

Rural Development Institute

Annual Report 2003

***Providing academic research and leadership on issues affecting
rural communities in Western Canada***

Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research center and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere.



RDI functions as a not-for-profit research and development organization designed to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural issues. The Institute provides an interface between academic research efforts and the community 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 multi-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 form or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences.

For more information, please visit www.brandonu.ca/rdi.

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Rural Development Institute

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Message from the Chairperson, RDI Advisory Committee



The past 12 months have been busy and significant for RDI as it moves forward on its vision to be recognized as a research centre of excellence for rural issues. This vision is important for rural communities and for Brandon University.

For rural communities, RDI has successfully undertaken research and related activities that are relevant to evolving issues. RDI's research alliances have helped enhance its capacity to undertake projects. RDI has also disseminated information on rural issues to a variety of rural community stakeholders at the local, provincial and national levels.

As an institution of Brandon University, RDI contributes to the University's mandate of teaching, research and community service. RDI continues to expand its rural research and project activities through the involvement of Brandon University faculty members, external academic scholars and community development professionals. RDI supports student research activities and a student research internship program. It also actively seeks student involvement in research and project activities. RDI has also helped guide the development and administration of the Brandon University Community Outreach Service.

As representatives of a variety of rural constituencies, members of the RDI Advisory Committee play a significant role in helping RDI maintain its rural focus. I sincerely appreciate the contributions of the Committee and look forward to RDI's future efforts.

Scott Grills, Dean, Faculty of Arts

Chairperson

Rural Development Institute Advisory Committee

Introductory Comments from the Director

In 2003, RDI continued to undertake rural research and project activities aimed at helping rural and remote communities adapt to change and address some of the unique set of challenges that confront rural communities. The *2003 Annual Report* highlights the results of RDI's efforts over the past year and identifies our goals for the future.

The first section of this report, *RDI's Vision as a Centre of Excellence for Rural Issues* summarizes the highlights of 2003. It is followed by *Our Research and Project Activities* that presents illustrative examples of our efforts and achievements in 2003 across RDI's domains of research interests. The section *Working Together* recognizes the efforts of research and project team members and the advisory committees associated with RDI's research and project activities. This section also acknowledges the contributions of the funding partners who are instrumental in making RDI projects happen. RDI's progress in priority areas for institutional development is described in the section *Institutional Growth and Development*.

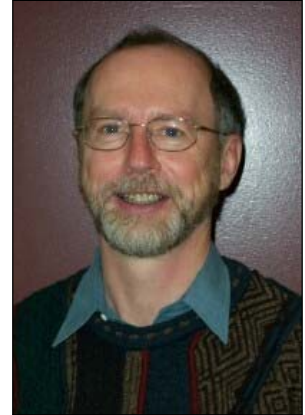
The last section of the report, *Impact and Future Activities*, highlights identified research priorities and activities for 2004. It also presents impressive examples of RDI's long-term impacts marked by the accomplishments of students and faculty members, progress by rural communities, a growing appreciation of the rural context by policy and decision-makers and RDI's expanding partnerships and alliances.

I know that everyone at RDI is excited and pleased by our achievements over the past 12 months. As we move forward to 2004, a new student research internship program has been established, the RDI research affiliates designation has been implemented and the RDI research fellowship program is underway. There is much to look forward to in 2004!

Sincerely,

Robert Annis, Director,

Rural Development Institute



Building RDI's Vision as a Rural Research Institute

Since its reconfiguration in 1999, the Rural Development Institute has seen a steady growth in its capacity to address rural research interests. Our vision is to be recognized at the local, provincial, and national levels as a center of excellence for rural issues. A number of milestones indicate our progress toward this vision.

- In 1999, RDI established processes for governance and decision-making. It also helped foster the development of the academic department of rural development and encouraged a wider involvement of Brandon University faculty in rural research.
- In 2000, the Institute concentrated its efforts on building partnerships and securing financial support for research and related activities. RDI also played a key role in helping the Department of Rural Development with its academic program.
- Brandon University realigned RDI and the Department of Rural Development in 2001. The Department of Rural Development moved into the Faculty of Arts and the former WESTARC Group Inc. and its activities became integrated with RDI. RDI successfully responded to these challenges by incorporating the activities of the WESTARC Group, and by continuing to complement the activities of the Department of Rural Development.
- In 2002, RDI began to experience the growth and development of its research capacity including a revision of its publication program. RDI was also successful in joining national research alliances and networks such as the Canadian Rural Health Research Society and the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development.

Much has been accomplished in 2003 to continue this momentum. For example:

- RDI implemented the Student Internship Program. This program provides undergraduate and graduate students with opportunities for a combination of research experience and guided individual study on rural development issues. In the fall of 2003, six student interns from a variety of disciplines began work on two RDI research projects, the *Determinants of Health of Rural Communities and Populations* and the *Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy*. Both of these projects are research activities funded through the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.
- Late in December 2003, the Board of Governors of Brandon University gave approval to implement a process to formally recognize, by way of the designation "RDI Research Affiliate", the contributions of Brandon University faculty members, external faculty members and community development practitioners who have contributed to RDI's research and project activities.

- In 2003, RDI's newest book, *The New Countryside: Geographic Perspectives on Rural Change*, was released. Ken Beesley, professor with the Department of Rural Development, and managing editor of RDI's formal publication series edited the monograph. RDI and Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia jointly produced the publication.
- This past year was the fourth year of RDI's facilitation of the Community Collaboration Project. Led by Robert Annis, Director of RDI, the project has received national recognition of its achievements. The project's use of technology provided by CIMnet, a group of current and former Brandon University students, has been of particular interest and the subject of three international presentations.
- RDI's team for the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project began the last phase of their work - field testing of a community workbook designed to assess the health of rural communities. Two Manitoba communities, Virden and Shoal Lake, established Community Assessment Teams to conduct the field test.

These examples are illustrative of RDI's progress toward establishing itself as an academic research institute and leading source of information on rural issues.

Our Research and Project Activities

RDI's approach to rural development research and project activities is to maintain and undertake rural research and project activities that are characterized by:

- innovative and inter/multi-disciplinary approaches;
- collaborative efforts to identify research and project activities through contacts with rural groups, towns and villages, governments, academic researchers and observers of the rural situation;
- practical applications gained by advice from citizen and community committees, government representatives and rural community stakeholders;
- linkages with Brandon University faculty members in Arts, Science, and Health Studies; and by,
- alliances with major research institutions, research networks, community organizations and government agencies interested in rural issues.

RDI's research interests are responsive to rural change. In 2003, RDI's multi-disciplinary research projects and activities on rural issues and quality of life fell within 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 encourages communities and community agencies to actively pursue community economic development processes that reflect a contemporary, conceptual framework most commonly known as 'CED'. Elements of this framework include:

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

Community Collaboration Project

The Community Collaboration Project, initiated in 1999, is a collaborative arrangement between communities in four regions of Manitoba and the Kivalliq region of Nunavut; the Rural Development Institute of Brandon University; federal and provincial government agencies including a community development association. The CCP is an operational example of a federal/provincial collaborative horizontal management model that supports regional community economic development.



The goals of the CCP were to:

- build an understanding of sustainability;
- build capacity for community-based sustainability;
- identify and access information resources and applicability for community planning;
- build understanding of and improve access to government programs and services;
- explore ways for governments to better serve rural and remote communities;
- facilitate collaboration between and among federal and provincial government departments; and,
- provide further exposure to and assistance in utilizing information technologies for community building processes.



