

Rural Development Institute

Annual Report 2004

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

## ***Rural Development Institute, Brandon University***

Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research centre 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](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi).

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## Message from the Chairperson, RDI Advisory Committee

The *RDI 2004 Annual Report* demonstrates the ongoing efforts of the Rural Development Institute as a research centre and leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada. These efforts have significant value to rural communities and stakeholders, as well as faculty and students at Brandon University.

For rural communities, RDI has successfully undertaken research and related activities that are relevant to the problems and challenges of rural Canadians. 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.

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.

Some of RDI's milestones of 2004 include a new Memorandum of Agreement with the Province of Manitoba, successful completion of the *Determinants of Health of Rural Communities and Populations*, the continuing success of the student internships program and several new publications and presentations.

Also in 2004, I chaired the Committee carrying out the five-year review of Director. I am pleased to report that upon recommendation of the committee, Dr. Annis has been re-appointed to the position of Director of RDI for a five-year term. This reappointment is well earned. It speaks to Dr. Annis' leadership as well as to the collective efforts of our research and project team members who are helping to build RDI's capacity for rural research and community development. I look forward to the successes that are on the horizon for RDI.

Dr. Scott Grills  
Dean, Faculty of Arts

## Introductory Comments from the Director



Rural and northern communities make vital contributions to Canada's economic and social growth. In 1989, Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute to work with communities and stakeholders on rural and northern issues. This 2004 Annual Report demonstrates that commitment.

As a research institute of Brandon University, RDI contributes to the University's mandate of teaching, research and community service. RDI continues to expand its research and project activities through the involvement of faculty members, external academic scholars and community development professionals. As well, in 2004, RDI provided ten student internships to graduate and undergraduate students and we hope to create further positions in the near future, as students are an integral part of our research

activities.

RDI's community and government partners, rural stakeholders, and research alliances have helped enhance our capacity to undertake projects. I am particularly pleased with the renewal of our Memorandum of Agreement with the Province of Manitoba since the financial support provided by Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives has played a significant role in facilitating both RDI's on-going research as well as assisting with the development of new endeavours.

During the past year, both faculty and students have made research presentations at numerous conferences both across the country and internationally, and have published extensively in academic journals and books. We have also hosted scholars from the University of Calgary and Statistics Canada to provide an exchange of ideas and expert advice on research ethics and access to Statistics Canada's information databases.

We begin 2005 with new and renewed, multi-year funding for research initiatives focused on leafy spurge, rural and northern health issues and information technologies. We are planning to enhance our publications and communication efforts by launching a new electronic journal created by Dr. Doug Ramsey, Chair of the Department of Rural Development. As well, we will be expanding our activities by sharing our project results with representatives from other regions and provinces. For example, in April, we will be co-hosting a national Think Tank on Immigration in Rural Canada, and later in the spring, we will be extending the benefits of RDI's success with the Community Collaboration Project in Manitoba to other provinces.

All of us here at RDI continue to be grateful for the participation and cooperation of our community and government partners and look forward to an exciting year in 2005.

Robert Annis, PhD  
Director  
Rural Development Institute

## Highlights of 2004

Since its reconfiguration in 1999, RDI's primary goals are to be recognized as a leader on rural research and a centre of excellence for rural issues. Our activities over the past 12 months are illustrative of our commitment to this goal:

- Brandon University and the Province of Manitoba entered into a new Memorandum of Agreement for RDI for the fiscal years 2003/04 to 2005/06.
- The RDI Student Internship Program provided 10 undergraduate and graduate students with opportunities for a combination of research experience and guided individual study on rural development issues.
- In January 2004, the Selection Committee for RDI Research Affiliates conferred the designation of RDI Research Affiliate to eight Brandon University faculty members, external faculty members and community development practitioners who have contributed to RDI's research and project activities.
- In addition to numerous reports, presentations and discussion papers, RDI released two new publications.
- From 1999-2004, RDI led a multi-disciplinary team for the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project. The research team submitted its final report to the SSHRC national research granting council. The success of this project led to the approval of further work on rural health sponsored by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.
- RDI has worked for a number of years to increase awareness and technology transfer of leafy spurge. In 2004, RDI received approval from the Greencover Technical Assistance Program, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, for a multi-year project focused on leafy spurge on the prairies. RDI submitted a second multi-year project on leafy spurge, which is currently pending approval.
- The past 12 months have been particularly notable for the Community Collaboration Project. 2004 was the fifth year of the project. RDI began as one of the sponsors of the project; over time RDI took on a facilitative role with the communities and government agencies involved in the project. RDI also promoted the use of information and communication technology in community collaboration. Led by Robert Annis, Director of RDI, the project has received national recognition of its achievements. The success of the Manitoba Community Collaboration Project has led to the development of a submission to the *Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Building Program* to extend this experience to other regions in Canada. The project commenced in October 2004.

## Themes from RDI Research and Project Activities

Since 1999 RDI has been involved in more than 30 rural research and project activities. While each research activity had specific research findings or outcomes, some key, crosscutting themes and outcomes on rural issues have begun to emerge as evidenced by illustrative excerpts from RDI's reports.

The Community Collaboration Project was a pilot project born of the belief that opportunities for new forms of governance can occur. With access to the appropriate tools, resources and information, individuals living in rural communities can engage in proactive, self-sustaining informed local decision-making and meaningful dialogue among communities, organizations and governments. The project was also an exercise in developing horizontal and vertical linkages among project partners, exploring alternate governing relations and facilitating capacity building among rural residents to ensure sustainable rural communities from a regional perspective.

The Community Collaboration Project represented a process by which committed community residents, government officials and other stakeholders can work together toward the common goal of continued community sustainability and development over the long term.

 *Reflections on Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project, August 2004*

Given the potential of information technology, it is reasonable to expect that technology-based community learning organizations, known as community learning networks, would indeed play an important role in the development of many rural Manitoba communities. The Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres successfully established a model for building a culture of lifelong learning in the member communities.

 *Final Evaluation Report for the Learning for Life Initiative, Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres, March 2004*

Infestation of leafy spurge in Manitoba has an estimated cost of approximately \$20 M per year. Biocontrol of leafy spurge using spurge beetles can be a highly effective, long-term control. However, biocontrol is a slow process that requires careful planning and attention to beetle requirements. It may take 3-5 years before impact is noticeable. Even when biocontrol agents become successfully established, they will never completely eradicate infestations of leafy spurge. The best hope is to reduce the weed to a manageable level where productivity of grasslands can be restored.

 *Leafy Spurge Biocontrol: Identification and Establishment of Biocontrol sites in Manitoba, March, 2004*

Information and communication technology (ICT) is one of the most important community development tools. ICT has significant potential to provide and assist communities with technical applications and training that support community

development and regional development. These applications include the use of appropriate technology that will enhance the community development process as well as meet the community's development needs. At the community level, CIMnet sites and community-based websites were highly effective examples of ICT.

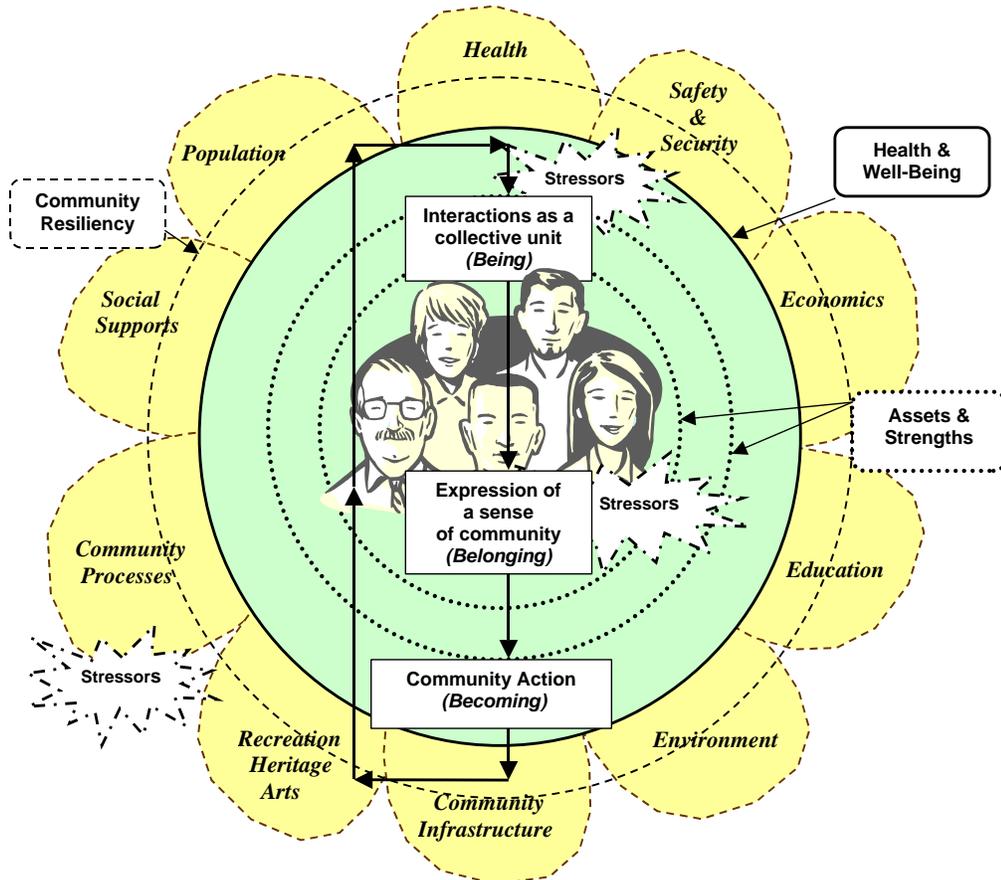
 *Reflections on Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project*, August 2004

