

## AgEvent Centre information session draws large crowd

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By Kim Hutchison; Staff Reporter:

The first Ponoka Ag-Event Centre information session was held on Nov. 17 at 7 p.m. at the Legion. The room was packed with people eager to hear more about the estimated \$8.5 million multi-purpose facility.

PAECS chair, Charlie Cutforth, introduced board members in attendance before handing the mike to Ag-society vice president and fundraising chair, Sherry Gummow.

Gummow gave a power-point presentation primarily addressing funding and the benefits this centre will bring, followed by a question and answer period hosted by Cutforth.

Over the last few months, a new and unique partnership between the Ponoka Ag-Society, the Ponoka Stampede Association, Ponoka County and the Town of Ponoka has emerged. These organizations believe in the advantages this agricultural, recreational, special event and educational centre will bring to Ponoka. With features including an indoor arena with a dirt floor surface and seating for 1,500 spectators, a warm up area attached to the arena, a banquet area seating up to 500, three barns and 200 box stalls, 50 camping sites, stock pens, indoor and outdoor wash racks, administration offices and much more, it has the opportunity to generate almost \$4 million per year in non-local spending.

With more than \$5 million already committed, the PAECS is embarking on a capital campaign to secure the remaining \$3 million needed to make the Centre a reality. If all goes as planned construction is slated to begin in Spring 2009.

Business case information, a facility concept design, estimated operating and capital budget and a fund resourcing strategy can be obtained by contacting Sherry Gummow at [sgummow@platinum.ca](mailto:sgummow@platinum.ca)

Volunteers interested in putting in time and effort to help make this project happen are needed. To volunteer, contact Sherry at the above address. Community support is vital.

Additional information and further questions regarding the Ag-event centre may be directed to Charlie Cutforth at 783-3333.