Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute (RDI) in 1989 as an academic research centre and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere. RDI’s mandate is to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural and northern issues. An RDI Advisory Committee whose members include rural community stakeholders, provincial and federal government representatives and Brandon University faculty was also established to act as a sounding board concerning the future development and advancement of the Institute.

As we look back over 2006, it is apparent that RDI has more than fulfilled its mandate. RDI’s applied research projects have connected the Institute with rural and northern communities, organizations and governments in the three Prairie provinces, northern British Columbia, the Yukon and Nunavut. During this past year, nine students have had the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the classroom in rural and northern communities. I am sure that those opportunities have enriched their studies.

RDI’s success is in large measure built on its ongoing vision as a centre of excellence for rural and northern issues. It sustains this vision through its multi-disciplinary strategies, social science approaches and expertise in a number of rural research interests. This vision is amplified by its continual and purposeful connections with rural and northern communities, stakeholders and the people on the ground that can make things happen. RDI’s success is also as a result of the financial support that it receives from governments and granting institutions such as Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives; Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada and the Canadian Institutes of Health Research. On behalf of the Advisory Committee, the Rural Development Institute and Brandon University, I extend my appreciation to these organizations and others for their continued support for research in rural and northern Canada.

I look toward 2007 with much anticipation as RDI continues with its multi-year research projects, and undertakes new initiatives that are reflective of rural and northern Canada’s opportunities and issues.

Scott Grills, PhD
Dean of Arts and Graduate Studies
Chairperson, RDI Advisory Committee
Message from the Director

The Rural Development Institute has just completed another interesting and exciting year. You will see that we have changed our reporting format and style. This year’s Annual Report focuses on the highlights of 2006, and in most of the articles, refers you to our web page for more detailed information.

In 2006 RDI continued with several multi-year applied research projects, the Community Collaboration (CCP) Model, the Health Care Access of Northern Residents, the Managing Invasive Species: Leafy Spurge Control and the Integrated Pest Management of Leafy Spurge projects. Late in 2006 we also started a new project, the Establishment of the Prairie Region Invasive Noxious Weed Survey and Mapping System project. During the year, RDI connected with more than 150 rural and northern communities and organizations in western and northern Canada. Our landscape ranged from southern and northern Manitoba, to southwestern, central and northern Saskatchewan, southern Alberta, northeastern British Columbia and to Yukon communities along the Alaska Highway. Our connectivity with governments included our multi-year research funders, as well as many federal, provincial and territorial government partners who are participating in the research projects.

Our close affiliation with Brandon University’s academic Department of Rural Development (DRD) provided the opportunity to co-host the 2006 International Comparative Rural Policies Studies (ICRPS) program at Brandon University. Students and faculty from several European and North and South American universities participated in this program. Faculty from this program also presented three public lectures, affording the citizens of western Manitoba the opportunity to participate as well. Representatives of DRD and RDI are also on the planning committee for the 2007 ICRPS program in Spain. RDI’s close association with DRD also enabled us to collaborate to launch our first-ever online journal, The Journal of Rural and Community Development.

I am pleased to welcome Diane Martz and Ryan Gibson as the two most recent RDI Research Affiliates with our team. Diane is the Research Manager at the Prairie Women’s Health Centre of Excellence at the University of Saskatchewan. Her work focuses on rural women, rural families, family farms and rural communities. Diane is also an adjunct faculty member in the Department of Geography at the University of Saskatchewan. Originally from rural Manitoba, Ryan has been engaged with the Rural Development Institute since 2002. He began his association with RDI as an undergraduate student research assistant. After he began his Master of Rural Development studies, Ryan was awarded a graduate student internship with RDI. Following the internship, Ryan became a senior student research assistant. Ryan received his Master of Rural Development degree in 2005 and was then engaged by RDI as an independent researcher. During Ryan’s time with RDI, he has been involved in many RDI research projects.

