**South West: a region in profile** was prepared by the Department of Regional Development and Lands in conjunction with the South West Development Commission to provide a snapshot of the region’s economy.

The rapid economic growth occurring in regional Western Australia is creating increased demand for housing and services. The State Government is acting to ensure the social and economic needs in the regions are addressed as a priority. The Royalties for Regions Scheme is an important Government initiative that will allocate an estimated $896.8 million for regional projects in 2010-11, including more than $28 million in the South West Region.

The South West has the largest population outside of the Perth metropolitan area, which in turn is reflective of a developed, diverse economy. The temperate climate and good rainfall is conducive to agriculture and the region produces a broad range of crops, pasture fed beef, and dairy herds. The Margaret River district is internationally recognised as a producer of premium quality wine.

The manufacturing sector in the South West is the largest outside of Perth. In addition, the region has a diverse mining sector producing alumina, coal, mineral sands and a variety of other minerals. Tourism and fishing also contribute to the economy.

This publication is easy to read and contains the latest information available on the economic development of the South West Region, at the time of printing. It is one of a series of nine economic summary documents, each covering a non-metropolitan region.

As Minister for Regional Development, I invite you to read **South West: a region in profile** and trust you will find it interesting and informative.

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Hon Brendon Grylls MLA  
Minister for Regional Development; Lands
The State’s Regional Development Commissions were established by the Western Australian Parliament following the enactment of the *Regional Development Commissions Act 1993*.

The role of each commission is to:
- maximise job creation and improve career opportunities in the region
- develop and broaden the regional economy
- identify infrastructure services to promote economic and social development of the region
- provide information and advice to promote business development within the region
- seek to ensure that the standard of, and access to, government services in the regions is comparable to the Perth metropolitan area
- generally takes steps to encourage, promote, facilitate and monitor the economic development of the region.

For the purposes of achieving those objects a commission is to:
- promote the region
- facilitate coordination between relevant statutory bodies and state government agencies
- cooperate with representatives of industry and commerce, employer and employee organisations, education and training institutions and other sections of the community within the region
- identify the opportunities for investment in the region and encourage that investment
- identify the infrastructure needs of the region and encourage the provision of that infrastructure in the region
- cooperate with departments and agencies of the state and Commonwealth public service in order to promote equitable delivery of services within the region
- cooperate with local governments in order to promote equitable delivery of services within the region.
SOUTH WEST REGION
KEY FEATURES

- Major Road
- Formed Road
- Railways
- Pipelines
- Local Government Boundary

- Population more than 5000
- 500 - 5000
- Population less than 500
- Airport
- Major River
- Lakes

- National Parks
- Arts and Crafts
- Crops
- Fishing
- Grazing
- Horticulture
- Industry
- Orchards
- Plantation
- Timber
- Winery
Situated in the picturesque south-west corner of Australia and located close to Perth, the South West is known for its natural beauty and enviable climate. It covers an area of 23,998 square kilometres and has a typically Mediterranean climate with dry summer months and rainfall in winter.

The region has a coastline featuring some of the best surfing beaches in the state. Towering forests and established wine regions complement national parks and eco-tourism attractions. Together these features make the South West Region the most popular tourist destination outside Perth.

The South West of Western Australia is a fast growing region. Lifestyle, employment opportunities and a thriving economy make the South West a popular place in which to live, work and invest.

The Department of Regional Development and Lands estimates the Gross Regional Product to be $12.4 billion, 7.0 per cent of Gross State Product. The region derives much of its wealth from a diverse and productive mining sector, which includes alumina production, coal and mineral sands mining. The regional workforce operates in a range of industries, including forestry, mining, agriculture, tourism, retail, construction and manufacturing.