In order to weather the current conditions, and challenges, Community Development Corporations (CDCs) in Manitoba will no doubt draw on their strengths to generate even greater opportunities for success in the future. CDCs are well positioned to play a leadership role in community development and to contribute significantly to regional initiatives. Many are rooted in and others have the opportunity to become engaged in the philosophy of grass roots CED. However, it will be important to mobilize increased levels of voluntary community participants in CDCs (e.g., Boards) and to more firmly establish a broad, community-based development vision. Committee structures represent an important avenue of voluntary involvement in community development activities but, again, CDCs would most likely benefit from a more diverse complement of committees with which to address the many issues faced in the development arena. The three major issues of staffing, training, funding are heavily intertwined and integral to many efforts to improve CDC effectiveness and capacity. There is a critical need for increased stable funding to support a variety of human resource and other development-related initiatives. Future opportunities to improve CDC effectiveness will stem from enhancing strengths, addressing challenges, and pursuing community-based development goals. Some of these issues are within the realm of local initiative, while others rest on the support of external agencies—both are required in order that CDCs can play an important role in the future of Manitoba's rural and remote communities.

 *Report on the Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities of Community Development Corporations in Manitoba*, March 2004

One of the major outcomes of the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* was the development of a Community Health Action Model. The model combines a Community Resiliency Framework with a Rural Health & Well-Being Framework.

### Community Health Action Model



© Rural Development Institute, Brandon University, 2004

*Rural Community Health and Well-being: A Guide to Action* (2004)

## **Our Research and Project Activities in 2004**

RDI uses an innovative and inter/multi-disciplinary approach to research and project activities. Contacts with rural groups, towns and villages, governments, academic researchers and observers of the rural situation identify potential research and project activities. Government representatives and rural community stakeholders give advice on more practical applications.

In 2004, RDI pursued research projects and activities on rural issues and community building activities in the following domains of research interest:

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

Details and reports of projects in these research domains can be found on RDI's website at [www.brandonu.ca/rdi](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi) or contact RDI at [rdi@brandonu.ca](mailto:rdi@brandonu.ca).

### ***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.

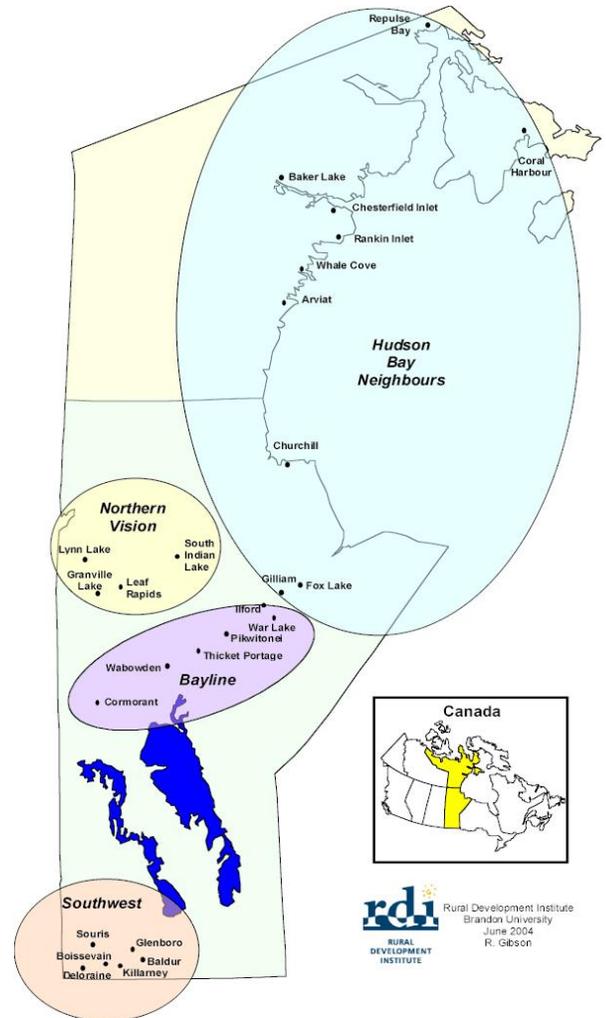
## Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project

One of RDI's most significant efforts in the area of CED is the Community Collaboration Project. The set of activities brought about an innovative approach to community economic development and capacity building in rural and northern areas. The vision of the Community Collaboration Project was to encourage communities to explore and develop processes to increase their ability to address change and work toward becoming more sustainable. Community representatives participated in Regional Round Tables and worked with a steering committee to identify regional socio-economic challenges, find common solutions, and implement programs and projects that address regional needs.

RDI was the project sponsor and facilitated the initial community meetings, provided support and meeting facilitation for the Steering Committee and conducted ongoing reviews of the project activities.

In 2004, the CCP in Manitoba included four diverse regional round tables involving 26 communities in Manitoba and Nunavut.

- 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 comprised of communities along the Bayline rail line with six 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 and Whale Cove.



In 2004, Robert Annis and Marian Beattie, RDI Research Affiliate, facilitated the Community Collaboration Project. Deatra Walsh, a graduate student in the Master of Rural Development program, documented the lessons learned over the five years of the project in Manitoba. In addition to community leaders, the project included representatives from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Rural Secretariat); Community Futures Partners of Manitoba Inc.; Community Information Management Network (CIMnet); Environment Canada; Health

Canada; Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives; Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs; Manitoba Community Connections; Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs; and Western Economic Diversification Canada.

### **Community Collaboration Project: Empowering Communities and Building Capacity**

In these changing times, opportunities for new forms of collaboration and governance can occur and, with access to the appropriate tools, resources and information, individuals living in rural and northern communities can engage in self-sustaining, informed, local decision-making and meaningful dialogue among communities, organizations and governments. In the Community Collaboration Project (CCP) model, community representatives come together to participate in regional round tables (RRTs), working with members of a steering committee to identify regional socio-economic challenges, find common solutions, and implement programs and projects that address regional needs. Its emphasis is on a community-up approach to decision-making. The CCP is an operational model of cross-government, collaborative horizontal management that supports regional community development.

The goal of the Rural Development Institutes' *Community Collaboration Project: Empowering Communities and Building Capacity* project is test the applicability and replicability of the CCP model, as developed in Manitoba, elsewhere in rural/northern Canada. Objectives include developing a collaborative comprehensive coordinated approach for capacity-building within and across communities in rural/northern Canada; implementing, testing and documenting the CCP process in new and different settings (for example: diverse issues, different mix of people, different capacities of communities, different geographical settings); improving community access to government program and services; utilizing and evaluating Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in supporting social networks for community development; and exploring new and different roles for ICT in supporting communities and associated universities, research institutes, and governments engaged in community research processes.

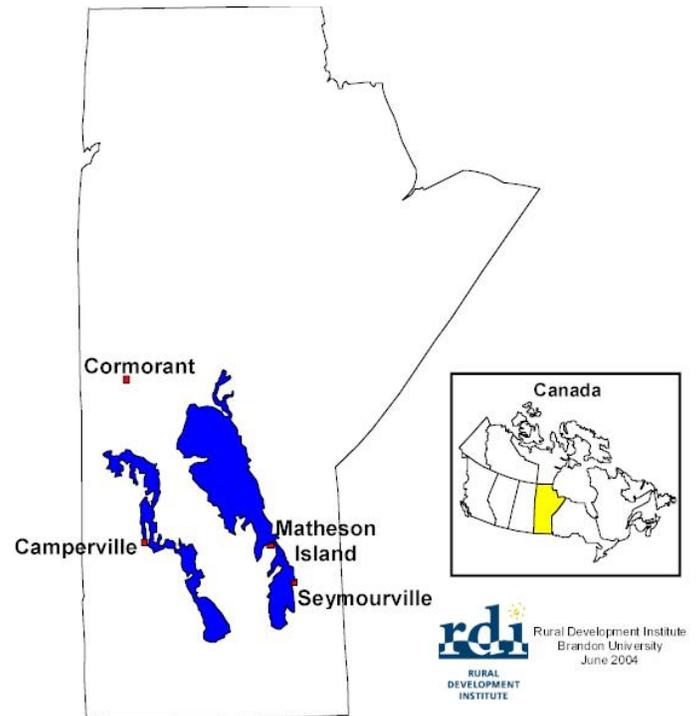
### **Evaluation of the N-CEDC – Learning for Life Project**

The Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (N-CEDC) is a network of six Manitoba communities: Deloraine, Neepawa, Rosburn, Russell, Souris and Swan River. A major project of the N-CEDC was the Learning for Life Initiative, a series of community-based activities designed to encourage the development of a culture of lifelong learning. In 2004, Karen Rempel, Research Affiliate with RDI completed an evaluation of the Learning for Life Initiative. She also prepared a summary of the best practices of the Initiative, aided by funding support from the Canadian Economic Development Technical Assistance Program (CEDTAP).



