

## RDI Research Projects and Activities

**Rural Works cont.** The various sessions were informed by a set of presentations from Dr. Lars Hallstrom, University of Alberta, Dr. Ray Bollman, RDI Research Affiliate, Dr. Ryan Gibson, a MRD alumni now at St. Mary's University, and Dr. Tom Johnson, University of Missouri.

The day's events are anchored by a Keynote Address from the Minister of Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, the Honorable Ron Kostyshyn, whose support also made this event possible.

### Rural Policy Learning Commons

The Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) announced Wayne Kelly is the Project Coordinator. He brings to the RPLC a broad set of management skills and in-depth knowledge of rural and community development. Through the winter, two of the Project's Liaison Officers were hired. Sarah Woods will work out of Brandon University for the project partners in Canada, while Pam Kelrick will work with the USA partner institutions from the University of Missouri. The European Liaison is to be announced shortly.

Wayne Kelly has been working diligently with the RPLC Steering Committee on a number of issues: finalizing MOU's with the project's partners, and developing a framework to organize the vast output of research, publications, presentations, webinars, etc. expected to be achieved through the project's 7-year term, both as a legacy for future policy researchers and managing the reporting requirements to SSHRC.

Collaborative and comparative engagements are the hallmark of the RPLC. A few events of note for the near future include:

The 27<sup>th</sup> Annual Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) in conjunction with the 10<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference of the North Atlantic Forum will be held in Summerside, Prince Edward Island, Sept. 16-19, 2015. **Building Community Resilience: Innovation, Culture, and Governance in Place** marks an opportunity for community leaders, governments, and researchers to share and explore insights on creating and sustaining healthy, resilient communities.

The Rural Policy Research Institute (RUPRI), one of the RPLC's main US partners, will be convening a pre-conference workshop on May 18<sup>th</sup> 2015 in partnership

Those interested in this event can visit the website: <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/25th/>

For additional information on this event, contact:

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with the RPLC. Under the title of **Water – Food – Climate Nexus**, this event is slated to coincide with the OECD Rural Development Policy Conference, **National Prosperity through Modern Rural Policy**, scheduled for May 19-21, 2015 in Memphis, TN.

Also, RUPRI is in the final planning for its annual conference to be held in Washington, D.C. in 2016. A main purpose of this RUPRI event is to establish a series of critical rural policy questions to be taken up by rural researchers. These questions and issues will provide a catalyst for researchers and rural stakeholders in the United States, but in keeping with the international and comparative core of the RPLC will be opened to other researchers and stakeholders. The results of these labors are to be presented at the first of the project's international RPLC/CRRF conferences. This event is still in the planning stages though Ottawa, Oct. 2016 has been selected as the venue's date.

For more information about this project, check the website at <http://rplc-capr.ca>, or contact:

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## RDI Research Projects and Activities

### Journal of Rural and Community Development

RDI continues to take an active role in marketing the Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD) published by RDI and edited by Dr. Doug Ramsey, Chair of BU's Department of Rural Development.

The JRCD is waiting for word from the Social Science and Humanities Research Council under its 'Aid to Scholarly Publications' programme whether the journal has been successful in its funding application. This funding would be for 2015-2018 and would be invaluable for maintaining open-source access to rural researchers across the world.

During the fall of 2014 the journal released Volume 9, Issue 3, which included 16 articles and 3 case studies.

The journal is also pleased to announce the recent release of Volume 9, Issue 4. This general issue includes five papers prepared for a Festschrift for Dr. Bill Reimer, Professor of Sociology at Concordia University and Director of the SSHRC-funded New Rural Economy Project from 1998 to 2007. All five papers were peer-reviewed through the co-editing efforts of Dr. William Ashton and Dr. Ray Bollman.

The first issue of the year 10(1) is now being produced.