In 2006, our connections with researchers in other academic institutions increased. An outcome of the CCP Model project was the opportunity to engage additional researchers with interests in multi-community collaborations and regional governance models, which has resulted in the formation of the RDI Community Collaboration Model Study Group. This cross-discipline group of academics adds value to the CCP Model project by offering a wider perspective of the evaluation processes, as well providing opportunities to use the CCP Model project as a comparative with the independent research initiatives of the members. We had our first formal meeting in late December in Winnipeg, and it promises to be a very dynamic research group.

RDI’s areas of research interest continue to be: community economic development; community leadership; environment and agro-economic issues; information management and technology utilization; policy and program research and development; rural and northern adaptation and change; rural and northern health; and rural tourism. Our research is highly relevant to the people who live and work in rural, northern and remote areas of Canada and to rural and northern policymakers. Ideas for the research activities undertaken by RDI are developed through contact with rural and northern groups, towns, municipalities, villages, governments, international researchers and observers of rural and northern situations. RDI’s connectivity with communities, governments and other academic institutions may originate from research questions, policy discussions, or involvement with citizens and community development practitioners. However in virtually all of our projects, we endeavour to incorporate the perspectives of diverse stakeholders in order to be relevant to the needs of researchers, policy makers and practitioners.

I would encourage you to view RDI’s web page at www.brandonu.ca/rdi. My thanks to Sylvia Henry, our webmaster, as well as the entire RDI Team for providing the information and ensuring that it is kept up-to-date. I would also like to thank Al Dunthorne and the Brandon University IT team for their assistance this year as we upgraded our web presence.

RDI is a collective group of academics, professionals and students whose knowledge, skills and abilities are complementary and enables the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University to be a centre of excellence in rural development research, policy and practice.

Robert C. Annis, PhD, Director, Rural Development Institute
The RDI Team

Led by Robert C. Annis, the RDI Team is a diverse group of individuals whose interests are in rural, remote and northern community development. Beverley Lischka and Sylvia Henry are the administrative personnel that support the efforts of the academic and professional researchers.

RDI’s research, development and outreach activities are conducted by individuals and researchers from a variety of academic disciplines and by practitioners with skills and experience in project management, group facilitation, research design, data analysis and specific topic domain expertise, with ties to RDI as a result of their interest in rural development. These ties are essential for carrying out the work of RDI’s inter-and multi-disciplinary approach. Marian Beattie, Kenneth Beesley, Kenneth Bessant, Susannah Cameron, Barbara Gfellner, Ryan Gibson, Diane Martz, Fran Racher, Doug Ramsey and Karen Rempel are Research Affiliates of the Rural Development Institute. Project manager, Beth Peers and Researcher, Ray Silvius are valued contributors to the RDI team. To learn more about the RDI Team, see the RDI website at www.brandonu.ca/rdi/

Contributing to Students’ Development

Students Interns and Research Assistants are integral to RDI. Graduate and undergraduate student internships provide research opportunities for students in the field of rural development. Internships provide students with opportunities to pursue their own field of interest while, at the same time, working on RDI research projects. Thus they advance their academic pursuits while at the same time gain new skills by “learning by doing” applied research, as well as having an employment opportunity.

In 2006, students earned approximately $55,000 working on RDI projects. Alex Martin, Anisa Zehtab-Martin, Alison Moss and Laine Mosset worked with Fran Racher on the Health Care Access of Northern Residents project. Jennifer McKinnon and Alex Martin worked with Karen Rempel on the Integrated Pest Management of Leafy Spurge project. Jennifer McKinnon and April Peers worked with Beth Peers on the Managing Invasive Species: Leafy Spurge Control project. Alison Moss and Anisa Zehtab-Martin worked with Robert Annis, Marian Beattie and Ryan Gibson on the Community Collaboration Model project. Alison Moss, Jennifer McKinnon and April Peers worked on the Invasive Plants Council project. Victoria Krahn is the Brandon Community Outreach Program Coordinator, and Abayomi Oredegbe is the Brandon University Rural Tourism Centre Graduate Student Intern. For additional information, see www.brandonu.ca/rdi/rdi_team.asp.
Partnerships, Networks and Affiliations

RDI’s collaborative, multi-disciplinary approach has led to strong community, government and university linkages. The Institute has diverse research affiliations, and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. In 2006, through its research initiatives, RDI connected with more than 150 rural and northern communities and organizations. Faculty members from the Department of Rural Development joined with colleagues from other Brandon University academic departments and from across Canada to undertake rural research and policy development.