## Joint Co-operative Development Project

The Joint Development Co-operative Project, a partnership between Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs, four Community Futures Development Organizations and the Rural Development Institute, was aimed at improving the quality of life and well being of four communities in northern Manitoba through co-operative development. The goals of the project were to assess the need, desire and levels of commitment of residents of four communities (Camperville, Cormorant, Matheson Island, and Seymourville) towards retail-consumer co-operatives in each of the communities. The Joint Co-operative Development Project proposed to develop sustainable co-operative ventures in each community. A broader scope of the project was to look at the co-operative model as an economic arm of the northern communities in Manitoba.



Four students from the Master of Rural Development program (Ryan Gibson, Lori Gould, Brad McKenzie, & Devron Kobluk), staff from Manitoba Aboriginal & Northern Affairs, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and Manitoba Community Futures Development Corporations worked in collaboration. With the aid of a community liaison, and support of the local mayors and councils and Community Futures Development Corporations, a survey was administered in each of the four participating communities. A series of working papers were developed to highlight the historical background to the co-operative movement, northern & aboriginal community involvement with co-operatives, and the role of co-operatives in community economic development.

## Manitoba Community Development Corporation Association

The Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association (MCDCA) is an association working to build an effective community development network by providing leadership through education, communication, coordination, advocacy and support services in partnership with member community development corporations. In 2004, RDI designed a website for the association. RDI maintains open communication with the MCDCA and assists the organization when opportunities arise for mutual benefit. For example, in 2003, Ken Bessant from the Department of Rural Development undertook a collaborative research project with Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs (IAF) aimed at compiling an inventory of community economic development organizations and agencies in the province. One of the goals of the project was to develop a more in-depth understanding of the setting, characteristics, operations, and activities of Manitoba's (incorporated) Community Development Corporations. The research team surveyed Manitoba municipalities for

information about the number and types of CED-related organizations as well as their staffing and economic development plans. In March 2004, Ken Bessant and Robert Annis released the *Report on the Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities of Community Development Corporations in Manitoba*. The report describes the strengths and challenges of the CDC's in Manitoba.

### **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.

### **Strategic Planning for the Manitoba Smart Network Inc.**

One of RDI's goals is to strengthen connections with rural communities by providing professional development opportunities for rural development practitioners. In August 2004, RDI was asked to facilitate a strategic planning session for board members involved in the Manitoba Smart Network Inc. The Manitoba Smart Network Inc. is a non-profit organization that was originally funded by Industry Canada as part of the Smart Communities Program. The goals of the organization are to create an environment that supports the development and use of technology and to demonstrate the benefits of new technology in rural Manitoba.

In September, Marian Beattie and Lori Gould, a graduate student in the Department of Rural Development, met with staff and board members of the Manitoba Smart Network Inc. for a one-day workshop. The goal of the workshop was to assist the organization with re-evaluating their goals and formulating a priority list of present and future projects and partnerships. Lori Gould prepared the final report for the strategic planning workshop.

### **Funding the Sector Workshop**

One of the great challenges facing the voluntary and non-profit sector today is financial sustainability. On September 17<sup>th</sup>, 2004, RDI delivered the *Funding the Sector Workshop* in conjunction with the Brandon Area Community Foundation, Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation, City of Brandon Community Services and the Marquis Project.

Seventy-six participants from across southern Manitoba attended the workshop, which featured keynote speaker Marcel Lauzière from the Canadian Council on Social Development. Robert Annis, Director of RDI, moderated a panel discussion which focused on how funders support the voluntary and non-profit sector.

### **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. At Ag Days 2004, the LSSG again sponsored a leafy spurge seminar. Beth Peers provides coordination of the LSSG on behalf of RDI. 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. Ryan Gibson (Master of Rural Development student) and Pamela McTavish provided research assistance to leafy spurge projects. In 2004, RDI and the LSSG undertook two major projects on leafy spurge.



### *Assisting Landowners /Managers with Establishing, Implementing and Sustaining Integrated Pest Management Plans (IPM) for Leafy Spurge*

Through this project, RDI and the LSSG will develop an inventory of programs, information and resources available to landowners / managers for IPM strategies; conduct a series of interviews with key informants to help determine the barriers for the adoption of IPM strategies; and document management plans for controlling leafy spurge in a municipality. This project was lead by Beth Peers and assisted by Pamela McTavish and Ryan Gibson.

### *Municipal Management Plans for Controlling Leafy Spurge*

A management plan is an important tool for the control of leafy spurge. RDI and the LSSG assisted with the development of a comprehensive leafy spurge management plan for the RM's of Daly and North Cypress for the purpose of providing long-term goals and actions for controlling this invasive weed. The project also 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. The project was a partnership with the Little Saskatchewan River Conservation District, and the rural municipalities of Daly, North Cypress and South Cypress.

## Inter-provincial Greencover Project on Leafy Spurge

In 2004, the RDI received funding support from the National Greencover Program, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, for a three-year project. The main goals of the project are to:

- encourage the development of a pan-Western organization or network of stakeholders involved in leafy spurge control and containment;
- provide technology transfer to land owners and managers;
- establish plot and demonstration activities for integrated pest management strategies; continue efforts to locate, establish and monitor biocontrol sites; and,
- carry out an economic assessment of increased biomass resulting from control and containment of spurge.

This project builds on RDI's work in monitoring of biocontrol, technology transfer activities. Karen Rempel, Research Affiliate of RDI is coordinating the project on behalf of RDI.

### ***Information and Communication Technology 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.

### **Assessing Technology Usage Barriers and Opportunities in the Business Community: A Case of Southwestern Manitoba**

In June 2004, an RDI research team began a research project entitled *Assessing Technology Usage Barriers and Opportunities in the Business Community: A Case of Southwestern Manitoba*. Partners involved in this assessment included the Manitoba Smart Network Inc., Economic Development Brandon (City of Brandon) and RDI.

The aim of the project was to assess the level of technology usage within the Brandon and southwestern region of the province, as well as to gather views on the challenges and opportunities facing businesses with regard to information and communications technology. Baseline data collected during the process will be used to measure community growth.

Activities involved in the research project included the creation of a comprehensive Brandon business inventory and of a select southwestern Manitoba business inventory. Key informant interviews and questionnaires were conducted with a sample of southwestern Manitoba businesses, including Brandon (focusing on processing, manufacturing and professional servicing sectors) in order to gather information on the use of technology, as well as barriers and challenges faced by these businesses.

An ongoing project activity is the design and development of a user-friendly database suitable for updating the business inventory. Once designed, this database has the potential to house a comprehensive list of Brandon businesses, selected southwestern Manitoba businesses and benchmarking information gathered from the questionnaires. Pamela McTavish is coordinating this project on behalf of RDI, with the assistance of Gerald Dueck (Department of Computer Science), Ken Bessant (Department of Rural Development) and Beth Peers. Students involved with the project included: Elicia Funk, Ryan Gibson, Lori Gould, Brad McKenzie, Devron Kobluk, Katherine Pachkowski, Deatra Walsh and Troy Wilkinson.

### **CIMnet's Role in Partnership with the Community Collaboration Project**

One of the most important community development tools included in the Community Collaboration Project and Regional Round Tables was the use of an information management network known as the Community Information Management Network or CIMnet. Supported by the Community Connections program, CIMnet is an information management network that provides and assists communities with technical applications and training that supported community development in Manitoba including the Regional Round Tables.

Through the Community Collaboration process, CIMnet's role was to align information communications technology with the community development process and ensure that the appropriate technology was available to meet communities' development needs. At the community level, CIMnet sites became community-based websites that assisted with the

process. A number of current and former Brandon University students have been involved in CIMnet including MRD student, Wayne Kelly.