For more information visit: [www.jrcd.ca](http://www.jrcd.ca)

### RDI Research Affiliates

Robert C. Annis	Rural Development Institute
Kenneth Beesley	Brandon University
Kenneth Bessant	Brandon University
Ray Bollman	Rural Development Institute
Jill Bucklaschuk	Rural Development Institute
Tom Carter	University of Winnipeg
David Douglas	University of Guelph
Barbara Gfellner	Brandon University
Ryan Gibson	St. Mary's University
Terence McGonigle	Brandon University
George Penfold	Community Planning and Development Consultant
Fran Racher	Brandon University
Doug Ramsey	Brandon University
Meir Serfaty	Brandon University
Ray Silvius	University of Winnipeg
Balfour Spence	Brandon University

### Knowledge Dissemination Profile

RDI has been very active in communicating with its research partners and community stakeholders over the last six months. These activities range from providing project fact sheets, publishing project research reports, to establishing project websites, and hosting webinars. In cooperation with other centres and researchers, we redistribute their research information. Two examples of RDI's engagement with rural stakeholders are:

- RDI and BU's Department of Rural Development were among the sponsors for the Canadian Association of Planning Students Conference held in Winnipeg in February, and
- Bill Ashton accepted an invitation to be a member of the Manitoba Food Development Centre Board Advisory Board.

RDI's recent dissemination activities also included:

- Hosting 4 Webinars on topics such as Manitoba's demographic and economic trends, state of rural development in Quebec, municipal governance in Alberta,
- Providing funding for 8 Community Outreach Projects on topics including rural history and museums, community gardens, reporting on poverty, soils in playgrounds, and cattle grazing,
- Approving 80 Service Learning applications through the Outreach program amounting to 1600 voluntary hours in community service,
- Linking with 23 Research Centre Hubs in Canada and U.S.A., and expanding email and contact lists.

Sign up for RDI Rural Research Updates at:

<http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/sign-up/>

### Upcoming Activities for RDI

#### 10<sup>th</sup> OECD Rural Development Conference

Memphis, TN, May 19 - 21, 2015

#### Rural Policy Learning Commons—

Co-hosts pre-conference session May 18, 2015

#### International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Summer Institute

University College Dublin, Ireland

June 21 - July 4, 2015


[www.icrps.org](http://www.icrps.org)

#### Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation

27<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference

Prince Edward Island, Sept. 16-19, 2015.

[www.pei2015.crrf.ca](http://www.pei2015.crrf.ca)

Support for this project is provided by 

Social Sciences and Humanities  
Research Council of Canada

Conseil de recherches en  
sciences humaines du Canada





# Research Activities Update Rural Development Institute

## Our Future: Our Vision...

With partners in communities, agencies, and among academics and students, RDI continues to initiate new outreach activities, research, and learning options, and contributes to addressing rural development issues and responding to opportunities. The Institute builds on a strong history of collabora-

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.

## Strategic Research Direction

The process reflects RDI's mandates and a community-based approach of reaching out to key stakeholders in MB and elsewhere in Canada. This work gains further credibility by contracting Dr. Carter, a recognized scholar at the University of Winnipeg

and former director of the Urban Studies Institute (the 'urban' version of RDI). The final product will point to key research directions for RDI over the next 3-5 years.



## Our Partners

Past and present RDI research and project partners include: The Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat; Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development; Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism and other government, university, community and corporate partners who support applied rural research.



## Contact Us

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## RDI Team

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Gillian Richards  
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Sarah Woods



**Rural Works! A Rural Policy Think Tank**  
took place at the Keystone Centre in Brandon, Manitoba on November 6, 2014. The vision that the Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Brandon University (BU) and its long-time partner, Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development (MAFRD) had for the day was two-fold. The first was to create a time and place for a conversation about economic development in rural Manitoba; the second was to celebrate the 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of RDI by BU. The day turned out to be a success with over 70 people engaging in meaningful conversations about the future of rural Manitoba.

During his luncheon presentation "Celebrating Partnerships" Bill Ashton, RDI Director, showcased

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

## Applied Research...Community-Based Solutions

### Rural Works! A Rural Policy Think Tank

The day's break-out sessions contributed directly to a new project called *Rural by Design*. The vision of *Rural by Design* is to inspire rural Manitobans to determine their own rural futures. At its heart is a focus on enhancing rural economic development in Manitoba by taking a design approach. This approach fosters innovation and flexibility and embraces direct involvement and local ownership that is enabled by government. It embraces collaboration, creativity, and innovation; challenges past assumptions and fosters making choices for a desired rural future(s).