Brandon University (BU)

RDI is co-located with the Department of Rural Development. This co-location provides a synergy for the Institute and the Department to collaborate on many initiatives. Master of Rural Development students are often employed by RDI for applied research projects. In addition to providing space and infrastructure, Brandon University provides core funding for RDI.

Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives (MAFRI)

Since its establishment in 1989, RDI has had a long relationship with the Government of Manitoba facilitated by ongoing consultations and formalized through a series of three year Memoranda of Agreement (MOA). The most recent MOA was a three-year agreement signed between Brandon University/RDI and the Government of Manitoba, specifically, MAFRI. Annually RDI and MAFRI agree on a yearly framework of activities and distribution of the funding support received through the MOA. In June 2006, during the launch of the Journal of Rural and Community Development, a presentation was made from MAFRI for $100,000. Scott Smith, Manitoba Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade and MLA for Brandon West, presented the cheque.

The framework of activities and distribution of funding support for 2006 included:

Rural Development Institute Program Support
Funds helped RDI respond in a flexible manner to emergent opportunities and issues confronting rural communities.

Professional Development Program of Activities
Funds enabled RDI to organize workshops and seminars for professional development across a number of sectors involved in community economic development.

Designated Research Program
Funds were used to encourage research alliances, enhance and build collaborative efforts with government and communities.

Department of Rural Development: Master Students’ Thesis and Research Support
Funds supported thesis and research for Masters students during their academic program.

Brandon University Community Outreach Service
Financial support was provided through grants to Brandon University faculty, students and rural communities to assist with direct costs associated with carrying out designated Outreach projects.

External Research Project Funders

Several government departments and granting institutions provide funding for research projects that RDI is engaged in. They include Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada’s Rural Secretariat, Research and Development Initiative (ARDI), and Greencover Canada Technical Assistance Program; Environment Canada’s Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program (IASPP); Manitoba Health, and Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR).

Research Affiliations

RDI also has research linkages with a number of major research institutions and research networks. These research affiliations include:

- Canadian Community Economic Development Network;
- Canadian Consortium for Health Promotion Research;
- Canadian Rural Health Research Society;
- National Rural Research Network;
- Pan-West Community Futures Network;
- Rural Teams in Manitoba, Saskatchewan & Yukon; and
- Universities of Regina and Saskatchewan.

In addition, RDI is at the starting phase of facilitating an academic study group from across North America with representation from Brandon University, Concordia University (Montreal), University of Guelph, University of Saskatchewan, Centre for the Study of Rural America (Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City) and University of Missouri-Columbia.

A consortium of universities is coming together to develop a proposal to continue building international study programs. These include Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, University of the Highlands & Islands, the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, the Banco do Nordeste do Brasil, University of Missouri-Columbia, Université du Québec a Rimouski, University of Guelph and Brandon University.
Brandon University’s Department of Rural Development and Rural Development Institute hosted the 2006 International Comparative Rural Policy Studies (ICRPS) program. The ICRPS program is a new advanced program aimed at enhancing policy formulation and analysis in the rural context. The program was developed by the Rural Policy Consortium, comprising nine universities in Canada, Europe and the USA, and is the first of its kind that enables students to examine and compare the role of rural policy in different cultural, political and administrative contexts in Europe and North America, as well as in the South. Planning committee and core faculty for the 2006 summer program at Brandon University included Doug Ramsey and Robert Annis of Brandon University, Tony Fuller of the University of Guelph (Canada), Tom Johnson of the University of Missouri-Columbia (USA), John Bryden of the University of Highlands and Islands (Scotland) and Lourdes Viladomiu of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona (Spain). The organizing committee at Brandon University was comprised of Doug Ramsey, Robert Annis, Bev Lischka and MRD students Alison Moss and Clive Lovett.