The region boasts excellent social and recreational infrastructure. Its high liveability was confirmed in 2008, when leading Australian demographer Bernard Salt, selected Harvey as one of the country’s top tree change destinations and Binningup as one of the top sea change towns.
The estimated population of the South West Region in 2009, was 157,817 residents. This represents 7.0 per cent of the total population of Western Australia, making the South West the most populated region outside of the Perth metropolitan area. Over the past five years the South West’s average growth rate was 3.2 per cent, per annum, resulting in an extra 23,021 people living in the region. The City of Bunbury is the largest local government area (LGA) in the region, with a population of 33,979 residents, 21.5 per cent of the region’s total population. There was significant population growth in the shires of Capel, Dardanup and Harvey, which are adjacent to Bunbury. This combined area, referred to as Greater Bunbury, has an estimated 82,843 residents in 2009, 52.5 per cent of the population of the South West.

In the 10 years to June 2009, the region’s population steadily increased at an average annual growth rate of 2.5 per cent. The Shire of Capel experienced the greatest population growth over the period with 6.9 per cent per year.

The Indigenous residents of the South West account for 4.3 per cent of the total number of Indigenous Western Australians. These 3086 Indigenous residents, in turn, account for 2.2 per cent of the total population of the South West. In 2004, the Western Australian Planning Commission estimated the population of the South West would reach 189,800 by 2031.
**Labour Force**

The labour force of the South West steadily increased over the past decade from 63,832 in 1999-00 to 88,254 in 2009-10. The 2009-10 labour force included 84,292 employed persons and 3962 unemployed persons, representing an unemployment rate of 4.5 per cent. The unemployment rate is below the state rate of 4.9 per cent.

![Labour Force Graph](image)

Employment in the South West was 60,187 in 1999-00 increasing to 84,292 in 2009-10, a rise of 40 per cent. Unemployment dropped from a high of 6.5 per cent in 2000-01 to a low of 3.3 per cent in 2008-09. The unemployment rate has risen to 4.5 per cent in 2009-10. These figures reflect the dynamic economy and the strong growth the region enjoyed.

The 2006 Census of Population and Housing reports the largest employer, by industry, in the South West is manufacturing, accounting for 12.4 per cent of the total workforce. This is followed closely by retail trade (11.8 per cent) and construction (11.8 per cent). These figures are indicative of the relatively even distribution of workforce among the industries in the region.

**Employment by Industry Breakdown**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>% of total workforce</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Manufacturing</td>
<td>12.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Retail Trade</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction</td>
<td>11.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Care and Social Assistance</td>
<td>8.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agriculture, Forestry and Fishing</td>
<td>7.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accommodation and Food Services</td>
<td>7.1%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education and Training</td>
<td>6.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Public Administration and Safety</td>
<td>4.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mining</td>
<td>3.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other Services</td>
<td>3.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport, Postal and Warehousing</td>
<td>3.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional, Scientific and Technical Services</td>
<td>3.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inadequately described/Not stated</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wholesale Trade</td>
<td>2.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Administrative and Support Services</td>
<td>2.7%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rental, Hiring and Real Estate Services</td>
<td>2.0%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Financial and Insurance Services</td>
<td>1.6%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Electricity, Gas, Water and Waste Services</td>
<td>1.4%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Arts and Recreation Services</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Information Media and Telecommunications</td>
<td>0.8%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS 2006 & 2001 Census of Population and Housing; usual residence
The South West Region of Western Australia is a drawcard for many of the state’s tourists. It is the largest tourism destination in terms of visitor numbers outside of Perth. Attractions include world-class surfing beaches, dense forest areas and well-established wine regions. According to data released by Tourism Western Australia, the total visitors to the South West Region was 1.6 million in 2001, decreasing to 1.5 million in 2009.

Domestic visitors totalled 1.4 million in 2009 and international tourists came to 105,000. In 2001, the total value of tourism expenditure in the South West was $508 million. By 2009, expenditure grew to $620 million, an increase of 22 per cent. Domestic tourism expenditure totalled $551 million in 2009, compared with $69 million from international tourists.

