



Rural Report

Director's Message

In this issue, I am very pleased to be able to introduce a number of people and projects that have developed ties to the Rural Development Institute. The group of individuals involved with RDI is ever-changing and constantly evolving, as can be seen by the articles within this newsletter.

From the changing membership of the RDI advisory group to my recent appointment to Rural Team Manitoba, the Rural Development Institute is continually able to make connections between diverse groups as an intermediary. Students at Brandon University are able to take advantage of these linkages through the RDI Internship Program, which provides them with a wide range of valuable experiences that coincide with and enrich their academic studies.

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New RDI Publications

In recent months, the Rural Development Institute (RDI) has published two new books and is preparing a new e-journal.

The first of the books, *The New Countryside: Geographic Perspectives on Rural Change* was co-edited by Dr. Ken Beesley of the Department of Rural Development. A collection of thirty papers from a 1999 international symposium in Halifax, the book is divided into five sections — Issues, Opportunities and Production; Reorienting Production and Services; Dimensions of Social Change; Policy, Programs and Social Issues; and The Evolving Rural-Urban Fringe — each of which are devoted to exploring a different aspect of the “new countryside.” This text is a joint publication between RDI and St. Mary's University.

Dr. Doug Ramsey, Chair of the Department of Rural Development, co-edited *The Structure and Dynamics of Rural Territories: Geographical Perspectives*.

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RDI Awarded Funding from National Green Cover Program

The Rural Development Institute has been awarded \$200,000 from the National Green Cover Program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to expand its Green Cover Program in the area of integrated pest management of leafy spurge.

Manitoba is the most severely infested province with leafy spurge — a highly competitive perennial weed species native to Europe that spreads rapidly in pastures and wildlife areas. Considered nearly impossible to eradicate, Manitoba has 340,000 acres affected with an estimated economic loss of \$20 million.

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New RDI Publications

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A collection of papers presented at the 2001 and 2002 Annual Meetings of the Canadian Association of Geographers, this book examines the wide array of changes affecting rural areas. RDI is the sole publisher of this book.

Both of these books may be purchased from the Rural Development office at Brandon University, or ordered online at www.brandonu.ca/rdi.

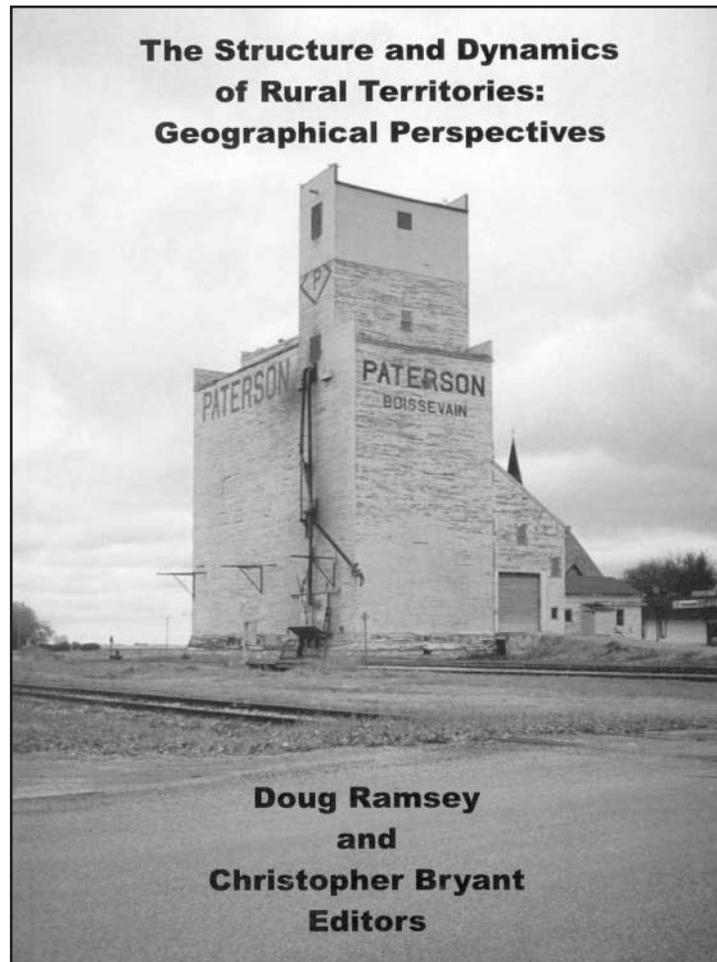
A new on-line journal — the *Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD)* — is also in development. This journal will provide a venue for academics to publish in the field of development studies in the rural and community arenas.

