



Rural Report

Director's Message

I am pleased with the diversity of projects and people engaged in activities at the Rural Development Institute, as indicated in this issue of Rural Report and in the Special Issue on Health. Projects have engaged over two dozen communities in Manitoba, from Wabowden to Killarney, Virden to Churchill.

In this issue of Rural Report:

- A DRD Master's student is engaged in studying the Regional Round Table process in Manitoba.
- RDI, on behalf of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group, hosted a tour and research discussion in June, bringing together faculty from Brandon University and other researchers to focus on issues of common concern.

*Robert C. Annis, PhD
Director, RDI*

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Presentation to Cabinet

Manitoba's senior bureaucrats and cabinet ministers are interested in rural and agro-Manitoba. That was the message Dr. Doug Ramsey received after presenting to over 100 government officials this past March in Winnipeg.

Dr. Ramsey was invited to present issues surrounding rural research at a government research information session co-sponsored by Brandon University and the departments of Advanced Education, and Education, Training and Youth.

"These information sessions are similar to Breakfast on the Hill in Ottawa," Dr. Ramsey said. An initiative of the Human and Social Sciences Federation of Canada, Breakfast on the Hill began in 1994 to communicate pertinent research information with the Canadian Government.

The objectives of the Manitoba sessions were threefold: to provide a forum to share research information, to provide government officials with important social and economic research relevant to the Province of Manitoba and to provide interdepartmental access to research findings.

"It's basically having university faculty invited to talk about subjects that are of interest to



Dr. Doug Ramsey

the government," Dr. Ramsey said.

He said that the provincial government wanted to know some of the rural initiatives that were occurring. His talk focused on the changing condition of rural communities and environments, providing Manitoba examples of change and response in rural areas.

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Labyrinth of Peace

by **Deatra Walsh**
Outreach Coordinator



On August 10, 2002, Brandon's newest tourist attraction and spiritual haven opened its doors, or rather its stones, to the city.

As rain threatened overhead, at least 100 faculty, staff, students, community members and political representatives admired Brandon University's Labyrinth of Peace and walked its circular, spiritual path.

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Director's Message

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- The Labyrinth of Peace is a project assisted by the BU Community Outreach Service, which is housed at RDI.
- The RDI Professional Development Series is being launched with an introductory workshop on Program Evaluation.
- Community Futures Partners of Manitoba and the Manitoba Community Development Corporation Association's conference *Motivating Manitoba: Strategies for Community Success* brought community partners together from across the Province on September 27-28. At this conference, a Master of Rural Development student met with two Community Development Corporations and representatives of Western Economic Development to help build a means of measuring community development at the CFDC level, and I facilitated a board development workshop for Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) volunteer board members and staff.

Held in conjunction with the Manitoba CF/CDC conference was the National Community Economic Development Conference (CED), *Strengthening Community-Led Innovation*, hosted by the Canadian CED Network and the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP). Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant, Department of Rural Development faculty member, outlined Brandon University's Master of Rural Development program and related academic resources at a forum on CFD Education.

I was delighted that The Honorable Jean Friesen, Deputy Premier and Minister for Intergovernmental Affairs, proclaimed September 23-29, 2002 Community Development Week in Manitoba. ■



RDI's Professional Development Series

RDI launches its 2002/03 Professional Development Series with An Introduction to Program Evaluation. Gerry Kaplan of Kaplan and Associates will deliver the day-long workshop on Monday, November 4, 2002.

As more public, private and not-for-profit agencies and institutions place increased emphasis on the results of programs and services they deliver, this one-day workshop will provide participants with heightened understanding and appreciation of the value of pro-

gram evaluations.

The workshop will cover several aspects of program evaluations, including:

- exploring the value and applications of evaluations;
- evaluation methods, when to apply each, and what they can tell you about your programs and services;
- logic models, their uses, and how to develop one;
- characteristics and attributes to look for when selecting an evaluator;
- emerging trends in evaluation technology and processes; and
- developing an evaluation framework hands-on approach.

Gerry Kaplan has 15 years of experience providing research and evaluation

services, primarily working with the public and not-for-profit sectors. He was Co-ordinator of Research and Information Systems with the Addictions Foundation of Manitoba for 10 years and, before that, he was an Evaluation Specialist with the Province of Manitoba.