The CCP Steering Committee evolved as a result of a series of dialogues among federal and provincial government departments and agencies exploring alternative means of working with communities to address mutually relevant issues. Over the past five years, membership in the

CCP Steering Committee has expanded to include representatives from: Community Futures Partners of Manitoba Inc.; Community Information Management Network (CIMnet); Community and Regional Development Initiative, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs; Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives; Environment Canada; Health Canada; Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Manitoba Community Connections; Rural Development Institute, Brandon University; Rural Secretariat (Agriculture & Agri-Food Canada); and Western Economic Diversification Canada.

The Community Animation Program (CAP) has supported the CCP with additional assistance provided through the Rural Dialogue component of the Canadian Rural Partnership Initiative. In-kind contributions have also been provided by Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs.

Upon completion of its fifth year of operation, the CCP has successfully engaged four regions. The four regional round tables (RRTs) involved are very diverse.

- The Northern Vision Regional Round Table is comprised of four northern Manitoba member communities: Lynn Lake, Leaf Rapids, South Indian Lake and Granville Lake.
- The Southwest Regional Round Table has six member communities in southwestern Manitoba: Baldur, Boissevain, Deloraine, Glenboro, Killarney, and Souris.
- The Bayline Regional Round Table is made up of communities along the Bayline rail line that runs from The Pas to Churchill with five member communities: Ilford, Cormorant, Pikwitonei, Thicket Portage, Wabowden and War Lake First Nation.
- The Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Round Table is a unique blend of three northern Manitoba communities: Gilliam, Churchill and Fox Lake First Nation, and seven communities from Nunavut's Kivalliq region: Arviat, Baker Lake, Chesterfield Inlet, Coral Harbour, Rankin Inlet, Repulse Bay, Whale Cove. Tadouly Lake First Nation has also been invited to join the RRT.

All of the RRTs have evolved over the past five years, each with its own unique membership requirements of the member communities. Each RRT has identified issues and projects to work on that are important to their region. At the 2003 annual meeting held in Thompson, the RRTs explored issues of common concern. The northern RRTs devised strategies to work together on projects for mutual benefit. Members of the RRTs and the Steering Committee have had the opportunity to share the CCP story nationally and internationally at conferences, workshops and meetings.

The Community Information Management Network (CIMnet) was developed as a vehicle to provide usable, affordable information communication technology (ICT) services and infrastructure for rural, remote and urban organizations. CIMnet, through the use of ICT, has become an active team member with the CCP. Building on the support that local communities received through Manitoba Community Connections, CIMnet has played an important role in supporting CCP communities with access and use of technology in ways that will assist and enable their community building processes.

Robert Annis, Director of RDI, and Marian Beattie, have acted as facilitators of the Community Collaboration Project in 2003.

CED in the New Economy

RDI is one of four founding members of the Manitoba Research Alliance for CED in the New Economy. The Alliance brings together academic researchers from the Universities of Manitoba, Winnipeg and the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University. It also includes the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives, a community-based research institute.

Early in 2003, the Alliance received approval for a three-year SSHRC research project called CED in the New Economy. 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. The Research Alliance will formalize the economic and political theory of the New Economy to assess its compatibility with democratic and participatory economic development. It will identify opportunities where the pursuit of New Economy activities might be integrated with current CED activities to produce greater development returns, and will determine what capital, infrastructure and policy supports are required for such activities. Moreover, the Alliance will consider how CED might be transformed to be more effective in today's environment.

Robert Annis is a co-investigator of the project, which encompasses a number of smaller research projects investigating a wide range of trends and issues in community economic development. In 2003, Karen Rempel, a PhD student at the University of Calgary, began working on two of the smaller research projects.

Survey of Community Development Corporations in Manitoba

In 2003 RDI began a collaborative research project with the Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association (MCDCA) to survey Manitoba's incorporated Community Development Corporations (CDCs). The purpose of the project was to develop a more in-depth understanding of the characteristics, operations and activities of these organizations and the contexts in which they typically operate. The survey gathered information about factors impacting the effectiveness of CDCs, the involvement in planning processes and the areas and priorities of activities associated with development-related functions.

Ken Bessant, faculty member in the Department of Rural Development is coordinating the project on behalf of RDI. A report on the project is expected early in 2004.

Community Leadership

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

Community Services Program Needs Assessment

Late in 2002 the City of Brandon asked RDI to assist the Community Services Department with a program needs assessment survey. The major thrust of the needs assessment was the participation of people in the City of Brandon in various programs such as arts and entertainment, sports programs, adult and youth programs and beautification programs. A report of the findings was submitted to the City of Brandon in May 2003. John Everitt,

Department of Geography, Faculty of Science, and Ken Bessant, Department of Rural Development, Faculty of Arts, coordinated the project on behalf of RDI. They were assisted by a number of Brandon University students.

Professional Development Workshops

One of RDI's goals is to strengthen connections with rural communities by providing professional development opportunities for rural development practitioners.

In the spring of 2003, RDI worked with Health Canada's Population and Public Health Branch in conjunction with the Rural Development Institute (RDI) of Brandon University to present a workshop used to assist project sponsors of fourteen (14) Health Canada-funded projects to complete evaluations of their projects. The workshop was held on March 25 and 26, 2003 at the Caboto Centre in Winnipeg. Project representatives were asked to bring details of their project with them so that they could work on developing their evaluation plans during the workshop.

The workshop goals were to:

- provide hands-on evaluation experiences for the participants; and
- establish a follow-up process to provide learning reinforcement and support to the participants.



The workshop objectives were to:

- develop an understanding of the evaluation process;
- increase the knowledge and skills of participants;
- identify key elements of projects using the Project Logic Model; and
- become more informed about how to work with external evaluation consultants.

In September 2003, the Brandon Area Community Foundation (BACF) and the Rural Development Institute (RDI) co-sponsored a workshop targeted at Environmental Organizations. This communications workshop, intended to be the first of a series, was entitled *Telling the Story* and held in Brandon on September 25, 2003.

The workshop objectives were to:

- increase the capacity of environmental organizations to network and communicate;
- assist environmental organizations in enhancing their communication strategies; and to;
- conduct a needs assessment for future workshops for environmental organizations.

In November RDI presented workshops in Brandon and in Selkirk that explored new approaches to governing for local and regional development. The emerging debate on the urban agenda was addressed, with a focus on the implications and connections with rural

Canada and the need for a regional approach. Participants discussed practical ways in which local municipalities and community development organizations can make the most of their existing resources and mandates to advance economic development.

Presenter, Robert Greenwood has extensive experience in community, regional and sector planning and development. He has held senior executive positions in provincial governments and crown corporations in Newfoundland and Saskatchewan. He has led strategic planning, organizational development and change processes, involving business and community organizations and all three orders of government. Greenwood is President of Greenwood Consulting, with clients in Saskatchewan, Manitoba, the Northwest Territories, Newfoundland and Labrador and Ottawa.

Throughout the spring and summer of 2003, RDI presented a series of professional development sessions to community facilitators from six rural communities involved in the Learning for Life Initiative.

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 invasive weed species, in particular 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)

In addition to being a member of the LSSG, RDI provides coordination and project management services on behalf of the group.

In 2003, RDI undertook a number of activities to increase public awareness of the impact of leafy spurge on the environment, community and economy including:

- *Municipal Management Plans for Controlling Leafy Spurge*, a partnership with the Little Saskatchewan River Conservation District, and the rural municipalities of Daly, North Cypress and South Cypress, established demonstration sites within the southwest region that will evaluate the long-term effects of bio-control, chemical, mechanical and grazing methods to control leafy spurge.
- RDI developed a comprehensive leafy spurge management plan in consultation with the RM's of Daly and North Cypress for the purpose of providing long-term goals and actions for controlling this invasive weed in these rural municipalities.
- Brandon Area Community Foundation provided funding for an awareness project, *Strengthening Community Capacity for Environmental Change: Leafy Spurge Awareness and Education Project*. The goal of the project was to increase awareness of leafy spurge issues through education and outreach activities.



