



NorthPeace Credit Union

Dawson Creek, BC, Canada

Micro Branch | Prototype

North Peace Savings & Credit Union (NPSCU) wanted to expand into a new market, making a bold statement that would quickly establish their presence. NewGround helped them design a new Smart Service Centre featuring innovative technology, such as video banking and versatile smart offices to accommodate better physical distancing and easily maintain cleaning protocols. The exterior projects a strong, modern, and progressive image on a pad site shared with Starbucks, while the interior integrates a boldly branded colour palette and comfortable, striking furniture with an exciting edge. The lobby also features a hearth as a focal point, evoking a sense of feeling warm in the comfort of home, but in a modern way.

This branch recently received recognition for the Achievement in Marketing (AIM) branch design award from the Marketing Association of Credit Unions (MACU).

MACU

Award Winner

2

PTMs

1,100

Square Feet



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As part of their strategic plan, North Peace Savings & Credit Union (NPSCU) wanted to focus on expansion through growth in new markets. After significant research, they found that Dawson Creek was a perfect fit to expand services in the South Peace region. Since the credit union wanted the concept of this new location to extend well beyond design, they looked to NewGround—as an innovative strategy, design, and project management firm—as their partner of choice to build the new Dawson Creek branch around the member experience.

Entering a new community, NPSCU needed to make a bold statement that would quickly establish their presence in the marketplace and set the tone for extraordinary service. Together, NPSCU and NewGround developed a new branch concept that has been described as a Smart Service Centre. NewGround's specialty is creating branded retail environments. With one of its signature methodologies, NewGround designed the facility with NPSCU—from an operational and marketing standpoint—using what is called the Member Journey. The foundation of the Journey is built around the premise that there are five activity zones that must be addressed in order to maximize the experience and marketing messages a person receives through their interaction with a facility.

Exterior

The Smart Service Centre sits prominently on a standalone pad shared with Starbucks, with a strong, modern and progressive exterior image. The exterior showcases large windows that face directly at oncoming traffic for the Starbucks drive-thru to send marketing campaign information directly to visitors and allow ample views inside the space to show how busy it is. This helps potential visitors follow social distancing guidelines before they even walk inside. NPSCU's logo is strategically placed on three sides of the building, making it visible from the street and the mall development, clearly identifying the entrance. Additionally, the lobby was purposely situated so that it is directly observable from the members' drive up to the Centre, as well as garnering the attention of Starbucks foot traffic as they pass the Centre. The design allows a connection of the dynamic interior to the exterior.

Interior

To encompass the transition of the outside world to the branded environment within the branch, the interior of the Centre encompasses the credit union's bold colour palette that immerses members in the brand from the moment they walk in the door. Additionally, furniture was specifically selected to further their brand message—colourful, comfortable, and modern, with an exciting edge.



NPSCU's mission is **"Helping Our Members Succeed in Life."** One of the main focal points in the lobby is the hearth, or fireplace, which is used to architecturally capture this statement. Traditionally, a hearth has been considered a symbol of warmth, comfort, and shelter—a home. A comfortable home embodies success. The Centre's hearth addresses this symbolism but in an exciting, modern way. The hearth also provides the opportunity to support a large screen monitor that broadcasts the credit union's messages in the waiting area of the lobby, and it is visible from the exterior.

Award-Winning Technology

The Centre also provides a high-level of service to the community by leveraging award-winning technology. Addressing the changing role of branches in members' lives, the Centre does not have staff that deals with cash. Instead, it builds upon the service of the successful face-to-face interactive teller machines (ITMs). Through two ITMs, video banking connects members to live tellers through video-enabled machines. Although remote, members are connected through a highly personal environment that creates direct personal contact between the member and teller while still limiting direct physical exposure. Staff in the branch are freed from the complexity that cash entails and can focus directly on needs of the member. Contactless transactions without the use of cash also helps reduce unnecessary exposure. Face-to-face video offers members a complete network of sales staff, business, retail and wealth specialists directly to the members.

Staff at the Centre are called Experience Specialists, and the design of the Centre assists them in delivering their services. Conversations can be held in the lobby, but for more private conversations, two offices are available. These private offices help improve physical distancing throughout the space. Maintaining the free-flowing nature of the Centre, these 'hoteling' offices are shared by all staff and are easy to clean after each use. Bright and modern, the offices break down the traditional furniture arrangement whereby a desk is a barrier. Moreover, each office is a smart office, meaning that it is set up for video conferencing allowing for the Experience Specialists to instantly draw upon any expertise required across NPSCU's network, especially when physical in-person meetings are not possible. Video conferencing is a quick, easy way technology is leveraged to enhance NPSCU's brand by ensuring there are no barriers when serving a member's needs.

Finally, critical to any branch's success is support for staff needs. The Centre provides a comfortable off-stage area to recharge, discuss ideas with colleagues, as well as tune into any corporate or training messages from the head office. Colours are purposely kept on brand.

Award Recognition

The NPSCU Dawson Creek Smart Service Centre received recognition for the Achievement in Marketing (AIM) branch design award from the Marketing Association of Credit Unions (MACU). This coveted award is given to credit unions across Canada that are acknowledged for their outstanding marketing efforts through the Achievement in Marketing Excellence.

From dynamic branded colours, to the inviting appeal of the exterior design and digital signage, NPSCU members embark on a journey from the moment they see this eye-catching credit union.