Dr. Kenneth C. Bessant, Associate Researcher with RDI and Department of Rural Development faculty member, is coordinating the RDI Professional Development Series 2002-03.

For further information about this workshop or other events in the Professional Development Series, please contact Bev Lischka at 204-571-8515 or lischkab@brandonu.ca; Ken Bessant 204-571-8516 or bessant@brandonu.ca; Bob Annis 204-571-8513 or annis@brandonu.ca. ■

Presentation to Cabinet

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"I wanted to illustrate the type of work I was engaged in that was having an impact on rural and small town Manitoba," he said. "I started out with a model to explain condition, which is synonymous with health and sustainability, and then provided examples that applied to this model."

Dr. Ramsey covered research on urban (re) development in Brandon, the role of wildlife habitat in agro ecosystem health, rural health, community revitalization and sustainability in southern Manitoba, as well as strategies to cope with change. In Manitoba, this includes both agricultural diversification and the diversification of economic activities to include such things as tourism.

The 45-minute presentation was made twice, first to cabinet officials and then to a larger crowd, including senior bureaucrats and general government employees.

"Dr. Ramsey's session received more requests from the department staff to attend than we could accommodate," said Jean Britton, acting director of the research and planning branch in Manitoba Education, Training and Youth. "Over 100 people attended from a wide range of departments," she added, saying

that the session received a high evaluation rating.

"The reception was positive at both meetings. The cabinet ministers had very pointed questions," Dr. Ramsey said,

“The objectives of the Manitoba sessions were threefold: to provide a forum to share research information, to provide government officials with important social and economic research relevant to the Province of Manitoba and to provide interdepartmental access to research findings.”

adding that they specifically wanted to know if models existed to deal with the allocation of services to dwindling rural populations.

Scott Smith, MLA for Brandon West and then Minister of Consumer and Corporate Affairs, expressed his interest in the session as well as Dr. Ramsey's work.

"Doug Ramsey clearly has a wealth of knowledge related to rural life. His presentation showcased the need for a balance between sustainability, economic development and quality of life in our rural communities," Mr. Smith said. "For policy makers the research that Doug has presented is valuable because he is able to approach broad themes using timely and local examples from our own province."

Survey data collected at the second meeting indicates that 60 per cent of the respondents were satisfied with the topic and content of the lecture. Written comments suggested that while current research is informative, there is still much to do.

"I highlighted my research to show what one person is doing," Dr. Ramsey said, adding that it was a broad-brush approach to a number of different areas. "I probably received a dozen queries afterward from people wanting more information."

Dr. Ramsey said that if he had the chance, he would do it again, although he indicated that he would focus the talk on one subject such as rural tourism or agricultural diversification.

He might have that chance. Given the success of the research sessions and their positive reception from government employees, Ms. Britton indicated that they intend to organize more sessions beginning in the fall. ■

Survey to Provide Signposts for CDC Growth

by Roger Newman

Manitoba's 92 Community Development Corporations will soon know what each of them is doing and where they are headed.

This information should be available to them late this year after Brandon University's Rural Development Institute (RDI) completes the first comprehensive report on the activities of CDCs belonging to the Manitoba Community Development Association (MCDA).

Kenneth Bessant, an associate professor in the university's department of rural development, has been toiling since spring to design a survey form and formula for follow-up analysis that will shed a light on the CDCs and their

projects across the province. In mid-August, he was on the verge of mailing the printed survey to CDC chairpersons across the province.

"It is fairly detailed with 15 pages of questions," Bessant said. "When the replies are returned, we'll start the analysis and break down the results in a report. But how quickly this gets done will depend on how fast the information comes back to us."

Bessant said the report will contain a "vast range of things," starting with basic information on the names and addresses of individual CDCs and their contact people. It will include a section on their activities and give a sense of what they might do in future. In addition, they will be asked what assistance and training

“The plan is to build a comprehensive profile of Manitoba's CDCs — how they operate and what are their requirements. It will also point to where their futures may lie.”

they need to accomplish their goals and objectives.

"The plan is to build a comprehensive profile of Manitoba's CDCs — how they *continued on page 4*

Survey on CDC Growth

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operate and what are their requirements," he said. "It will also point to where their futures may lie."