The *JRCD* will provide open access to all of its contents in order to better disseminate the research it publishes. Including standard editorials, regular refereed articles, and a book reviews section, the *JRCD* will also contain shorter refereed case study articles and pieces that analyze specific policies or programs that impact rural and small towns. Each issue will also include a list of recently completed theses and upcoming conference announcements.

The Editorial Advisory Board of the *JRCD* has been established and includes individuals from a number of geographical regions and areas of study. Such diversity serves to underline the range of subject areas that have been identified for publication in this journal.

Two issues per year are planned with the potential for the inclusion of special, themed issues.

The *JRCD* is located online at www.jrcd.ca. ■



Call for Proposals

The Brandon University Community Outreach Service is once again holding its annual call for proposals competition. The service assists with matching the needs of community organizations with the learning and research interests of university students and faculty. To assist the Outreach Service in attaining its goals, the Manitoba Department of Intergovernmental Affairs has provided funds for “community outreach” projects.

The objective of the Outreach funding is to provide financial support to the community service of faculty and students of Brandon University by assisting with costs associated with carrying out designated research projects that facilitate a greater collaboration and knowledge transfer between the resources of the University and the needs of the community.

Over the past few years, many worthy projects in a wide range of areas have been funded. If you have an idea for a project and would like to know more about the 2005 Annual Call for Proposals, please visit our website at <http://outreach.brandonu.ca>. ■

Rural Team Manitoba

Rural Team Manitoba (RTM) is a working group under the Rural Secretariat’s Canadian Rural Partnership — the key policy framework supporting federal rural policy efforts to date. The RTM is comprised of representatives of federal and provincial departments, other levels of government and community-serving organizations that have a shared interest in facilitating rural community development.

Through RTM, all stakeholders are encouraged to participate in building partnerships, networks and alliances to address key rural issues.

With the recent invitation to Dr. Robert Annis, Director of RDI to join RTM, the Rural Development Institute currently holds memberships status on Rural Team Manitoba. This relationship allows RDI to engage in meaningful dialogues regarding rural Manitoba and increases the effectiveness of its project development and management. ■

Health Care Access for Northern Residents

People in northern communities face a host of challenges ranging from isolation to severe climate. Not the least of these difficulties is distance to health care services. Research has shown that northern populations also tend to have higher incidences of chronic and infectious diseases including diabetes and tuberculosis.

In order to better understand the

details of the difficulties northern peoples face in attempting to access health care services, the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) has granted \$277,000 over three years to RDI under Dr. Robert Annis and co-applicants Dr. Fran Racher of the School of Health Studies at Brandon University and Dr. Bonnie Jeffery of the Faculty of Social Work, University of Regina and Research Faculty, Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit, Prince Albert Office.

Under the "Improving Health Care Access of Northern Residents" project, the researchers will explore access dimension of availability, accessibility, accommodation, affordability and acceptability. Input

and direction will be sought from a steering committee to be comprised of community members, health organizations and health service providers, as well as Manitoba Health, Saskatchewan Health and Health Canada.

Dr. Racher is thrilled with the announcement of funding. She explains, "For me, the excitement comes with talk-

“**For me, the excitement comes with talking with northern residents about their experiences in accessing health services and using that information to identify issues and barriers to access.**”

ing with northern residents about their experiences in accessing health services and using that information to identify issues and barriers to access.”

Outcomes of this project may include the adaptation of clinical practices and methods of service delivery as well as the development of new programs to improve northern residents' access to health

services.

"This project will be very interesting as we work with focus groups of northern people," says Racher, "to give meaning to how we understand the issues of access and generate 'made in the north' ideas and solutions to improve access to health services for northern people." ■



Fran Racher

Director's Message

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Our connections with a wide variety of organizations are what drive the internship program. Students such as Devron Kobluk, Osa Idehen and Betty Kelly become involved in the activities of RDI through our projects, such as the Determinants of Health and the Women's Enterprise Centre Projects.

These projects are a direct result of RDI's relationships with the Government of Manitoba -- in particular MAFRI (Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives); Rural Secretariat; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Health Canada; and Community Futures organizations. In addition, relationships have been forged between researchers at RDI and academics at other institutions. For example, RDI has recently undertaken a major health care initiative funded by the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) entitled Improving Health Care Access of Northern Residents.

Through the purposeful networking and collaborations as evidenced in the above example, the Rural Development Institute has been able to expand its work experience activities for MRD students.