### **Exploring Connectivity, Use and Usefulness of Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in a Northern Community Setting**

In 1997, citizens in Churchill, Manitoba formed a community-based organization called the Churchill Community Network Inc. to actively pursue dial-up and broadband connectivity. The Network was established at a time when Internet connectivity was just gaining momentum, especially in rural, remote and northern areas. Network members successfully established broadband connectivity in Churchill prior to nationwide initiatives to address bandwidth needs.



In 2004, RDI initiated a research project to explore Churchill's Internet connectivity experience. Using a case study approach, the research team looked at the connectivity experience through the eyes of local government, community residents, business owners and board members of the Churchill Community Network Inc. The case study used a community economic development framework to contribute to an understanding of connectivity barriers, decision-making processes, government involvement, and economic opportunities for a northern

community through connectivity infrastructure.

The research team from RDI included Robert Annis, Susannah Cameron, community development professional, John Everitt, faculty member of Brandon University and Deatra Walsh, a graduate of the Master of Rural Development program. Team members conducted face-to-face interviews with councillors and board members in Churchill and collected background documents related to Churchill's Internet connectivity to write the case study. The research report will be completed early in 2005. This research is a joint initiative between RDI and the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy, an initiative funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC).

### ***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.

### **Immigration and Rural Canada**

In the fall of 2004, RDI and the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF) began organizing two complementary sessions focused on immigration and rural Canada. These sessions will be held in late April 2005. One session, the *CRRF-RDI National Rural Think Tank 2005 - Immigration and Rural Canada: Research and Practice*, will be held on

Thursday, April 28, 2005. The aim of this session is to consider policy issues on immigration and rural Canada.

A second session, *Developing a Community Immigration Strategy: Lessons, Opportunities and Directions* will be held at Brandon's Rural Forum on Friday, April 29, 2005. Here, Manitoba community and industry leaders will attend, participate and learn about innovative immigration programs in a practical day designed to offer knowledge on issues pertaining to immigration and rural communities while strengthening community attractiveness and receptivity to immigrants. These Rural Forum sessions are co-sponsored by the Rural Development Institute and Manitoba Labour and Immigration, with support from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

Conference organizers expect more than forty key researchers, policy personnel and practitioners to participate in sessions to discuss the existing state of research on immigration and rural Canada and what further efforts are required for research to respond to the challenges, opportunities and issues surrounding immigration and rural Canada. Ray Silvius, RDI research assistant, is coordinating the conference planning on behalf of the RDI.

### **Manitoba Research Alliance on CED in the New Economy**



In recent years, the emergence of a new knowledge-based economy has been credited with generating robust economic growth, new and challenging employment opportunities, new wealth creation possibilities, and the promise of greatly enhancing productivity in the rest of the economy. Current evidence, however, suggests that the rewards and opportunities presented by this New Economy have not been shared equally. Moreover, the New Economy might impose additional obstacles to communities that already faced sizeable barriers to economic development under previous economic conditions.

With research funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada, the Manitoba Research Alliance is undertaking a three-year research project titled, *Community Economic Development in the New Economy*. This comprehensive set of research activities is investigating how disadvantaged communities might use CED approaches as a strategic response to assist communities in taking up the opportunities and meeting the challenges created by the transition to a New Economy.

Robert Annis, Director of RDI is one of the three co-applicants of the project. In addition to the involvement of Robert Annis, several Brandon University graduate students, faculty and researcher affiliates have been involved in research activities including Susannah Cameron, John Everitt, and Karen Rempel.

Other co-applicants and participants come from the University of Manitoba and the University of Winnipeg. The project also includes senior government policy makers and practitioners active in Manitoba's dynamic CED community. More information on the research project can be found at <http://www.manitobaresearchallianceced.ca/>.

## **Rural Team Manitoba**

In 1998, the Federal Government established the Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP). The CRP is designed to support rural community development by adopting new approaches and practices to respond to rural development issues and concerns. In each of the provinces and territories, a Rural Team of representatives from federal and provincial government departments as well as rural stakeholders undertake a range of policy-related activities. Partnerships, networks and alliances help focus the activities on key rural issues of local relevance.

Rural Team Manitoba is a team of 35 representatives from 26 federal and provincial government departments and community serving organizations who have an interest in rural, remote and northern Canada. RDI has had a key role in the Rural Team Manitoba from earliest days. Robert Annis, from RDI, facilitated planning sessions and helped set the direction and priorities for the Rural Team Manitoba. In 2003 and 2004, Robert Annis and Marian Beattie, RDI Research Affiliate, designed and implemented a monitoring and evaluation process. Early in 2004, Robert Annis, Director of RDI, was invited to sit on Rural Team Manitoba to represent the academic interests in rural community development. One of the outcomes of this representation has been the increased involvement of Rural Development graduate students in various research activities coming out of Rural Team Manitoba.

## ***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 change. 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.

## **Changing Needs of Rural and Northern Women in Manitoba**

The project *Changing Needs of Rural and Northern Women in Manitoba* is RDI's first project on women's issues. The objectives of the project are to conduct a synthesis of past and current needs of rural and northern women and make recommendations for changes. The study includes questionnaires and focus groups. The first draft of the findings of the study is due for January 2005 for presentation to the Manitoba Rural Team. The final report is expected by March 2005.

Two Master of Rural Development students, Betty Kelly and Osayanmo Idehen, are carrying out the research activities under the supervision of Robert Annis. Sponsors of the project include Health Canada, the Rural Secretariat and the Women's Enterprise Centre, Winnipeg.

## **Impact of a Community Learning Network on CED**

Karen Rempel, a PhD student at the University of Calgary, is in the final year of a two-year case study that is investigating the impact of a community learning network on community economic development. Rempel is using the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (N-CEDC) Learning for Life project as an example of community learning networks. The project is a project of the Manitoba Research Alliance on CED in the New Economy funded by SSHRC. The final research report is expected in March 2005.

## **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.

### **Improving Health Care Access For Northern Residents**

Robert Annis and co-applicants, Fran Racher (School of Health Studies, Brandon University) and Bonnie Jeffrey (University of Regina) have received a Canadian Institutes of Health Research grant to undertake the facilitation of community dialogue in a number of northern communities in the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan.

Residents of First Nation communities, Metis communities and larger regional centres in northern Manitoba and Saskatchewan experience multiple challenges in accessing health services. Access issues may be related to local services, itinerant services and services for which residents must leave their communities. Such health services include primary health care, diagnostics, obstetrical and surgical services, dialysis, home care, emergency services, mental health services, preventative services and health promotion and education. Related issues of transportation compound the difficulties.

Over the course of three years, the researchers will explore access dimensions of availability, accessibility, accommodation, affordability and acceptability. Population characteristics, environmental factors, health behaviours and related outcomes will be examined from the perspective of community members and health care providers.

### **Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities**

In 1999 RDI was awarded the *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* Project as an innovative, interdisciplinary research project funded by SSHRC. In 2004, the research team completed the major research objectives of the project. One of the major outcomes of the research information was the development of a guidebook for rural communities. Titled *Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action*, the guidebook is intended for use by residents of rural communities to assess the health and quality of life of their communities. Early in 2004, the Town of Shoal Lake and Rural Municipality of Shoal Lake and the Town of Virden and the Rural Municipality of Wallace helped pilot the workbook.



In June 2004, the community of Leaf Rapids invited RDI to assist them in studying well-being and quality of life in the community. An advisory committee was established to guide the project, and a local community coordinator was hired to provide support for the project. RDI researchers and student interns continue to be involved with Leaf Rapids, traveling to the

community on a regular basis. The intended outcomes of these efforts are to implement community action on key issues and to build skills and capacity in the community.

### **Community Through the Eyes of Youth**

This project was a component of the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project. The goal of this research activity was to gain an understanding of how children and youth of the community of Leaf Rapids, Manitoba, view their community. Children and youth residing in the town of Leaf Rapids were provided



with disposable cameras and over a one week period took pictures that illustrated what their community is to them. Students kept photography journals noting how they came to take each picture, the content of the picture, and the significance of the picture to them. Each participant chose one picture, in consultation with RDI and the Leaf Rapids National Exhibition Center, for enlargement and mounting.

A community exhibit, titled *Leaf Rapids: Through the Eyes of Youth*, displayed the photos. The exhibit provided an opportunity for young people in the community to share their perspectives in a unique, creative manner. Fran Racher, RDI Research Affiliate leads the project. Through analyzing the photographs and journals the project has informed discussions on community development and setting goals by the community. Student research assistants Ryan Gibson, Tanis Horkey and Katherine Pachkowski also worked on the project.

