



South East Sport, Culture & Recreation District

25/26

Annual Report

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



South East Sport, Culture & Recreation District would like to acknowledge the First Nations, the Métis and all of the peoples across southeast Saskatchewan who share a history and deep connection with this land. We dedicate ourselves to moving forward in partnership with Indigenous communities in a spirit of reconciliation and collaboration.



WHO WE ARE:

Joni Hagen, Executive Director

Amber Andersen, Community Development Consultant

Dallas Cossar, Administrative Coordinator

BOARD OF DIRECTORS:

Regan Lanning, Weyburn

Jordan Wall, Pilot Butte

Tim Eveleigh, Whitewood

Tina Clay, Weyburn

Skylar Antoniuk, Estevan

Merissa Scarlett, Estevan

Shelley Sargent, Carlyle

Jacquie Van De Woestyne, Weyburn

WE ARE TEAM SOUTH EAST!

And it was an amazing year for us!

**There's so
much to say
about sport,
culture, and
recreation.**

At the South East Sport, Culture & Recreation District, we're your trusted partner in building thriving communities. We help unlock the full potential of local organizations — from sport clubs and cultural groups to recreation leaders — by creating connections to funding, training, and tools that drive growth.

You lead the way. We help you get there. Together, we are the South East.

STRATEGIC PLANNING & DIRECTION (2026–2029)

In September 2025, the Board of Directors and staff came together in Grenfell for a strategic planning session. Informed by extensive community consultations, the session reaffirmed the district's strengths in collaboration, stable governance, and adaptability, while also identifying emerging challenges facing communities, including volunteer capacity, funding uncertainty, increased technological demands, and aging infrastructure.

The resulting three-year strategic plan (2026–2029) is grounded in core values of respect, diversity, accessibility, connection, reconciliation, community-driven service, and innovation. To guide its work over the next three years, the South East Sport, Culture & Recreation District identified **four strategic priorities**:

- **Strengthening volunteerism** through skill-building and program support
- **Creating leadership development** opportunities for communities and organizations
- **Amplifying district awareness** and strengthening community connections
- **Enhancing long-term evaluation** to ensure impact, accountability, and continuous improvement

This strategic plan helps guide the District as we continue opening doors for communities, supporting inclusive growth, and creating positive change across Southeast Saskatchewan.



Staff and Board Retreat

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & AWARENESS

This year, we significantly strengthened our presence across the southeast through consistent, on-the-ground community engagement. Through **30 in-person and virtual community consultations**, we connected with municipalities, recreation boards, cultural organizations, and regional parks across the district. These efforts resulted in **18 new community relationships**, expanding both awareness of our organization and access to district supports. Our commitment to being present and responsive ensured communities felt supported and connected throughout the year.

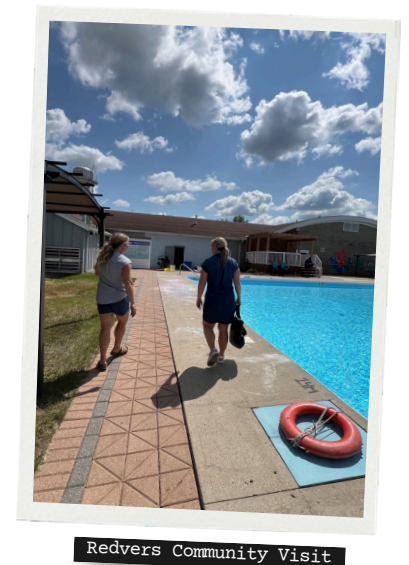
Municipal and council outreach remained a strong focus. Following outreach to all newly elected councils, we delivered five municipal council presentations aimed at increasing understanding of our services and strengthening relationships with key decision-makers overseeing recreation, culture, and sport. These engagements reinforced our visibility and reputation as a trusted, accessible regional resource.