Bessant said the report will be useful to CDC officials who only have a sketchy idea of the functions and activities of their counterparts across the province. "It may open their eyes to things they haven't thought about," he said. "The timing is right because community development is really taking off."

He also said the report will be useful to CDC clients and government and development officials at all levels. "It is not just an in-house report because it could be an instrument in helping to develop national and provincial policies."

Dr. Robert Annis, head of the institute, said the RDI is anticipating publication of an interim report in September and the final report in November or December. Like Bessant, he stresses the multi-uses of the report as a directory, planning document and future guide for the CDC movement and its partners.

"All CDCs are not alike and there is no overview of them at present," he said. "This survey will raise their profiles and provide a snap shot of where they are and where they want to be."

Ed Brethour, MCDA past-chair and head of the Hamiota CDC, said the report will enhance the association's database and acquaint CDCs with each other and their ideas.

"We're also going to use it as a promotional tool," he said. "It will be posted on our web site and people will be able to get a one stop look at Manitoba's CDCs." ■

*This article first appeared in the Manitoba Community Development Corporation Association's publication *The Motivator* (Vol. 3 Issue 1, p. 8) and is reprinted with permission from the MCDCA and the author.

RDI Works with the NCEDC Learning for Life Project



**by Karen Rempel
Research Associate, RDI**

The Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (NCEDC) is comprised of six participating communities – Deloraine, Neepawa, Rosburn, Russell, Souris and Swan River. As a Network, the NCEDC's aim is to maximize the effectiveness of entrepreneurial and enterprise development resources in its member communities.

At the present time, the primary activities of the NCEDC focus on the Learning for Life (NCEDC-LFL) Project, a three-year innovative pilot project (2000-2003) funded by the Office of Learning Technologies, Industry Canada, Manitoba Education, Training and Youth, and Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs. The aim of the project is to promote a lifelong learning culture in its member communities primarily through the use of technology.

Early in January of 2002, the Board of the NCEDC sought technical assistance from the Rural Development Institute to conduct an interim and final evaluation of the project. Since that time, Karen Rempel, research associate with RDI, has provided the NCEDC Board, project coordinator and community facilitators

with observations, recommendations and assistance with professional development opportunities on lifelong learning.

Rempel, a PhD student in Adult, Community and Higher Education at the University of Calgary and an advocate of lifelong learning, is very excited about the project. "Lifelong learning holds tremendous potential for rural community development. A more highly educated population is more productive, more economically and socially stable and healthier. Rural commu-

nities can reap tremendous benefits by promoting a learning community."

Project coordinator Laurie Crowe, from Deloraine,

adds, "Learning for Life

projects and activities are intended to add incremental value to an individual's skills and abilities. These skills and abilities can be used in the community to improve productivity, foster entrepreneurial activities or encourage new community leaders."

In addition to RDI's involvement with the evaluation of the project, Dr. Doug Ramsey, from the Department of Rural Development, is helping the NCEDC develop a framework and indicators that community facilitators can use to assess the impact of the Learning for Life activities. The NCEDC Learning for Life project will conclude in December 2003. ■

Learning
for Life

Leafy Spurge Tour and Research Discussion

by **Jennifer Pachkowski**
Field Technician

On June 20, 2002, the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group, coordinated by Brandon University's Rural Development Institute, hosted a leafy spurge tour and research discussion. This event was well attended by members of Manitoba Agriculture and Food, the University of Manitoba, and representatives from the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group. Brandon University faculty members Dr. Robin Marles and Dr. Bill Paton (Botany) and retired professor Mr. Al Rogosin also participated.

The purpose of this day was to identify areas where leafy spurge research is needed, as well as to increase interest in finding a solution to the problem.

The morning began with a tour of vari-



ous leafy spurge control sites around Brandon. These included a bio-control release site, a visit to a multi-species grazing pasture (the goats proved very popular), as well as integrated management research plots. Brief introductory speeches given at each site were followed by questions and lively conversation surrounding the control measures.

Prior to the research discussion in the afternoon, Dr. Paul McCaughey presented the Strategic Analysis of Leafy Spurge Control Options for the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group Research Committee. Dr. McCaughey is a beef pasture management researcher from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Brandon.