### **Student's Social and Educational Needs and Aspirations**

The *Student's Social and Education Needs and Aspirations* is a research project aimed at developing a better understanding of the issues facing children and youth in the school and community. RDI Research Affiliate Barbara Gfellner, and student research assistant, Ryan Gibson interviewed senior students at the Leaf Rapids Education Centre in December 2004. They asked students to identify any challenges for young people in the community, how the school meets their needs, and their plans for the future. Students also commented on issues such as cultural heritage content within the school curriculum, how older youth can help children of the community, and suggestions for the community. Both the community and the local education centre will utilize the information to plan future initiatives. The project was supported by the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project.

### **Consumer and Provider Perspectives on Rural Mental Health Services**

An RDI research team held a series of focus groups and key informant interviews in southwestern Manitoba in the spring and summer of 2004. Participants in the project also included Mental Health Services in the Assiniboine Health Region, and outreach workers from the Manitoba Schizophrenia Society, the Anxiety Disorders Association of Manitoba, and the Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba. From the discussions, researchers

extracted the perceptions of mental health consumers, their family members, and service providers around mental health services in the region. Various themes were identified, including service utilization, access to services, knowledge of resource availability, support systems, communication, a team approach, relationships with professionals, consumer directed care, public perception and stigma, and education issues. Consumers, family members and service providers also discussed possible strategies to address these issues, particularly attending to the challenges of life in rural Manitoba. The information gathered from these discussions will inform the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority in future policy planning and program development. RDI Research Affiliate, Fran Racher, led this project with assistance from student assistants Elicia Funk, Ryan Gibson and Katherine Pachkowski.

## ***Rural Tourism***

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

### **MANITOBA BEST Workshops**

In 2004, RDI continued its successful partnership with the Manitoba Tourism Education Council (MTEC) by providing MANITOBA BEST programs 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 workshops in Brandon during 2004, which consisted of 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.

### **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 centre. In 2004, RDI continued to support the development of the rural tourism centre.

## **Working Together**

Whenever possible RDI works with Brandon University faculty members in Arts, Science and Health Studies. We make efforts to seek alliances with major research institutions, research networks, community organizations and government agencies interested in rural issues.

The academic and professional efforts of research and project team members as well as partnerships with community stakeholders and government agencies provide the essential elements for RDI's research and project activities. 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 Agreement Steering Committee:* The RDI Agreement Steering Committee has helped implement the intent and purposes of the Memorandum Of Agreement between Province of Manitoba and Brandon University. The Steering Committee is comprised of a representative from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (Maurice Bouvier replaced later by Peter Reimer), the Vice-President, Academic and Research, Brandon University (Jeff Williams) and the Director of RDI (Robert Annis).

*RDI Advisory 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  
Larry Flynn, Health Canada  
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  
W.J. (Bill) Pugh, Meyers, Norris, Penny Chartered Accountants, Brandon  
Peter Reimer, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, 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, W.J. (Bill) Pugh, Fran Racher. Front row: Bev Lischka, Frank Thomas, Dion Wiseman, Scott Grills, Bob Grodzik, Darell Pack, Jeff Williams. Missing: Larry Flynn, Peter Reimer, Ray Simms*

## **Partners**

### *Research Alliances*

Canadian Community Economic Development Network  
Canadian Consortium for Health Promotion Research  
Canadian Institutes of Health Research  
Canadian Rural Health Research Society  
Community Economic Development Technical Assistance Program, Carleton University  
Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy  
New Rural Economy Research Project, Concordia University

### *Community Partners*

Assiniboine Regional Health Authority  
Brandon and Area Community Foundation  
Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation  
Brandon Regional Health Authority  
Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives  
Cedar Lake Community Futures Development Corporation  
Community Futures Partners of Manitoba  
Community of Camperville  
Community of Cormorant  
Community of Matheson Island  
Community of Seymourville

Ducks Unlimited Canada  
Economic Development Brandon, City of Brandon  
Leaf Rapids National Exhibition Center  
Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group  
Little Saskatchewan River Conservation District  
Manitoba Cattle Producers Association  
Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association  
Manitoba Schizophrenia Society  
Manitoba Smart Network Inc.  
Manitoba Weed Supervisors Association  
Marquis Project  
Mood Disorders Association of Manitoba  
NEICOM Community Futures Development Corporation  
Parkland Community Futures Development Corporation  
Rural Municipality of Daly  
Rural Municipality of North Cypress  
Town and Community Adjustment Committee of Leaf Rapids  
Town and Rural Municipality of Shoal Lake  
Town of Leaf Rapids  
Town of Virden and Rural Municipality of Wallace  
Virden-Wallace Community Development Corporation  
Wheat Belt Community Futures Development Corporation  
Winnipeg River Brokenhead Community Futures Development Corporation  
Women's Enterprise Centre

*Government Partners*

Environment Canada  
Health Canada/Public Health Agency of Canada  
Manitoba Aboriginal and Northern Affairs  
Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives  
Manitoba Community Connections  
Manitoba Industry, Economic Development and Mines  
Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade  
Manitoba Labour and Immigration  
Manitoba Tourism Education Council  
Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada  
Statistics Canada  
Western Economic Diversification Canada

***Research and Project Team Members***

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  
John Everitt, Ph.D., Department of Geography, Faculty of Science  
Barbara Gfellner, Ph.D., Department of Psychology, Faculty of Science  
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

### ***Community Development Professionals***

Marian Beattie, PHEc, B.Ed (5<sup>th</sup> Yr), Brandon, MB  
Susannah Cameron, M.Sc., Brandon, MB  
Brenda Edgeworth, Shoal Lake, MB  
Rosemarie Grusska, Leaf Rapids, MB  
Stuart Harvey, M.R.D., Brandon, MB  
Leanne Kalynuk, Virden, MB  
Pamela McTavish, B.A., Hamiota, MB  
Beth Peers, B.A. (Spec.), Virden, MB  
Karen Rempel, M.Ed., Brandon, MB  
Ray Silvius, M.A., Brandon, MB  
Ross Thompson, B.Sc., Stonewall, MB  
Marnie Wilson, M.Sc., Brandon, MB

### ***Faculty from Other Universities***

Betty Havens, D. Litt., University of Manitoba  
Bonnie Jeffrey, Ph.D., University of Regina  
Bryan Massam, Ph.D., York University  
Bill Reimer, Ph.D., Concordia University

### ***RDI Student Interns and Research Assistants***

Keith Edmunds, B.Sc. (Spec.), Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Elicia Funk, B.Sc., Faculty of Arts student, Brandon University  
Tanis Horkey, School of Health Studies student, Brandon University  
Ryan Gibson, B.A. (Hons.), Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Lori Gould, B.Sc. (Hons.), Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Osayanmo Idehen, B.Sc., Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Betty Kelly, B.A., Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Wayne Kelly, B.A., Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Devron Kobluk, HBES, Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Alex Martin, B.A., Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Brad McKenzie, B.A., Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Pauline Morton, B.Sc., Faculty of Education student, Brandon University  
Alison Moss, B.A. (Hons.), Master of Rural Development student, Brandon University  
Jennifer Pachkowski, B.Sc., Brandon University graduate

Katherine Pachkowski, B.Sc.P.N., School of Health Studies student, Brandon University  
Nicole Shirray, B.Sc., Faculty of Science student, Brandon University  
Deatra Walsh, B.A. (Hons.), M.R.D., Master of Rural Development graduate  
Troy Wilkinson, Faculty of Science student, Brandon University

### ***RDI Support Staff and Administration***

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

### ***Research Grants and Project Funding***

RDI's community and government partners, rural stakeholders, and research alliances have helped enhance its capacity to undertake research and project activities. 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 its 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 centre of excellence for rural issues. In 2004, the Province of Manitoba and Brandon University entered into a new Memorandum of Agreement. Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI) is responsible for this Agreement on behalf of the Province. The Agreement plays a very significant role in facilitating both RDI's on-going research as well as assisting with the development of new endeavours.

Representatives from MAFRI also serve on RDI's Agreement Steering Committee and on the RDI Advisory Board. This cooperation contributes to RDI's ability to address relevant rural issues. In 2004, the RDI Agreement Steering Committee agreed to the following areas of activities that will be supported wholly or in part by the Province:

- *RDI Program Support* helps RDI focus on issues confronting rural communities in a flexible and responsive manner.
- *RDI Research Fellows Program* supports an initiative intended to attract rural development academics to Brandon University.
- The *Department of Rural Development Masters Student Thesis and Research Support* 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.
- The *Professional Development Program of Activities* is an organized and sustained program of professional development activities for individuals involved in 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.

### **Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC)**

In 2004, RDI participated in two research projects:

#### *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities*

For the past three years, SSHRC provided research funding for the Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities research project. The research completion date is March 2005. In 2004, RDI also received in-kind support from government agencies and the rural communities of Shoal Lake and Virden through their Community Assessment Teams.