- The *Bio-Control of Leafy Spurge in Support of Recovery of Species at Risk* project is a field work, demonstration and outreach project concerned with identifying effective bio-control strategies for leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula* L.) with the aim of reducing the negative impact on plant species diversity and plant species at risk.

In 2003, Beth Peers, provided coordination of the LSSG on behalf of RDI. Research assistants working on various leafy spurge project included Ryan Gibson, Pauline Morton, Jennifer Pachkowski and Nicole Shirray.

Information Technology: Utilization and Access for CED

Rural communities recognize that information technology has great potential and application for CED. Through various research and project activities RDI encourages the use of information technology.

CIMnet's Role in Partnership with the Community Collaboration Project

A key to promoting sustainability at the community level is in managing information. The appropriate use of information technology supports rather than drives the development of programs leading to environmentally strong, economically prosperous and socially equitable communities. The Community Information Management Network (CIMnet) was developed as a vehicle to provide usable, affordable information communication technology (ICT) services and infrastructure for rural, remote and urban organizations.

CIMnet is a strategic alliance of communities and community-serving organizations working together to strengthen communities through partnerships and information sharing. The core guiding principle is that partnerships with a shared value in the strength of community interconnectedness provide the best and most promising path towards viable regions, cities and neighbourhoods. CIMnet offers communities a framework for building mutually beneficial partnerships, a process for collaborative decision-making and common tools to create, store and manage locally relevant information.

CIMnet, through the use of ICT, has become an active team member with the Community Collaboration Project (CCP) described on page 6. Building on the support that local communities received through Manitoba Community Connections, CIMnet has played an important role in supporting CCP communities' access and use enabling technology to assist in their community building processes.



The partnership between CCP and CIMnet is one mechanism communities can use to become active participants in the emerging knowledge based society. CIMnet technology has allowed each Regional Round Table (RRT) to develop Internet websites that manage public information as well as secure content intended for internal audiences. In addition to website technology, CIMnet has also developed a series of web-based resources known as CIMtools. These resources allow communities Internet access to information and programs needed for successful

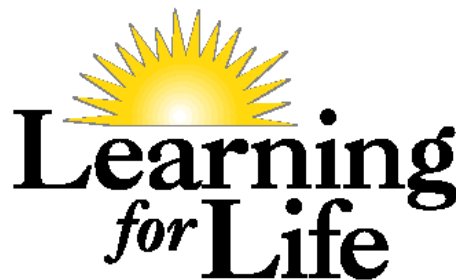
community planning initiatives. CIMtools can also be used to establish linkages between communities facing similar issues. Participation in CCP has allowed CIMnet to work in partnership with communities and jointly build capacity through technology.

The role of CIMnet in CCP continues to evolve as it becomes clearer how to best utilize ICT to augment the information and social needs of the community development process. In 2002, CIMnet joined the CCP Steering Committee, an ad hoc group responsible for coordinating and facilitating the CCP process. Over the past year, many RRT communities have begun to use CIMnet's web-based resources in practical ways; including an online survey to develop a regional youth inclusion strategy and an online survey to determine the relevance of the Lyon Declaration concerning information societies to CCP communities. Bruce Hardy of CIMnet, along with other members of CCP, actively promoted the use of ICT, the CCP approach and RRT communities at a number of venues.

In July 2003 a presentation was made at the *Building Information Commonwealth* conference in St. Petersburg, Russia. Later in 2003 presentations were made at the *World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities of the Information Society* in Lyon, France, and the *United Nations first World Summit on the Information Society* in Geneva, Switzerland.

NCEDC – Learning for Life Project

The Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (NCEDC) is a network of six Manitoba communities: Deloraine, Neepawa, Rosburn, Russell, Souris and Swan River. A major project of the NCEDC is the Learning for Life project, a series of community-based activities designed to encourage the development of community culture of lifelong long learning. The project also includes activities, which would promote a regional community-learning network based on the geographic boundaries of the Association. A specific requirement of the project is the use of information technology whenever possible and evidence of partnerships with other community groups and organizations.



RDI is working with the NCEDC in two major areas of activities. The first set of activities is part of interim and final evaluations of the project. The second set of activities is being carried out on behalf of the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP) to provide professional development to the NCEDC board and community facilitators. Karen Rempel, on behalf of RDI, is the project lead for these activities. Reports and outcomes will be completed in 2004.

Policy and Program Research and Development

Policy makers need accurate and relevant information for the development of rural policy. As a leading source of information on rural issues, RDI is often called upon to provide advice, facilitate discussions or participate in proceedings.

Impact of a Community Learning Network on CED

Karen Rempel, a PhD student at the University of Calgary will undertake a two-year case study approach to investigate the impact of a community learning network on community

economic development. Rempel will use the case of the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (NCEDC) Learning for Life project as an example of community learning networks.

Rural Team Manitoba: Advance 2003

Rural Team Manitoba is a team of 35 representatives from 26 federal and provincial governments and other agencies who have an interest in rural, remote and northern Canada. The team's mission is to advocate and support sustainable, healthy communities for citizens



of rural, remote and northern Manitoba. Its mandate is to work together to advance community capacity through collaborative actions in response to community driven initiatives.

Several planning meetings occurred with a small group of Rural Team Manitoba members meeting with Robert Annis and Marian Beattie of the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University, workshop planners and facilitators. The outcomes of these meetings was a set of

objectives for Rural Team in 2003. The collaborative process established to meet the objectives was known as Advance II. The objectives set out for Advance II were to:

- facilitate communication among team members;
- review the Rural Team's history and charter;
- review the Rural Team's process and activities;
- review/refine the Rural Team's purpose, goals, membership, roles, expectations, resources, and priorities;
- explore trends related to future role of government/horizontal management; and to
- develop strategies and action plans for the next 12 months.

The objectives were accomplished through a combination of informative presentations, participatory discussions, and small group efforts. Len Simpson, Mayor of Pinawa opened the planning session with an informative and thought-provoking presentation. There was considerable discussion about horizontal management within government. The team charter was reviewed and expanded and a working group established to consider additional aspects. The 2003-2004 action plan for Advance II was developed with working groups assigned for most of the goals. The setting of Wilderness Edge Retreat in Pinawa provided a picturesque setting for members of Rural Team Manitoba, invited presenters and guests to connect, both formally and informally.

Rural Team Advance II Impact Assessment

Rural Team Manitoba is a team of 35 representatives from 26 federal and provincial governments and other agencies who have an interest in rural, remote and northern Canada. At Advance II, in March 2003, Rural Team Manitoba created working groups to take actions on seven priorities. Each of these working groups has made progress, some more than others.

One of the team's priorities was to assess how the team was doing. The Rural Development Institute of Brandon University was invited to design and implement a monitoring and evaluation process for the team. Information was collected from April 2003 to January 2004.

RDI obtained progress reports from working group chairpersons, opinions from team members at four consecutive meetings evaluating the team and their individual meeting participation behaviours, and comments in one-on-one telephone interviews. RDI also obtained comments from interviews with colleagues nominated by team members.

Rural Adaptation and Change

Over the past several years RDI has undertaken research and project activities on issues that confront rural communities as they adapt to changes. To date, these activities have focused on evaluating the effectiveness of rural programs to address change, or assessing the needs of individuals or communities to adjust to change.

Canadian Agricultural and Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI) Evaluation

As the regional affiliate for New Economy Development Group, a consulting firm based in Ottawa, RDI completed a regional evaluation of the Canadian Agricultural and Rural Communities Initiative. As part of the evaluation, RDI conducted interviews with proponents from a sample of projects and program-level interviews. Using the responses from the interviews and supplemental information, RDI completed six project profiles. Beth Peers conducted this work on behalf of RDI. Deliverables included interview responses and project profiles.