Plans for the region aim to transform the South West to an international tourism “region of excellence” by 2020. A number of tourism developments are underway to help achieve this including the redevelopment of the Bunbury and Augusta waterfronts.
Retail Turnover

The Western Australian economy was robust over the last decade with the international demand for the state’s commodities creating positive consumer confidence, which is reflected in retail turnover. In the South West, retail turnover was valued at $818 million for the financial year 1998-99. In the last decade retail trade increased rapidly to reach $1.6 billion by 2008-09. This is an average annual growth rate of seven per cent over the decade.

The City of Bunbury is the major retail service centre for the region. With strong population growth in the shires of Capel, Dardanup and Harvey, retail turnover in the Greater Bunbury area is set for continued growth. The Shire of Busselton also has a strong retail industry to service an expanding population.

Mean Taxable Income

The South West Region had an estimated mean taxable income of $51 417 for 2007-08, an increase from $29 959 in 1997-98. This indicates an average growth rate over 10 years of 5.6 per cent, per year. The Shire of Collie had the highest estimated mean taxable income of all local governments in the region at $57 742 for 2007-08.
Agricultural production in 2008-09 for the South West Region was valued at $624 million, 8.7 per cent of the total value of agriculture in Western Australia. There are 2738 agricultural establishments in the region, covering an area totalling 603,133 hectares.

In 2008-09, total crop production for the region was valued at $348.5 million or 56 per cent of the total value of agriculture. Fruit and vegetables constitute approximately 40 per cent of total agricultural production. Although many varieties make up this total, the most significant commodities are potatoes, apples and grapes. Wine grapes account for 99 per cent of grape production and underpin a significant regional wine industry. The South West is recognised as a world-class premium wine producing area, the largest in Western Australia. The balance of crop production came from a variety of broadacre crops, including barley, hay and canola.
Livestock products in 2008-09 totalled $174.8 million, or 28 per cent of total agricultural production. Milk and wool are the primary commodities in this category. The South West is dominant in milk production, which was valued at $149.9 million. Harvey is the centre of the region’s dairy industry and home to the annual Harvey Agricultural Show.

Livestock disposals include cattle, sheep, pigs and poultry and goats, which constitutes 16 per cent of the total value of agriculture in the South West Region. This equates to a value of $100.6 million in the year 2008-09.

Over the past 10 years, total agriculture production in the South West increased by 33.5 per cent. The value for 2008-09 dropped slightly from 2007-08, despite an increase in dairy production and livestock disposals. The decrease was due to a decline in broadacre crops, specifically hay production. Grape production was also down slightly on the previous year.
Commercial fleets in the region operate out of Augusta, Bunbury, Busselton, Dunsborough, Walpole and Windy Harbour. Finfish represent a live weight catch of 1160 tonnes, valued at $2.7 million for 2008-09. Additionally, recreational fishing is a popular pastime in the South West Region and major target species for beach and rock anglers are salmon, herring, whiting and trevally. Boat anglers target pink and queen snapper, shark, samson fish and King George whiting.

The rock lobsters catch totalled 37 tonnes valued at $911,000 in 2008-09, significantly lower than the 2007-08 figure of $1.7 million. The mollusc catch also declined 28 per cent to $2.1 million in 2008-09.
**TIMBER**

Pine plantations were established to meet the state’s expanding demand for structural timber. In 2009, the harvest was 1.1 million tonnes, valued at an estimated $69.3 million, slightly below the 2008 value. The South West Region produces 74 per cent of the value of Western Australia’s state forest production.

The region’s harvest is made up equally of softwood and hardwood with Radiata pine proven suitable for growing in the South West. The restructuring of the native hardwood sawmilling industry hastened the trend towards Radiata pine becoming the dominant structural timber in Western Australia. This factor and the forecast growth in demand for structural timber provides a significant opportunity to expand the Radiata pine industry. Maritime pine was also planted as a support species. In addition, large scale Bluegum plantations (private) are now supplying woodchips to markets in Japan, with 1.3 million tonnes exported through the Bunbury Port in 2010.