*Rural by Design* has come to envisage a number of community recommendations for action:

1. Initiate and participate in conversations about the many dimensions rural development in Manitoba and share those conversations with all levels of government.
2. Ask questions to better understand how different government departments are involved in rural development.

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3. Consider approaching your economic development activities based on a functional economic region as a way to respond to issues and opportunities in your community and others.

4. Inform your decisions by investing attention and resources into data collection.

5. Apply your energy and resources to collaborative approaches for rural economic development in Manitoba.

6. Pay attention to and list your assets; what are they and how can local and regional assets be used for your growth plan for the future.

The day's discussions were facilitated by Joy Dornian, on behalf of Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development, who turned the participants' attentions to address a number of provocative questions:

- Can you imagine ...
- ◇ Rural with (out) agriculture?
  - ◇ Rural with (out) regions?
  - ◇ Rural with (out) influence?

[See Rural Works, p. 2](#)



## RDI Research Projects and Activities

### Manitoba's Bulk Food Innovations

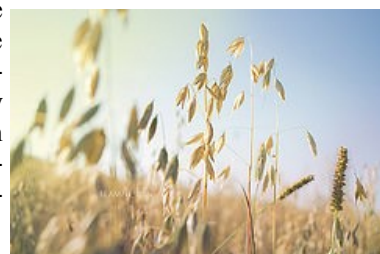
RDI's food processing research conducted in 2014 prompted a follow-up analysis on innovation in this industry sector: *Successful Innovation When Commercializing Bulk Food Ingredients in Manitoba*. Three food-processing companies agreed to participate: Richardson Milling, Shape Foods, and Canadian Prairie Garden Puree Products.

The research led to the development of four major reports – individual case studies for the 3 food processors, and a final summary report. Each case study, validated by the three businesses, described the industry and its particular supply-chain, the types and characteristics of its past innovations, future opportunities for innovation and growth, factors impacting on their capacity to innovation, and partnerships involved in innovation.

While the case studies revealed significant differences among the three enterprises in terms of innovations, all three resonated on a number of issues:

- Innovation is bringing about a dynamic and robust bulk agri-food sector in Manitoba. New products and processes are sparking innovations in marketing and organizations for large and small processors. Both big and small firms are also on the verge of realizing world-class, and high-growth with novel products and processes, which will undoubtedly propel more innovations.

- Along the supply chain, many different relationships are involved when innovating. While multi-national Richardson Milling draws extensively on integrated relationships where cooperation and coordination are pre-dominant, smaller processors often appear larger and more capable by hiring outside expertise and specialists, as they grow and learn through each innovation initiative.



- Initiatives are found throughout the supply chain, which suggests a great deal of independence. All those along the supply chain know that innovation requires their own commitment of time and resources to share in the benefits.



See Bulk Foods, p. 5

### Shelterbelts & Agricultural Greenhouse Gases

The Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Project team worked extensively with beef producers, government agencies, and conservation districts to examine shelterbelt usage and its promotions in order to reduce agricultural emissions and increase production efficiencies.

The last year's research efforts focused on developing and assessing how social marketing tools could be used to promote shelterbelts, be they used for alley cropping or for more extended grazing. The project team worked closely with ChangeMakers, the Manitoba firm involved in social marketing to develop a communications strategy. ChangeMakers is adding the finishing touches to a new communications plan to promote the benefits of shelterbelts.

The RDI team has met with the project partners through August to discuss options around developing a plan focused on continuing the promotion and use of shelterbelts.



On November 12, 2014, Dr. Gillian Richards, Project Lead, hosted a webinar with a presentation from Drs. James Breen and Tim McAllister who offered an international perspective on agricultural greenhouse gas mitigation in the livestock industry.