Oungre Community Visit



Whitewood Community Visit



Redvers Community Visit

During 2025–26, we continued to strengthen relationships with Indigenous communities. Staff attended the Cowessess Pow Wow as a meaningful opportunity for relationship building and reconciliation learning. We also supported ongoing outreach through community visits and inclusive programming initiatives. Through the Indigenous Community Sport Development Grant, funding support was provided to Ocean Man Basketball and Ochapowace Skating, helping expand sport opportunities and participation!

We continued to strengthen our network of community recreation practitioners across the southeast through regular virtual talks, ongoing e-blast communication, and direct support for new leaders.

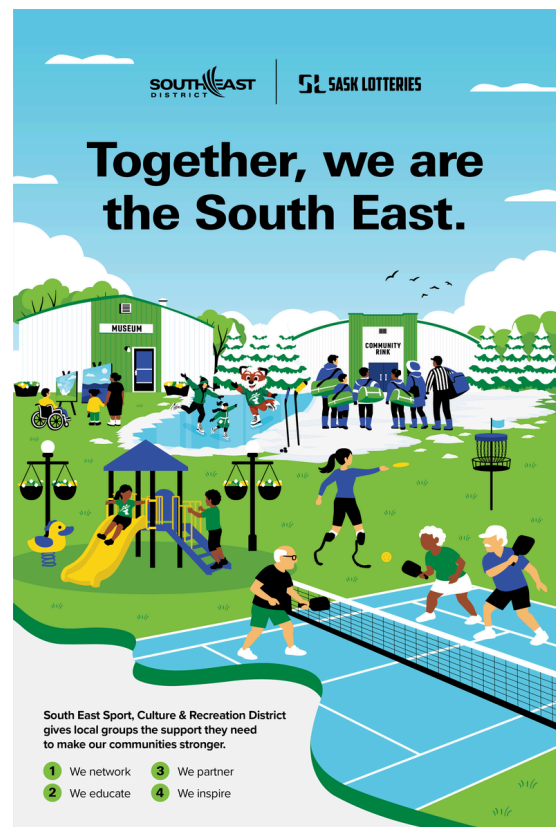
We also made meaningful progress in branding and communications. Working with a communications firm, we completed the Enhancing Our Brand project, which resulted in refreshed core messaging and updated elevator pitches. A new About Us graphic was launched to clearly communicate who we are and what we do, and planning was completed for a new awareness campaign scheduled to roll out in 2026–27.

Newsletter Performance

- Audience reach grew: List size increased 8.5%
- Opens were strong and improved over the year.

Social Media Performance

- Facebook: 17.6% increase in followers
- Instagram: 11% increase in followers



RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

In 2025–26, the tools and resources we developed were guided by what communities told us they needed. Through conversations and community visits, we listened and responded with practical supports that help communities try new ideas, build on their strengths, and make the most of the assets they already have.



Winter Town Toolkit



For Sport's Sake



READY, SET, HIRE!



Let's Get Creative

Winter Town Toolkit – a resource kit to provide guidance, inspiration, and practical tools for municipalities, community organizations, and local leaders who want to activate their towns in the colder months! BECOME A WINTER TOWN TODAY!

For Sport's Sake – a campaign and set of resources designed for potential coaches and officials, community leaders, sport clubs, and grassroots organizations! Best practices in attracting and retaining coaches and officials!

READY, SET, HIRE! A Toolkit to Hire and Inspire Students – a toolkit that provides helpful information, tips, and resources to assist with the different stages of employment for your potential student workers!

Let's Get Creative Series – the aim of the series is a digital resource library of ideas that orchestrate best practices and educate fully about the topic while inspiring the reader. This series was born out of our community visits, in which it was communicated that people were seeking ideas, but that this library could expand into other areas, such as grant writing. Having content will drive people to our website, providing us with an opportunity to expand awareness. It also provides 24-hour access, so these ideas are there when communities need them.

EVOLVING PROGRAMS & PARTNERSHIPS

Throughout 2025–26, the South East District strengthened its regional and provincial network by actively engaging with more than **40 partner organizations** across the sport, culture, recreation sectors. These collaborations supported shared learning, joint program delivery, community capacity-building, and sector-wide coordination. In total, staff participated in **over 50 partner meetings**, reflecting a strong commitment to relationship-building.