Hardwood timbers make up 53 per cent of the value of South West timber production, consisting of Jarrah, Marri, and Karri grown for their strength and furniture appeal.

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**Aquaculture**

The value of commercial aquaculture in the South West in 2008-09 was approximately $1.4 million and included the farming of marron and oysters. The production value has remained steady over the past four years.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Marron</th>
<th>Oysters</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2005-06</td>
<td>1151.8</td>
<td>22.4</td>
<td>1174.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2006-07</td>
<td>1344.7</td>
<td>61.4</td>
<td>1406.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2007-08</td>
<td>1324.3</td>
<td>107.5</td>
<td>1431.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2008-09</td>
<td>1352.4</td>
<td>45.4</td>
<td>1397.7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Department of Fisheries with further estimates by the Department of Regional Development and Lands

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**Value of Forestry Production**

Source: Forest Products Commission
MINING AND MINERAL PROCESSING

In 2009-10, total mineral production was valued at just under $1.7 billion. The major mineral commodity in the region is alumina with production valued at approximately $1.2 billion, accounting for 68.8 per cent of the region’s mineral production. The state’s main export market for alumina is China, the world’s largest consumer and major producer of aluminium.

The Shire of Collie produces all of the state’s coal. In 2009-10, the value of coal production was $326.2 million. Collie also hosts an alumina smelter used for processing of bauxite into alumina. In addition, heavy metal mineral sands mining and synthetic rutile production, in the Shire of Capel contributed $124.9 million in 2009-10. Heavy mineral sands products and ores are also mined and produced in the Shire of Dardanup and in the limits of the City of Bunbury.
Heavy mineral sands are exported or processed to produce titanium dioxide pigment used in paint manufacture. Tin, tantalum and spodumene are mined in the Shire of Bridgetown-Greenbushes.

Source: Department of Mines and Petroleum with estimates by the Department of Regional Development and Lands
The Manufacturing Census of 2006-07 reports the value at an estimated $2.7 billion, with 734 business establishments. Beverages and tobacco, which includes the numerous wineries of Margaret River, Manjimup and Pemberton, were identified with 123 business establishments. Fabricated metal products totalled 119 establishments followed by wood products with 92 businesses. Food processing had 83 establishments in the South West, as did furniture and other manufacturing.

Manufacturing Locations 2006-07

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total manufacturing locations</th>
<th>Estimated Number of Locations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Beverage and tobacco product mfg</td>
<td>123</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fabricated metal product mfg</td>
<td>119</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Wood product mfg</td>
<td>92</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Food product mfg</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Furniture and other mfg</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Machinery and equipment mfg</td>
<td>61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-metallic mineral product mfg</td>
<td>45</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Textile, leather, clothing and footwear mfg</td>
<td>30</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport equipment mfg</td>
<td>24</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Primary metal and metal product mfg</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Printing (including the reproduction of recorded media)</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other manufacturing nec</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Polymer product and rubber product mfg</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: ABS with additional estimates derived by the Department of Regional Development and Lands

Manufacturing is a major contributor to employment in the region and the Australian Bureau of Statistics’ census in 2006 recorded employment in manufacturing at 12.4 per cent of the total workforce.

The Kemerton Industrial Park hosts a number of major manufacturing and service industries including: Kemerton Silica Sand; Kemerton Power Station; Kemerton Chlor Alkali Plant; Kemerton Pigment Plant; Kemerton Silicon Smelter; and an abattoir.
The value of building approvals for the South West recorded strong growth over the past decade. Approvals for the year 2000-01 were valued at $274 million, increasing to a peak in 2009-10 of $873 million.

