Westlock Grain Terminals
A Case Study

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The Westlock Grain Terminals is a very successful New Generation Co-operative located in Westlock, Alberta. In 2002, when the community found out that their grain terminal was going to be sold, they rallied together to raise more than $1.2 million to purchase the terminal as a community owned venture. Since then, the Co-op has paid healthy dividend, on its shares to members and investors every year and are following through on plans to continually expand their grain handling capacity. Its success was a result of the vision and dedication of a small group of farmers, with the support of some key individuals, and, as with any new venture, a little bit of luck. The experience of Westlock Terminals has lessons to offer to any community faced with the loss of a major economic asset.
– Tenacious leader integrity of founding members
– how much you want this co-op.
– Identify what you know and, more importantly, what you don’t know about your business.
– Examine opportunities for alliances with other businesses and co-operatives if it builds the business case.
– Tour other community-owned initiatives.
– Get an independent party to evaluate the business opportunity.
– Set a reasonable timeline
– Board should sell shares to gain community support.
– Identify businesses in the community that will be impacted by the success or failure
– Be astute of legal advice about co-ops.
– Hire competent, experienced, and motivated management