Lunch and Learn



Play Leadership Training

Municipal, Community, and Sector Partnerships

Throughout the year, we worked with multiple municipalities and community organizations to support capacity-building, event development, and governance training. Partnerships included:

- The City of Leduc through a volunteer presentation collaboration
- The Town of White City and RM of Edenwold through hosting of the Board Ready in a Day workshop; and the Estevan Chamber of Commerce
- Estevan Chamber of Commerce, City of Estevan and SEDA through Community Builders training, including bringing Peter Kenyon to Estevan (spring 2026).
- Attendance at Saskatchewan Urban Municipalities Association (SUMA) Trade Show with fellow districts to promote the district delivery system
- Partnered with Coaches Association of Saskatchewan (CAS) to promote the delivery of a grassroots coach development webinar

We partnered with Inclusion Saskatchewan and the Active Living Alliance for Canadians with Disabilities to bring inclusive workshops to the southeast.

In the arts and culture sector, we continued to build new cultural partnerships:

- Engaged with Saskatchewan Arts Alliance, Organization of Saskatchewan Arts Councils (OSAC), and local artists and filmmakers through Culture Chat programming
- Collaborated with the Art Gallery of Southwestern Manitoba and Brandon University on a webinar featuring the Nuit Blanche case study
- Continued delivery of Art Starts programming through our partnership with Southeast Regional Library, including presenting at their Regional Library and Saskatchewan Library Conferences
- Began collaboration with Moosomin Visual Arts Centre (MVAC) and the Town of Moosomin as cultural partners in preparation for the 2026 Cultural Summit
- Coordinated a session with the City of Yorkton for the OSAC Showcase focused on engaging new audiences

Collectively, these collaborations supported storytelling, placemaking, and cultural revitalization.



Indian Head Community Visit



Wawota Community Visit



Milestone Community Visit

LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT

Over the past year, we offered more than **20 learning opportunities** to support communities, organizations, and volunteers. These sessions were delivered through a mix of in-person and virtual formats and covered a wide range of topics, including board development, governance, leadership, volunteer engagement, grant writing, sponsorship and marketing, accessibility and inclusion, cultural development, and sport nutrition. Together, these learning opportunities strengthened local leadership, encouraged inclusive practices, and provided communities with practical tools they could apply right away.

Workshop feedback demonstrated strong outcomes, with 92% of participants reporting increased knowledge and skills. In addition, 93% reported feeling confident applying what they learned, either immediately or in the future, and 93% stated that the workshop met or exceeded their expectations.

Training Highlight

In 2025, we launched **OnBoard: Become Board-Ready in a Day** as a new initiative in direct response to a growing challenge faced by many communities—recruiting and retaining volunteers for local boards.



OnBoard White City



OnBoard Estevan

As fewer people step forward and more first-time board members feel uncertain about their roles, boards are seeking more welcoming, informed, and effective ways to engage new volunteers. This one-day training was designed to remove barriers by clearly explaining what board service involves, how meetings and motions work, and how individuals can contribute with confidence from day one.

With strong participation and enthusiastic feedback, OnBoard has proven to be a valuable addition to our training offerings. Based on its success in 2025–26, we will continue to offer this program moving forward!



OnBoard Participants

"Our board felt this was a very worthwhile workshop. We all appreciated the real-life stories. Since taking the workshop, we changed several "rules" immediately and are constantly working to become a more enjoyable board where people want to volunteer. Meetings are more organized, and members are fed snacks, which seems to take the "gotta get outta here" edge off!"

The workshop encouraged me, as the President, to give board members more opportunities to take control of projects. We have had several new people join our board, and things are going pretty smooth!"



