

Rural Development Institute

**Annual Report
2002**

*Providing Academic Research and Leadership on
Issues Affecting Rural Communities in Western
Canada*

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In 1989, Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute (RDI) to help foster rural community development and community resiliency through research and information on issues unique to rural areas. Principal activities of the Institute are the design, implementation and communication of academic and applied research on rural issues. While its primary focus is on issues of rural and northern communities in western Canada, RDI maintains relationships with rural researchers across Canada and abroad.

The Institute provides an interface between academic research efforts and rural communities by acting as a conduit of rural research information and by facilitating community involvement in rural development.

RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of many stakeholders. The Institute has diverse research affiliations and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. RDI disseminates information to a variety of constituents and stakeholders and makes research information and results widely available to the public, either in printed or electronic form, or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences.

RDI's research is highly relevant to rural policy and to the people who live and work in rural areas. Ideas for the research activities undertaken by RDI research and project teams are developed through contact with rural groups, towns, rural municipalities, villages, governments, international researchers and observers of the rural situation

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Message from the Chairperson, RDI Advisory Committee



Rural populations face considerable challenges in today's rapidly changing economic and social environments. The Rural Development Institute (RDI) has a commitment to help strengthen rural communities adjust and respond to these changes by carrying out research and disseminating information on rural issues. This report summarizes RDI's achievements and progress in providing relevant research and activities on rural issues in 2002.

In 2001, Brandon University reactivated its RDI Advisory Committee by asking for representatives from a broad section of stakeholders with interests in rural issues and from internal constituencies at the University. Since our inaugural meeting in September 2001, the Advisory Committee has discussed a wide variety of issues aimed at enhancing RDI's ability to respond to rural stakeholders.

I congratulate the research and project teams for their efforts and thank the RDI Advisory Committee for its continued support and input. I would also like to thank the Province of Manitoba for its continued support of RDI. In March 2002, Premier Gary Doer visited the Rural Development Institute. At that time he expressed the Province's support for RDI research and project activities on rural issues. I look forward to working with members of the Advisory Committee as we continue our efforts on behalf of rural communities.

Sincerely,

Scott Grills, Dean Faculty of Arts

Chairperson,

Rural Development Institute Advisory Committee

Introductory Comments from the Director

In 1999-2001, the Rural Development Institute began a rejuvenation of its rural research and program activities. These efforts are presented in the *Annual Report 1999-2001*. The year 2002 was marked by many successes and solid evidence of progress toward our vision as a nationally recognized centre for rural development research. This *Annual Report 2002* describes these successes and summarizes our progress.



The first section, *Building RDI's Vision as a Rural Research Institute*, describes the progress toward the focus of RDI's efforts – that is, to extend and expand rural research opportunities. This section is followed by *Our Research and Project Activities*, which includes illustrative examples of our research and project activities.

The section *Working Together* recognizes the value and contributions of RDI's partners, project advisors, and research and project team members. RDI's progress in priority development areas for 2002 is summarized in the section *Institutional Growth and Development*. This section includes a description of RDI's planning process, our collaborations, partnerships and a comprehensive listing of RDI's efforts to disseminate information on rural issues. The final section of the report, *Impact and Future Directions* concludes with indications of RDI's impact in 2002 and highlights of upcoming projects and priority areas of activities in 2003.

This report demonstrates the high level of commitment that our partners, advisory committees, research team members and Brandon University have for rural communities. In particular, I would like to acknowledge the long-standing support of Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs. Since RDI's inception in 1989, the Province, initially through the Department of Rural Development and later, through Intergovernmental Affairs, has supported our rural development research and project activities.

On behalf of the staff, researchers and community development professionals at RDI, I am pleased to present this report. It is through our research and project activities that RDI continues its commitment to rural development.

Sincerely,

Robert Annis, Director,

Rural Development Institute

Building RDI's Vision as a Rural Research Institute

RDI's vision is to establish itself as an academic research institute and leading source of information on rural issues. The purpose of this vision is to enhance or build knowledge on rural issues, and translate and transfer this information to rural stakeholders and communities for their benefit.

Throughout 2002, RDI dedicated considerable attention to the enhancement of our rural research capacity; the promotion and dissemination of information; and the facilitation of working relationships with rural communities. RDI was pro-active in responding to opportunities for rural research by acting as a focal point and facilitator for innovative, interdisciplinary research projects. The Institute assisted researchers in proposal development, established project teams and administered a number of research and project contracts.

RDI recognizes the importance of disseminating information on rural research and related activities. In 2002, the Institute devoted considerable efforts to establishing a comprehensive communications and publications program to include academic publications, research reports and working publications, conference presentations and professional development workshops.

Also in 2002, RDI developed and recommended policies and decision-making processes within RDI that will help foster rural research activities at Brandon University.

There are a number of examples that testify to RDI's progress toward establishing itself as an academic research institute and leading source of information on rural issues.

- For the first time in its history, Brandon University, through the Rural Development Institute, received funding from the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Canada's national health research granting council.
- RDI is a founding member of the Manitoba Alliance for Research on Community Economic Development (CED). In 2002, this alliance, comprised of the Rural Development Institute, the University of Manitoba, the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, and the University of Winnipeg, was the recipient of a large research grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) to undertake research on community economic development in the New Economy.
- Late in the 2002, RDI began working with a multi-disciplinary team of researchers from across Brandon University and other western Canadian universities to plan and submit an extensive research proposal to the highly competitive Community-University Research Alliance. The team recently received approval from SSHRC to pursue the second stage of proposal development in 2003.
- RDI's success in establishing a higher profile as an academic research institute is evidenced by the increased involvement of faculty members and undergraduate and graduate students in RDI's research and activities.

Responding to Brandon University's Scope 20/20

In 2002, Brandon University adopted Scope 20/20, a framework of five strategic areas: Scholarship, Communications, Outreach, Performance, and Environment. RDI responded to these strategic areas by:

- encouraging scholarship and research on rural issues (Scholarship);
- disseminating the results of our efforts through conference presentations and workshops, publications and documents (Communications);
- encouraging more and building on our relationships with rural stakeholders (Outreach);
- enhancing the profile and activities of the Brandon University Community Outreach Service (Outreach);
- developing and presenting policies and procedures to strengthen the governance of RDI (Performance and Accountability); and by,
- providing opportunities for Brandon University faculty members, students and community development professionals to learn and work collaboratively on issues of concern to rural Canadians (Environment).

Our Research and Project Activities

Since 1989, RDI has providing an interface between academic research efforts and rural communities by acting as a conduit of rural research information and by facilitating community involvement in rural development. In 2002, RDI was able to enhance its capacity to undertake rural research and project activities by:

- an expansion of RDI's research opportunities to more Brandon University faculty members;
- the preparation and submission of applications to major research granting opportunities and other agencies;
- the involvement of Brandon University undergraduate and graduate students in RDI's research and project activities; and by
- the effective and strategic use of research infrastructure and human resources characteristic of a smaller university.

RDI is noted for innovative and multi-disciplinary research and project activities developed and enhanced through linkages with rural groups, towns and villages, governments and researchers and observers of the rural situation. Using these linkages, RDI pursues research projects and activities on rural issues and quality of life dimensions in the following domains of research interest:

- community economic development (CED);
- community leadership;
- environmental and agro-economic issues;
- information technology: utilization and access for CED;
- policy and program research and development;
- rural adaptation and change;
- rural health; and,
- rural tourism.

Community Economic Development (CED)

RDI's research and project activities in community economic development (CED) reflect a conceptual framework that has emerged in Canada and around the world in recent years.

Fundamental elements of this CED framework include:

- a recognition of the linkage between social and economic needs;
- an integration of economic, environmental, and social development goals;
- local community participation and control of CED processes; and,
- the importance of partnerships.

Community Collaboration Project

The *Community Collaboration Project (CCP)* was initiated in 1999. Its purpose was to design and model a multi-agency approach to support regional community economic development. The CCP is a collaborative arrangement between communities, the Rural Development Institute; Health Canada; Environment Canada; Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Western Economic Diversification Canada; Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs; Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Manitoba Community Connections; Community Information Management Network (CIMnet), and Community Futures Partners of Manitoba.

Throughout the past three and a half years, RDI facilitated initial community meetings, provided support and meeting facilitation for the steering committee, and conducted ongoing review of the CCP.