Rural Health

Over the past four years, RDI has had a sustained research focus on the factors that have an impact on the health of rural populations and communities. These factors include access to education, employment, health care services, social support networks and safe environments. Many of the rural health research and project activities are interdisciplinary in nature and actively involve the participation of communities, regional health authorities, and government agencies with rural and health policy interests.

Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities (YCPC)

The Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities project, investigated community mediating actions for child and youth well being. The Centre was comprised of six networks representing major prairie cities. RDI provided administrative services to the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities on behalf of the School of Health Studies at Brandon University.

In February 2003, the Brandon site embarked on Phase II of the project. Based on findings from Phase I of the research, with input and participation from the Brandon network, two projects were



designed: *Aboriginal Children's Health Program: An Examination Of Experiences, Impact, Transitions and Mobility* and *Mentoring Youth In Brandon: Successes, Challenges and Best Practices*. Unfortunately, effective September 2003, Health Canada announced that it would no longer support the Centre of Excellence for Child and Youth Centred Prairie Communities (YCPC). While the Centre was able to complete its Phase II activities in Brandon in 2003, plans for Phase III of the project were terminated.

Aboriginal Children's Health Program

This project involved an evaluation of the Aboriginal Children's Health Program in terms of the program's impact on children, the experiences of parents and program staff, and the impact of transitions and mobility. The Aboriginal Children's Health Program encompasses many strategies beginning with the newborn and their parent(s) through to preparing preschoolers for transition to Brandon School Division. The programs offered through the Brandon Friendship Centre include the Canada Prenatal Nutrition Program, Community Action Program For Children and the Aboriginal Head Start Program. The examination of the Aboriginal Children's Health Program was based on a community based research model. Program staff had an essential role in deciding the detail of the research questions, the collection and analysis of data as well as its interpretation and reporting process. There was built in community involvement (program staff members, families and Elders) through all phases of the project, which served to build capacity. Noreen Ek from the School of Health Studies was the lead researcher of this project.

Mentoring Youth In Brandon

This project, which was coordinated by Elicia Funk of RDI, examined the successes, challenges and practices of five mentoring initiatives aimed at 'at-risk' adolescents in Brandon. The different structures that the programs have implemented, the impact of these programs on participants, and successful practices of these programs were highlighted to build a model of successful mentoring initiatives. A committee of community partners guided the research.

Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities

The Rural Development Institute of Brandon University has led the *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project. This project involves university researchers from Brandon University, University of Manitoba and Concordia University; rural Manitoban communities; inter-community agencies and government departments.

The goals of the project are to develop indicators to determine health and well-being of rural communities utilizing a workbook developed within the project. The communities of Shoal Lake, Virden and their surrounding



areas were selected as community settings for testing the workbook, *A Rural Community Guide to Assessing Well-Being and Quality of Life*, during 2003.

The workbook utilizes a framework, depicted as a flower, that represents ten determinants or categories (petals) of community health. Associated with each determinant are indicators that can be used to understand and assess that determinant. Local assessment committees selected applicable indicators and gathered information from a variety of sources. RDI assisted the communities in analyzing and compiling the data into reports. The reports will be available to the community councils and in electronic format from the RDI website.

Rural Tourism

Rural tourism is receiving attention as a component of community economic development for many rural communities.

Field Work and Research in the Puerto Vallarta Region of Mexico

In 2000, RDI initiated a co-operative teaching and research venture with the Puerto Vallarta campus of the Universidad de Guadalajara, Jalisco, Mexico. John Everitt, Faculty of Science, Brandon University and Bryan Massam, York University, have been facilitating the sessions since that time. The goal of their work is to explore selected topics concerning tourism and quality of life as they relate to rural development and sustainable change in small rural communities near Puerto Vallarta. The project team included a number of professors from the Universidad de Guadalajara.

In August 2003, Everitt and Massam prepared a working paper, which provided a summary report of the work completed during three field visits to the Puerto Vallarta area over the period 2000-2003. The working paper can be found on RDI's website www.brandonu.ca/rdi.

Tourism Research Centre

Late in 2002, a group of interested Brandon University faculty members led by Doug Ramsey from the Department of Rural Development received approval from the Board of Governors to establish a tourism research center. In 2003 RDI helped support the development of the rural tourism centre including support to speakers to Brandon University on rural tourism: Alison Gill from Simon Fraser and Rhonda Koster, University of Saskatchewan.

Manitoba BEST Service Excellence Seminars

In 2003, RDI continued its' successful partnership with the Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC) by providing the Manitoba BEST program to the Southwest region of Manitoba. This partnership allows relevant tourism training to be made more accessible to rural communities. Pamela McTavish, on behalf of RDI, facilitated three seminars in Brandon during 2003, two frontline sessions and one management session.

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.

Working Together

The academic and professional work of research and project team members as well as partnerships with community stakeholders and government agencies provide the essential elements for RDI's work. RDI gratefully acknowledges these efforts as well as the support of a wide variety of partners for providing financial resources for projects, in-kind contributions, advice and guidance.

Advice and Collaboration

Throughout the past year, RDI received input from many individuals representing a number of community organizations, stakeholder groups, government agencies and research institutes. The advice and collaboration from these rural stakeholders characterizes many of RDI's rural research and project activities. This 'community-based approach ensures the relevance of RDI's research and project activities.

Institutional Advice and Guidance

RDI Steering Committee: Since 1999 the RDI Steering Committee has helped satisfy implement the intent and purposes of the 1999 MOA between Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Brandon University. The Steering Committee is comprised of a representative from Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs (Ron Riopka), the Vice-President (Academic and Research), (Jeff Williams) and the Director of the Rural Development Institute (Robert Annis).

RDI Advisory Committee: In addition to the guidance of the RDI Steering Committee, RDI receives the advice of the RDI Advisory Committee. This committee includes a broad section of stakeholders with interests in rural issues. The Committee has representatives from both internal and external constituencies. The role of the RDI Advisory Committee is to discuss issues and offer advice on academic and applied rural research interests and needs.

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, Baker Hutterite Colony, MacGregor
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, Brandon University
Dion Wiseman, Department of Geography, 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.

Partners in Research and Project Activities

RDI works with a number of partners on rural research and project activities. Some of these partners in 2003 included:

Community Collaboration Project (Year IV): Collaborative members of the CCP project include Manitoba Community Connections Initiative, Community Futures Partners of Manitoba, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, Rural Secretariat – Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Western Economic Diversification Canada.

Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities (Year III): Research and project team members include representatives from the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority, Community Futures Partners of Manitoba, Health Canada, Virden-Wallace Community Development Corporation, Wheat Belt Community Futures Corporation, and the community of Shoal Lake.

Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG): In addition to being a member of the LSSG, RDI carries out much of the LSSG's project activities. These activities include partnerships with a wide variety of stakeholders including Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Brandon and Lethbridge Research Stations, Ducks Unlimited Environment Canada, Manitoba Cattle Producers' Association, Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association, and many others.

Learning for Life Evaluation and Professional Development: The NCEDC Board comprised of representatives from Deloraine, Neepawa, Rossburn, Russell and area, Souris, Swan River and area, Assiniboine Community College, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, and Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs have been closely involved in RDI's evaluation and professional development activities.