#### *Manitoba Research Alliance on CED in the New Economy*

RDI is one of four institutional 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 2004 to provide a doctoral student with research internship support for research activity.

## **Institutional Growth and Development**

On an annual basis, RDI sets out a number of short- and medium-term priority areas aimed at encouraging the Institute's growth, developing its position as a centre of excellence for rural development, and enhancing its capacity to respond to emergent rural issues and opportunities for research activities.

In 2004, RDI focused on the following priority areas for institutional growth and development were to:

1. enhance RDI's capacity for rural research and activities;
2. extend RDI's domains of research interests;
3. promote RDI as a nationally recognized centre of excellence for rural issues;
4. seek research and project funding to address rural issues; and
5. administer the on-going activities and operations of RDI.

### ***Priority Area 1: Enhance RDI's capacity for rural research and activities***

RDI's capacity for rural research and activities comes from the involvement of Brandon University faculty, undergraduate and graduate students, research affiliates and community development professionals. In 2004, RDI set out to encourage the involvement of Brandon University faculty members and graduate students in RDI research and related activities; implement the Research Fellows Program development; implement a Student Research Internship program; and respond to emergent opportunities and issues confronting rural communities.

#### **Student Support**

Students are important resources for building RDI's capacity. Whenever possible, RDI supports and encourages the participation of students in research and project activities. In 2004, RDI provided student thesis support for two Master of Rural Development graduate students. Lori Gould received support to carry out research for her thesis topic of rural tourism. Yan Cong received support for her thesis research on tourism promotion in Brandon. RDI also provided financial support to eight students to attend rural development conferences including the Community Futures Partners of Manitoba Conference in Dauphin, Manitoba.

#### **Student Internship Program**

RDI continued to offer its Graduate Student Internship. Students are an integral part of the research and learning process. RDI recognizes the role of students in fulfilling RDI's mandate to assist with rural community development.

RDI implemented a Student Research Internship program in 2003. The Student Research Internship program is a competitive process and 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 of RDI and the remaining time on guided individual study related to rural developmental issues. In 2004, ten graduate and undergraduate students received student internships.



**Elicia Funk** was an undergraduate student intern with RDI from September 1, 2003 to March 31, 2004. During this period she worked on the SSHRC *Determinants of Health in Rural Populations and Communities* project. Elicia gained valuable experience in working with rural communities conducting community health and well-being assessments. Elicia was able to utilize the skills gained through her course work in mathematics and sociology in analyzing the results of community surveys from Virden-Wallace and Shoal Lake. She also strengthened her writing skills by assisting in compiling community-gathered information into a comprehensive report for the Virden-Wallace area. The student internship also provided Elicia with the opportunity to undertake an independent study course for credit in sociology in an area of her own interest that complemented the SSHRC *Determinants of Health in Rural Populations and Communities* project. She contributed to the *Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action*.

**Ryan Gibson** started as a graduate student intern with RDI in the fall of 2003. Through the internship, Ryan participated in the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* project. Over the duration of his internship, Ryan worked with the three communities, Shoal Lake, Virden and Leaf Rapids, in preparing a community assessment of their quality of life and well-being. The graduate internship opportunity allowed Ryan to devote some of his internship time to pursue an independent project. With the assistance of various researchers from the project, Ryan created an annotated bibliography on rural health. In generating the bibliography, Ryan gained valuable knowledge on issues of quality of life and well-being within the rural context. He contributed to the *Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action*.

**Lori Gould** a long time resident of Manitoba began an internship with RDI on October 1, 2003. She graduated from Brandon University with a Bachelor of Science (Hons) degree in May 2003 and is currently in the first year of her Master of Rural Development program. Lori has been working with the New Rural Economy project since June 2003. During her internship she worked on the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and*

*Communities* project in the area of farm health issues. Her personal research interests include tourism, rural communities and international development.

**Tanis Horkey** is an undergraduate intern and School of Health Studies student. Originally from Brandon Manitoba, Tanis Horkey began working as an undergraduate intern for RDI at the end of July 2004. Under the guidance of Dr. Fran Racher, she is currently working on the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* project, *Consumer Participation in Program and Service Evaluation and Development* and various other RDI projects. In 2004 she entered her fourth year of studies in the Psychiatric Nursing degree program this fall and plans to graduate in May 2005. Tanis is interested in community health promotion and assessment and hopes to develop knowledge and skills in these areas.

**Osayanno Idehen** is in her first year of the Master of Rural Development program. Osa is from Edo state in Nigeria, West Africa. She graduated in 2001 with a Bachelor of Science degree in sociology and anthropology from Obafemi Awolowo University (University of Ife), Nigeria. Her major interests are in the area of gender issues and community development and that explains why her undergraduate thesis was "Gender factors in trade unionism in Nigeria." Osa is currently working as an intern with RDI on a project titled *Changing Needs of Rural and Northern Women in Manitoba*.

**Betty Kelly** is a part-time student in the Master of Rural Development program and brings a strong interest in policy development to ensure human service programs have a rural focus. Betty has been employed with the provincial government as a Regional Child Day Care Coordinator, since 1980 and has worked in Thompson Region, in Winnipeg and in Central Region. In this role Betty works closely with community groups and families, helping communities develop programs most suited to their needs. Betty also has a long history of volunteer involvement in the rural community, both at a local and provincial level. Currently Betty's internship involves working on the RDI project, *Changing Needs of Rural and Northern Women in Manitoba*.

**Devron Kubluk** is in the Master of Rural Development program. His research interests include how social capital and community capacity building can be incorporated in rural economic initiatives. These concepts are seen as a way to promote sustainability in ecosystem, health, education and cooperative systems. Devron graduated with an honors degree in Forest Conservation from Lakehead University in Thunder Bay, Ontario. Devron's internship is with the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* research project. He contributed to the *Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action*.

**Alex Martin** Originally from a small farm outside of Neepawa, Manitoba. Alex completed a B.A. in Geography with a concentration in Environmental Studies at Brandon University. Throughout his studies in geography Alex developed a personal and academic interest in environmental issues. Through his studies in the Rural Development programme, Alex has developed research interests in rural perceptions of environmental issues, sustainable agriculture, economic development and the resulting policy implications.

Alex is currently working as a graduate intern on the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group project. This project involves developing a geographic information system (GIS) to enable stakeholders from across Manitoba, Saskatchewan, and Alberta to share spatial information involving the biological control of leafy spurge (*Euphorbia esula*).

**Katherine Pachkowski** is originally from Ethelbert, Manitoba. She is a recent graduate of the Psychiatric Nursing Program at Brandon University. As an undergraduate intern with RDI, Katherine worked on the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* project, as well as the mental health project *Consumer Participation in Program and Service Evaluation and Development*. Her interests are in the field of Mental Health, particularly as it pertains to communities. She contributed to the *Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action*.

**Karen Rempel** is a doctoral student at the University of Calgary. Originally from southeastern Saskatchewan, Karen worked for several years with the Saskatchewan government as an educational consultant, researcher, policy analyst and project manager. She has been actively involved with a number of agricultural and rural community groups where she has played a leading role in a wide variety of initiatives and projects such as community research foundations, agricultural awareness programs, advisory committees and cooperative boards. Karen has written or co-authored several publications focusing on agriculture and rural perspectives. She has a particular interest in rural workforce and occupational adjustment issues. During Karen's internship she undertook a research project looking at the impact of community learning networks on CED. This project is part of the Manitoba Research Alliance's CED in the New Economy.

**Nicole Shirray** is originally from Winnipeg, Manitoba. She completed her Bachelor of Science degree from Brandon University in Zoology and is currently working in Asia. Her student internship involved working on the SSHRC *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities*. She contributed to the *Rural Community Health and Well-Being: A Guide to Action*.

## Professional Development

RDI uses professional development opportunities to enhance the research and professional capacity of faculty, students and community development professionals. In 2004 RDI provided support or facilitation of a number of professional development sessions including:

- RDI was actively involved in Rural Forum 2004. RDI helped with planning the forum, helped facilitate presentations and contributed financial support. Students from the Department of Rural Development presented abstracts and hosted a booth.
- RDI and Brandon University Ethics Committee co-hosted a public presentation by Janice Dicken, PhD on Research Ethics as Research Service. Dr. Dicken discussed the necessity of finding a balance between the need to conduct research with universities and the need to respect the subjects involved in the research project.
- In March, RDI sponsored Kelly Cranswick, research analyst with Statistics Canada. Ms. Cranswick presented information on the longitudinal and cross-sectional data sets that are available through the Research Data Centre. She also discussed research proposal development and evaluation.



- RDI helped co-sponsor two events with businesses and organizations in the Brandon area. These events were: TECH 2004 and 'Funding the Sector', a workshop exploring the financial sustainability of the voluntary and non-profit sector.
- Marian Beattie and Fran Racher, Research Affiliates with RDI, and Robert Annis held a workshop in January 2004 on project evaluation for the Literacy Partners of Manitoba. The workshop was held in Thompson, Manitoba.