There were also presentations on current research and control efforts in Alberta and Saskatchewan. Dr. Rob Bourchier, an entomologist with Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada in Lethbridge, Alberta, spoke of his research with leafy spurge flea beetles and the results of his programs. Dr. Garry Bowes, coordinator of the Saskatchewan Integrated Noxious Weeds Management Program, emphasized an integrated management containment and exclusion method for landowners, which is proving effective in Saskatchewan.

The research discussion also proved fruitful, with many new ideas exchanged and discussed. Specific areas for research



were pinpointed, and agencies that should be contacted for support and education were identified. Everyone contributed his or her thoughts on how to achieve a coordinated provincial leafy spurge control effort.

Even though the field season is winding down, we hope to keep up the interest in leafy spurge management through the winter. The Rural Development Institute and the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG) will be setting up displays and giving presentations at venues such as Ag Days and the Manitoba Grazing School. And on January 16 and 17, 2003, the LSSG will host a Leafy Spurge Forum for producers and municipal councillors as well as researchers. Keep posted to the Leafy Spurge Web site at www.brandonu.ca/rdi for further information on this major event. ■

Community Outreach Coordinator: Deatra Walsh, B.A. (Honours)

Deatra Walsh holds a B.A. in Honours (Sociology) from Concordia University and is currently enrolled in the Master's of Rural Development Program at Brandon University. She is also working as the Brandon University Community Outreach Coordinator.

After working as a research assistant for the New Rural Economy project at Concordia for two years, Deatra developed an interest in rural community response to change, community capacity, power relations and social cohesion. As a rural Newfoundlander, Deatra concentrated her honours thesis on a Newfoundland fishing community's

cohesiveness and ability to revitalize in the post-Northern Cod Moratorium period.

She plans to continue her work with resource communities in Newfoundland, as well as those in Manitoba. Her other research interests include marginalized cultures, Newfoundland identity, ethnographic research methodology and social theory.

Through her work as the Outreach Coordinator, Deatra hopes to increase the service's visibility, forge new relationships with students, faculty and communities, and learn more about prairie life. ■



Walking on a Spiritual Path: Labyrinth Open to Public

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Under the direction of Dr. Alison Marshall, assistant professor in BU's religion department, the labyrinth began as a \$2,000 community outreach project with Brandon's Riverbank Inc. in April 2001.

Today, the project has blossomed into a major collaborative effort that has involved four students, local businesses, residents and religious groups. Over \$20,000 has been raised in monetary and in-kind support from 16 contributors around the city to construct the labyrinth's wheel-like walking path is located in Assiniboine Riverbank Area, across from Kirkcaldy School and to the West of Red River Trail.

From the project's onset, Riverbank Inc. supported the labyrinth's location and construction in the Riverbank Area.

According to Dr. John Everitt, president of Riverbank Inc., agreeing to partner the project was easy.

Dr. Marshall said that after Riverbank Inc.'s support, media coverage and a lot of hard work, the project gained

momentum.

"As more people learned about the project and as we got a plan with specific details of what the labyrinth would look like, the size, and the materials we needed, more people became interested," she said.

The labyrinth occupies a plot of land 50 feet by 50 feet donated by the City of Brandon through Riverbank Inc. It features 10 colourful stained glass religious

icons, embedded in cement and mounted on small pillars. Stepping stones, molded out of concrete and surrounded by crushed stone, will form the outer circle of the labyrinth, and form the five paths that meet at its center.

The original labyrinths, which were Christian in origin and built in the 1200s, had a spiritually significant centre. The journey to the centre and out again acted as a sacred pilgrimage so

“ **The original labyrinths, which were Christian in origin and built in the 1200s, had a spiritually significant centre. The journey to the centre and out again acted as a sacred pilgrimage so that Christians could become closer to God.** ”

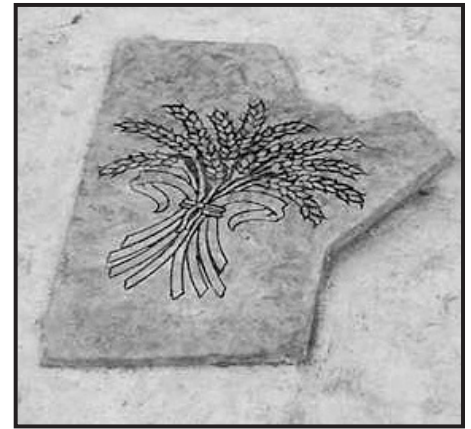
that Christians could become closer to God.

