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## **SMARTstart Program Receives Municipal Award**

AIRDRIE, ALBERTA – The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA) presented the 2016 Above & Beyond Award: Economic Sustainability to the Airdrie Business Resource Partnership for its work on the made-in-Airdrie SMARTstart program.

The award was one of four presented at the President’s Dinner during the AUMA Annual Convention in Edmonton on October 4, 2016. According to AUMA, the Above and Beyond Award “recognizes staff, residents or organizations who help municipalities achieve their sustainability goals related to governance.”

Accepting the award from AUMA President Lisa Holmes was Kent Rupert and Leona Esau of the City of Airdrie. The City of Airdrie is a member of AUMA and is one of four partners who deliver SMARTstart on behalf of the Airdrie Business Resource Partnership.

“This is the fourth award that we have accepted on behalf of the SMARTstart program,” explains Kent Rupert, Economic Development Team Leader with the City of Airdrie. “We are very proud of this program and it’s gratifying to be recognized for the group’s efforts. But the real reward is seeing the difference we’re making in the entrepreneurial community and seeing people succeed with their passions of opening a business in Airdrie.”

SMARTstart is an entrepreneurial training program that was designed and is delivered in Airdrie. The program was launched in 2014 and, to date, more than 50 local entrepreneurs have completed the program. SMARTstart is delivered over an eight-month period and consists of an intake of up to 20 new and prospective businesses. Participants are provided with online training, workshops, a local mentor, and the tools to complete a business, strategic or feasibility plan. The program is made possible through generous business sponsorship and volunteer mentors.

SMARTstart is run on behalf of the Airdrie Business Partnership by Airdrie Chamber of Commerce, Bow Valley College, City of Airdrie Economic Development, and Community Futures Centre West.

Applications are now being accepted for year four of the program. To learn more, visit [smartstartbusiness.ca](http://smartstartbusiness.ca).

The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association represents all of Alberta’s urban municipalities, including cities, towns, villages, summer villages and specialized municipalities, as well as municipally related Associate and Affiliate members. Learn more at [auma.ca](http://auma.ca).

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