Research and Project Teams

RDI continues to depend on the academic and professional contributions of faculty and students from Brandon University; academic researchers from related research networks or alliances; faculty from other universities; and knowledgeable, independent community development professionals 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
Noreen Ek, Ph.D., School of Health Studies
Nukte Edguer, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science
John Everitt, Ph.D., Department of Geography, Faculty of Science
Barbara Gfellner, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science
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., Ph.D., School of Health Studies
Renée Robinson, R.P.N., B.Sc.M.H, M.Sc., School of Health Studies
Kim Ryan-Nicholls, R.P.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

Robert Annis, Director
Sylvia Henry, Clerical support
Bev Lischka, Administrative Assistant

Community Development Professionals

Marian Beattie, PHEc., B.Ed (5th Yr), Brandon, MB
Pamela McTavish, B.A., Hamiota, MB
Beth Peers, B.A. (Spec.), Virden, MB
Karen Rempel, B.Ed., M.Ed., Brandon, MB
Ross Thompson, B.Sc., Stonewall, MB

Faculty from Other Universities

Betty Havens, D. Litt., University of Manitoba, Winnipeg
Bryan Massam, Ph.D., York University, Toronto
Bill Reimer, Ph.D., Concordia University, Montreal

Student Assistants and Research Assistants

Amanda Campbell, B.A. Brandon University student, Master of Rural Development
Keith Edmunds, B.Sc. (Spec.) Brandon University student, Master of Rural Development
Elicia Funk, B.Sc., Brandon University student, Faculty of Arts
Zamira Gawletz, Brandon University student, Faculty of Arts
Ryan Gibson, B.A. (Hons.), Brandon University student, Master of Rural Development
Lori Gould, B.Sc. (Hons.), Brandon University student, Master of Rural Development
Erinn Heinrichs, Dipl. Rural Development, Assiniboine Community College
Greg Joice, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Wayne Kelly, B.A., Brandon University student, Master of Rural Development
Tatenda Kwedza, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Debbie Kuehne, Brandon University student, First Nations and Aboriginal Counselling
Katie McKay, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Arron Metcalfe, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Pauline Morton, B.Sc., Brandon University student, Faculty of Education
Kirby Mosset, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Lindsay Mosset, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Linda Opoonechqw, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Katherine Pachkowski, Brandon University student, School of Health Studies
Jennifer Pachkowski, B.Sc., Brandon University graduate, Faculty of Science
Ryan Robson, Brandon University student, Faculty of Education
Tara Romanyszyn, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Nicole Shirray, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Matt Skinner, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Catherine Taylor, Dipl. Library Tech. Brandon University student, Faculty of Arts
Lani Tianhui, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science
Deatra Walsh, B.A. (Hons.) Brandon University student, Master of Rural Development
Liu Yingying, Brandon University student, Faculty of Science

Research Grants and Project Funding

RDI gratefully acknowledges the support of a wide variety of partners for providing financial resources and in-kind contributions for research and project activities.

Province of Manitoba

Since RDI's establishment in 1989, one of RDI's most important sources of support has come from the Province of Manitoba. This support, administered through a series of memoranda of agreements, has been critical in helping RDI grow and develop into a recognized center of excellence for rural issues. In 2003, the areas of activities supported wholly or in part by the Province were:

- *RDI Program Support* help RDI focus on issues confronting rural communities in a flexible and responsive manner.
- Funding allocated to *RDI Research Fellows Program* supports a program intended to attract rural development academics to Brandon University.

- The *Department of Rural Development Masters Student Thesis and Research Support* funding provides annual financial support to Masters students during their academic program.
- The *Brandon University Community Outreach Service* assists Brandon University students and faculty with direct costs associated with community outreach projects.
- A portion of the Province's funding supports the *Professional Development Program of Activities*. This program is an organized and sustained program of professional development activities for individuals involved in a various kinds of community economic development activities.
- The *Designated Research Program* is a targeted program of research activities that includes building research alliances, enhancing community-based rural research and project activities; or, supporting collaborative research efforts with the Province of Manitoba or rural communities.

In 2003, the existing funding Agreement between the Province of Manitoba and Brandon University lapsed. At that time, the Province offered an interim Agreement pending the completion of a review of RDI's activities.

There have been a number of significant changes that have occurred affecting the rural programming and the Rural Development Institute (RDI) over the period of the last Agreement that are transforming Brandon University to a Centre of Excellence in Rural Studies. The Community Outreach Service, the growth in student enrollment in the Masters Program, the on-going research activities and the significant amount of new research activities that the RDI has been able to attract, are all commendable achievements that benefit the Institute, the University and Manitoba. I am pleased that we have been able to be part of this transformation and would like to continue our relationship within the authority that has been provided.

letter dated June 11, 2003
from Jean Friesen
Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)

In 2003, RDI participated in two research projects – the Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities and the CED in the New Economy - funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, a national research granting council.

Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities

For the past three years, the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada provided research funding for the Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities research project. The research completion date is March 2004. In 2003, RDI also received in-kind support from government agencies and the rural communities of Shoal Lake and Virden through their Community Assessment Teams.

CED in the New Economy

RDI is one of four partners in the Manitoba Research Alliance on CED that received approval from SSHRC for an extensive, multi-year research project on CED in the New Economy. As a member of the Alliance, RDI received funding in 2003 to provide a doctoral student with research internship support for research activity.

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.

Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP)

RDI received funding from CEDTAP to plan and implement a series of professional development workshops and related activities for community facilitators involved in the NCEDC Learning for Life Project.

Institutional Growth and Development

Institutional growth and development describes RDI's short- and medium-term priority areas of activities that RDI needs to remain attentive to emergent rural issues and to enhance its capacity to carry out rural research activities.

In 2003, RDI focused on six priority areas of activities:

- continuing to enhance RDI's capacity to carry out rural research and related activities;
- seeking new rural research alliances and networks in order to promote RDI as a center of excellence for rural research;
- building connections with rural communities;
- promoting RDI as a nationally recognized center of excellence for rural issues;
- securing funding support for RDI activities; and,
- providing administrative leadership to RDI.

Priority Area: Continuing to Enhance RDI's Capacity to Carry Out Relevant Research and Project Activities

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

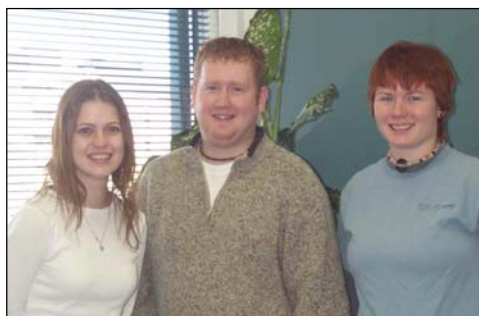
RDI Research Fellows Program

RDI submitted a policy proposal to Brandon University administration for the RDI Research Fellows Program. While a full-fledged program is pending, RDI hosted several visiting scholars from across Canada, the United States and abroad (Turkey) who have been attracted to RDI's program.

RDI Student Research Internship Program

Students are an integral aspect of the research and learning process. RDI recognizes the role of students in fulfilling RDI's mandate to assist with rural community development.

In 2003, RDI successfully implemented a student research internship program. The student internship program operates on a shared research and learning experience. Internship recipients are expected to devote two-thirds of their internship to RDI project work assigned by the Director, RDI and the remaining time on guided individual study related to rural developmental issues.



In 2003, RDI had six student interns working on two RDI Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council projects. Five undergraduate and graduate students across a variety of

disciplines worked on the *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities*. These students were:

- Elicia Funk, Katherine Pachkowski and Nicole Shirray, Brandon University undergraduate students; and,
- Ryan Gibson and Lori Gould, graduate students, Master of Rural Development.

One doctoral student from the University of Calgary, Karen Rempel, is working on the *Manitoba Research Alliance on CED in the New Economy* project.

