lethbridgeherald.com/news/lethbridge-news/2021/04/21/capstone-claresholm-solar-project-highest-capacity-in-canada/>

Energizing Agricultural Transformation: Research Report

<https://www.albertasouthwest.com/about/our-projects/current-projects/energizing-agricultural-transformation/>

Peaks to Prairies Electric Vehicle Charging Station Network

<https://www.atco.com/en-ca/projects/peaks-to-prairies-electric-vehicle-charging-station.html>

NEW: Peaks to Prairies public service/promotional videos!

<https://youtube.com/playlist?list=PLlbW7jHE7jWlbwjKsVtddmGGNhOyJLSgZ>