By the end of 2002, the CCP had successfully engaged a diverse set of four regional round tables (RRTs):



Bayline Regional Roundtable

- The Northern Vision Regional Round Table (NVRRT) includes three northern industrial and one remote First Nations communities.
- The Southwest Regional Round Table (SWRRT) is comprised of seven agriculture-based communities in southwestern Manitoba.
- The Bayline Regional Round Table (BRRT) named after the rail line that connects the six member northern Manitoba communities.
- The Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table (HBRRT), consisting of three northern Manitoba and seven Nunavut communities, was established in January 2002. This regional round table encompasses a huge expanse of land that crosses provincial-territorial boundaries.

The vision of the *Community Collaboration Project* is “communities exploring and implementing processes to assist them in working towards becoming resilient, healthy and sustainable.” The CCP, through the regional round table process, provides those federal and provincial departments involved with an opportunity to work together with the common objective of supporting the existing regional round tables and encouraging the formation of new RRTs. The CCP is an operational example of a collaborative program delivery model that meets the needs of federal, provincial, territorial and municipal government departments and local communities.

In July 2002, Dr. Trevor Hancock, an independent consultant from Victoria, BC, examined the CCP in a broader context, relating it to other community-based processes and initiatives in Canada. The report of his findings, *From Governing to Governance: Reflections on the Community Collaboration Project* is available at <http://www.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/communitycollaboration.html>

Hancock found that the communities wanted greater face-to-face involvement with members of the CCP steering committee, comprised of representatives from the Rural Development Institute; Health Canada; Environment Canada; Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Western Economic Diversification Canada; Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs; Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Manitoba Community Connections; Community Information Management Network (CIMnet), and Community Futures Partners of Manitoba.

The communities wanted information from government, but also wanted to provide information to government. Hancock’s key recommendation was to shift the CCP from a project managed by a steering committee composed primarily of federal and provincial staff to a partnership in which communities are in the majority, while maintaining a close partnership with federal and provincial government. The goal is to move the CCP towards a governance model reflecting a true partnership.

The CCP suggested that the regional round tables would benefit from interaction with each other. At the end of 2002, Robert Annis and Marian Beattie of RDI started working with the steering committee to plan and organize a first-ever regional round table planning and networking conference to be held in February 2003.

Northern Regional Health Forum

A related activity of the Community Collaboration Project was the Northern Regional Health Forum. This day-long health forum involved the Bayline RRT, consisting of the communities of Pikwitonei, Ilford, Cormorant, Wabowden, Thicket Portage and War Lake First Nation. The forum was held in Thompson in March, 2002. Fran Racher, on behalf of RDI, facilitated the session.

The purpose of the forum was to bring community members to Thompson to meet with representatives of the two regional health authorities serving the region and Manitoba Health for a facilitated discussion on common issues related to health care service and delivery. Through collaborative dialogue, short- and long-term goals were developed for each issue. More than 50 participants attended the session. RDI provided a report of the event to the Bayline RRT.

New Rural Economy Research Project

The New Rural Economy (NRE) is a national five-year research and education project designed to look at rural issues in various regions across Canada. The project is lead by Dr. Bill Reimer from Concordia University in Montreal.

The aim of the NRE project is to discover communities that are responding well with economic changes as well as those that are struggling with economic changes. The project also hopes to determine the factors that encourage or inhibit communities' abilities to respond to change.

In 2002, RDI provided some additional financial support to Doug Ramsey, faculty member in the Department of Rural Development, to carry out the next phase of the Manitoba component of the research project. Ramsey and Department of Rural Development student Deatra Walsh conducted key informant interviews with selected individuals throughout the RM of Rhineland to determine Rhineland's natural, social and human capital. As work on this project continues in 2003, it is hoped that a model of community capacity can be developed based on the findings.

In 2002, the NRE project received approval for a 2nd stage of their research from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The value of the project is \$3 million over four years. Doug Ramsey from the Department of Rural Development is part of the research team that includes researchers from across Canada. The project is based out of Concordia University in Montreal.

Action Plan for the Ste. Rose du Lac Community Development Corporation

In November 2002, Karen Rempel on behalf of RDI met with the Executive Committee of the Ste. Rose Community Development Corporation (CDC) and Anne Dandeneau, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs to discuss RDI's assistance in developing a plan of action that would help the Ste. Rose CDC move forward with community economic development. As a result of the discussion, the Executive Committee agreed that there were a number of preliminary steps needed before going forward with the development of a vision and strategic planning. These steps included the need for Board orientation; a review of the structure of the Board; and the preparation of a job description for the Economic Development Officer.

In late 2002, Rempel worked with the Ste. Rose du Lac CDC Board and prepared an action plan, a job description and interview guidelines for the Economic Development Officer. She also assisted the Board with the development of a clear set of goals and objectives that would help it implement actions.

Community Leadership

Community leadership is a key factor for successful rural development. RDI recognizes the important role that community development practitioners play in encouraging broad-based and active participation in community leadership.

Professional Development Series

RDI launched its professional development series in November 2002 with a one-day workshop – *An Introduction to Program Evaluation*. The workshop, delivered by Gerry Kaplan of Kaplan

and Associates, covered several aspects of program evaluations including: the value and application of evaluations; evaluation methods; logic models; selection of an evaluator; emerging trends; and, the development of an evaluation framework.

More than 15 community development practitioners attended the workshop held in Brandon at RDI's meeting rooms in the Jeff Umphrey Centre at Brandon University.

Ken Bessant from the Department of Rural Development, Marian Beattie on behalf of RDI and Robert Annis from RDI coordinated the session.

Profile of Community Development Corporations

Community Development Corporations play a leadership role in encouraging CED in their communities. In 2002 the Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association (MCDCA) and RDI began discussing a project aimed at developing a preliminary profile of Community Development Corporations operating in the province. The MCDCA is interested in developing a more comprehensive database comprised of a broader range of descriptive information. The project team, lead by Ken Bessant from the Department of Rural Development, will begin its work in 2003.

Environmental and Agro-Economic Issues

RDI takes a multi-disciplinary approach to environmental and agro-economic issues. In recent years, RDI has undertaken a number of research and awareness activities focused on leafy spurge. Leafy spurge is an invasive weed species that threatens an estimated 340,000 acres of pasture, nature lands, road allowances and parks. The estimated net economic impact of leafy spurge infestation in Manitoba is approaching \$20 million per year.

Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG)

The Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG) was formed in the fall of 1998 to examine the issues and impacts of leafy spurge. The LSSG is a coalition of agricultural and conservation groups and agencies from all three levels of government. RDI is a member of the LSSG. Beth Peers coordinates the LSSG on behalf of RDI.

In 2002, the LSSG asked RDI to coordinate a number of the group's activities. These include field research projects on bio-control and activities aimed at increasing public awareness of the impact of leafy spurge on the environment, community and economy.

Bio-control Field Research Project

In the spring and summer of 2002, RDI completed the third year of the bio-control of leafy spurge field research project on behalf of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group. The goal of the field research was to look at the survival rates of a flea beetle identified as an effective control of leafy spurge. Findings from the three-year field research project suggested a number of environmental factors, which could encourage the establishment and growth of beetle populations for various ecosystems in Manitoba.

Principal researchers for the project were Rob Bouchier from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Lethbridge Research Station and Paul McCaughey from AAFC's Brandon Research Station. Karen Rempel coordinated the project on behalf of RDI. Pauline Morton, a Brandon University geography graduate, conducted the field research with the assistance of Deatra Walsh, graduate student in the Department of Rural Development.

Bio-control of Leafy Spurge in Support of Recovery of Species at Risk – Year II

RDI coordinated the *Bio-Control of Leafy Spurge in Support of Recovery of Species at Risk* project, a field demonstration project concerned with identifying effective bio-control strategies for leafy spurge with the aim of reducing the negative impact on the western spiderwort, an indigenous prairie plant species considered to be at risk of extinction.

In Year II, the project involved conducting a follow-up on the vitality of the beetles released in Year I and profiling beetle survival characteristics; exploring the feasibility of boosting beetle populations through additional releases in a controlled experiment; establishing a vegetative baseline and conducting initial release of beetles; and collecting data and comparing it to baseline data to initiate a longitudinal tracking of beetle populations and long-term impact on leafy spurge and its effects on species at risk.



In Year II, the project involved conducting a follow-up on the vitality of the beetles

Beth Peers coordinated the project's activities on behalf of RDI. Jennifer Pachkowski, a Brandon University graduate and research assistant with RDI, undertook the field work and prepared the Year II report entitled *Bio-control of Leafy Spurge in Support of Recovery of Species at Risk – Year II, 2002 Field Research Results*.