Department of Rural Development, Faculty of Arts, Brandon University

Since 1999, more than 40 students have been admitted to the graduate studies program in the Department of Rural Development. Over this time RDI provided support for student research and thesis activities, research assistant opportunities and student activities. For example, RDI provided research support for two recent MRD graduates:

- Mark Matiassek completed his thesis entitled *Board Governance and Accountability Capacity Gaps in Northwestern Ontario Community Futures Development Corporations*; and
- Mike Pelliccotti completed his thesis *Tourism Policy Development in Manitoba: How the Province of Manitoba is Addressing Rural Tourism to Support Economic Development*.

In April 2003, RDI also helped finance the 1st Annual Interdisciplinary Student Conference hosted by the Rural Development Graduate Students' Association. Ten graduate students made presentations as well as keynote speakers from Brandon University and Simon Fraser University. Later in the year, RDI provided travel assistance to two students speaking at national and international conferences.

Priority Area: Seeking New Research Alliances and Networks

RDI seeks research alliances and affiliated networks that have the ability to complement and extend RDI's research efforts.

Research Alliances and Networks

Research alliances and networks provide opportunities for new research projects or new partnerships based on rural community research interests. In 2003 these research alliances and networks included:

- Canadian Community Economic Development Network;
- Canadian Consortium for Health Promotion Research;
- Canadian Rural Health Research Society;
- Canadian University Network on Rural Development;
- Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program, Carleton University;

- Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy; and the
- New Rural Economy Research Project, Concordia University.

Applications for New Research Projects

In 2003, RDI developed and submitted the following research applicants for adjudication on a competitive basis.

- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada Community-University Research Alliances (CURA) Research Project: *Rural and Northern Community Capacity Building to Improve Quality of Life*. This project was submitted in collaboration with Dalhousie University. RDI received approval and funding support to proceed with the development of a full research proposal. The application was subsequently declined.
- In December RDI submitted a research proposal, *Building a Conceptual Framework of Rural for Population Health and Health Services*, to the Community-University Research Alliance. RDI is awaiting the decision on this proposal.
- In late 2003, RDI notified the Community-University Research Alliance that RDI would be submitting a proposal *Community Collaboration to Improve Health Care Access of Northern Residents*.

Manitoba Research Alliance for CED in the New Economy

RDI became a founding member of the Manitoba Research Alliance for Community Economic Development in the New Economy in 2002. The Manitoba Research Alliance consists of the RDI, University of Manitoba, University of Winnipeg and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives. In 2003, the Alliance was successful in receiving a three-year research project from SSHRC. The Director of RDI is one of three principal investigators and co-investigators for this project administered by the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives.

RDI Research Affiliates

In 2003, with the approval of the Board of Governors at Brandon University, RDI established a policy and selection process that recognizes these contributions with the designation of *RDI Research Affiliate*. While this designation does not in any way confer special status within the University nor assign any particular rights or privileges, it does recognize individuals who contribute to the Rural Development Institute as:

- principal research investigators or co-investigators on research funding requests;
- collaborators or senior researchers on designated RDI research projects;
- project planners and developers of institute activities; or, as
- managing editors or coordinators of institute programs.

Late in 2003, the RDI Selection Committee, comprised of the Robert Annis, Director of RDI, Scott Grills, Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Chair of the RDI Advisory Committee, and Jeff Williams, Vice President (Academic and Research) named the following individuals as RDI Research Affiliates:

University Faculty Members

Betty Havens, D.Litt. University of Manitoba
Barbara Gfellner, Ph.D., Faculty of Science, Brandon University
Fran Racher, R.N., Ph.D., School of Health Studies, Brandon University
Doug Ramsey, Ph.D., Faculty of Arts, Brandon University

Graduate Students

Karen Rempel, B.Ed., M.Ed., doctoral student, University of Calgary

Practitioners from the Public and Private Sector

Marian Beattie, PHEc., B.Ed. (5th yr.), private consultant

Priority Area: Building Connections with Rural Communities

In 2003, RDI continued to build connections with rural communities by seeking opportunities for research and project activities. RDI was also actively involved in a professional development series to enhance the skills of community development practitioners.

Brandon University Community Outreach Service

The role of the Brandon University Community Outreach Service is to facilitate projects that combine the involvement of community organizations, Brandon University students and faculty members. The Director of RDI administers the service as part of the funded areas of activities supported by funding from Province of Manitoba.

The Brandon University Community Outreach Advisory Committee provides advice to the Community Outreach Service at Brandon University. The Committee includes representatives from each of the faculties at Brandon University, the Director of RDI and the Vice-President (Academic and Research).

Members on this committee include:

Jeff Williams, (Chair) VP Academic and Research
Robert Annis, (Co-Chair) Rural Development Institute
Ken Beesley, Faculty of Arts
Andrée Dagenais, Faculty of Music
Roberta Graham, School of Health Studies
Johanna Leseho, Faculty of Education
Dion Wiseman, Faculty of Science
Deatra Walsh and Keith Edmunds, MRD students and 2003 Community Outreach Coordinators

Activities supported in 2003 through Community Outreach include:

- *In-Place Sheltering Children's Educational Program* (BU Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies Program and the City of Brandon)
- *Assiniboine River Corridor Bird Census* (BU Department of Geography and Brandon Riverbank Discovery Centre)
- *GIS Applications in MARCD* (BU Department of Geography and Mid-Assiniboine River Conservation District, PFRA and RM of Whitehead)
- *The Special Delivery Club: Analysis of Impact and Future Programming Needs* (BU Health Studies and Child and Family Services, Brandon)

Deatra Walsh and Keith Edmunds, graduate students in Rural Development, coordinated the Outreach Service in 2003.

RDI Professional Development Sessions

RDI organized a number of professional development session for individuals or organizations involved in community development. These sessions included:

- A seminar on program evaluation
- An information session on communication and a needs assessment with the Brandon Area Community Foundation facilitated by Marian Beattie and Karen Rempel on behalf of RDI.
- Robert Greenwood, Regina, Saskatchewan, gave two seminars entitled *Governing for Local and Regional Government*. One seminar was held in Brandon, the other in Selkirk, Manitoba.
- Robert Annis, Director of RDI facilitated a strategic planning workshop with Assiniboine Community College
- RDI was active in Rural Forum 2003
- Karen Rempel provided a series of five professional development sessions to community facilitators and board members involved in the Learning for Life Project in the communities of Deloraine, Neepawa, Souris, Rossburn, Russell and Swan River.

Partnering with Rural Communities

RDI seeks and welcomes opportunities to build partnerships with rural community development organizations and agencies.

- RDI plays a key role in sustaining the momentum of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group, a broad group of government agencies and stakeholder organizations working together to increase awareness of leafy spurge.
- RDI facilitated the establishment of Community Assessment Teams in the communities of Virden and Shoal Lake. These communities were the pilot sites for the community workbook developed as part of the *Determinants of Health of Rural Communities and Populations* research project.

- RDI has been working with the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres and community facilitators in the communities of Deloraine, Neepawa, Rosburn, Russell, Souris, and Swan River to document examples of best practices for community learning networks.
- Through the *Community Collaboration Project*, RDI has facilitated partnerships and regional round tables involving 27 rural and northern communities in Manitoba. RDI is also participating in emerging regional round tables in Nunavut.

Priority Area: Promoting RDI as a Centre of Excellence for Rural Issues

Communicating the results of research and project activities as well as sharing information with key rural decision-makers promotes RDI's ability to act as a leading source of information that will help encourage change in rural policies and programs. One of the highlights in 2003 was the publication *The New Countryside: Geographic Perspectives on Rural Change* edited in part by Ken Beesley from the Department of Rural Development and a joint publication of RDI and Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

RDI's Publications and Communications Program

RDI actively encourages research and project team members to take advantage of 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 that provide opportunities for improving professional practice;
- commissioned reports to provide specific information at the request of rural stakeholder, agency or organization; and,
- project reports which present information on a particular research or project activity.

Faculty members from the Department of Rural Development assist with RDI's publication and communications program.