The value of residential approvals increased from $180 million in 2000-01 to $650 million in 2009-10, reflecting increases in the region’s population, as well as the increasing value of housing and housing construction. The total number of residential dwelling approvals was 2534 for 2009-10, an increase of 35 per cent from 1873 the previous year. The indicative average price per unit for residential approvals was $142 000 in 2000-01, which increased in nominal value to $257 000 by 2009-10. A significant portion of residential construction activity took place in the Shire of Busselton with 679 building approvals valued at $203 million and the Shire of Capel with 500 building approvals valued at $106 million.

The value of non-residential construction also increased over the last decade with a near record level of investment in 2009-10. The value reached a peak of $269 million in 2007-08. Non-residential approvals were valued at $223 million in 2009-10, up from $113 million in 2008-09.

Value of Building Approvals

Source: Australian Bureau of Statistics
Project Investment

Project investment is divided across three categories: under consideration; committed; and under construction. Under consideration is where the project idea is being scoped for further development. Once the projects are approved, they are categorised as committed and recognised as under construction once building commences.

The South West displayed impressive economic growth over the past eight years with the development of a diverse industrial base. As a result, investment in the region recorded a value of approximately $8.1 billion in 2009-10. Project investment is largely due to manufacturing and the expansion of electricity, gas and water infrastructure.

Further development of the Worsley Alumina refinery in Collie and the construction of the Southern Seawater desalination plant made significant contributions to investment in the region.

In addition, $3.7 billion will be spent developing a new coal-to-urea plant near Collie. The region is well-placed to attract future investment.
INDIGENOUS PARTICIPATION

The 2006 Census identified 3086 Indigenous people accounting for 2.2 per cent of the population in the South West Region.

Partnerships and collaboration exist between government, the not-for-profit sector and Indigenous people in the South West, targeting and promoting Indigenous participation and successful employment outcomes. The South West Development Commission and the state government work closely with the region’s Noongar people to support sustainable economic development for their communities. Projects supported by this collaboration include: funding to upgrade Roelands Village for commercial and cultural purposes; support to the Ngalang Boodja Council Aboriginal Corporation and Premier Coal to establish aquaculture using derelict coal mines; and the international promotion of Noongar art, marketed in Italy and USA. Royalties for Regions funding is also providing a boost to other Noongar projects in the South West, including the development of a community centre in Collie, as well as a mobile health clinic that will service the region.

There are specifically designed services in the South West that promote Indigenous economic participation and successful employment outcomes. The South West Aboriginal Medical Service, based at the South West Health Campus in Bunbury, provides appropriate holistic health services to the Indigenous population. The Djidi Djidi Aboriginal School provides educational and cultural support to Noongar children. In addition, the Aboriginal Challenge Employment Services provides employment and training opportunities to Indigenous clients and employers.

The Heads of Agreement signed in December 2009 by the Western Australian Government, provides a structure to resolve and negotiate the native title claims for the Noongar people and recognises their traditional ownership. It also provides a settlement package for native title claims, which will further enhance sustainable development and Indigenous participation in the region.
The South West is a thriving region with modern, first-class infrastructure. The City of Bunbury boasts one of the biggest regional ports in Australia. Major commodities shipped through Bunbury Port include alumina, mineral sands, woodchips, caustic soda and silica sand.

The region is linked by modern bitumen-sealed roads and highways with transit time from Bunbury to Perth about one-and-a-half hours on the new Perth-Bunbury Highway. The Australind passenger rail service operates between Bunbury and Perth. The Australian Railway Group operates a freight service carrying bulk commodities, such as coal, alumina and woodchips, to the Bunbury Port. The Bunbury Port also hosts visiting cruise ships, which bring many economic benefits. Busselton is home to the main regional airport and airstrips for light aircraft are located at Bunbury, Margaret River, Manjimup, Collie and Boyup Brook.

Regional telecommunication services include broadband internet in many smaller regional centres. Copper and optical fibre cables enable a comprehensive range of voice, data and internet services. Mobile phone coverage and high speed internet access is rapidly expanding to cover much of the region.