A second component of the Species at Risk project (Environment Canada's Habitat Stewardship Program) was the documentation of the best practices in stewardship by a private landowner battling leafy spurge. This effort produced the report, *Best Practice: Environmental Stewardship by a Private Landowner* written by Jennifer Pachkowski, research assistant with RDI. RDI will be preparing final reports on the project in 2003.

Innovative and Sustainable Practices for the Control of Leafy Spurge in Manitoba

The project, sponsored by the Sustainable Development Innovations Fund, was designed to foster research activities, transfer knowledge and increase public awareness of the impacts of leafy spurge on the environment, community and the economy.

Numerous accomplishments resulting from this project including the development of promotional materials, liaison with stakeholders, field demonstrations and a planning for a 2003 public forum on leafy spurge.

Strategic Planning for Leafy Spurge Research

The LSSG held a strategic planning session for future leafy spurge research in June 2002. Participants in the session included faculty members of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Brandon University and the University of Manitoba, representatives from Manitoba Agriculture & Food, the University of Manitoba and representatives from the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group.

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

Best Practices: Manitoba Municipalities and Integrated Control Strategies for Leafy Spurge

The aim of the project, funded the Covering New Ground program from Manitoba Agriculture and Food, was to increase awareness at the municipal level about the extent and impact of leafy spurge infestation. Activities included in the project were:

- an assessment of the infestation of leafy spurge of four selected municipalities;
- field site experience demonstration on what municipalities can do to control leafy spurge; and,
- information and demonstration on what municipalities can do to prevent the spread of leafy spurge.



Beth Peers, on behalf of RDI, coordinated a number of meetings and outreach activities and Jennifer Pachkowski undertook the fieldwork activities

In 2002, the project involved a number of meetings and outreach activities within the Rural Municipality (RM) of Cornwallis, the RM of Daly, the RM of Oakland and the RM of Whitehead. Beth Peers, on behalf of RDI, coordinated the project and Jennifer Pachkowski undertook the fieldwork activities. A final reporting on this project is anticipated in early 2003.

The Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group web site contains more information on the group's activities.

<http://www.brandonu.ca/organizations/RDI/leafyspurge.html>

Information Technology: Utilization and Access for CED

There is increasing evidence that information technology (IT) is a powerful tool for communities involved in CED. The utilization of and access to information technology are themes that RDI has pursued when encouraging rural communities to take advantage of IT's potential for CED.

NCEDC – Learning for Life Project

The Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (NCEDC) is a network of six Manitoba communities: Deloraine, Neepawa, Rossburn, Russell, Souris and Swan River. A major project of the NCEDC is the Learning for Life project, community activities designed to encourage lifelong learning as a strategy for community economic development (CED). The uses of information technology and community partnerships are key components of the project.

In 2002, RDI assisted the NCEDC with an interim evaluation of the project and professional development activities. RDI will complete the final evaluation in 2003. It will also conduct a number of professional development workshops and will develop related reports and materials. The Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP) at Carleton University is providing funding for these activities. Karen Rempel is coordinating the evaluation, developing the professional development workshops and helping the NCEDC develop materials.

CIMnet

CIMnet is an information technology service provided to communities through the Manitoba Community Connections Initiative of Manitoba Industry, Trade and Mines.

The service is closely involved in the Community Collaboration Project (CCP). CIMnet works with CCP member communities to adopt and use information technology as a tool for encouraging regional cooperation.

The strength of the Community Information Management Network (CIMnet) is its ability to work with communities and community-serving organizations through the effective use of common information technology tools. These tools have been developed to help communities create, share, store and management community information more effectively.

As of 2002, every community involved in the Community Collaboration Project benefited from Community Connections Public Access sites, Internet Connectivity programs and the CIMnet initiative. As a component of the Community Collaboration Project, CIMnet uses information technology tools created by a group of current and former Brandon University students. Each member community received CIMnet website technology that allows them to have public and secured, collaborative working space on the internet.

RDI maintains contact with CIMnet as it is an integral component of RDI's facilitation of the Community Collaboration Project.

Policy and Program Research and Development

As a leading source of information on rural issues, policy- and decision-makers often call on RDI to provide advice, consultation, or program evaluation services on rural policies and programs.

Provincial Policy through a CED lens

Over the course of 2001 and 2002, Robert Annis, Director of RDI, was invited by the Manitoba government of to participate in numerous consultations and a developmental workshop discussing a province CED policy framework to support a comprehensive approach to community economic development. Consultations examined provincial policy through a CED lens. The CED lens is aimed at

- building greater community capacity;
- enhancing resident knowledge and skills;
- nurturing individual and community pride, self-reliance and leadership;
- developing businesses that are responsive to social, economic and environmental needs; and,
- fostering balanced equitable and sustainable economic development.

Federal – Provincial Consultations for Rural Team Advance (Manitoba)

In 2002, RDI was contracted to design, develop and facilitate a three-day planning session for the Rural Team Advance in Manitoba. The Rural Team Advance is comprised of members of more than 10 federal government departments, three provincial departments of government as well as representatives from several community-based development organizations. The Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada supports the Team.

Objectives for the session included:

- facilitation of communication amongst team members;
- a review of the Rural Team's history, charter, process and activities;
- a review of the Rural Team's purpose, goals, membership, roles, expectations, resources and priorities;
- an exploration of trends related to the future role of government; and,
- the development of strategies and action plans for the next 12 months.

At the end of 2002, the facilitated session was still in the planning and design phase. The workshop is scheduled for March 2003 and approximately 25 to 30 participants comprised of Rural Team members, plenary speakers and invited community leaders are anticipated.

Robert Annis and Marian Beattie are facilitating the project on behalf of RDI.

Presentation to the Provincial Government of Manitoba

In March of 2002, the Provincial Government of Manitoba invited Doug Ramsey of the Department of Rural Development to make a presentation on issues surrounding rural research. Ramsey's presentation focused on the changing condition of rural communities and reviewed RDI's research and project activities. Over 100 people attended the session including members of the Provincial Cabinet and government officials.

Evaluation of the Canadian Rural Partnership, Pilot Project Initiative

In 2002, RDI assisted with an evaluation of the Canadian Rural Partnership, Pilot Project Initiative, a program supported by the Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. RDI acted as the regional team for the Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta region on behalf of the New Economy Development Group, a consulting firm based in Ottawa.

Project team members reviewed documentation for pilot projects and interviewed representatives from a sample of pilot projects. The team also developed in-depth profiles of selected projects. Beth Peers coordinated the evaluation on behalf of RDI with assistance from Elicia Funk, Pamela McTavish, Marian Beattie and Deatra Walsh. Robert Annis conducted program level interviews as part of the evaluation.

Rural Adaptation and Change

This domain of RDI's research interest is attentive to the challenges of various social and economic dimensions of rural adaptation and change.

Rural Adaptation Needs Assessment Report

Agricultural producers in Manitoba face considerable challenges when confronted with adaptation, succession and transition needs. 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.

Over the course 2001 and 2002, RDI research team members investigated the gaps and deficiencies in programs and services from a variety of perspectives and developed *The Rural Adaptation Needs Assessment Report*. This report identifies several themes as well as a number of key recommendations gleaned from the interviews with agricultural producers. The report is accompanied by a comprehensive listing of adaptation, succession and transition programs and services that were available to agricultural producers at the time of writing the report.

The Rural Adaptation Needs Assessment Report has been circulated widely to policy-makers in the federal and provincial governments. It can be downloaded from RDI's website:

www.brandonu.ca/rdi/.

Research team members working on behalf of RDI included Carl Cunningham, Beth Peers, Karen Rempel and Les Routledge. Karen Rempel and Beth Peers wrote the final report and Carl Cunningham prepared an inventory of nearly 200 programs and services. The Canadian

Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI) funded through Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Manitoba Education, Training and Youth provided financial support to the project. Manitoba Agriculture and Food provided in-kind administrative and consultative support.

Profile of Rural Community Newspapers

In 2002 RDI undertook an examination of rural English language community newspapers in Canada on behalf of the Publications Assistance Program, Department of Canadian Heritage. The research conducted during the project included a review of program statistics collected by the PAP; a review of information and materials posted on the Internet by newspaper industry associations; a review of reports developed by other organizations documenting the current state of the community newspaper sector and public policy issues associated with the sector; and telephone interviews with 20 community newspaper owners / publishers from across the country.

Results of the investigation yielded a profile of community newspapers and the identification of possible ways for the Publications Assistance Program (PAP) to assist community newspapers. The final report, entitled *Publications Assistance Program: English Language Community Newspapers Report*, is designed for the PAP personnel and other relevant individuals associated with the Department of Canadian Heritage. The information contained in the report provides a summary of the current state of community newspapers and the support they require from the federal government.