- Robert Annis, Director of the Rural Development Institute, is managing editor for RDI's working papers and project reports. Several of these reports can be found on RDI's website: www.brandonu.ca/rdi.
- Ken Bessant, faculty member in the Department of Rural Development, is managing editor for RDI's professional development and skills series. Information on these opportunities can be found on RDI's website: www.brandonu.ca/rdi.
- Doug Ramsey, faculty members in the Department of Rural Development, is the managing editor for the Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation publications. He is also pursuing the implementation of the *Journal of Rural and Community Development* (proposed title).

RDI also prepares a semi-annual newsletter and regularly updates its website (www.brandonu.ca/rdi).

During 2003, research and project team members prepared the following reports, working papers, conference presentations and peer-reviewed articles based on RDI research and project activities:

Annis, R.C. (May 2003) Lessons learned: A discussion of Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project and its relevance in a wider context. Paper presented at *Pan West: Community Capacity Building Seminar*, Edmonton, Alberta.

Annis, R.C., Hardy, B., Ottaway, D. (December 2003). ICT for development platform Paper presented at *United World Summit on Information Society*, Geneva, Switzerland.

Annis, R.C., Hardy, B., Ottaway, D. (December 2003). World summit of cities and local authorities of the information society. Presented at *International Conference World Summit of Cities and Local Authorities*, Lyon, France.

Annis, R.C., Lachance, P, Hardy, B., Kelly W. (June 2003). Lessons learned: Community Collaboration Project. Paper presented at *Building the Information Commonwealth Conference* at St. Petersburg, Russia.

Beesley, K., Millward, H., Ilbery, B., & Harrington, L. (2003) *The new countryside: geographic perspectives on rural change*. Joint publication of the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University and Saint Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia.

Everitt, J. (May 2003). *Community Services Program needs assessment survey report*. Commissioned report for the City of Brandon.

Gibson, R. (July 2003). *This gold isn't treasure: Leafy spurge invasion in Manitoba*. Presentation at Spruce Woods Provincial Park, Glenboro, MB.

Lachance, P, Annis, R.C. (October 2003) The community collaboration project. Paper presented at *5th International Symposium, The Future of Rural Peoples*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Massam, B., Everitt, J. et al. *Quality of life in the Puerto Vallarta region of Jalisco State, Mexico*. RDI Working paper #2003-01.

Pachkowski, J. *Implementing a bio-control program for leafy spurge*. Fact sheet prepared for the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group.

Pachkowski, J. *Multi-species grazing*. Fact sheet prepared for the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group.

Racher, F. (ed.) RDI *Rural Report Special Issue on Health*, Spring 2003 Newsletter available at: <http://www.brandonu.ca/organizations/RDI/sshreproject.htm>.

Rempel, K., Annis, R.C. Investigation of the impact of community learning networks on rural community economic development. Paper presented at *5th International Symposium, The Future of Rural Peoples*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, October 2003.

Ryan-Nicholls, K., Annis, R.C. (October 2003) Assessing health and quality of life of rural communities: Piloting a framework and indicators. Paper presented at 5th *International Symposium, The Future of Rural Peoples*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Walsh, D. E., Annis, R.C. (October 2003) Finding an optimal relationship in university-community research engagement: The case of Brandon University's Community Outreach Service. Paper presented at 5th *International Symposium, The Future of Rural Peoples*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Walsh, D.E., Annis, R.C. (May 2003) Exploring new links between universities and communities: The outreach potential. Paper presented at *CU Expo International Conference*, Saskatoon, Saskatchewan.

Rural Consultations

Throughout 2003, the RDI Director and project team members made themselves available for consultations with representatives from more than 70 rural communities or stakeholder organizations as well as a variety of provincial and federal government departments in order to discuss future activities that RDI might be explored or undertake. These consultations help influence research activities, the Community Outreach Service, research and funding proposals and other types of project activity undertaken by RDI.

One example of RDI's work in communities is the Community Assessment Teams working in Shoal Lake and Virden, Manitoba. In 2003, these community-based applied research teams used a workbook for communities developed as part of the SSHRC rural health research project, to assess the health of their communities. Late in 2003, the communities began to analyze the data. The teams will present their preliminary reports in 2004.

Over the past year, RDI also was actively involved in a number of consultations with policy makers including in chronological order

- Robert Annis was involved in provincial government discussions on government policy through the CED lens.
- Robert Annis and Fran Racher helped organize and took part in the Rural Indicators workshop hosted by Canadian Institutes for Health Research in Newfoundland.
- Robert Annis and Marian Beattie facilitated sessions with the Rural Team Advance.
- Robert Annis participated in a meeting organized by the Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada to assist with the development of a prioritized research agenda for federal, provincial and territorial governments. (Ottawa)
- Karen Rempel, on behalf of RDI, made a presentation on the *Rural Adaptation Needs Assessment* report to senior officials in Manitoba Agriculture and Food.
- Karen Rempel, on behalf of RDI and the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group, contributed to a consultation session for programming priorities in the Agricultural Policy Framework (Environmental Chapter)

- Robert Annis participated in a CED Policy meeting hosted by the Caledon Institute and the J.S. McConnell Foundation (Montreal)
- Robert Annis continued as an appointed committee member on the National Selection Committee on *Broadband for Rural and Northern Development Pilot Program*. The role of the committee is to make recommendations to the Minister of Industry Canada 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 currently have no broadband access.

Priority Area: Securing Funding Support for RDI Activities

As an institution of Brandon University, RDI receives funding for the positions of director and administrative assistant as well as some operational funding.

In addition to this, the Province of Manitoba has provided funding support to RDI since 1989 through a series of agreements that have contributed significantly to RDI's institutional growth and development.

Evaluation of Funding Agreement with the Province of Manitoba

The most recent agreement with the Province of Manitoba expired in 2003. In preparation for a new agreement, the Province examined RDI's progress, results and impacts in order to evaluate the previous agreement's effectiveness in responding to the shared interest in supporting rural development in Manitoba.

The evaluation concluded that RDI had been highly successful in achieving its goals and objectives.

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- *RDI has worked hard on the development of faculty and student capacity to undertake research and related activities that are responsive to the short and long-term interests of rural Manitoba.*
 - *RDI has successfully facilitated greater collaboration between the knowledge, skills and resources available at the University with the resources required by rural communities. It has worked with or assisted more than 40 different community development organizations, rural community groups, agencies or associations including Community Development Corporations and Community Futures Partners of Manitoba.*
 - *RDI has been successful in building linkages and affiliations at the local, national and international level with individual researchers and research institutions that assist Brandon University to increase its visibility and strengthen its reputation as a Centre of Excellence in Rural Studies. As a result, Manitoba is also becoming recognized as a province showing leadership in addressing rural communities' issues.*

Selected excerpts from the "Report on the Three Year Funding Agreement with Brandon University to Support Rural Development Research and Skill Development" prepared by the Province of Manitoba

Funding for Research and Project Activities

While Brandon University and the Province of Manitoba support much of RDI's institutional growth and development, funding for research and project activities must be secured through external sources such as research granting agencies or through commissioned research and project activities.

In 2003, RDI has submitted three major research proposals and several smaller research proposals or requests for partnerships. Some of these include:

- CIHR – Defining Rural workshop and publication (submitted and approved); and,
- CIHR – *Building a Conceptual Framework for “Rural” for Population and Health and Health Services Research* (full proposal submitted and decision pending)
- Covering New Ground, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (two proposals submitted and approved);
- Habitat Stewardship Program for Species at Risk, Environment Canada (proposal submitted and approved)
- SSHRC – CED in the New Economy (full proposal submitted and approved);
- SSHRC - Community-University Research Alliance (letter of intent submitted and successful);
- SSHRC – Community-University Research Alliance (full proposal submitted, proposal declined).