The 2006 ICRPS group consisted of 26 students from the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona, the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven (Belgium), University of the Highlands & Islands, the Universidad Nacional de Colombia, the Banco do Nordeste do Brasil, Université du Québec a Rimouski, the University of Guelph and Brandon University. This year’s summer program reflected unique characteristics of travel and life on the Canadian prairies. The program began on June 24 in Winnipeg, Manitoba; a short stay in Manitoba’s capital provided the opportunity for participants to become acquainted with the social, geographic and administrative/political dimensions of Manitoba. Other attributes of the Canadian prairies became increasingly evident as the group made their way west to Brandon University on June 25. The first two-thirds of the program were spent on the Brandon University campus. The principal objectives of the program included an emphasis on methods of analyzing and comparing public policy in Canadian, European and American contexts. Local examples were drawn upon within the City of Brandon and the surrounding countryside to illustrate how policies and programs are layered, reflecting the relationships and linkages between local, provincial and federal powers in Canada. This in turn acted as a catalyst for debating the similarities and differences evident in policy analysis internationally. Examining policy issues confronted by both the public and private spheres provided an excellent opportunity to better assess the impact of policies at all levels and by all players.

ICRPS became mobile for the final week. Classroom facilities were located in the field, as the last block of the program was spent in the Duck Mountain Provincial Park. Distance and transportation are of critical importance to rural Canadians. Guests from abroad experienced how policy, programs and citizens are affected by these factors as the group made their way north on a day trip to The Pas. The change of venue encouraged a greater understanding of the regional complexity of generating and implementing policy in the Canadian context. ICRPS 2006 concluded in Winnipeg, Manitoba on July 15. For further information, see www.icrps.com.
This new electronic tool launched the online, open access Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD) with a ribbon cutting ceremony on the BU campus on June 6, 2006. Dr. Doug Ramsey, Associate Professor in Brandon University’s Department of Rural Development, founded the journal and also serves as its editor. Adding to Brandon University’s strong journal publication history, the purpose of the JRCD is to provide a venue through which academics can publish findings in the field of development studies in either or both rural and community contexts. Though a number of journals exist in one or the other of these two areas the JRCD will distinguish itself by being one of the first to encompass both. The format includes standard editorials, regular refereed articles, and a book review section, as well as shorter, refereed case study articles and pieces that analyze particular policies and programs developed for or impacting on, rural areas and small towns. The closing section of each issue lists recently completed theses and upcoming conference announcements.

According to Dr. Ramsey, “the JRCD fills a void in the academic literature and while the editorial board is still being developed, it already includes academics from coast to coast in Canada, as well as from the United States, the United Kingdom and Europe”. He continued, “that being part of the ‘Open Access’ journal system allows for free access to all, anywhere, anytime. This certainly improves the relevance and applicability to addressing rural and community development issues for all concerned”.

Scott Smith, Manitoba Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs and Trade and MLA for Brandon West, cut the ribbon launching the journal. The journal is located at www.jrcd.ca.

On March 3-4 2006, RDI supported the Rural Issues and Insights 2 Conference hosted by the Brandon University’s Department of Rural Development Graduate Students Association. Topics covered at the conference included: planning and management of emergencies in rural areas; movement of people; the attraction and retention of rural populations; rural connections; communication and social capital; community development and levels of governance; and rural development adaptation and the environment. The conference also provided students, faculty, government and public agencies involved in rural issues a venue to share interests, research findings and ideas.

