

Director's Message

As RDI heads into the fall, we continue to strive towards our goals through a diversity of endeavors such as the rejuvenation of the RDI Advisory Committee, the integration of RDI and WESTARC as well as a broad range of activities as described in the next few pages. A sincere word of appreciation goes out to the new members of the Advisory Committee. Their commitment to work with RDI in the coming years will enhance our ability to respond to rural stakeholders. Thank you also to members of the RDI and WESTARC team for their support and hard work as we ensure a smooth and successful integration of our two organizations.

RDI's goals are to:

- Promote, facilitate and conduct research and development studies on the needs, concerns, problems and possibilities of rural, native and northern life.
- Work cooperatively and collaboratively with rural, native and northern communities, government and the private sector to apply the resources of Brandon University to the enrichment of life, in such vital areas as economic development, lifestyle conditions, health, cultural development and educational opportunities.
- Provide a communications link among and between rural, native and northern communities in Western Canada and Brandon University.

Robert Annis
September, 2001

RDI Advisory Committee Has Inaugural Meeting

Brandon University's Rural Development Institute, as a centre of excellence in rural development, helps strengthen rural communities through research and information on issues unique to rural areas. The inaugural meeting of the RDI Advisory Committee held on September 17, 2001, was chaired by Brandon University President, Dr. Louis Visentin and confirmed RDI's commitment to rural issues and rural communities.

The new RDI Advisory Committee is structured to include a broad section of stakeholders with interests in rural issues, representing both internal and external constituencies of Brandon University.

Dr. Scott Grills, Dean of Arts at Brandon University, will be taking over duties as Chair of the Advisory Committee. Other members of the committee include Dr. Robert Annis, Director of Rural Development, Brandon University; Dr. Doug Ramsey, Department of Rural



RDI Advisory Committee 2001

Development, Brandon University; Dr. Jeff Williams, Acting Vice-President, Brandon University; Dr. Dion Wiseman, Department of Geography, Brandon University; Ms. Fran Racher, School of Health Studies, Brandon University; Mr. Reg Helwer, Shur-Gro Farm Services Ltd.; Mr. Bill Pugh, Meyers Norris Penny & Co.; Mr. Ray Simms, Regional

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RDI Director Elected To Chair CFPM

The Community Futures Partners of Manitoba (CFPM) elected Dr. Robert Annis, Director of RDI, as Chairperson at its General Meeting in June 2001. "We are very pleased to have Dr. Annis as our Chairperson," stated Maurice Bouvier, General Manager of CFPM. "The combination of his in-depth knowledge of community economic development, his experience with the Community Futures program and the consensus building skills he possesses greatly strengthen CFPM's ability to strengthen the Community Futures program in Manitoba."

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Operations Manager North/West, MTS Communications Inc.; Mr. Ron Riopka, Executive Director, Program and Policy Development, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs; Mr. Darell Pack, Senior Policy Advisor, Rural Secretariat; Mr. Jim Feeney, Director, Public Affairs, CN; Mr. Jonathan Maendel, Baker Hutterite Colony; and Mr. Frank Thomas, General Manager, Western Manitoba CIBC.

The role of the committee is to make recommendations on the long-term goals and policies of the Institute, to provide advice to the Institute on matters of rural concern, to help RDI confirm and build linkages with

rural stakeholders and to comment on RDI research and outreach activities. Topics discussed at the September 17th round table meeting included how to define "rural", finding a focus for RDI activities and projects and the importance of open communications with rural constituents.

Additional committees will be established as required, with all linkages facilitated through representation on the Advisory Committee. One such committee has already been struck, the RDI Publications Committee, whose role is to review, adjudicate and recommend research reports for publication.

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RDI Director Elected To Chair CFPM

Dr. Annis has a lengthy history of providing services to a variety of community-based organizations. He has been a board member with CFPM since 1997 and the Wheat Belt Community Futures Corporation since 1993.

As a grassroots-driven program, Community Futures organizations work across rural and Northern Canada to support rural economies by assisting in community economic development and facilitating entrepreneurship. CFPM is an association that represents the 16 Community Futures Development Corporations that are

established throughout rural and northern Manitoba.

The CFPM works on behalf of its membership to identify resources that can assist its members to achieve their goals, to develop provincial and inter-provincial networks and to encourage communication with the various volunteer boards that guide the Community Futures program at the community level. For more information about the CFPM, please visit their website at <http://www.cfpm.mb.ca>.

RDI and WESTARC Integrating Activities

In July 2001, Dr. Louis P. Visentin, President of Brandon University, appointed Dr. Robert Annis to also serve as Director of WESTARC Group Inc. This appointment will facilitate the integration of operations of RDI and WESTARC.