Beth Peers coordinated the project on behalf of RDI. Les Routledge, Bev Lischka, Erinn Heinrichs and Jacie Skelton also worked on this project and the development of the final report.

Rural Health

Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities

Rural Canadians are vitally concerned about how they participate in decision-making and planning processes to ensure the health of rural people and the communities in which they live. Access to education, employment, health care services, social support networks and safe environments are pivotal factors in the lives of rural people. Research that focuses on the health of populations and identifies the factors that have an impact on the health of populations in Canada is gaining prominence. However, researchers have given limited attention to describe the health or well being of rural communities.

The *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project is an innovative interdisciplinary, multi-partner research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) under the Strategic Theme "Society, Culture and the Health of Canadians". Robert Annis is the principal investigator, of this four-year project (1999-2003), with co-investigators and collaborators from Brandon University, the University of Manitoba and Concordia University. Communities and government partners include community development agencies, regional health authorities, and government agencies with rural and health policy interests.

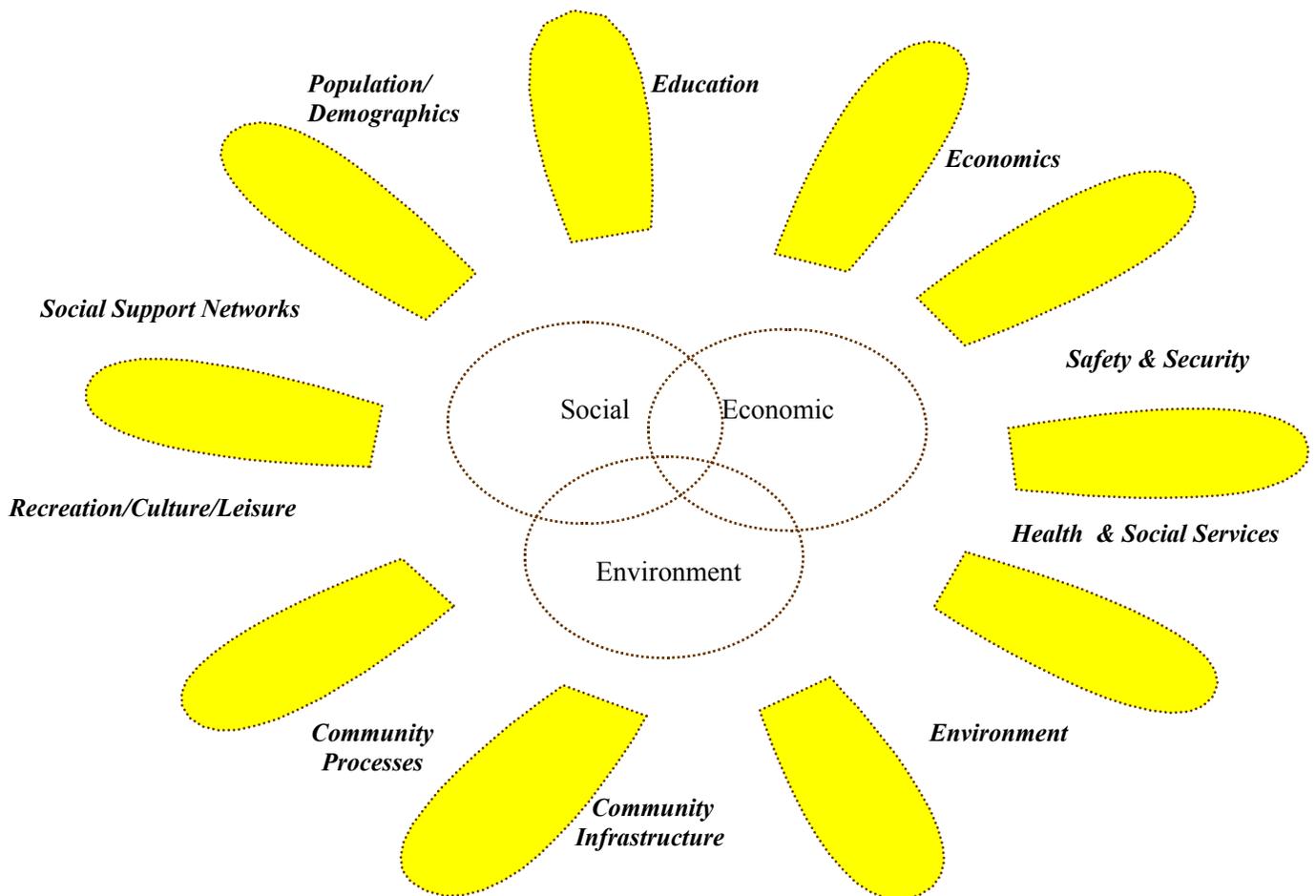
An important aspect of this project is student capacity building. To that end, nine students, from a variety of disciplines, have been involved in the research. Their activities included conducting

literature searches; conducting and transcribing interviews; facilitating and recording focus groups; collecting and analyzing primary and secondary data, and managing reference databases.

The research team examined national surveys and databases to assess health status and factors that contribute to the health of rural populations. In addition, researchers and their partner conducted focus groups with residents of fifteen rural communities in southwestern Manitoba. Rural residents were asked for their views of the concepts of ‘rural’, ‘health’ and ‘community’. Participants described ways to determine if a community was healthy and suggested criteria to assess rural community health and well being.

Rural residents, together with researchers and project partners participated in a day-long workshop in February 2002. The goal of the workshop was to identify community-based indicators to assess rural well-being and quality of life. Research team members used the information gathered in the focus groups and the workshop to develop a framework and indicators for each framework category. Ten domains emerged: population/demographics; education; economics; safety and security; health and social services; environment; community infrastructure; community processes, recreation/culture/leisure; and social support networks.

Figure 1: Organizing Framework



The research team members used the framework and indicators identified by the rural community participants as the foundation of a workbook developed in the latter half of 2002.

The researchers developed the workbook, *Rural Community Guide for Assessing Well-Being and Quality of Life* as a tool for rural community members to use for building partnerships, conducting community assessments, establishing baselines and setting future goals. The organizing framework for the workbook includes the domains of the determinants of health represented by the petals of a flower and the social, economic and environment factors as the centre of the flower. (Figure 1).

In November 2002, the research team presented a first draft of the workbook for field-testing. In June 2002, community members and the research team nominated two rural southwestern Manitoba communities to pilot the community development processes and workbook. In November, representatives from the communities of Shoal Lake and Virden accepted the nominations and subsequently held information meetings to solicit support from their communities. Ultimately, both communities decided to participate, and their steering committees came into being early in 2003.

On an on-going basis, the research team communicates and disseminates information and findings about the project. During 2002, individual research team members submitted peer-reviewed articles for publication; made a number of conference and public presentations and developed working papers. RDI newsletters also contained information on the project. Various papers and presentations can be found on SSHRC Research Project: Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities web site:

<http://www.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/sshreproject.htm>

Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities

The Centre is a five-year research initiative supported by Health Canada to conduct community-focused, action-based research on the community determinants of child and youth well being. The mission of the Centre is to make existing knowledge accessible, create new knowledge, and use both to influence policy and practice as well as to promote communities' capacity to support children and youth, with an emphasis on Aboriginal communities. The Centre is comprised of six networks that represent major Prairie cities or 'sites'. Noreen Ek from the School of Health Studies acts as the site director for the Brandon Centre. Elicia Funk coordinates the Centre on behalf of RDI along with student assistants Debbie Kuehne, Ryan Robson and Zamira Gawletz.

Phase I of this project ended in 2002. This phase focused on gathering information and making it more accessible to interested organizations. Several reports including *Is Brandon Child and Youth Friendly: A Community Consultation*, and a Brandon specific literature review resulted from the activities in Phase I. The Early Years Team and Youth Services Committee helped distribute the information to child- and youth-serving Brandon organizations. Media articles, conference presentations and presentations to local government representatives also contributed to the dissemination of this information to the Brandon community and relevant stakeholders.

The Centre used the results of Phase I to plan Phase II projects in collaboration with our Brandon Network. In December 2002, the Centre submitted two projects, which have since been approved. These projects are *Aboriginal Children's Health Program: An Examination of*

Experiences, Impact, Transitions and Mobility and Mentoring Youth in Brandon: Successes, Challenges and Best Practices.

In 2002, RDI administered the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities on behalf of the School of Health Studies at Brandon University.

Marquette Regional Health Authority Early Childhood Development Needs Assessment

The Rural Development Institute conducted a needs assessment on behalf of the Marquette Parent Child Coalition to determine the scope of the health, safety, social and learner development needs of the 0 – 6 years of age population within each sub-region of the Marquette Regional Health Authority.