There are many suitable light and heavy industrial areas in the South West as all towns have industrial zones. The major location for heavy industry is the Kemerton Industrial Park.

The South West Health Campus in Bunbury is the major medical centre for the region with 24-hour emergency care and a wide range of support services. There is a high focus on community health services including maternity support, child health clinics, school-based immunisation, dental care and intensive youth education programs. In addition, there are a number of smaller district hospitals, specialist medical services and community-based health services, aged care facilities and retirement villages. The region is well-equipped with sporting facilities and offers great lifestyle opportunities for all.

The South West features a choice of government and non-government schools catering for pre-primary, primary and secondary students. Edith Cowan University has a campus in Bunbury, as does the South West Institute of Technology with smaller campuses located across the region.
INVEST IN THE SOUTH WEST REGION

TOURISM

Home of the world-famous Margaret River wine region, the South West provides the ideal setting for luxury branded resorts and is therefore increasingly attractive to international resort developers. With future infrastructure construction such as the Bunbury and Augusta marina developments, the aim is to make the South West an international region of excellence by 2020, to be achieved by effectively promoting niche areas to attract investment.

There are a number of opportunities for investment in the tourism industry in the South West. These include:

- accommodation development, which is encouraged in the establishment of high-end spa resorts and boutique hotels, as well as short-stay and eco-style accommodation.
- wine tourism, which is an ideal opportunity to capitalise on the booming wine industry in the region by investing in select wineries and wine tours.
- corporate tourism, an area of potential development. This includes function centres and conferencing packages.
- nature based tourism, such as nature walks, cycle trails and other outdoor activities, are increasingly popular among visitors to the region.

AGRICULTURE

A mild climate with no major pests, pollution or diseases makes the South West ideal for agricultural development.

Strong growth is occurring in the avocado industry with new orchards in Capel and Margaret River. Other new or proposed crops such as truffles and green tea are expected to expand the range of horticultural products available in the region.

Investment opportunities in the agricultural industry include:

- introduction of new crop varieties such as avocados, asparagus and green tea
- further expansion of wine grape production
- aquaculture development – eg. marron and abalone farming.

The Department of Agriculture and Food Western Australia has developed an extensive information network called
‘Find your Farm’. The portal assists potential investors to find the right area, make business contacts and view agricultural statistics and information. You can access ‘Find your Farm’ via the Department’s website.

MINING AND MANUFACTURING
The South West is rich in minerals with current mining projects in coal, mineral sands, spodumene, tantalum and tin.

Currently responsible for the production of 100 per cent of Western Australia’s coal as well as one of the world’s largest, low-cost Alumina producing hubs, there are a number of potential investment opportunities in the region. In addition, there is available land to establish heavy industry.

Industry opportunities include:
- timber processing
- manufacturing of exotic light metals eg. titanium
- fabrication
- power generation
- coal mining
- meat and dairy processing.

RENEWABLE ENERGY
Western Australia offers excellent opportunities to develop renewable energy resources for use by industries. There are new and innovative renewable energy technologies under development including solar, wave, geothermal, wind and bio-energy. The South West is the ideal location for the development of these technologies.

The WA Biomass 40 mega watt project, using wood as a fuel, was approved by the Minister for Environment. Depending on the success of the pilot project, there may be potential for future expansion of such plants.

FURTHER INFORMATION
For more details regarding these industries please contact the South West Development Commission or visit the following websites:

South West Development Commission: (see back cover)
Tourism Western Australia: www.tourism.wa.gov.au
Department of Agriculture and Food: www.agric.wa.gov.au
Department of State Development: www.dsd.wa.gov.au
Department of Mines and Petroleum: www.dmp.wa.gov.au
Office of Energy: www.clean.energy.wa.gov.au
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Front cover – dolphin photo courtesy of Dave and Fiona Harvey
All other photos – Courtesy of South West Development Commission

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