

## Route 22 Artist Collective Gallery Celebrates Another Milestone in Rapid Rise from Humble Beginnings

**JANUARY 28 | 2026** Route 22 Artist Collective is celebrating another milestone in a rapid rise from humble beginnings that started as a local grassroots and artist-led initiative. It has become an ambitious and inspiring arts organization serving Cochrane and rural regional communities in Alberta.



Prairies Economic  
Development Canada

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Route 22 is being hailed a success story as it comes to the end of a major four-year federal funding agreement with **Prairies Economic Development Canada (PrairiesCan)** under its **Community Economic Development and Diversification (CEDD) program**. Through the CEDD program, PrairiesCan makes targeted investments that aim to generate sustainable, inclusive economic growth for communities in Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.

Since 2022, PrairiesCan has invested more than \$192,000 in Route 22 Artist Collective Ltd to support the business success of artists. Project activities included website and database development, development and delivery of entrepreneurial capacity building courses for artists, curation and production of specialized art exhibits, engagement initiatives with Indigenous artists, and participation in events to promote artists. PrairiesCan's support has been matched by support from local, municipal and provincial funding bodies.

The project set a steep target for revenue growth of over \$500k by the organization from late 2022 - March 2026, championing the professional development of artist entrepreneurs as drivers of economic growth within the organization. Specific goals included the support of 60 local artists to develop their businesses through entrepreneurial training and mentorship, the continued development of physical and digital spaces for the sale of artworks, and the promotion of artists at specialized events.

Coming up to the end of the project in March 2026, Route 22 is very proud to announce that they have met and exceeded every target and goal identified within the project, including revenue growth. The gallery currently is home to 90 artists with 29 applicants on their waitlist. Route 22 is over 80% women run and operated and has supported and assisted 16 individual Indigenous artists in their community exhibitions, events and programs. They have held multiple annual specialized community art exhibits, including Rocky View School student showcases, Mental Health Awareness Week programming and exhibitions in partnership with FCSS, Indigenous solo and group exhibitions in partnership with Cochrane's Wazin Ichinabi Ti Indigenous center as well as leading collaborative community events for National Day of Truth and Reconciliation. The gallery hosts ongoing rotating solo and juried exhibitions throughout the year.

Route 22 also leads the collaborative and rapidly growing Come Paint Alberta festival series with 9 other regional arts organizations and Glenbow Ranch Park, connecting the broader arts community and building Tourism attractions throughout the Southern Alberta region.

Since entering into the funding agreement with PrairiesCan, the Route 22 team has worked tirelessly to build the capacity of the organization and to leverage the funds to the most possible benefit. It has allowed the organization to elevate the Arts and artists to being recognized as cornerstones for the Cochrane and area cultural community and economy.

"Route 22 Artist Collective demonstrates how strategic investments can translate into real and direct economic impact for communities," said the Honourable Eleanor Olszewski, Minister of Emergency Management and Community Resilience and Minister responsible for Prairies Economic Development Canada. "Our government is proud to support artists not only as creators, but as entrepreneurs with the ambition to build sustainable businesses, access new markets, and contribute to make inclusive thriving economy in Alberta and across Canada."

"Route 22 is opening doors for artists to learn, innovate, and turn their creativity into businesses," said Corey Hogan, Member of Parliament for Calgary Confederation and Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Energy and Natural Resources. "By strengthening the economic capacity of local artists and equipping them with practical tools and resources, this initiative is helping to build a more resilient arts sector in Alberta."

The team is extremely proud to be not only a cultural hub for the region but also a tourism destination for the town.

**Jo-Anne Oucharek, former Executive Director of Cochrane Tourism and current President of Route 22 Board of Directors had this to say;**

*"Watching Route 22 grow from a small grassroots idea into a thriving cultural and economic force for our region has been incredibly rewarding. This project proves that when you invest in artists, you invest in community, reconciliation, tourism, and long-term economic vitality. I am immensely proud of what this organization, our artists, and our partners have achieved together. This success belongs to every artist, volunteer, partner, and supporter who has believed in what we are building."*

Established as a non-profit volunteer-based organization in 2020, the mission of Route 22 is to empower creativity, collaboration, community, and lifelong learning through the arts. Their vision is to build a connected cultural community and a strong creative economy through the arts. The organization created Route 22 Gallery 5 years ago which includes an arts programming and education space and recently moved their operations to a prime location in the heart of historic downtown Cochrane.

In 2025 they announced the creation of two specific charitable funds with the Cochrane Foundation. A permanent Route 22 Endowment fund will provide long term sustainability for the organization, and a Route 22 Capital fund will support the goal of purchasing their leased property to establish a permanent home for the arts in Cochrane.

**Route 22 extends sincere gratitude to PrairiesCan and to all the funding partners that have matched federal contributions, including:**

- The Town of Cochrane
- Totem Foundation
- Cochrane Foundation
- Rocky View Country
- Two Pharmacy
- Bow River's Edge Campground Society
- Alberta Foundation for the Arts

For more information on the collective, and to support their initiatives please visit: [route22gallery.com](http://route22gallery.com).