RDI facilitated eleven focus groups as the project activity for Phase One of this project. The focus groups identified resources available, used and needed by residents of the region. More than 100 residents participated in the sessions.

Joy Dornian acted as the coordinator of the project on behalf of RDI. Fran Racher from the School of Health Studies provided professional assistance and reviewed the data with the intent of providing a broader perspective of rural community health needs. Beth Peers and Elicia Funk assisted with the project.

The final reporting for Phase One of the project entitled *Healthy Children, Healthy Communities: Resource Needs For Families With Pre School Children In The Marquette Region* was submitted to the Marquette Parent Child Coalition in May 2002.

National Workshop: Defining Rural and Rurality

The Rural Development Institute received funding support from the Canadian Institute of Health Research (CIHR) for a pre-conference workshop *Methodological Issues of Rurality and Rural Health*.

The pre-conference workshop was held in Halifax in October in conjunction with the 3rd National Conference of the Canadian Rural Health Research Society. The workshop brought a select group of rural health researchers from Canadian universities together with program administrators and policy makers to discuss defining “rural” and “rurality” for health and health service research in general. Fran Racher, from the School of Health Studies, initiated the proposal with CIHR and was instrumental in planning the workshop.

Racher was also co-editor for the workshop report, *Defining ‘Rural’ and ‘Rurality’ for Health and Health Services Research: Workshop Report for the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University and the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University*. The report is available on RDI’s website.

Rural Tourism

Rural communities engaged in CED often consider rural tourism as area of opportunity and growth. In 2002, RDI began to explore more fully this domain of research interest.

Tourism Research Centre

In January 20, 2003 a group of Brandon University faculty members engaged in tourism-related research came together to establish the Tourism Research Group (TRG). The primary purpose of the group is to collaborate on research and projects of mutual interest. Members of the TRG include:

Robert Annis, Rural Development Institute

Ken Beesley, Department of Rural Development

Ken Bessant, Department of Rural Development

Derrek Eberts, Department of Geography

John Everitt, Department of Geography

Chris Malcolm, Department of Geography

Doug Ramsey, Department of Rural Development

Manitoba BEST Service Excellence Seminars

In 2002, the Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC) engaged RDI's services to help provide the Manitoba BEST program to the southwest region of Manitoba.

MTEC adapted the Manitoba BEST program to meet the need for a practical and relevant Customer Service Program within the tourism industry. The program includes small group discussions and practical exercises that help managers and staff focus on their role in Manitoba BEST service. Pamela McTavish, on behalf of RDI, facilitated two seminars in Minnedosa during 2002. Several more sessions are planned for early 2003.

Working Together

RDI uses a multi-disciplinary project-based approach to address issues of importance to rural communities. Projects include partnerships and collaboration with government, community partners and research granting agencies.

RDI gratefully acknowledges the support of a wide variety of partners for providing financial resources for projects, in-kind contributions, advice and guidance. Among these partners, RDI is grateful to the Province of Manitoba through the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs for its long-standing support of RDI.

Research Grants and Project Funding

Research grants and project funding support RDI's rural research activities. In 2002, a considerable portion of RDI's efforts went into pursuing research grants made available through highly competitive processes specified by national research granting councils.

A summary of some of the successful research grants and project funding in 2002 includes:

Canadian Institute for Health Research (CIHR)

RDI was awarded funding support from the Canadian Institute of Health Research for a workshop on methodological issues of rural and rural health held in conjunction with the *3rd National Conference of the Canadian Rural Health Research Society* held in October, 2002. This was the first time that Brandon University had been awarded CIHR funding.

CEDTAP – Technical Assistance Support to the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres

RDI is a member and technical assistance provider for the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program. In 2002, RDI worked with the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (NCEDC) to plan and implement a series of professional development workshops and activities for community facilitators involved in the Learning for Life project

Community Collaboration Project

The CCP is a collaborative arrangement between communities, the Rural Development Institute; Health Canada; Environment Canada; Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Western Economic Diversification Canada; Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs; Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Manitoba Community Connections; Community Information Management Network (CIMnet), and Community Futures Partners of Manitoba.

Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development

RDI was invited to be one of four partners in the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development. The goal of the Alliance was to plan and submit plans for a major research project to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, Canada's national research granting council for the social sciences. In May 2002, the SSHRC approved the Alliance's request for funding support to prepare an extensive research proposal

for Community Economic Development in the New Economy. Late in 2002, the Alliance received approval of the full three-year research proposal.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

The *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project is an innovative interdisciplinary, multi-partner research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) under the Strategic Theme “Society, Culture and the Health of Canadians”. Dr. Robert Annis is the Principal Investigator, of this four-year project (1999-2003), with Co-Investigators and Collaborators from Brandon University, University of Manitoba and Concordia University. Communities and government partners include community development agencies, regional health authorities, and government agencies with rural and health policy interests.

Support from the Province of Manitoba

The Province of Manitoba has been a long time supporter of RDI’s rural research activities. Since 1989, the Province, first through the Department of Rural Development, and later through the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs (IAF) has supported RDI. This continued support has helped RDI build institutional capacity and academic program in order to meet the needs and interests of rural Manitobans. In 2002, IAF funding helped support a number of key activities, such as:



Premier Gary Doer, Doug Ramsey, Chair DRD, Robert Annis, Director, RDI, Dr. L Visentin, President, Brandon University

- *rural research program support* is used to enhance RDI’s ability to carry out, identify or support research on rural issues confronting rural communities. The purpose of the resource allocation was to enable RDI to respond in a flexible manner to emergent opportunities.
- the *Research Fellows Program* aimed at encouraging broader academic knowledge as well as practical experience in community development situations. A sub-committee of the RDI Advisory Committee is considering ways to optimize the value of the program.
- the *Brandon University Community Outreach Service* provides financial support for related costs associated with Brandon University students and faculty carrying out designated community outreach projects.

Projects receiving support in 2002 through the Brandon University Community Outreach include the Manitoba Agricultural Museum Artifact Database, Austin, MB; Play and Learning: An Experiential Learning Group for Toddlers and Parents, Brandon, MB; Training the Trainer: A Capacity Building Model of Community Health Promotion, Brandon Regional Health Authority, and Assiniboine Regional Health Authority; and the Labyrinth of Peace situated at the Riverbank Discovery Centre, Brandon, MB. More

information on these projects and the Brandon University Community Outreach Service can be found at <http://outreach.brandonu.ca/>

- financial support to graduate students in the Master of Rural Development program for work related to graduate thesis research.

Research and Project Advisory Committees

In 2002, RDI received valuable input and advice from a large number of individuals involved in research and project advisory committees. These individuals represent a large number and cross-section of rural community organizations and stakeholder groups.

Collaboration from rural stakeholders is an integral component of RDI's rural research and project activities and is an extremely valuable approach to ensuring that RDI's efforts are relevant to rural areas. In 2002, representation on research and project advisory committees included:

Community Collaboration Project: Health Canada; Environment Canada; Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Western Economic Diversification Canada; Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs; Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Manitoba Community Connections; Community Information Management Network (CIMnet), and Community Futures Partners of Manitoba.

Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities: Brandon Early Years Team; Brandon University – School of Health Studies; Brandon Youth Services Committee; Calgary Aspen Family and Community Network Society; Edmonton Social Planning Council; Regina Council on Social Development; University of Saskatchewan – Saskatchewan Population Health and Evaluation Research Unit; University of Winnipeg – Institute of Urban Studies

Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities: South Westman and Marquette, now Assiniboine Regional Health Authority; Brandon Regional Health Authority; Community Futures Partners of Manitoba; Health Canada; Statistics Canada; Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada; Virden-Wallace Community Development Corporation; and Wheat Belt Community Futures Corporation.

Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group: Agricultural Crown Lands, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Association of Manitoba Municipalities, Canadian Forces Base Shilo, Canadian Wildlife Habitat, Canadian Wildlife Services, Critical Wildlife Habitat, Dow Agro-Sciences, Ducks Unlimited, Environment Canada, Keystone Agricultural Producers, Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Manitoba Cattle Producers Association, Manitoba Conservation, Manitoba Equine Ranchers, Manitoba Heritage Habitat Corporation, Manitoba Sheep Association, Manitoba Transportation and Government Services, Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association, Mid-Assiniboine River Conservations District, Nature Conservancy of Canada, Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration.

Learning for Life Evaluation and Professional Development: NCEDC Board and Community Facilitators including representatives from Deloraine, Neepawa, Rossburn,

Russell and area, Souris, Swan River and area, Assiniboine Community College, Manitoba Agriculture and Food, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs.