Dr. Annis served as Executive Director of WESTARC for 10 years prior to taking on his current position as Director of Rural Development. "I am pleased to resume my involvement with WESTARC personnel and their projects and clients," said Annis.

"Brandon University is going through a refocusing of its outreach activities," said Scott Lamont, Brandon University Vice-President, Administration & Finance.

"WESTARC will continue to operate over the next year as the contracts and projects currently underway are completed or renewed." Since July, members of the RDI and WESTARC teams have been working closely together to ensure a smooth integration of the two operations.

WESTARC served for almost two decades as a non-profit consulting group that has concerned itself with the applied research, training and community and economic development needs of communities and organizations in Western Canada. WESTARC provided project management, research, training and consultancy services to meet the needs of communities, businesses and organizations.

Intergovernmental Affairs Supports Rural Development

Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs supports RDI and Brandon University in its efforts to facilitate rural research and the advancement of rural development knowledge and skills.

Intergovernmental Affairs representatives meet at least once a year with Brandon University and RDI through a Steering Committee, whose main task is to ensure appropriate support is provided to RDI activities. The Steering Committee also actively identifies other projects and research activities that may be developed into RDI projects.

Intergovernmental Affairs is also represented on the RDI Advisory Committee.

Current funding from Intergovernmental Affairs supports a number of initiatives including:

- Building Program Linkages
- Master's Distance Delivery
- Master's Student Research Projects
- RDI Research Program
- Research Fellows Program
- Brandon University Community Outreach Projects
- Rural Community Communications

Adaptation, Succession and Transition Needs of Manitoba Agricultural Producers

RDI is providing technical and evaluation assistance to a study focused on rural adaptation, succession and transition. The study, which is directed by WEST-ARC Group Inc., examines the needs of agricultural producers and their families.

Many rural communities in Manitoba are closely linked with the agricultural sector. This close relationship to agriculture means that many communities face the challenges of attracting and retaining young people, keeping older producers in the community and developing strategies that will help producers take advantage of value-added and diversification opportunities. Each of these challenges is significant and each needs more information and research.

One overarching issue for producers, as well as rural communities, is the identification of the gaps and deficiencies in services, program supports and resources that can help producers and their families carry out rural adaptation plans – specifically adaptation, succession and transition. From March until December of this year, WESTARC researchers will investigate these gaps and deficiencies in programs and services from a variety of perspectives.

At the onset of the investigation, researchers asked a key group of program and service deliverers, producers and community members to identify existing and past

programs and services that were available to producers. This information formed the basis of interview questions to be used with individual agricultural producers in the next phase of the assessment. During the summer and into the fall, researchers will ask producers from across Manitoba and from various agricultural sectors to discuss their needs for rural adaptation as well as to identify gaps and deficiencies in existing services, program supports and resources. "This is a unique opportunity for those directly involved in farming to help identify the supports that are needed to stem the transition of farm families out of rural communities and help these communities maintain and attract new families," said Carl Cunningham, Project Director. "We anticipate a final report of the needs assessment by the end of December."

Funding partners for the project are the Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI) and Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. Rural stakeholders and community partners include the Manitoba Women's Institute and Keystone Agricultural Producers, with government partners Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Rural Secretariat. For more information on the project, contact Mr. Carl Cunningham, Project Director, at (204) 571-8553.

RDI Partners with Carleton University

RDI was selected by Carleton University to be a regional representative on the Prairies for its Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP). Activities in which RDI could be involved include:

- identifying initiatives coming from Community Economic Development (CED) organizations that have the potential of applying to CEDTAP;
- promoting CEDTAP's programs and activities at seminars, conferences and other public meetings; and
- playing a pro-active role to select key professional resources in the CED regional community that could benefit the CEDTAP program.

RDI will also act in an advisory capacity to CEDTAP on different issues concerning rural economic development. Through this new collaboration, both Brandon University and Carleton University hope to create opportunities for joint research on CED as it relates to rural development.

CEDTAP began in 1997 as a response to the challenges faced by community groups engaged in CED, including geographic isolation and limited access to technical advice and expertise. CEDTAP's mission is to enhance the legitimacy and effectiveness of

community-based organizations engaged in community economic development by supporting activities that will strengthen their capacities and increase the visibility, knowledge, coherence and resources of the CED sector as a whole in cooperation with other organizations with similar interests.

With a \$3 million grant from the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the program set out to provide community-based organizations with access to a network of professional CED practitioners. Now in its second phase, CEDTAP aims to assist 500 communities across Canada by 2006. The J.W. McConnell Family Foundation is also funding phase two with a \$5 million grant that will be matched through sponsorships from other foundations, corporations and government.