The *MB Cooperator* profiled the webinar in its December 6th, 2014 edition; the article

See Shelterbelts, p. 6

## RDI Research Projects and Activities

### International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Summer Institute in Ireland

The 12<sup>th</sup> Annual International Comparative Rural Policy (ICRPS) Summer Institute will be co-hosted by University College Dublin, the National University of Ireland, Galway, and Teagasc, the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority.

Over the course of the Institute's two-week program, participants will explore and study this year's policy themes: agriculture and food systems, coastal economies and ecosystem services, regional development, social structure and change, and governance. These themes reflect, in part, the rural circumstances and challenges unique to Ireland, but offer participants an intensive program to share and compare learning, insights and experiences around these issues. As in years past, lectures and field visits will be used to examine these issues currently facing rural areas in Ireland and other rural regions.



The Institute is designed for graduate students and professionals wishing to enhance their knowledge of rural policy, but all participants whether faculty, guest speakers and students will be expected to compare their experiences and learning around these themes.

The Summer Institute will be convened by the University College Dublin in Dublin and the National University of Ireland, Galway, on Ireland's west coast.

RDI will assist at least 2 graduate students to attend, and Bill Ashton will participate as faculty contributing lectures and engaging in group discussions.

For more information, check:

<http://www.icrps.org/>

For further information about the institute email:

[icrps2015@ucd.ie](mailto:icrps2015@ucd.ie)

#### Bulk Foods cont.

- Innovation in this agri-food sector also spawned the growth of new businesses, which fosters further investment and generates an environment of entrepreneurship in Manitoba. This undoubtedly leads to increasing investor confidence, more exports, contributes to economic growth, and creates jobs, all benefiting rural areas.



Research was key to understanding the complexity of many of the case studies innovation initiatives. This speaks to the need for ongoing investment in such research. To this end, RDI is looking for opportunities to add several more cases.

This research was supported and funded through Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development.

For more information on this project, contact:

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#### See Shelterbelts cont.

can be found at — <http://www.manitoba.cooperator.ca/news-opinion/news/lowering-greenhouse-gas-emissions-from-cattle/>

This project was implemented by the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District (as project proponent) in collaboration with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Manitoba Agro Woodlot Program, Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, Manitoba Forage Council, and Rural Development Institute.

Those interested in shelterbelt usage and their benefits are encouraged to visit the project website: <http://prairieshelterbelts.ca/> or to contact:

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## RDI Research Projects and Activities

### RDI's Anniversary cont..

RDI's 25th Anniversary and shone a bright light on the many partnerships that RDI has established and fostered since its inception on October 25, 1989, involving researchers, academic institutions, government agencies, rural organizations, as well as businesses and communities.

Four key concepts – **Insight, Foresight, Innovate, and Action** – helped frame the tenor and broad perspective of his historical overview and, in fact, all aspects of the day's activities. All in the room could very well appreciate how well these four mantras were represented by the initial Memorandum of Agreement signed between the Government of Manitoba as represented by the Minister of Rural Development and Brandon University to establish and provide funding for core operations and projects undertaken by RDI. This informed and collective decision, drawing upon Brandon University's research strengthen, recognized the potential and opportunities for engaging and collaborating with rural stakeholders to realize promising innovations that would have a lasting impact on rural regions and communities.

### Manitoba Fact Sheets

The *Rural Works: A Rural Policy Think Tank* provided a perfect venue for Ray Bollman, RDI Research Affiliate, to deliver a précis of the 11 Fact Sheets that collectively present a detail demographic and economic snapshot of Manitoba. His presentation, *Rural Manitoba: 10 Facts (in 10 minutes...)*, was clearly a tongue-in-check reference given the details distilled from the set.

Offering only a few major highlights from the full package, his overview was both insightful and surprising. In general, the 10 Facts demonstrated the hard, double-edged circumstances facing rural regions and communities. To note but a few examples:

- Real wages are increasing in rural regions, and yet as productivity and other efficiencies have also increased, fewer workers are also needed to deliver these goods. The population of rural Manitoba has grown since 1996, yet this growth and its capacity of fill labor-market needs has not been uniform across all rural regions.
- The percentage of the Manitoba population entering the labor force who are identified as Aboriginal is currently around 20% but over 20 years is projected to reach 29%; this trend underscores the importance of moving quickly on initiatives and programs to realize the potential of this community.

communities.