Rural Adaptation Needs Assessment: Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI) funded through Agriculture and Agri-food Canada; the Dauphin office of Manitoba Education, Training and Youth; Killarney and District Community Development Corporation; Manitoba Agriculture and Food; Manitoba Education, Training and Youth; Parkland Community Futures Development Corporation.

Research and Project Teams

RDI's research and activities result from academic and professional contributions of faculty members and students from Brandon University, academic researchers from research networks or research alliances; faculty members and researchers from other universities; and knowledgeable, independent community development professionals coming from a broad range of disciplines related to rural development research.

Brandon University faculty members

Robert Annis, Ph.D., Director, Rural Development Institute
Ken Beesley, Ph.D., Department of Rural Development, Faculty of Arts
Ken Bessant, Ph.D., Department of Rural Development, Faculty of Arts
Nukte Edguer, Ph/D., Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science
Noreen Ek, Ph.D., School of Health Studies
John Everitt, Ph.D., Department of Geography, Faculty of Science
Barbara Gfellner, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science
Chris Hurst, B.S., M.L.I.S., Library Services
Guy Landry, B.A., M.A., Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts
Doug Ramsey, Ph.D., Department of Rural Development, Faculty of Arts
Fran Racher, R.N., B.Sc.N, B.A., M.Sc., School of Health Studies
Renée Robinson, R.P.N., B.Sc.M.H, M.Sc., School of Health Studies
Linda Ross, Ph.D., Dean, School of Health Studies
Kim Ryan-Nicholls, R.P.N., R.N., B.Sc.N. M.D.E., School of Health Studies
Fatteneh Zehtab-Jadid, B.Sc., M.Sc., Department of Economics, Faculty of Arts

RDI support staff and administration

Sylvia Henry, Clerical support
Bev Lischka, Administrative Assistance
Ginger Pelletier, Clerical support

Community Development Professionals

Marian Beattie, PHEc, B.Ed. (5th Yr)
Carl Cunningham, B.Sc., M.A.
Wayne Digby, P.Ag., B.S.A., MAED
Joy Dornian, B.A., M.A.
Pamela McTavish, B.A.
Beth Peers, B.A. (Spec.)
Karen Rempel, B.Ed., M.Ed.
Les Routledge, P.Eng., B.Sc., MBA
Jacie Skelton, B.A.

Faculty members from other universities

Betty Havens, D. Litt., Community Health Sciences Department, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
Bill Reimer, Ph.D., Sociology and Anthropology Department, Concordia University, Montreal

Researchers from Other Institutions

Rob Bourchier, Ph.D., research scientist, Lethbridge Research Station, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
Paul McCaughey, Ph.D., research scientist, Brandon Research Station, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Student Assistants and Research Assistants

Amanda Campbell, Brandon University, Master of Rural Development student
Rebecca Cowan, B.A., Brandon University graduate, Faculty of Arts
Elicia Funk, B.Sc., Brandon University student, Faculty of Arts
Zamira Gawletz, Brandon University student, Faculty of Arts
Ryan Gibson, Brandon University geography student, Faculty of Science
Bruce Hardy, Brandon University student, Faculty of Arts
Erinn Heinrichs, Diploma in Rural Development, Assiniboine Community College
Wayne Kelly, B.A., Brandon University, Master of Rural Development student
Debbie Kuehne, Brandon University student, First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling Program
Pauline Morton, B.Sc., Brandon University graduate, Faculty of Science
Jennifer Pachkowski, B.Sc., Brandon University graduate, Faculty of Science
Bev Pshebniski, B.A., Brandon University, Master of Rural Development student
Ryan Robson, Brandon University student, Faculty of Education
Deatra Walsh, B.A., Brandon University, Master of Rural Development student

Institutional Growth and Development

Institutional growth and development describes RDI's short- and medium-term priorities. The overarching goals of these priority areas are to enhance RDI's ability to remain open and attentive to emerging rural issues; and, and to develop and grow RDI's institutional capacity to carry out research and project activities.

The financial support from Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs has been an important source of support for RDI's institutional growth and development. Brandon University administration and the RDI Advisory Committee have also been helpful in affirming RDI's short- and medium-term priorities. With the guidance of the Advisory Committee, RDI identified the following priority areas of activities for 2002:

- sharpening the focus for RDI's research and project activities;
- enhancing the rural research capacity and output at Brandon University;
- supporting rural communities in their development activities and processes;
- building partnerships and establish RDI in strategic research networks;
- securing external funding support for RDI activities;
- disseminating information to rural stakeholders; and,
- providing input into rural policy at the local, provincial and national levels.

Two research and project activities – the *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* and the *Community Collaboration Project* - stand out as having significant influence on progress toward these priority areas. The *Community Collaboration Project* is illustrative of RDI's collaborative partnership building approach with multi-stakeholders. Twenty-seven communities in southwestern Manitoba, northern Manitoba and Nunavut are benefiting from the regional round table process, working with federal, provincial and territorial government departments to enhance their resiliency, sustainability and health. The *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* project, using a participatory action research approach, is providing citizens of rural Manitoba communities the opportunity to participate in the determination of health and quality of life from a rural perspective. Outcomes of both of these projects will influence local, provincial and national policies.

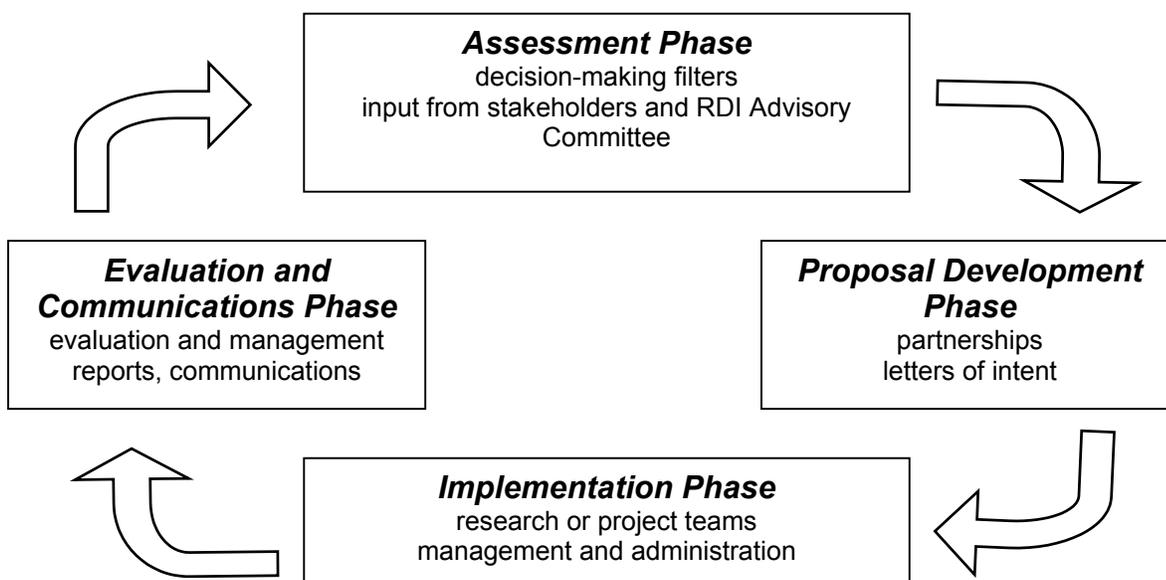
Sharpening the Focus for RDI's Research and Project Activities

There is little question that rural communities face many challenges and opportunities in a rapidly changing global economy. Moreover, a great number of these are wide open for further research and activities. RDI undergoes considerable planning and decision-making to ensure that research or project activities are relevant to rural development as well as fully achievable and successful. Many times, the funding support provided by Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Brandon University make it possible for RDI to plan wisely for meaningful opportunities.

In 2002, RDI began to deliberately and thoughtfully sharpen its focus on which research and project activities it should actively pursue. Using a well-established planning process (Figure 2), RDI proposed policies and procedures that would refine the decision-making process, help establish research and project teams, evaluate impact and processes; and, ensure effective communication on matters of interest to rural communities.

Included in the planning process is a set of decision-making filters which function as a set of operating guidelines for RDI. In 2002, the planning process and decision-making filters were presented to the RDI Advisory Committee and approved by Brandon University administration.

