



## Vision...

es, agencies, and tive activities while enhancing resource capabilities and programming. As a leading source of information on rural areas, RDI continues to deliver new knowledge of rural issues and helps create opportunities for vibrant rural communities and regions.

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## About RDI

For 25 years, research conducted by Rural Development Institute (RDI) has helped define issues and opportunities in rural areas, informed new public policies, clarified related implications, and suggested public programs.



Since 1989, RDI has engaged in applied, multi-disciplinary research and conducted a wide array of community projects in the prairies and across rural areas in Canada, covering a range of issues, such as community economic development, community leadership and governance, environment and agro-economic issues, information technology management and utilization, rural and northern policy research and development, rural adaptation and change, rural health, rural tourism, and others.

In the summer of 2013, Brandon University's Senate informed RDI that it was to undergo a formal academic review of its

[See RDI Anniversary, p. 6](#)

### RDI Team

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## Applied Research...Community-Ba

### Manitoba's Food and Beverage Processing Industry

This research on the Manitoba Food Processing Industry is funded by Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD) and the research is completed by RDI.

The purpose of this research is to analyze the \$4.7 billion Manitoba's Food and Beverage Processing Industry, identify key trends in Manitoba, and envision the next seven years of the industry's progress. In addition, this research identified key opportunities for public policy to positively impact the growth of the Food Processing sector.

Statistics Canada data, MAFRD reports and other sources were used to identify key indicators, drivers, and trends for the Manitoba food processing industry and related sub-sectors. These included, in particular, key factors such as transportation, water availability, country of origin labeling, monetary exchange rates, labor availability, and costs. This information was used to create scenarios for the food processing subsectors through to 2020. Fact

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## Commons Project

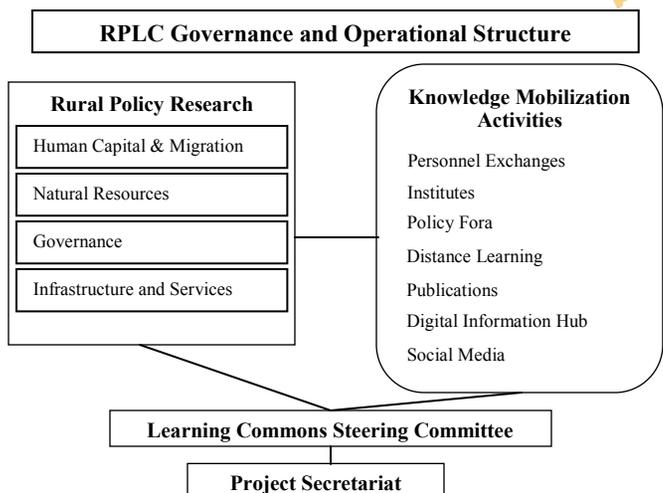
RDI project team and worked diligently to *Policy Learning Commonwealth International* order to submit the and Humanities Review 1, 2013.

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commitment to a core set of activities and deliverables each of which is designed to enhance comparative research and HQP training around rural and northern policy:

- Creating Memoranda of Understanding among the participating universities to recognize each other's academic courses.
- Developing a Comparative Rural Policy Study Abroad program for students to study comparative rural policy at a host institution in a partner country.
- Developing a credit-based Graduate Certificate in Comparative Rural Policy, targeting professionals active in rural policy formation.
- Increasing cooperation and exchange among the partner researchers and academic institutions through comparative research projects
- Collaborating with national and international research centers, governments and other agencies in the partner countries on rural policy analysis.

The project team is optimistic about its comprehensive proposal to SSHRC and is welcomes the opportunity to builds on its collective experience and expertise regarding rural and northern policy

For more information on this initiative contact:

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## Digital Skills for Rural Youth Retention



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This project is a collaboration between the University of British Columbia, Wilfred Laurier University and RDI, with funding provided by SSHRC.

The purpose of this study is to design an online portfolio of digital skills to help youth with employment opportunities and to help small businesses stay competitive. In particular, this projects targets rural communities that are experiencing a decline in their youth population. The study will involve the use of an online system to explore the actual utility of these portfolios once developed in job searches. This project focuses on the high engagement levels exhibited by youth who exercise new digital skills regularly. By aligning their existing skills set with local business needs, immediate employment opportunities can be facilitated.