CEDTAP is managed by the Centre for the Study of Training, Investment and Economic Restructuring (CSTIER) in the Faculty of Public Affairs and Management, Carleton University, in Ottawa.

Ray Funk and Shirley Falstead are CEDTAP's Regional Program Coordinators for the Prairies. Ray and Shirley co-own Spruce River Research. Ray has twenty years experience as a practitioner, consultant and researcher specializing in CED, adult education and

Department of Rural Development

RDI works closely with many Brandon University faculty and departments but none more closely than with the Department of Rural Development (DRD). Presented here is information on some of the current activities of the department's members.

Dr. Doug Ramsey Involved in National Study

Dr. Doug Ramsey, Assistant Professor in the Department of Rural Development, recently completed fieldwork in the Rural Municipality of Rhineland for a national study. New Rural Economy (NRE) is a 5-year research and education program designed to look at rural issues. The aim of the NRE project is to discover which communities are dealing well with economic changes as well as those that are struggling with economic changes and why. In Manitoba, staff from Brandon University are managing the NRE project.

Dr. Ramsey's fieldwork examined changes in a range of areas including employment, health care services, community services, and the use of the Internet via a survey instrument. The survey also gave respondents the opportunity to discuss their "hopes for the future of Rhineland" and to describe what they felt was the most important thing that their community should be attempting "to achieve over the next few years."

"Coordinating a survey of 148 households during the summer in an agricultural region never proves to be an easy task," stated Ramsey, "however, with the assistance of a local caller in the community of Altona, we contacted more than 800 households using a systematic sampling technique and were successful in achieving the desired sample size of 148." Even with four research assistants conducting the interviews, the survey took from July 11 to August 8 to complete. The data will be compiled along with the other 19 sites across the country. The national sample is hoped to be of the order of 2,100 households.

The next step of the Manitoba-based research project is to conduct key informant interviews with selected individuals throughout Rhineland in order to gauge community capacity. This qualitative survey will ascertain Rhineland's natural, social and human capital. It is hoped that a model of community capacity can be developed based on the findings.

DRD Faculty

The Department of Rural Development at BU was established in 1999. The department offers programs focused on rural studies and rural development that are unique to Western Canada.

Members of the department include:

Dr. Richard Rounds, Professor, Chairperson
Dr. Robert Annis, Associate Professor
Dr. Gabe Ferrazzi, Associate Professor
Dr. Doug Ramsey, Assistant Professor

Update on the Department of Rural Development's Distributed Learning Efforts

In June 2001 Dr. Gabe Ferrazzi, Department of Rural Development (DRD), presented a lessons learned paper titled *Creating the Conditions for an Institutional Approach in Distributed Learning: The Experience of the Department of Rural Development, Brandon University* in Vancouver at the WebCT conference - *Transforming the Educational Experience*. The WebCT conference revealed the amazing speed with which WebCT and similar platforms are being adopted by Canadian universities and universities abroad. The WebCT began as a tool to enhance on-campus offerings, but it is increasingly used for distributed learning (also known as distance education) environments, and entire programs are beginning to emerge with WebCT as the cornerstone platform.

At Brandon University, DRD is now only one of several units testing or using WebCT. Design capability and technical support to use the multi-media potential of WebCT are two areas needing greater support campus-wide. The support already received from the BU administration and the Province of Manitoba (through Intergovernmental Affairs) has brought the DRD to the point where it can present its strategic plans for distributed learning to the Faculty of Arts and the President's Office.

With confirmation of institutional support, particularly around resources, the DRD will soon announce its intention to fully launch its online graduate level programs by 2003/2004. "If all of the pieces fall together properly," said Ferrazzi, "the BU-DRD online program also may be connected with a Canada-wide consortium to deliver an online program for domestic and international learners."

Dr. Doug Ramsey of the DRD will be developing two courses—Rural Tourism and Rural Resource Development—over the 2001/2002 academic year, bringing the DRD online offerings to five regular courses.

After the presentation of his lessons learned paper at the WebCT Conference, Dr. Ferrazzi was asked to submit his paper for publication in *The Technology Source*, an electronic journal focusing on technology in education. The submission will be reviewed and, if accepted, will be published in an upcoming 2001 journal.

For More Information:

Email: depruraldevelop@brandonu.ca

Website: www.brandonu.ca/academic/ruraldevelopment

RDI and WESTARC Conducting Leafy Spurge Field Research

RDI and WESTARC are directing four research projects focusing on the monitoring and release of spurge beetles (genus *Aphthona*) as a cost effective, long-term solution to control and prevent the spread of leafy spurge. Introduced to North America from Europe in the early 1800's, leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*) has proven to be a highly invasive and difficult plant to control.