Figure 2: Research and Project Planning Process



RDI Advisory Committee

The role of the RDI Advisory Committee is to discuss issues and offer advice on academic and applied rural research interests and needs. The Committee is comprised of:

Scott Grills (Chair) Dean, Faculty of Arts, Brandon University
Robert Annis, Director, RDI
Jim Feeney, Canadian National Railway, Winnipeg
Reg Helwer, Shur-Gro Farm Services Ltd., Brandon
Ben Maendel / Jonathan Maendel, Baker Hutterite Colony, MacGregor
Darell Pack, Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Winnipeg
Bill Pugh, Meyers, Norris, Penny Chartered Accountants, Brandon
Ron Riopka / Bob Grodzik, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, Winnipeg
Ray Simms, North/West MTS Communications Inc., Brandon
Frank Thomas, Canadian Imperial Bank of Commerce, Brandon
Jeff Williams, VP (Academic and Research), Brandon University
Fran Racher, School of Health Studies, Brandon University
Doug Ramsey, Department of Rural Development, Faculty of Arts, Brandon University
Dion Wiseman, Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, Brandon University

Resource: Bev Lischka, Administrative Assistant (RDI)



RDI Advisory Committee: (Back row) Jonathan Maendel, Ben Maendel, Robert Annis, Doug Ramsey, Reg Helwer, Bill Pugh, Fran Racher. Front row: Bev Lischka, Frank Thomas, Dion Wiseman, Scott Grills, Bob Grodzik, Darell Pack, Jeff Williams. Missing: Ray Simms, Jim Feeney.

At its semi-annual meetings, the RDI Advisory Committee provides advice and guidance through discussion of RDI's activities, proposed policies and procedures and free flowing discussions on rural issues.

Existing Activities become Building Blocks

As evidenced by the research project, *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities*, many current and past research and project activities have become the building blocks of future activities. This project helped launch a number of related activities including a national workshop focused on definitions of rural and rurality and subsequent proposals for more rural health research.

Consultation with Faculty Members and Rural Stakeholders

RDI receives and offers suggestions for research and outreach programs from rural stakeholders and faculty members. As well RDI's major research projects depend on the consultation and collaboration of Brandon University faculty members and residents of rural communities in southwest Manitoba. In addition to seeking the advice of more than 25 Brandon University faculty members, RDI met or worked with more than 50 Manitoba communities during 2002 and received input from more than 40 government and non-government agencies involved in rural community development.

Building Rural Research Capacity

RDI's vision as a nationally recognized centre for rural research relies on its rural research capacity. On a continuing basis, RDI focuses its efforts on expanding its rural research capacity and output by liaising across and within faculties at Brandon University, as well as with other Canadian universities, and by encouraging the involvement of Brandon University students, particularly graduate students in the Department of Rural Development.

For example, all faculty members in the Department of Rural Development as well as a number of faculty members from Geography, Psychology and the School of Health Studies are closely involved with RDI. RDI also advertised on three occasions for student research assistants to work on RDI projects.

Information on the Rural Development program can be found on the Department of Rural Development's web site:

<http://www.brandonu.ca/academic/RuralDevelopment>

Supporting Rural Communities in Their Development Activities and Processes

Whenever possible, RDI collaborates with rural communities, government representatives, policy makers and rural development practitioners to assist them with their development strategies. One such example is the professional development series for rural development practitioners coordinated by Ken Bessant from the Department of Rural Development, Robert Annis from RDI and Marian Beattie on behalf of RDI.

RDI also responded to a number of requests from rural communities to assist with development planning. Examples include regional round tables, the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres and Community Development Corporations Board Development.

Brandon University's Community Outreach Service is another important way in which RDI helps support rural communities in their development activities and processes.

Establishing Partnerships

The aim of this priority area is to form partnerships and establish research networks that have the ability to complement and extend RDI's research efforts and assist Brandon University faculty in their research activities.

In 2002, RDI established or enhanced partnerships and alliances with:

Canadian Community Economic Development Network (CCEDNET)

The CCEDNET promotes excellence and investment in community economic development. The goals of CCEDNET are enhanced community capacity for revitalization and self-reliance; widespread recognition of community economic development (CED) as a significant strategy on a national scale; and solving economic, social and environmental problems at the local level. Member organizations are committed to working towards CCEDNET's goals.

Canadian Consortium for Health Promotion Research (CCHPR)

RDI is one of fifteen centres from across Canada that comprises the Consortium. The mission of the Consortium is to enhance health promotion research, policy and practice in Canada by linking research, capacity development, and information dissemination. Individual centres partner with a variety of organizations such as Health Canada, other universities, provincial Ministries of Health, and non-government organizations, as well as community groups and agencies. The purpose of the CCHPR is to support the work of its member centres, to provide networking opportunities and information exchange, to facilitate new opportunities for collaborative research and to advocate for and promote health promotion research in Canada. It also serves as a conduit of health promotion expertise and knowledge at a national level.

Canadian Rural Health Research Society

The Rural Development Institute is a member of the Canadian Rural Health Research Society. The mission of the Society is to facilitate research aimed at improving the health of people living in rural and remote Canada. The two main objectives adopted by the Society are to:

1. build inter-disciplinary, multi-disciplinary, mutually supportive and community-focused research networks concerned with rural and remote health and,
2. to develop health research that is responsive to the needs of people living in rural and remote communities.

RDI serves as a link between researchers at Brandon University interested in rural and remote health research and the Society.

Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP)

RDI was selected by Carleton University to be a regional representative on the Prairies for its Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program. RDI also acts in an advisory capacity to CEDTAP on different issues concerning rural economic development. Through this collaboration, both Brandon University and Carleton University hope to create opportunities for joint research on community economic development (CED) as it relates to rural development.

Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development (CED)

The Research Alliance brings together academic researchers from the Universities of Manitoba, Winnipeg and Brandon, senior government policy makers and practitioners active in Manitoba's dynamic CED community and elsewhere, under the administrative leadership of the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a community-based research institute uniquely positioned to make such community-university connections. The diversity of the research group will create a context for innovative, inter-disciplinary assessments of the impacts of the New Economy on disadvantaged communities that are attentive to both theory and practice, and give voice to the personal experiences of people who live in those communities.

The Alliance will explore how and where New Economy developments might facilitate effective CED, and conversely, the ways in which CED approaches might assist communities in satisfying New Economy requirements that might otherwise impede economic development.

Partners in Rural Communities

Throughout 2002, RDI continued to build partnerships with community economic development organizations, regional health authorities and other rural stakeholders. Illustrative examples include:

- RDI has helped coalesce the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group, a broad group of agencies and organizations working together to increase awareness and undertake research for leafy spurge.
- The *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* involves many community organizations, government partners and rural communities. In particular, the southwestern Manitoba communities of Shoal Lake and Virden and their surrounding areas are piloting the workbook developed in the project to assess their health and well-being. Their involvement began late in 2002 and will continue through 2003.
- The evaluation and professional development program for the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres includes partnering with the Carleton University's Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program.
- RDI was contracted by the New Economy Development Group to help with the review of the Canadian Rural Partnerships Pilot Project Initiative. This group is a consulting firm based in Ottawa that offers technical skills and socio-economic development expertise to

community groups and organizations involved in CED initiatives. It specializes in organizational development, aboriginal development, training and facilitation, and community and regional development.

- The Community Collaboration Project involves community partners from 27 rural and northern communities in Manitoba and Nunavut participating in four regional round tables.

Funding Support for Research and Project Activities

As an institution of Brandon University, RDI receives funding from the University for the positions of Director and Administrative Assistant as well as some operational funding. RDI must secure external funding however to support research and project activities.

Since 1989, RDI has received significant financial support from the Province of Manitoba. To complement this long-standing support from the Province of Manitoba, RDI combines funding support from various partners with in-kind contributions.

In 2002, additional support for specific research and project activities came from:

- Canadian Institute of Health Research
- Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program
- Department of Canadian Heritage
- Environment Canada
- Health Canada
- Human Resources Development Canada (Child and Youth Centre)
- Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group
- Manitoba Agriculture and Food
- Manitoba Community Connections
- Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs
- Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres
- Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Disseminating Information to Rural Stakeholders

RDI's mandate includes acting as a leading source of information on rural issues. In addition to providing information in the RDI newsletters and on its web site, RDI also encourages research and project team members to use a variety of opportunities to disseminate information to rural stakeholders. These include:

- peer-reviewed published papers that provide new knowledge on rural issues;
- conference presentations, workshops or working papers that encourage an exchange of views on rural issues or provide opportunities for professional development;
- RDI commissioned reports to provide specific information at the request of a rural stakeholder, agency, or organization; and,
- RDI project reports which present information on a particular research or project activity.