Into this busy and exciting time, I welcome our new advisory committee members, researchers, partners and student interns. ■

*Robert C. Annis, PhD
Director, RDI*

Women's Enterprise Centre Project

Rural and Northern women have been faced with a wide range of issues over the years and many steps have been taken to address these matters. Of all these many concerns, the ones that appear most important to these women are health, education and economic issues. Government and community organizations have initiated programs to address many of these areas, but there remain some areas, and more issues continually appear.

In March 2004, Rural Team Manitoba identified the need to undertake research related to these changing needs of rural and northern women as a priority.

The "Changing Needs of Rural and Northern Women" project is under the direction and coordination of the Sub-Committee on Women, Rural Team Manitoba and the Rural Development Institute. The aim of this project is to examine: the issues affecting rural and northern women in Manitoba; the steps taken so far by government, organizations and individuals to address these identified areas; the impact of the implemented initiatives and the resultant changes in the lives of these women.

Two student interns were hired to assist with this research: Betty Kelly and

Osayanmo Idehen, both of whom are registered in the Masters of Rural Development program at Brandon University.

"My involvement in this project is to examine these issues from past to present and find the gaps and barriers that exist and recommend ways to address these new needs," states Osa. "As an intern student, this project means so much to me because it deals with women's issues which is one of my major research interests. Having worked with an NGO [non-government organization] concerned with women's status building and development in Nigeria, it gives me a broader view of women's lives and also a comparison between the African concerns and the Canadian concerns as it relates to meeting needs."

Betty agrees on the value of the project. "This project provides me with an opportunity to integrate my academic

studies with both my professional and personal interests," she says. "As a rural woman, as a cattle producer and as the Child Day Care Coordinator who has worked with women in rural and northern communities for many years, I find this project a natural fit."

Osa and Betty will be engaged in conducting a series of interviews and focus groups with different groups of women from various communities in Manitoba, with an

aim to have the necessary data collected by mid-December.

Based on the findings of this research, recommendations for changes or new initiatives will be made. ■

“**The aim of the project is to examine the issues affecting rural and northern women in Manitoba, the steps taken so far by the government, organizations and individuals to address these issues, the impact of these initiatives and the changes in the issues and life of these women.**”

Leafy Spurge

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This project builds upon RDI's work to date in the area of leafy spurge which includes monitoring of biocontrol, technology transfer activities and the coordination of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (a network of stakeholders in the province).

One of the primary goals of this project is to establish a network of stakeholders involved in leafy spurge control and containment across the western provinces. RDI's coordination of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders group has shown that this type of network is very effective at organizing cooperative efforts for the containment and control of leafy spurge.

RDI's Research Affiliate Karen Rempel

will manage the project, entitled "Integrated Pest Management Strategies for Leafy Spurge," with input

from Dr. Paul McCaughey, Brandon Research Station, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. ■



A marker shows a heavy-density patch of leafy spurge.

Devron Kobluk - Graduate Student Intern

Originally from a commercial cattle farm north of Inglis, Manitoba, Devron Kobluk graduated from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario with his undergraduate honors degree in Environmental Studies (Forest Conservation) in 2002.

Devron's undergraduate thesis focused on the conflicts occurring with Pikangikum First Nation during the proposed Whitefeather Forest Initiative. The thesis explored the interactions of the Pikangikum First Nation, Ontario Ministry of Natural Resources, Weyerhaeuser Canada, Partnership for Public Lands and the Ministry of Indian Affairs and Northern Development in the economic development of traditional land known as the Whitefeather Forest.

Following his graduation from Lakehead, Devron entered the workforce. "When I started working in the industry, it was the height of the soft-wood lumber dispute. All the jobs I could get were contracts, so I didn't feel very secure," he explains.

Lacking job security, Devron moved back to Manitoba where he started working for the Alonsa Conservation District. "For some reason, they had a brochure for the MRD [Master of Rural Development] program in the office. That was the first I had heard of the program."

"I liked the fact that the Masters program was rurally based and emphasized rural issues. Also, it was close to home, so I didn't have to travel three provinces over to further my education."

As a Masters of Rural Development student, Devron's academic research interests include how social capital and community capacity building can be incorporated in rural economic initia-

tives. These concepts are seen as a way to promote sustainability in ecosystem, health, education, and cooperative systems.

Involved with RDI as a graduate intern on the Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities Project, Devron finds his work and research interests share common ground.

"Not only have I seen these concepts at work in the projects I've been involved with, but also in the relationships between people in my academic and internship work.

This allows me to utilize the commonality among my work, academic and project environments."