Since Dr. Marshall's labyrinth represents 10 different religions, it became more difficult to select a symbol for the centre. She chose a wheat sheaf because of its importance to prairie life.

"The wheat sheaf represents the social, economic and cultural importance of wheat in the lives of people in this region."

Explanations for the sheaf and the 10 other symbols are featured on a sign at the entrance to the labyrinth. Dr. Marshall also plans on publishing small books, to be sold at the Riverbank Discovery Centre, that explain the symbols and the history of the 10 religious groups in Brandon.

Dr. Marshall said the labyrinth basically began as a whim that simply mushroomed. A native of Toronto, world trav-



eler and specialist in Chinese religions, she has been exposed to multiculturalism and knows the importance of religious tolerance. After teaching several courses at BU, she realized the city's own multicultural nature.

"You wouldn't think that in Brandon, there are so many religions, but there are. Even though there aren't churches, people still find ways to practice their religion," she said.

The Labyrinth of Peace Project highlights Baha'i, Buddhism, Christianity, Daoism, Earth Religions, Hinduism, Islam, Judaism, Native Religions, and Sikhism. When asked about the response of groups featured by the labyrinth, Dr. Marshall replied that they have been very helpful in the endeavour.

"For the lesser known groups, they're quite happy to see something of this nature representing them," she said.

For Dr. Everitt, the labyrinth will add to the appeal of the Riverbank Area. Each season, thousands of tourists visit the area and while Dr. Everitt was unsure whether the labyrinth would draw in large numbers of new tourists to the area, he did say it would act as an additional attraction to what is already there.

"I think it will fill in a piece of the puzzle. It will be interesting for people walking through," he said and added, "It will be one more thing to draw people to the riverbank and the more people down there, the better it is for us."

Dr. Marshall says she has been lucky to have the community's support, particularly that of Dr. Everitt. She says that without his help, the labyrinth could not have been possible.

And now it is. Just over a year after Dr. Marshall's whim of creating something symbolic and interesting in Brandon, the Labyrinth of Peace has become a reality. ■



Is Brandon a Child and Youth Friendly Community?

by **Elicia Funk**
Coordinator, Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities, Brandon

This question is being addressed by the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities in Brandon.

Brandon is one of six sites investigating the opportunities and challenges

urban Prairie communities, especially Aboriginal communities, experience in supporting the healthy development of their children and youth. By conducting research about the issues and challenges facing children and youth in Brandon and by engaging young

people and their families, it is hoped that we can discover ways that families, communities, service providers and governments can address these challenges.

Brandon University's School of Health Studies is the lead partner in Brandon and is represented by Dr. D. Noreen Ek. Elicia Funk from the Rural Development Institute serves as the Project Coordinator.

A wide network of community organizations help to guide the Centre of Excellence's activities in Brandon.

Child and Youth Issues in Brandon

A review of community literature and initial face-to-face community consultations have identified a number of issues that influence child and youth well-being and are of particular concern to the residents and service workers in Brandon. Some of these issues include:

- Available activities for youth
- Affordability and availability of housing
- Affordable recreational activities
- Low income and poverty
- Racism
- Supported housing for youth
- Access to childcare
- Loss of identity among Aboriginal youth
- Public awareness of child issues
- Need for alternative education services
- Need for preventative programs
- Youth employment
- Use of tobacco, alcohol and drugs
- Youth engaged in criminal activity
- Gap between youth and other segments of the community
- Child safety ■

Members of the Early Years Team and Brandon Youth Services Committee make up the main network, which provides input into the project.

The Centre undertook a review of community literature to help provide a background to understanding the well being of children and youth in Brandon. This series of community consultations with parents, youth and service providers has recently been completed. These

community consultations were used to gather input into Brandon as a community and its strengths and weaknesses in supporting children youth and families.

The information gathered through the literature review and

community consultations will be used to provide a focus for more detailed research activities which will be conducted in the next phase of the project. ■

“**These community consultations are being used to gather input into Brandon as a community and its strengths and weaknesses in supporting children, youth and families.**”



What is a Child and Youth Friendly Prairie Community?