RDI's three directors, Drs. Dick Rounds, Bob Annis and Bill Ashton, the faculty members in the Department of Rural Development, the RDI Research Affiliates, the over 50 graduates of the Masters of Rural Development who have been involved in countless research projects, and the various members in the national and international networks to which RDI belong have and continue to contribute to this four-fold promise.

For more information about this event, contact:

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- The stereotype that the rural Manitoba economy remains dominated by agriculture and other resource sectors is falsified by the emergence of rural manufacturing that accounts for some 35% of the province's GDP.
- This final point served to emphasize that a new paradigm of development was needed, one which moves from community development to a broader "rural regional economic development" in contrast to "metro economic development", which by implication more sharply separates rural policy from the current metro-centric public policy.

The entire set of Fact Sheets is available at: <https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/25th/>

Funding for this project was made available by the MAFRD.

Those interested in his presentation can find it at:

<https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2014/09/Rural-Works-10-Facts-in-10-Minutes-by-Dr.-Ray-Bollman.pdf>

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## RDI Research Projects and Activities

### Citizen & Immigration Canada—Community Consultations

The optimal delivery of settlement services is essential for new immigrants to feel at home in Canada. Given this reality and the success of its previous immigration projects, RDI was invited Immigration Research West (IRW) and funded by Citizen and Immigration Canada (CIC) to lead research focused on inventorying immigration settlement services across CIC's Western Region. RDI worked in partnership with co-investigators from British Columbia, Alberta and Saskatchewan.

This project collected data from 29 communities across this region, selected based on the proportion of immigrant landings in smaller urban centres and rural communities across the provinces. Research activities were undertaken with the assistance of knowledgeable members of service provider organizations in the selected communities, including those funded through CIC or those providing key roles in the settlement of newcomers. Community feedback helped validate the findings in each community. A sample of the project's key findings included:

#### Settlement and Employment

- Settling newcomers is a challenge across much of western Canada.
- Small rural communities offer benefits to newcomers but often lack key services.
- English language proficiency and foreign credential recognition are two common challenges facing newcomers seeking employment.

#### Services and Gaps

- Expanding services is needed across western region. Moreover, extending service offerings to a broader

range of newcomers who currently do not qualify will benefit the communities at large.

- The range of language services can be limited to basic language skills when advanced language training, job specific language training, and literacy training are necessary in rural communities.
- Reliable core funding is needed for SPOs to support the organizational capacity required to provide effective settlement services.
- Remote communities face additional service provision challenges, largely due to low population density and large distances.

#### Partnerships

- Partnerships are key to service newcomers in rural and small centres.
- Local Immigration Partnerships (LIPS) are supported, but need to build upon existing organizational partnerships. There are provincial differences with regards to the development of LIPs.
- Private sector partnerships and involvement is desired. Participants from all provinces expressed a desire to improve their involvement and coordination with local businesses and employers.

Key findings of the project were presented at the recent 17th Annual Metropolis Conference in Vancouver, BC, in March.

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### Adjustment Strategies for Communities

This project, *Adjustment Strategies for Declining Communities*, focused on identifying key factors that can help change the direction of declining populations in rural communities and support them towards growth.

To achieve this goal, the project completed a number of key tasks:

- Selected 2-3 communities categorized as declining and recently growing rural communities using Statistics Canada Community Profiles in order to conduct high level profiles of each,
- Conducted a review of growth strategy literature, manuals, and websites for small communities to help identify key elements, contexts, and implementation criteria of these strategies,

- Conducted case studies of the selected declining and recently growing rural communities and aligned strategies to support these two groups of communities.

The project's research findings and recommendations are currently being finalized.

Funding to conduct this project was made available by MAFRD and Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism.

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