Devron joined other students, Ryan Gibson, Katherine Pachkowski, and Tanis Horkey, on the Determinants of Health project. His role included working on the "Rural Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action" guidebook, which will be available to

communities early in 2005. He spent considerable time working on the toolkit section of this guide.

"This internship allows me an avenue to integrate academic activities into a productive working environment. It gives me practical experiences in the concepts we've learned in class. There's a synergy between the classes and the internship."

Other projects Devron has been involved with are the Manitoba Smart Network Database project and the Joint Co-operative Development project.

Upon completion of his Masters, Devron hopes to find a position with the provincial or federal government where he will be able to apply the knowledge and skills he acquired from his education and internship within a policy analyst position. ■



Devron Kobluk

“ **This internship allows me an avenue to integrate academic activities into a productive working environment. It gives me practical experiences in the concepts we've learned in class. There's a synergy between the classes and the internship.** ”

RDI Expands Office Area

Over the course of the summer, the Rural Development Institute relocated its premises from the Jeff Umphrey Centre to the Lower Concourse of McMaster Hall. Now sharing space with the Department of Rural Development, RDI's move will allow increased communication between the two groups.

As Dr. Annis explains, "Rural Development Institute and the Department of Rural Development, while distinct entities, share a number of research interests. RDI's move allows us to communicate and collaborate on these projects with more ease. As well, students enrolled in the Rural Development program are more aware of our presence and become more involved with our various projects."

With a new meeting room, offices for research affiliates and student interns, RDI's new location has proven to provide a collaborative environment. ■

RDI Advisory Committee

The RDI Advisory Committee is composed of representatives from a variety of constituencies. While each of these groups has a particular point of view, all are concerned with the idea of 'rural.'

This committee has recently undergone some changes. New to the committee are Peter Reimer, Acting Director, Community Cooperatives & Regional Development Initiatives and Mr. Larry Flynn, Regional Manager, Population Health Promotion, Health Canada.

RDI appreciates the time and energy put forward by those individuals who have sat on this committee in the past and wishes them well in their future endeavours.

Currently sitting on the Advisory Committee are:

Scott Grills, Chair

Dean of Arts, Brandon University

Peter Reimer

Community Cooperatives & Regional Development Initiatives

Reg Helwer

Shur-Gro Farm Services

Ben Maendel

Baker Colony

Jonathan Maendel

Baker Colony

Bill Pugh

Meyers, Norris & Penny

Fran Racher

School of Health Studies, Brandon University

Doug Ramsey

Department of Rural Development, Brandon University

Frank Thomas

Western Manitoba CIBC

Larry Flynn

Health Canada

Ray Simms

MTS Communications Inc.

Jeff Williams

VP Academic & Research, Brandon University

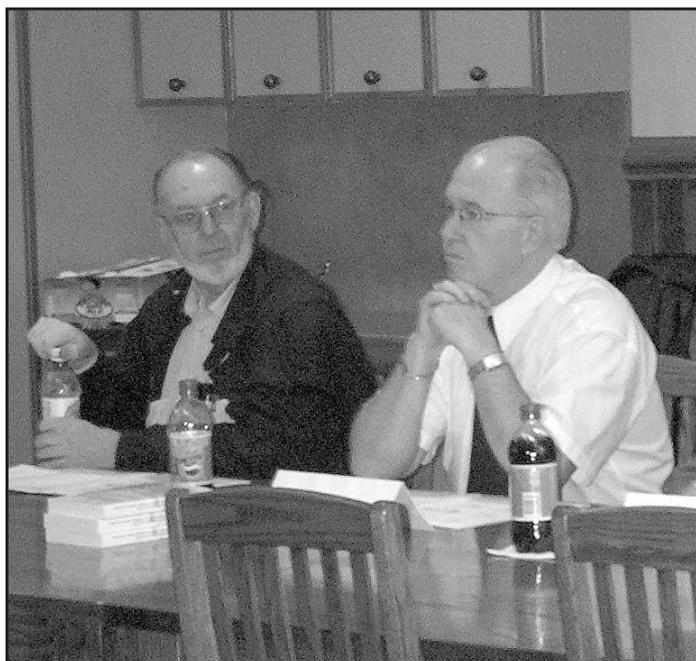
Dion Wiseman

Department of Geography, Brandon University

Robert Annis

Director, Rural Development Institute

Under the guidance of this committee, Rural Development Institute continues to be a leader in world-class research on rural issues. ■



RDI Advisory Committee members



Dr. Annis addresses the RDI Advisory Committee at their November 2004 meeting

RDI Sponsored Events

OCTOBER 20, 2004

Tech 2004

RDI was one of the sponsors for this event, which explored new technology and its impact on businesses and the community.