OnBoard Participants



OnBoard Participants

2026 SASKATCHEWAN WINTER GAMES

Team South East Highlights

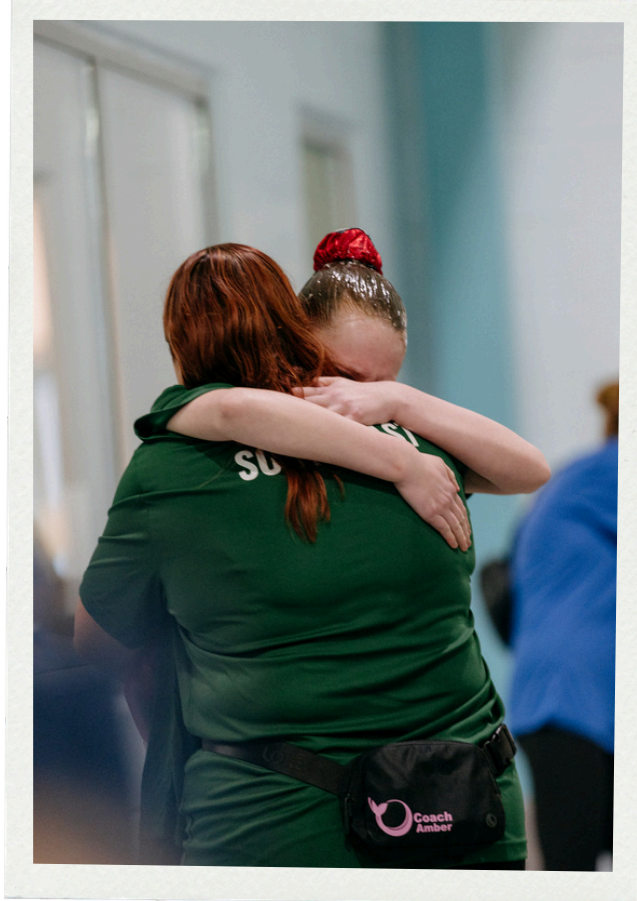
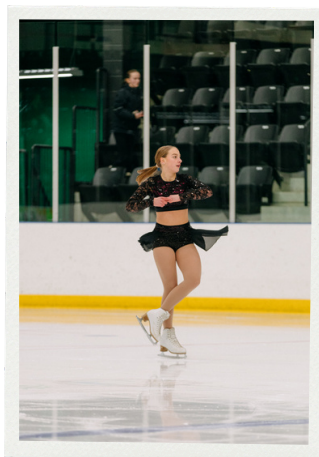
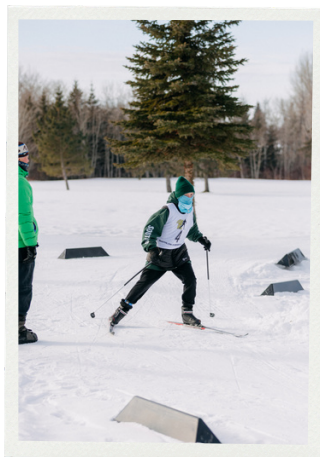
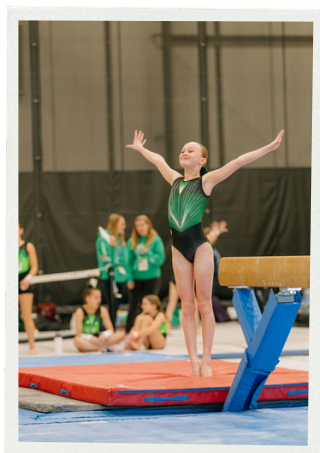
The **2026 Saskatchewan Winter Games** called for strong coordination, collaboration, and community support, and Team South East rose to the occasion. With **183 athletes, coaches, and managers** representing the region, Team South East delivered an outstanding performance—finishing **4th overall** and bringing home **30 medals** (12 Gold, 9 Silver, and 9 Bronze). From the mats and platforms to the bowling lanes and beyond, athletes competed with pride, determination, and heart, proudly representing Southeast Saskatchewan on the provincial stage.