In 2003, support for specific research and project activities came from:

- Canadian Institutes of Health Research;
- Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program;
- Environment Canada;
- Health Canada;
- Human Resources Development Canada;
- Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group;
- Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives;
- Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs;
- Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres;
- Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada;
- Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada

Priority Area: Providing Administrative Leadership to RDI

In 2003, RDI successfully continued its commitment to rural community development under the administrative leadership of Robert Annis, Director, and Beverley Lischka, Administrative Assistant. Using a consultative process with many individuals associated with RDI as well as the RDI Advisory Committee, the following examples illustrate some of the administrative dimensions of RDI:

- description and application of filters for decision-making;
- internal planning and monitoring process for RDI's efforts in rural research and project activities;
- implementation of a student internship program;
- guidance and administration of Brandon University Community Outreach Service;
- development of plans for space and facilities resulting from the move of RDI's offices out of the Jeff Umphrey Centre;
- development of policies and procedures for Research Affiliates and Research Fellowship programs.

Impact and Future Directions

This concluding section of the *2003 Annual Report* provides a reflection of RDI's broad impact. It also takes a look ahead at priority areas of activities and some research and project activities for 2004.

Making a Difference

Reflecting back over the past 12 months, there are strong indications that RDI's efforts are making a difference across many dimensions.

- Over the past 12 months, RDI's capacity to build knowledge of the rural context has become increasingly recognized provincially, nationally and internationally. At the provincial level, the Province of Manitoba reviewed and indicated its endorsement of RDI's activities and direction.
- At the national level, RDI facilitated or was invited to participate in a number of policy discussions throughout Canada. For example, Robert Annis was invited to participate in a CED policy meeting hosted by the Caledon Institute and J.W. McConnell Foundation, Montreal Quebec. He also attended a Rural Indicators Workshop hosted by the Canadian Institute of Health Research in Newfoundland. Late in 2003, Annis was invited by Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, to participate in a two-day meeting in Ottawa to develop a prioritized policy research agenda for federal, provincial and territorial governments.
- In 2003, the institutional support provided by Brandon University and the Province of Manitoba through the Department of Intergovernmental Affairs helped leverage research and project funding and in-kind support valued at more than \$500,000.
- At the Fifth International Symposium on Rural Peoples held in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan, RDI team members made a number of presentations.
 - Pat Lachance, Health Canada, and Robert Annis presented a paper on the Community Collaboration Project.
 - Karen Rempel assisted by Robert Annis presented preliminary findings on the investigation of the impact of community learning networks on rural community economic development.
 - Kim Ryan-Nichols and Robert Annis, presented a paper from the Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities research project entitled *Assessing Health and Quality of Life of Rural Communities: Piloting a Framework and Indicators*.
 - Deatra Walsh, and Robert Annis presented a paper describing the Community Outreach Service.
- Mr. Mike Kolba, a geography graduate from Brandon University, worked for two summers as research assistant on RDI's *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project. Mike is currently a Masters student in Geography at Queen's University. In 2003, he received the Best Presentation Award in the Masters category for his paper, *The migration preferences of nursing students*

preparing to enter the healthcare workforce and the registered nursing shortage in Ontario.

- In 2003, RDI and Saint Mary's University jointly published *The New Countryside: Geographic Perspectives on Rural Change*, a peer-reviewed monograph edited by Ken Beesley, from the Department of Rural Development.
- RDI's legacy in rural communities includes the development of the community workbook, *A Rural Community Guide to Assess Health and Quality of Life*, which is currently undergoing testing in two rural Manitoba communities.
- RDI and its partners received national and international recognition for their efforts towards the development of regional round tables facilitated through the Community Collaboration Project. CIMnet, the information technology component, managed and delivered by a group of current and former Brandon University students, plays a key role in the CCP project. In 2003, Robert Annis from RDI, as well as Pat Lachance from Health Canada, and Bruce Hardy and Wayne Kelly from CIMnet, were asked to speak about the Community Collaboration Project in St. Petersburg, Russia, Lyon, France, and Geneva, Switzerland.
- In 2003, RDI's research and project activities involved 15 university faculty members, five community development professionals, and 27 current or former Brandon University students as research assistants.
- In 2003, more than 80 rural and northern communities benefited from the knowledge and experience of RDI's research team members.
- The professional development sessions have had a significant impact on the participants.

This past weekend, I attended a consultation with the National Literacy Secretariat, along with the Movement for Canadian Literacy and my coalition counterparts from across Canada. We were presented with a new Logic model framework that the NLS had submitted to the Treasury Board to show the results of their \$30M in funding. As partners, we were asked to react to the model.

Many of my coalition counterparts were confused by the model itself. I was not. I was able to work through the model and even suggest significant changes to it. An external contractor had been retained to adapt the model based on partner input. He agreed that my suggestions were crucial about modifying outcomes, adding in another huge intermediate outcome.

email received from a participant in the
professional development workshop on
program evaluation

Looking Ahead

RDI's research and project teams are looking enthusiastically to 2004. These activities include:

- RDI will be receiving notification of 2003 research submissions and will be seeking new opportunities for research and project proposals to national research granting councils.
- As a collaborative partner in the Manitoba Research Alliance for CED, RDI continue its participation in the SSHRC funded research project *CED in the New Economy*.
- The Community Collaboration Project will enter its 5th year. RDI acts as facilitator of the project in Manitoba. Discussions in 2004 will focus on extending the CCP experience to communities in Nunavut.
- RDI will present a new series of professional development seminars.
- RDI's report on the survey results of Manitoba's Community Development Corporations prepared for the Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association will be finalized.
- RDI will conclude its evaluation of the Learning for Life project and will document "best practices" for community learning networks on behalf of the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres and the Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program.
- The final report of the multi-year *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* will be submitted to the SSHRC national research granting council.
- RDI, on behalf of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group, will plan and propose further leafy spurge activities including a needs assessment for landowners/managers on the barriers they face with implementation of integrated pest management strategies for the control of leafy spurge. This activity is anticipated to provide information to a broad audience.
- Past efforts and new directions for rural issues have helped RDI identify the following priority areas of activities for 2004:
 - enhancement of RDI's capacity for rural research and activities;
 - examination of RDI's domains of research interests;
 - promotion of RDI as a national centre of excellence for rural issues;
 - pursuit of research and project funding to address rural issues;
 - administration of RDI including adjusting office space to accommodate RDI offices, the Brandon University Community Outreach Services, and the Department of Rural Development;
 - policy implementation for RDI Research Fellows Program; and,
 - signing of new three year Memorandum of Agreement with the Province of Manitoba.

RDI ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Scott Grills, Chair
Dean of Arts
Brandon University

Maurice Bouvier
Director
Rural Initiatives, Community Cooperatives
and Regional Development Initiatives
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives

Larry Flynn
Regional Manager
Population Health Promotion
Health Canada

Reg Helwer
Shur-Gro Farm Services

Ben Maendel
Jonathon Maendel
Baker Colony

Darell Pack
Senior Policy Advisor
Rural Secretariat

W.J. (Bill) Pugh
Partner & Certified Financial Planner
Meyers Norris Penny

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Frank Thomas
General Manager
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Ray Simms
Regional Operations Manager, North-West
MTS Communications Inc.

Jeff Williams
VP Academic & Research
Brandon University

Dion Wiseman
Associate Professor
Department of Geography
Brandon University

Robert Annis
Director
Rural Development Institute
Brandon University

The role of the RDI Advisory Committee is to provide general advice and direction to the Institute on matters of rural concern. On a semi-annual basis the Committee meets to share information about issues of mutual interest in rural Manitoba and foster linkages with the constituencies they represent.