September 17, 2004

"Funding the Sector"

In partnership with Brandon and Area Community Foundation, Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation and the Marquis Project, Rural Development Institute sponsored "Funding the Sector". This free workshop on September 17, 2004 explored the financial sustainability for the voluntary and non-profit sector.

May 7, 2004

"Research Ethics Review as Research Service"

Co-hosted by RDI and the BU Research Ethics Committee, a public presentation entitled "Research Ethics Review as Research Service" took place May 7, 2004.

The presenter, Janice Dickin, holds a PhD in medical history from the University of Alberta and a law degree from the University of Calgary. Her background includes law practice, research and in ethics.

Dickin discussed the necessity of finding a balance between the need to con-



Janice Dickin



Kelly Cranswick speaks at BU

duct research with universities and the need to respect the subjects of the research. By adopting the role of a service provider and becoming open and flexible in its approach to research, a Research Ethic Board can become a valuable protector of both the researcher and the institution.

March 5, 2004

Kelly Cranswick, Research Analyst - Statistics Canada

An RDI sponsored guest speaker, Kelly Cranswick, a Statistics Canada Research Analyst based at the University of Manitoba Research Data Centre, presented two information sessions at Brandon University on March 5, 2004.

In the first session, Ms. Cranswick presented information on the Research Data Centre and many longitudinal and cross-sectional data sets that are available for analysis. These data sets include such holdings as: the National Longitudinal Survey of Children and Youth (NLSCY), the National Population Health Survey (NPHS) and the Survey of Labour and Income Dynamics (SLID).

The second session focused on research possibilities using these existing Statistics Canada data sets. Proposal development, evaluation and review constituted the majority of the discussion. ■

In Brief...

Ray Silvius currently holds a research position with RDI and the Community Futures Partners of Manitoba studying social economy initiatives throughout rural and northern Manitoba. His findings were presented at an event hosted by United Way Winnipeg in late October.

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RDI is pleased to welcome Susannah Cameron as part of the team working on the Project "Exploring Connectivity; Use and Usefulness of ICT in a Northern Setting: A Churchill Case Study." Susannah, who has a M.Sc. in Rural Planning from the University of Guelph, is also reviewing documents for the Joint Co-operative Development project and is coordinating a national network of community investment funds.

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A proposal has been submitted to extend the RDI Community Collaboration Project. The proposed Community Collaboration Project (CCP): Empowering Communities and Building Capacity project aims to test the applicability and replicability of the CCP model, as developed in Manitoba, elsewhere in rural and northern Canada. At time of this printing, a decision on funding is pending. ■

Joint Co-operative Development Project

In early 2004, the *Joint Co-operative Development Project* was initiated by Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, with the aim of improving the quality of life and well-being of 'Northern Affairs communities'. These communities are those that are located in northern Manitoba and fall under the jurisdiction of Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs.

The Joint Co-operative Development Project proposes to explore and develop the co-operative development model in four Manitoban communities; Camperville, Cormorant, Matheson Island and Seymourville. A broader scope of the project is to look at the co-operative model as an economic arm of Northern Affairs communities in Manitoba.

Each of the four communities in the project communicated their desire to gather further information on the possibilities of a retail-consumer co-operative in their respective communities through the community round table process.

The student interns involved in this study — Devron Kobluk, Ryan Gibson, Lori Gould, and Brad MacKenzie are developing a number of research papers, as well as assisting in the development of a feasibility plan and a business plan for each of the communities.

To accomplish the objectives of the Joint Co-operative Development Project, a number of partners have been established.

These include:

Manitoba Aboriginal & Northern Affairs
Aboriginal Affairs Secretariat,

Local Government Development
Division,

Community of Camperville,

Community of Cormorant,



Community of Matheson Island,

Community of Seymourville,

Parkland Community Futures
Development Corporation,

Cedar Lake Community Futures
Development Corporation,

Neicom Community Futures
Development Corporation,

Winnipeg River Brokenhead Community
Futures Development Corporation,

Rural Development Institute, Brandon
University,

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural
Initiatives,

and Co-operative Development Initiative,
Co-operatives Secretariat.

Project papers include:

*Survey Results and Community Summary,
Camperville, MB*

*Survey Results and Community Summary,
Matheson Island, MB*

*Survey Results and Community Summary,
Cormorant, MB*

*Survey Results and Community Summary,
Seymourville, MB*

*For further information, see our website at
www.brandonu.ca/rdi.*

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