The second year of RDI field research consisted of monitoring 20 bio-control sites throughout Manitoba to determine what factors inhibit or support beetle survival in this province. Pauline Morton, RDI field researcher, visited each site three times throughout the season, beginning on June 25th and finishing on August 2nd. Morton collected and counted leafy spurge flea beetles (*A. lacertosa*) using sweep nets and a modified leaf blower. She also recorded vegetative data, including stem counts of spurge. Five of the 20 sites are successful bio-control sites, while the other sites have poor to fair populations of beetles.

WESTARC Group received support from the Covering New Ground Program (CNG) to collect baseline data sets and release spurge beetles for five agricultural producers in two Manitoba agriculture regions. It is hoped bio-control measures designed to fight leafy spurge will increase the forage production of the respective properties.



Collecting leafy spurge density data

"The landowners are extremely frustrated by the expense and short-lived effectiveness of the more traditional means of control, such as burning or spraying," said Jennifer Pachkowski, project field

researcher. "They're enthusiastic about the bio-control project and we hope to see very positive results." For their part, the producers will continue to monitor the spread and occurrence of new patches of leafy spurge that may appear.

Public education and awareness continues to be an important component of the control of leafy spurge. WESTARC will develop an Integrated Pest Management (IPM) manual for agricultural landowners and producers, an educational activity also supported by CNG.

WESTARC is also conducting research funded by Environment Canada under the Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk (SAR). The project concentrates on bio-control of leafy spurge in support of recovery of species at risk, such as, Western spiderwort, and the Small white lady's slipper. Leafy spurge is infesting valuable habitat space in two of the species at risk sites being monitored by researchers. Pachkowski collected baseline data for the sites and released beetles at one site.

Project researchers traveled to Minot, North Dakota on two occasions to collect beetles for release this year. These beetles were used for the CNG initiative and also for the establishment of two nurse sites, a large population of beetles that can be used for collection and distribution.

The RDI field research is funded, in part, under the Matching Industry Initiative program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. The Covering New Ground Program is administered by Manitoba Agriculture and Food.



Releasing leafy spurge flea beetles

RDI Partners with Carleton University

training, strategic planning, tourism, government relations, socio/environmental assessments and conflict resolution. Shirley Falstead has spent the past ten years working with communities and has experience in the areas of project management, board training, facilitating workshops, feasibility studies, research and analysis, policy development, proposal writing, environmental assessments, organizational needs assessments and working with funding agencies to leverage resources.

For more information about CEDTAP, please visit <http://www.carleton.ca/cedtap>.

Ray Funk or Shirley Falstead, Regional Program Coordinators for the Prairies, can be contacted at Spruce River Research, Box 63, Spruce Home, Saskatchewan, S0J 2N0, Tel: (306) 764-7903, Fax: (306) 764-8508, Email: prairies-patdec@cedtap.com.

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SRMIS: Out of the Box Thinking

'Out of the box' is an expression that describes non-conformist, creative thinking. Although the origin of the term is unknown to us, in the fast-paced world of information technology, employers often say they are looking for someone who "thinks out of the box."

This demand for a shift in thinking exists beyond business. It is a critical issue in rural communities which are undergoing unprecedented changes and are faced with complex social, environmental and economic challenges (i.e., downturn in rural communities, loss of traditional industries, environmental degradation, etc.) as well as emerging opportunities (i.e., information and other technologies, tourism, community renewal, etc.). Fostering the innovative culture and creative minds to support communities is a key ingredient in community development and is critical to community sustainability. How to foster this, in itself, requires "out of the box thinking."

Since 1996, the Sustainable Resource Management Information System (SRMIS – pronounced sir-miss) has existed as a student working group under the auspices of the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University. SRMIS has brought creative insight into the use of Internet technologies into more than 34 community-based and community-driven partnership projects. These projects have had the involvement of various academic departments, included three levels of government and existed in partnership with many community serving organizations in Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta.

SRMIS projects are based on the work of students and recently graduated students from Brandon University. Students gain knowledge of community development through a mentorship process provided by these community-based projects. These technology-related

projects have included both rural and urban communities with the goal of enabling communities to become more proactive with the use of Internet technologies. These supports provide direct benefits to communities as they make the connection between the economic, social and environmental pressures that are affecting them. SRMIS's technological design philosophy works towards community-driven solutions, which align with community requirements and government supports. These combined development efforts are resulting in more efficient identification of new community resources needs, including technology and tools, and more innovative and constructive partnerships between different sectors and interests, public/private, citizens and government.