### **Research Fellows Program**

In 2004, RDI continued to work with Brandon University senior administration to implement the *RDI Research Fellows Program*. The program is intended to attract academics from within and external to Brandon University who are interested in rural development research.

### **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 the Province of Manitoba.

The Brandon University Community Outreach Advisory Committee provides advice to the Community Outreach Service at Brandon University. Members on this committee include:

Jeff Williams, (Chair) Vice-President (Academic and Research)  
 Robert Annis, (Co-Chair) RDI  
 Ken Beesley, Faculty of Arts  
 Andrée Dagenais, Faculty of Music  
 Roberta Graham, School of Health Studies  
 Anne Cheverie, Faculty of Education  
 Dion Wiseman, Faculty of Science  
 Deatra Walsh and Keith Edmunds, Master of Rural Development students and 2004  
 Community Outreach Coordinators

Projects funded in 2004 through Community Outreach include:

- *Assiniboine River Corridor Birder Education Program*
- *Consumer Participation in Mental Health Program and Service Evaluation and Development*
- *Development of Database and Mapping Technology by Conservation District Programs, Projects and Services*
- *RM of Whitehead Municipal Infrastructure Inventory*

Keith Edmunds and Deatra Walsh, graduate students in Rural Development, coordinated the Outreach Service in 2004.

## ***Priority Area 2: Extend RDI's domains of research interest***

One of RDI's priorities for 2004 was to extend the domains of research interest. This involved seeking new research alliances and networks, exploring new partnerships that would enhance our rural research interests, establish a network of RDI Research Affiliates and seek opportunities to extend the efforts within RDI's domains of research interest.

Procedures are in place for designation of RDI Research Affiliates that recognize the rural research skills and knowledge of BU faculty, external researchers and community development professionals. Eight Research Affiliates have received designations from the Brandon University Research Affiliates Adjudication Committee.

Over the past 12 months, RDI made significant progress to extend the domains of research interests as illustrated by new research activities in community economic development, information and communication technology for CED, agro-environmental, rural health and rural tourism.

## ***Priority Area 3: Promote RDI as a nationally recognized centre of excellence for rural issues***

This priority area is aimed at raising awareness of RDI's profile and capacity to conduct and manage rural research and policy development.

### **Consultations with Program and Policy Makers**

RDI actively participates in consultations with rural policy makers and program planners. The Director, Robert Annis, is the primary agent for these consultations; however, other members of research and project teams also make meaningful contributions to policy and program discussion. Illustrative activities in 2004 are:

- Robert Annis is an invited member of Manitoba's Rural Team, a group comprised of representatives from federal and provincial government departments and community stakeholder groups with rural interests.
- Robert Annis is a member of Industry Canada's National Selection Committee for broadband initiatives.
- In March 2004, Robert Annis participated in the National Rural Policy Framework Consultation held in Ottawa.
- In April 2004, Ken Bessant from the Department of Rural Development and Robert Annis gave a summary of the *Report on the Strengths, Challenges and Opportunities of Community Development Corporations in Manitoba* to the Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association Annual Conference held in Brandon, Manitoba.
- In May 2004, Robert Annis made a presentation entitled, *Pan Canadian Community Futures: Building the Movement*, to the CCEDNet Conference in Trois-Rivières, Quebec.
- In July 2004, RDI implemented a project on integrated pest management strategies for leafy spurge in the prairie region of Canada. One of the primary goals of the project is to establish a coalition of stakeholders across the prairie region that ultimately will take a

comprehensive and cooperative approach to invasive plant species. Karen Rempel, RDI Research Affiliate is coordinating these efforts.

- In October 2004, Robert Annis was a guest speaker at the 3<sup>rd</sup> *National Rural Conference* held in Red Deer, Alberta. Also, in October, Bruce Hardy, project coordinator for the CIMnet component of the Community Collaboration Project and Robert Annis presented a session titled, *An Innovative Approach to Community Capacity Building*, at the Tech 2004 Conference, Brandon Manitoba.

## **Journal of Rural and Community Development**

RDI is providing financial support to the Journal of Rural and Community Development. Given the trends towards urbanization and rural restructuring throughout the world, it is important that academics, policy analysts, community practitioners, and students interested in rural and small community research be able to disseminate their peer-reviewed findings to the largest audience possible. The purpose of the *Journal of Rural and Community Development* (JRCD) is to provide that venue. An on-line format, offered free of charge to readers, ensures that the largest audience possible is reached and in a timely fashion. The JRCD aims to develop an international focus and encourages manuscripts of both theoretical and applied natures. The latter are encouraged through the special 'Case Studies' section.

Doug Ramsey, Department of Rural Development, is the journal's editor. Assisting Doug is Stuart Harvey, a recent graduate of the Master of Rural Development program. For more information on the JRCD visit [www.jrcd.ca](http://www.jrcd.ca).

## **Publications, Reports and Presentations**

RDI continuously seeks to enhance its publications and communications program. This program includes peer-reviewed papers, presentations, working papers and project reports. Faculty members from the Department of Rural Development make important contributions to this program by being closely involved with a number of publications. A complete list of RDI's publications, reports and presentations can be found on RDI's web site [www.brandonu.ca/rdi](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi). In 2004, our publications and presentation included the following:

### **Peer-Reviewed Publications**

Annis, R.C., Racher, F.E., & Beattie, M. (Eds.) (2004). *Rural community health and well-being: A guide to action*. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Halseth, G., & Halseth, R. (2004) *Building for Success: Exploration of Rural Community and Rural Development*. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Ramsey, D., & Bryant, C. (2004) *The Structure and Dynamics of Rural Territories: Geographical Perspectives*. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

## **RDI Working Papers**

Everitt, J., & Massam, B.H. (August 2004). *Perceptions of Spaces in Puerto Vallarta, Jalisco, Mexico*. RDI Working Paper #2004-1

## **RDI Reports**

Annis, R.C. (January 2004). *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities Research project, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant No. 828-1999-1029, 2003-2004 Progress Report*. Submitted to Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada.

Annis, R.C. (January 2004). *Community Collaboration Project Annual Meeting Report*. Report submitted to the Community Collaboration Project Steering Committee.

Annis, R.C. (March 2004). *The Community Collaboration Project: A Review*. Report Submitted to the Community Collaboration Project Steering Committee.

Annis, R.C., Everitt, J.C., Walsh, D., & Cameron, S. (November 2004). *The Churchill Connectivity Story*. RDI Project Report. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University. Rural Development Institute.

Bessant, K.C., & Annis, R.C. (March 2004). *Report on the Strengths, Challenges, and Opportunities of Community Development Corporations in Manitoba*. Report to Manitoba Community Development Corporations Association executive.

Funk, E. (March 2004). *Rural health differences by definition*. Report prepared through RDI Student Internship Program.

Gibson, R. (2004). *Rural health: An annotated bibliography*. Reported prepared through RDI Student Internship Program.

Gibson, R., Pachkowski, J., & Peers, B. (March 2004). *Municipal Management Plans for Controlling Leafy Spurge*. Report submitted to Covering New Ground, Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives.

McTavish, P., Peers, B., Gibson, R., & Gould, L. (December 2004). *Assessing Technology Usage Barriers and Opportunities in the Business Community: A Case Study of Southwestern Manitoba*. Report submitted to Manitoba Smart Network.

Rempel, K. (June 2004). *Best Practices of The Learning For Life Initiative*. Report submitted to the Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres (N-CEDC).

Rempel, K. (March 2004). *Final Evaluation Report for The Learning For Life Initiatives Network of Community Enterprise Development Centres*.

- Rempel, K. (November 2004). *The Evolution of Community Learning Networks: Political Philosophy and Historical Examples from Rural Manitoba*. Working Paper prepared for the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy.
- Rempel, K, Morton, P. (March 2004). *Leafy Spurge Bio-Control Identification and Establishment of Bio-Control Sites in Manitoba*. Report to Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives, Covering New Ground program.
- Rural Development Institute. (Spring 2004). *CAT Scan Shoal Lake Community Assessment Team (CAT) Rural Lifestyle Assessment*. Submitted to Shoal Community Assessment Team members, pilot community for Determinants of Health, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant No. 828-1999-1029.
- Rural Development Institute. (December 2004). *Hudson Bay Neighbours Regional Roundtable Meeting Report*.
- Rural Development Institute. (March 2004). *Community Collaboration Project Annual Meeting Report January 27-28, 2004*.
- Rural Development Institute. (April 2004). *The Community Collaboration Project: A Review April 1-2003-March 31, 2004*.
- Rural Development Institute. (Spring 2004). *Virden-Wallace Rural Lifestyle Assessment*. Submitted to Virden-Wallace Rural Lifestyle Assessment Team members, pilot community for Determinants of Health, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council Grant No. 828-1999-1029.
- Walsh, D (August 2004). *Reflections on Manitoba's Community Collaboration project 1999-2004*.