Initial community consultations have helped to paint a picture of what a “child and youth friendly prairie community” would look like. Participants envisioned that such a community would have the following attributes:

- A safe and healthy place to be a child.
- Support is readily available for families and to raise a family.
- The community is aware of how to be child and youth friendly.
- Children and youth have things to do, regardless of age or income, at all times of year.
- The input of youth is valued and youth can speak with a united voice.
- Cultural diversity is celebrated.

Did you know?

- Children under 15 make up 20% of the Brandon population.
- An additional 14.8% of the population is 15 to 24 years of age.
- Brandon has a slightly higher than average number of lone parent families compared nationally.
- The average income of families is \$48,908 in Brandon, while lone parent families have an average income of \$25,787.
- Brandon has a growing Aboriginal population. In 1996 7.3% of Brandon's population was Aboriginal, compared to a national rate of 2.8%.
- In Manitoba, 1 of every 5 children under the age of 15 is Aboriginal. It is projected that by 2016 Aboriginal children could account for up to 25% of this age group.

Community Development Initiative Benefits Rural PEI

Charlottetown, PEI – The Province of Prince Edward Island is changing its approach to community development by implementing an initiative that will help rural areas coordinate community development at the local level. As part of “A New Partnership with Island Communities,” a Community Development Fund was established and six Community Development Officers hired to assist rural citizens in determining and implementing the most effective measures for strengthening their communities.

“At the very heart of our province, communities play a vital role in economic development,” stated Premier Binns. “Through this initiative, government will be in a better position to partner with communities in the development process, and the responsibility within government will be broadened to involve more departments.” The Premier added that this initiative follows through on the government’s pledge in the 1999 Budget Address to create a Community Development Fund to help rural PEI.

The focus of this community/government partnership will be to capitalize on the ideas and strengths within each individual community by helping citizens to identify the improvements that will bring long-term sustainability to the area. After citizens come to a consensus on what improvements need to be made, all provincial government departments will play a role in bringing about the changes needed to enhance and improve the economies of rural communities.

Four Provincial Ministers have joined together to form the Community Development Bureau, a cooperative partnership by the Province to involve a number of line departments to assist rural communities. These include the departments of Technology and Environment, Health and Social Services, Education, and Development.

“As a community recognizes its opportunities and challenges for development, it will be the residents who take an active leadership role to put together a community development plan which best suits the needs of their area,” said Don

MacKinnon, Minister of Development. “It is our role to provide them with the assistance they need to make informed choices regarding the future of their communities.”

This program will help citizens plan through and selectively choose improvement projects that will be the most effective for strengthening their area. As opposed to government responding to projects that are requested in a fragmented nature, this program will assist citizens to determine, as a group, the most important actions that the community can carry out to best sustain or strengthen their area.

A Bureau Chief and six Community Development Officers have been hired to spearhead and facilitate the implementation, and champion the community’s interest in a local improvement process. Community Development Officers will be located in each of the Regional Services Centres across the province including: Eastern Kings, Southern Kings and Queens, East Prince, West Prince and the Evangeline region, as well as one in Queens region. ■

MRD Student Profile: Wayne Kelly

Wayne Kelly is a Master’s student in the Rural Development (MRD) program at Brandon University. His focus is the diverse challenges and opportunities that affect community development within different global settings and cultures.

Wayne is working on a class project with another MRD student in Nunavut. The focus of this project will be on the recent Regional Round Table that was held in Northern Manitoba, and the potential application of this process in Nunavut. Wayne will take advantage of the training sessions in Northern Manitoba to interview participants in the Northern Regional Round Table and to gather data for his project. Data and knowledge gained through this trip will assist in the assessment and potential application of the Regional Round Table process.

Wayne also works with the university-

based working group, SRMIS. Through this group, Wayne is engaged in a number of projects with the Rural Development Institute. The most current project is the Community Connections initiative to create public access sites and community resource networks province-wide.

Wayne is specifically involved in the Information Technology guidance and training for communities and youth employees. He will be working with four regions around the province: three northern regions and the southwestern region. His role will be to train the Community Access Program Youth Initiative employees to use CIM-Tools and applications and to model the web site development process for them. In addition to working with the youth employees, Wayne will guide the communities through the graphics and content development

process in order to ensure that their web site accurately reflects their ideas and self-image. ■

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