Examples of SRMIS projects include: Northern Visions Regional Round Table (see www.northernvision.ca) a community development initiative lead by the Rural Development Institute's Community Collaboration Project; the Seniors Resource Network (see www.seniors.ca) is a seniors' initiated support network lead by Creative Retirement Manitoba; and Community Connections (see www.communityconnections.mb.ca) a Federal-Provincial initiative providing over 220 new public access opportunities to rural Manitoba, which include the use of CIM Web site development tools, a combined innovation of many SRMIS projects.

In addition to the success of SRMIS projects for the public sector, the experience of working in an innovative technology team setting has resulted in the creative thinking that employers often say they are looking for in students—someone who "thinks out of the box."

For more information on SRMIS, their current or past projects or partnership opportunities, visit their website at srmis.brandonu.ca or contact them at (204) 727-7418.

Community Development Corporation's Annual Conference

The Manitoba Community Development Corporation Association (MCDCA) will be hosting the Community Economic Development Conference on October 26, 27 and 28, 2001 in Winnipeg. The conference, *Motivating Manitoba: Community Passion – An Opportunity for Development*, is aimed at all community development practitioners and volunteers who work through CDCs and other related developmental agencies. Participants will be welcomed to the conference by the Honourable Jean Friesen, Deputy Premier/Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, His Worship, Mayor Glenn Murray, and MCDCA Chairperson, Ed Brethour.

The conference will focus on three main themes: Preparation, Implementation and Cooperation. The agenda consists of a number of sessions, including MCDCA Community Loan Management Workshop,

Training and Skill Development of Community Members and Identifying Local Resource Opportunities.

Ernesto Sirolli has been confirmed as one of the keynote speakers. For the last 28 years, Mr. Sirolli has worked in Europe, Africa, Australia, New Zealand, Canada and the U.S.A. in the field of local economic development. Mr. Sirolli is the founder of the Sirolli Institute, an international nonprofit organization that teaches community leaders how to establish and maintain Enterprise Facilitation projects in their communities.

RDI has been working with the organizing committee to assist with conference development and coordination. Other partners include Community Futures Partners of Manitoba, Conseil de Développement Économique des Municipalités Bilingues du Manitoba, and Manitoba Regional Development Corporations.

Now Available from RDI: Brandon and Area Labour Market Information

A set of seven reports that document both a current and projected profile of the labour force in Brandon and area is now available through the Rural Development Institute.

The Summary Report provides a synthesis of data and information. Supplementary reports provide compilations of more detailed information on towns, villages, rural municipalities and First Nations reserves in southwestern Manitoba. The supplementary reports are: *Community Profiles*, *Labour Force by Gender and Occupation*, *Population Information; Mobility, Employment and Educational Levels*; and *Details of the Metis Population of Southwest Manitoba*. There is also a detailed report of the pertinent sources of labour force information at the regional, provincial and national levels.

The project was initiated by a number of member agencies of the Westman Training Council. Partners in the project included Assiniboine Community College, Human Resources Development Canada, Manitoba Education and Training, Southwest Regional Manitoba Metis Federation, and the Rural Development Institute. The goal of the project was to document both a current and projected profile of the labour force in the area.

Please contact the Rural Development Institute at (204) 571-8515 for more information.

RDI's Newest Publications

Over the past several months, RDI has put the final touches on a number of working papers and discussion documents. These include the following occasional papers: *A Discourse Analysis of Policy Concerning Seniors and Aging* by Bryan Massam and Raymond Garrison, *Final Report of Year 1 of the Leafy Spurge Project* by Pauline Morton and *No Time Left for Me: A Reality Check on the Impact of Government Policies on Women's Caregiving Work* by Mary Annis. These documents will be available soon in .pdf format on RDI's website at www.brandonu.ca/rdi.

Nearing completion is the Community Adjustment Handbook, a comprehensive, practical and easy-to-use outline of processes that will help Community Adjustment Committees develop effective, community-based action plans. Complementing the handbook is a *Toolkit of Resources*, a collection of print materials that have been selected specifically for their appropriateness to community adjustment, as well as their application to Manitoba communities. RDI, as well as Manitoba Labour and Immigration, Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines, and Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs have provided funding and guidance for the project. Contact the RDI office at (204) 571-8515 for more information on the availability of the Handbook and Toolkit.

In addition to these publications, researchers working on the Rural Health Research Project have prepared a number of discussion documents and working papers available through the Rural Health Research Project website: <http://rhrp.brandonu.ca>.

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