## **Public Communications**

- Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (Spring 2004). *Leafy Spurge in Manitoba*. Newsletter prepared by the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group.
- Gibson, R. (2004). MCDCA on the net. *The Motivator*, 5, 1. Article in the MCDCA newsletter.
- Rural Development Institute. (Spring 2004). *Shoal Lake: CAT Scanned*. Newsletter prepared for the Shoal Lake Community Assessment Team.
- Rural Development Institute. (Spring 2004). *Virden-Wallace Rural Lifestyle Assessment*. Newsletter prepared for the Virden Wallace Rural Lifestyle Assessment Team.
- Rural Development Institute. (Winter 2004). *RDI Rural Report*. Newsletter prepared by the Rural Development Institute.

## Policy Presentations and Publications

Annis, R.C. (March 2004). *Northern Linkages Project Evaluation Workshop January 26-27, 2004*. Report presented to Literacy Partners of Manitoba and Health Canada, Population and Public Health Branch Manitoba and Saskatchewan Region.

Annis, R.C. (March 2004). *The Community Collaboration Project: Year 5 Review*. Presentation made to Rural Team Manitoba.

Rural Development Institute. (March 2004). *Rural Team Manitoba Charting Our Course, Setting Our Sails: The Crew's View*. Report submitted to Health Canada, Population and Public Health Branch Manitoba and Saskatchewan Region.

Rural Development Institute & Town of Leaf Rapids. (2004, December). Community meeting. *Determinants of Health of Populations and Communities project*, Leaf Rapids, MB.

Rural Development Institute & Shoal Lake Community Assessment Team. (2004, August). Community meeting. *Determinants of Health of Populations and Communities project*, Shoal Lake, MB.

Rural Development Institute & Virden-Wallace Rural Lifestyle Assessment Team. (2004, August). Community meeting. *Determinants of Health of Populations and Communities project*, Virden, MB.

## Conference Presentations

Cameron, S., Everitt, J.C., & Annis R.C. (2004). Exploring Connectivity, Use and Usefulness of Information and Community Technology (ICT) in a Northern Community Setting: A Churchill Case Study. Paper presented to the Manitoba Research Alliance on Community Economic Development in the New Economy.

Gibson, R., Ramsey, D., Annis, R., & Everitt, J. (2004, August). *What is a rural community? "Community is really mostly people"*. Poster presented at Manitoba Summer Community Health Institute, Brandon, MB.

Gibson, R., Pachkowski, K., Racher, F., & Annis, R. (2004, October). *What makes a rural community healthy? "Health doesn't necessarily mean medical care"*. Poster presented at the Manitoba Summer Community Health Institute, Brandon, MB.

Racher, F. (2004). *Rural consumer participation in mental health program evaluation and development*. Paper presented at the 5<sup>th</sup> Canadian Rural Health Research Society Conference and 4<sup>th</sup> International Rural Nurses Congress, Sudbury, ON.

Racher, F. (2004). *Elderly rural couples' experiences in accessing health services and managing their interdependent lives*. Presented at Incontro Internazionale –

Exploring Connections, International Palliative Care Nursing Research Conference, Prato, Italy.

Racher, F., & Everitt, J. (May 2004). *What makes a rural community healthy? "Health doesn't necessarily mean medical care"*. Poster presented at the National Primary Health Care Conference, Winnipeg, MB.

Ramsey, D. (November 2004). *Rural health and well-being: Reflections on best practices in collaboration in Manitoba*. Presented at Grand River Rural Forum, Brantford, ON.

Ramsey, D. (November 2004). *Rural community well-being: Models and applications to Ontario and Manitoba*. Paper presented at Grand River Rural Forum, Brantford, ON.

Peers, B. (January 2004). *Municipal Management Plans for Controlling Leafy Spurge*. Presentation at the Covering New Ground session at Ag Days 2004, Brandon, MB.

### **Corollary Activities**

Gould, L. (November 2004) *Manitoba Smart Network Inc. Strategic Planning Workshop Report*.

McTavish, P. (December 2004). *Assisting Landowners / Managers with Establishing, Implementing and Sustaining Integrated Pest Management Plans (IPM) for Leafy Spurge*. Presentation to the LSSG Research Committee, Brandon, MB.

Rural Development Institute & Town of Leaf Rapids (2004, December). Community meeting. *Determinants of Health of Populations and Communities project*, Leaf Rapids, MB.

Rural Development Institute & Shoal Lake Community Assessment Team (2004, August). Community meeting. *Determinants of Health of Populations and Communities project*, Shoal Lake, MB.

Rural Development Institute & Virden-Wallace Rural Lifestyle Assessment Team (2004, August). Community meeting. *Determinants of Health of Populations and Community project*, Virden, MB.

### **Priority Area 4: Seek research and project funding to address rural issues**

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 2004, RDI submitted three major proposals for research and project activities as well as several smaller requests for support. Major proposal submissions included:

- *Improving Health Care Access for Northern Residents.* Funding application to Aboriginal Peoples' Health, Canadian Institutes of Health Research. This application was accepted.
- *Integrated Pest Management Strategies to Increase the Success of Leafy Spurge Management in Pastures and Wildlands in the Prairie Region of Canada.* This funding application to the National Greencover Technical Assistance Program was accepted.
- *Managing Invasive Species – Leafy Spurge Control.* This funding application to the Canada-Manitoba Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative was submitted and approved.
- A funding application under the *Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Building Program* has been submitted and a decision is pending.

### **Priority Area 5: Administer the operations of RDI**

In 2004, RDI successfully continued its commitment to rural community development under the administrative leadership of Robert Annis, Director, and Bev 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 the 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; and
- development of policies and procedures for Research Affiliates and Research Fellowship programs.

In accordance with Brandon University policy, the 5-year review of the Director of RDI took place over the summer and fall of 2004. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts chaired the review committee. In addition to a comprehensive review of the Director's activities over the past 5 years, the Committee sought input on the Director's performance from internal and external sources. Based on the Review, the Director received unanimous endorsement for a renewal of a five-year contract. Formal ratification of this decision is before Brandon University's Board of Governors.

## **Impact and Future Directions**

This concluding section of the *2004 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 2005.

### ***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. The Province of Manitoba reviewed and indicated its endorsement of RDI's activities and direction. Early in 2004, Brandon University and the Province of Manitoba signed a new three-year Memorandum of Understanding.
- At the national level, RDI facilitated or was invited to participate in a number of policy discussions throughout Canada. For example, Robert Annis is a member of Rural Team Manitoba. He has also facilitated or participated in several consultations on rural policy at the national and provincial level.
- In 2004, the institutional support provided by Brandon University and the Province of Manitoba through the Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives helped leverage research and project funding and in-kind support valued at more than \$500,000.
- In 2004, 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 2004, more than 80 rural and northern communities benefited from the knowledge and experience of RDI's research team members.

### ***Looking Ahead to 2005***

RDI's research and project teams are looking enthusiastically to 2005. For example

- In late April 2005, RDI will be coordinating and co-sponsoring two complementary forums focused on immigration and rural Canada. The goal of the event is to facilitate active engagement between established immigration practitioners and interested Manitoban community and industry leaders. Open attendance sessions will highlight case studies of communities in Manitoba and elsewhere that have implemented successful and/or innovative immigration strategies. With a focus on lessons learned, best practices and the transferability of existing or tested community immigration strategies, the sessions are to serve as practical and instructive tools for those in attendance.
- RDI will continue to be involved in the Manitoba Research Alliance and the SSHRC funded research project *CED in the New Economy*. It also hopes to extend the experience of Manitoba's Community Collaboration Project to other parts of the

country through the *Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Building* program of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada.

- Early in 2005 RDI will present professional development seminars facilitated by Dr. Rob Greenwood.
- Research team members working on the multi-year *Determinants of Health of Rural Populations and Communities* will submit their final report to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Granting Council of Canada.
- RDI will continue to grow and develop by promoting RDI as a nationally recognized centre for rural research; enhance RDI's capacity to conduct rural research and related activities; pursuing research and project funding to address rural issues and demonstrating administrative leadership to RDI.

## **RDI ADVISORY COMMITTEE**

**Scott Grills**, Chair  
Dean of Arts  
Brandon University

**Peter Reimer**  
Acting 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

**Fran Racher**  
Associate Professor  
School of Health Studies  
Brandon University

**Doug Ramsey**  
Associate Professor  
Department of Rural Development  
Brandon University

**Frank Thomas**  
General Manager  
Western Manitoba CIBC

**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.