Our support included recruiting and coordinating **eight (8) Mission Staff volunteers**, delivering an in-person orientation, providing ongoing communication with families, coaches, and Provincial Sport Organizations, and managing uniform distribution through five regional drop-off locations. We also participated in over 25 partner meetings to support Games planning, logistics, and coordination. District staff attended the host orientation in Meadow Lake in November 2025.

To celebrate Team South East, we completed media interviews and shared 25+ social media posts, along with daily media updates during the Games, resulting in strong regional visibility.

We extend our sincere thanks to all Games partners, including the City of Meadow Lake, Flying Dust First Nation, the Saskatchewan Games Council, and Provincial Sport Organizations, for their collaboration and support.

We are grateful to the coaches and managers who generously volunteered their time, energy, and expertise. Your leadership, commitment, and support made this experience possible, and the impact you had on athletes extends far beyond the Games.



Team South East Mission Staff

We would like to say a great big thank you to our Team of Mission Staff volunteers!

Kirscen Rulloda – Stoughton

Tina Clay – Weyburn

Vickie and Rick Procyk – Fillmore

Kathy Erickson – Weyburn

District Staff Support: Joni Hagen (Chef de Mission), Adrien van Dyke (Assistant Chef de Mission), Dallas Cossar



Mission Desk

What Our Mission Staff Had to Say...

"A highlight is that you see familiar faces of friendships you have built through the years and you meet new friends that become part of your mission staff family. Being part of the mission staff working with the athletes, coaches is an incredible humbling experience, this is their Olympic games!"

Volunteering truly fills my heart, and the friendships you make along the way are irreplaceable. I got involved in the Games because it's an opportunity to give back and be part of something bigger than myself. If you've never been to any Sask Games, I highly recommend it.

Each experience at the games is electric from the moment you arrive. The part that I enjoy the most is the mission staff teamwork and watching the athletes achieve their best or overcome setbacks. The games are not about the medals, but about the memories and friendships made during the games.



The Games were such a wonderful experience. It definitely had its tough moments—there was one day when the weather just wasn't on our side. But the South East team, along with every other district, really came together and pushed through. It was amazing to see how everyone just kept going, no matter what.



Lunch Break!



Mission Staff

GROW YOUR COMMUNITY GRANT HIGHLIGHTS

In 2025–26, we continued to offer the GROW Your Community Grant to help kick-start new programs and initiatives! Close to \$30,000 was allocated to support initiatives that strengthen recreation, sport, and arts/culture across the southeast. Recognizing the evolving needs of communities, we also refreshed the program, launching a new name and updated criteria on **March 1, 2026**: the **4 Seasons Participation Grant**. The updated grant reflects a year-round focus on participation and accessibility.

Grant funding supported a wide range of organizations, including towns and rural municipalities, public libraries, sport and recreation clubs, museums, arts councils, and community organizations. Through this program, we helped communities reduce financial barriers, try new ideas, and build sustainable programs that contribute to vibrant, active, and creative communities!



DIY Board Game Making



Oxbow's Community Mural

This past year was one of growth, connection, and momentum for the South East Sport, Culture & Recreation District! We were able to hire a contract consultant for a six-month term to support resource development and the Saskatchewan Games program. This position played an important role in strengthening our internal capacity, allowing staff to advance special projects while ensuring dedicated support for Games coordination. The additional support enhanced our overall effectiveness and helped meet increased workload demands during a busy year!

We showed up in communities across the region, strengthened how we support governance, inclusion, culture, and recreation, and clarified our direction through thoughtful strategic and operational planning. Our visibility continued to grow through stronger communications and our proud participation in the Saskatchewan Winter Games, while our work in reconciliation, sport development, and volunteer support made a meaningful difference on the ground.

Together, these accomplishments reflect the dedication of our communities, volunteers, partners, board, and staff team! With a strong foundation in place and renewed energy moving forward, the South East District is well-positioned for an exciting and strategic 2026–27, and we look forward to continuing this work alongside the communities we serve.



CollabARTive Studios



The Get Out Gallery



Staff Planning Day