Faculty members from the Department of Rural Development are closely involved with helping RDI act as a leading source of information on rural issues. Ken Beesley is managing editor for the RDI peer-reviewed research reports and monographs; Robert Annis is managing editor for RDI's working papers and project reports; Ken Bessant is managing editor for RDI's professional development and skills series; and Doug Ramsey is the managing editor for the Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation publications.

The following lists information disseminated in 2002:

Annis, R.C. (June 2002). Regional cooperation for community development. Workshop presentation to *Winnipeg River Brokenhead Community Futures Development Corporation Annual General Meeting*, Lac Du Bonnet, Manitoba.

Annis, R.C. (October 2002). Community capacity & collaborative partnerships for rural community development. Paper presented at *5th Rural Development Conference of The Ontario Rural Council*, Alliston, Ontario.

Annis, R.C., Hope P. & Slasor, R. (July 2002). What is the Community Collaboration Project? Poster presentation at *Canadian Public Health Association's 93rd Annual Conference*, Yellowknife, North West Territories.

Annis, R.C. & Ottaway, D. (November 2002). Communities and government working together. Paper presented at *Engage, Ignite, Declare the Strength of Communities at the Ontario Healthy Communities Coalition Conference*. Toronto, Ontario.

Dornian, J. (2002). *Community Collaboration Project. A review of year III*. RDI project report presented to the Community Collaboration Project Steering Committee.

Dornian, J. Funk, E. and Peers, B. (August 2002). *Healthy children, healthy communities: Resource needs for families with pre-school children in the Marquette region*. RDI project report submitted to the Marquette Regional Health Authority, Shoal Lake, Manitoba.

- Ek, D. N. and Funk, E. (July 2002). *Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities - Brandon site report: Phase I*. School of Health Studies and RDI project report submitted to the Centre of Excellence of Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities, Health Canada.
- Ek, D. N. and Funk, E. (August 2002). *Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities - Literature review summary report*. School of Health Studies and RDI project report submitted to the Centre of Excellence of Child and Youth Centred Communities, Health Canada.
- Ek, D. N. and Funk, E. (September 2002). *Is Brandon child and youth friendly? A community consultation*. School of Health Studies and RDI project report submitted to the Centre of Excellence of Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities, Health Canada.
- Funk, E. (October 2002). Determining if a community is child and youth friendly. Paper presented at 3rd National Conference, Canadian Rural Health Research Society Halifax, Nova Scotia.
- Kaplan, G. (November 2002). *An introduction to program evaluation*. RDI professional development workshop. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.
- Pachkowski, J. (2002). *Best practice: Environmental stewardship by a private landowner*. RDI project report. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.
- Pachkowski, J. (2002). *Leafy spurge project: Bio-control of leafy spurge in support of recovery of species at risk, Year II*. RDI project report. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.
- Racher, F.E. (2002). *Well-being and quality of life: Choosing indicators to assess rural communities*. RDI working paper. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.
- Racher, F. & Guernsey, J. (eds.) (2002). *Defining 'rural' and 'rurality' for health and health services research: Workshop report for the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University and the Department of Community Health and Epidemiology, Dalhousie University*. Project report. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.
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A number of these are available for downloading from RDI's web site:

<http://www.brandonu.ca/organizations/RDI/RDIpublications.html>

Rural Policy Development

The aim of this area of activity is to encourage the use of RDI's research and expertise as a source of information that helps encourage change in rural policies and programs. RDI's research on rural issues provides valuable knowledge to policy makers.

For example, RDI provided research and documentation support for the *Rural Adaptation Needs Assessment Report*. Key policy recommendations for adaptation, transition and succession needs of agricultural producers are contained in the report. Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada are currently utilizing this report for development of policy and strategies.

In 2002, RDI began Year III of the *Community Collaboration Project (CCP)*, a multi-stakeholder project aimed at encouraging community cooperation at a regional level. The cooperation arising from CCP activities has led to a number of regional policies and initiatives.

Whenever possible, RDI assists Brandon University faculty and researchers in their efforts to influence the development of rural programs and rural policy. Research team members have made presentations to the provincial cabinet, members of a number of federal and provincial government departments as well as to participants at national conferences.

Broadband for Rural and Northern Development

Late in 2002, federal Industry Minister Allan Rock named Robert Annis from RDI as a member of the National Selection Committee for *Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Pilot Program*. The role of the committee is to make recommendations to the Minister on which proposals should receive funding support for the development and implementation of business plans intended for the deployment of innovative and sustainable broadband services to Canadian communities that currently have no broadband access.

Impact and Future Directions

RDI is continuing to build its capacity as a centre for rural research while maintaining an essential commitment to rural communities.

Making a Difference

Looking back over 2002, there are strong indications that RDI's efforts are making a difference across a number of dimensions. The impact of these efforts has helped RDI determine priority areas for future directions that will continue to make a difference to rural communities.

- RDI's efforts at the Third National Conference of the Canadian Rural Health Research Society held in Halifax, Nova Scotia are helping researchers and statisticians develop better ways to define and operationalize 'rural' for use with health and health service research
- RDI's approach to collaborative, multi-disciplinary rural research is a recognized strength. This approach reflects the inter-relationship of social, economic and environmental development goals in rural areas. In 2002, Brandon University faculty members from Economics, Geography, Psychology, Rural Development, and the School of Health Studies were involved in rural research.
- In 1999, the Sustainable Resource Management Information System (SRMIS) began as a student-working group under the auspices of the RDI. Resulting largely from the mentorship of Robert Annis, Director of RDI, a core group of former SRMIS members created their own company, Function Four Ltd., a consulting firm specializing in using information technology as a tool for community economic development.
- RDI encouraged a number of rural communities to become involved in rural research as a strategy to strengthen their ability to gather information and make informed decisions. Late in 2002, RDI facilitated the organization of community assessment committees in the communities of Shoal Lake and Virden. In 2003, these community-based committees will field test the workbook being developed under the *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project.
- RDI also helped the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centre develop a decision-making model for community-based learning activities. RDI's success in the Community Collaboration Process has led to other communities becoming involved in regional round tables.
- In 2002, RDI's research and project activities involved 15 Brandon University faculty members, 13 Brandon University students, and 9 community development professionals.
- In 2002, more than 70 rural and northern communities benefited from the knowledge and experience of RDI's research team members.

- In 2002, RDI benefited from a number of radio and television interviews, media releases, visits from provincial and federal politicians including the Honourable Gary Doer, Premier of Manitoba, and the Honourable Dr. Rey D. Pagtakhan, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Secretary of State (Science, Research and Development).
- The institutional support provided by Brandon University and Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and others helped leverage other research and project funding for a combined total of more than \$1,400,000.

Looking Ahead

RDI's research and project teams are looking ahead to 2003 with enthusiasm. There are exciting new research projects and proposed policies and procedures aimed at enhancing RDI's ability to address rural issues.

- In 2003, RDI will begin the process to trace our success rate for research and project activities and to determine actions, which can help improve our efforts.
- RDI will be submitting research and project proposals to major research-granting councils including the Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) and the Community-University Research Alliance within the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).
- RDI will continue the *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities*, providing support to the Virden and Shoal Lake teams as they assess the health and quality of life in their communities. RDI will update the workbook, based on these communities' experiences, and publish it, making it available to other rural communities.
- RDI will be proposing research activities to the *SSHRC Innovative New Economy – Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy* research project.
- In 2003, RDI will begin active participation in the CED Network Portal, a single-window, and user-friendly access point to CED information exchange for community development practitioners and researchers.
- RDI will continue its involvement with the regional round tables in the Community Collaboration Project. The Project is gaining significant prominence as an example of regional cooperation among communities.
- RDI will plan and propose further leafy spurge research activities including an economic assessment of the problem. It will also continue to coordinate the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group including acting as its proponent for new awareness and extension activities.
- RDI will be researching and documenting the connection of lifelong learning practices and technology as an approach for rural community economic development.

- The Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association and RDI will begin a project aimed at developing a preliminary profile of Community Development Corporations operating in the province.
- In 2003, RDI will provide professional development and evaluation services to the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres.
- In 2003, RDI will place a strong focus on publications and communications.

Priority Areas for Institutional Growth and Development

In 2002, the Rural Development Institute experienced evidence of progress for institutional growth and development. Looking ahead for 2003, RDI has identified the following priority areas:

- enhance RDI's capacity to carry out rural research and related activities;
- seek new research alliance and networks;
- strengthen connections with rural communities;
- promote RDI as a nationally recognized centre for rural research;
- secure funding support for RDI activities; and,
- provide administrative leadership to the Rural Development Institute.