Youth will benefit by:

- Building digital and social media skills for employment purposes
- Being better positioning in the technology industry
- Learning about jobs in the digital economy
- Improving digital skills with friends

Businesses will benefit by:

- Taking advantage of technology in their business

## Certificate in Social Media Engagement

RDI continued to offer its *Social Media Engagement Certificate* with instructors from the Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing, Digital Relay, and Brandon University. The Certificate is specifically developed for public sector organizations, non-profits, NGOs, and associations to enable them to develop, use and adapt social media, so they can communicate and maintain their stakeholder and client relations.

A second offering of Modules 1 & 2 in the Social Media Certificate were presented in Winnipeg on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Twenty participants from across Manitoba and Saskatchewan engaged in this learning event, bring to a total of 44 who have completed Modules 1 & 2. Those participated in the certificate program thus far come from a range of occupations, including communications officers, managers, human resource administrators, educators, as well as social media practitioners.

The first offering of Modules 3 & 4 was offered online on November 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The modules were delivered and facilitated by Roger Miranda, from Digital Relay, Inc., a social media and web-consulting firm headquartered in Winnipeg. Twelve registrants from Winnipeg, Brandon and other rural centres participated

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For local project in

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RDI delivered M

23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014.

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For more informat

<http://www.brandonu>

Gillian Richards, Pro

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report on Neepawa

opment (MRD) students. The training and mentoring of  
these students is inspiring. A review of RDI's Annual  
Reports (<http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/about-rdi/annual-reports/>) reveals the scale of student involvement. Well  
over 60 students have been involved in various projects  
and RDI activities, including over 30 MRD students  
many of whom have gone on to further graduate studies  
or moved into jobs placements such as development  
officers or policy professionals.

As inspiring is the level of external financial (cash  
and in-kind) support that has been generating by the  
countless projects undertaken over these 25 years. In  
excess of \$20 million dollars has been secured - a sig-  
nificant portion of which has been gone to support  
these student through salaries and travel opportunities.

Discussions are ongoing regarding the planning and  
hosting of an Anniversary event in the fall of 2014.  
Interested parties wishing to be involved in such a cele-  
bration can contact:

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[www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2011/02/Neepawa-and-Area-Research-Report-FINAL-ElecCopy.pdf](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2011/02/Neepawa-and-Area-Research-Report-FINAL-ElecCopy.pdf)

The intent of these discussions is to examine the co-  
ordination between various government departments  
and their programs and to ascertain whether there are  
opportunities for improving and maximizing the bene-  
fits arising from their cooperation.

A key goal of this project is to develop a new inven-  
tory of programs in response to the MB government's  
recent cabinet shuffles and its department budgetary  
planning. The challenge of this project is to realign the  
government's programs while still providing substantial  
value and benefits to rural communities in a timely  
fashion.

RDI was provided funding by MAFRD and Manitoba  
Immigration and Multiculturalism to conduct this pro-  
ject.

For more information on this project, contact:  
Wayne Kelly, Project Lead, RDI

### MB Food Industry con't.

The project team also completed interviews with  
stakeholders, including Associations and representa-  
tives from a range of sectors, to identify opportunities  
and innovations, barriers and challenges, and how pub-  
lic policy can support the growth of the industry. Find-  
ings from these interviews will be used to understand  
past trends and identify 2 possible growth scenario to  
2020.

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### Strategic Project for Investment—Southwest Regional Dev

In spring 2013, Southwest Regional Development  
Corporation (SRDC) commissioned the Rural Devel-  
opment Institute (RDI) to create a number of development  
strategies tailored to address the economic needs of  
southwestern Manitoba. These strategies were to foster  
economic growth and job creation as well as become a  
source of much needed income to sustain the long-term  
viability of the SRDC as a regional economic develop-  
ment agency. After considerable research and analyses,  
RDI recommended two strategies. Both were accepted  
by the SRDC Board.

Over the fall of 2013, Rural Development Institute  
refined two proposals: rural business succession and  
innovation transfer. These initiatives were designed to  
impact regional business continuance and foster an en-  
vironment of entrepreneurship, innovation and econom-  
ic prosperity. The succession and innovation strategies  
offer SRDC concrete action plans to impact positively  
on rural communities across the southwestern region of  
Manitoba.

To develop these action plan, RDI engaged in an  
extensive literature review of innovative economic de-  
velopment models suitable for the southwest region  
from across Canada and the United States, and consult-  
ed with business development and innovation experts  
within the private and public sectors, including BDO,  
MNP, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Develop-  
ment, Manitoba Mineral Resources, Manitoba Jobs and  
the Economy, the Premiers Economic Advisory Council,  
Industry Canada and Western Economic Diversification

ation. RDI updated  
conversations allow  
focus for succession



RDI is assisting S  
gies in May 2014.

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