In conjunction with the 2006 ICRPS program, RDI hosted a series of lectures, which were open to the public at no cost. On June 27 Ms. Cynthia Neudoerffer, PhD candidate at the University of Guelph, and Phil Beard, General Manager of the Maitland Valley Conservation Authority in Ontario offered a presentation entitled Watershed Management: Watershed Planning in a Rural Agricultural Watershed. This presentation provided information about watershed planning and its implementation in rural watersheds in Ontario and Manitoba. The presentation highlighted the value of watershed boundaries as a planning tool and discussed some of the strengths and weakness of this approach.

On July 4, Dr. Sterling Evans, Associate Professor and Canada Research Chair in History at Brandon University, presented Agricultural Connections: Continental and Intercontinental. This session explored various dimensions of North American agricultural history that have inherent connections to other parts of the world, which have been forged over time by dependencies on markets, commodities, labour, and technology.

On July 5, Professor Laurent van de Poele, of the Institute for International and European Policy at the Katholieke Universiteit Leuven, Belgium, presented The EU and the Internal and External Pressures for the reform of its Common Agricultural Policy. Professor van de Poele’s presentation examined how European Union (EU) enlargement, the globalization of trade and changing consumer demands have led to a new context for the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP). Among other things, the discussion covered the fact that agriculture and local rural economies in the EU find themselves in a rapidly changing environment, as consumers become more critical of the role of agriculture in terms of food quality and public opinion at large is opposed to the cost of the CAP, leading to a serious problem in the relationship between farmers and civil society.
On October 16, RDI sponsored visiting scholar Charles Bohi who gave a talk on The Rural Railroad Station as an Architectural Logo. From the 1880s until the 1960s Prairie Canada's railway depots occupied a central role in the communities they served. This presentation briefly examined the purposes the railway stations fulfilled and their impact on town site development.

Finally, it looked at the seven designs that were used to erect nearly 60% of the some 2,000 permanent depots built between the Lakehead and the Pacific. These designs were replicated so often that the resulting structures became virtual architectural logos of the companies that built them. Charles Bohi has spent literally a lifetime studying the railways of Prairie Canada and has written or co-written extensively on the subject.

On October 17 and 18, Brandon University Applied Disaster and Emergency Studies and RDI co-hosted a campus and community symposium featuring Hurricane Katrina-affected speakers from Louisiana.

The symposium included two days of classes, community presentations and a public lecture. Rosina Philippe, a displaced Native American mother, spoke along with her teen-aged daughter Ani Philippe-Cortez. Advocate and research collaborator Kristina Peterson also spoke, drawing on over 20 years of experience responding to disasters from a faith-based perspective. Hurricane Katrina was an enormous human tragedy and still unfolding one year later. It was also a wake-up call about inequality, environmental degradation, and the vulnerability of even the wealthiest nations to “natural” disasters. For Canadians, Katrina affords a window of opportunity for thinking about how social policies today may be instrumental in designing the disasters of our future.

Mainstream media focused on African Americans trapped in a flooding city, though many other people and places were also hit hard. Central American migrant workers, Vietnamese shrimpers, and Native Americans were often “out of the loop” at the time and remain so one year later. The bayou people who have lived off the land for generations up and down the Gulf Coast are not recovering rapidly from Hurricane Katrina, among them the Atakapa people. Residents for over 200 years, but not a federally recognized tribe, the community was and remains invisible to the Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA) and most other relief agencies. Now numbering only in the hundreds, the livelihood and culture of the Atakapa people in the bayous have long been endangered. Hazard mitigation intended to save (other) people has undermined their local economy, and they suffer today in the “post-disaster disaster” of reconstruction. Women most of all are left out of community consultations about long-term recovery conducted by planners, officials and outside experts.
RDI Publications and Presentations

Publications
An important function of RDI is to disseminate research findings and applied research practices to rural communities, students and practitioners. Our efforts for information and dissemination include print and electronic versions of published research reports, working documents, project reports and tools for communities. In 2006, RDI launched an online, open access Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD). The purpose is to provide a venue through which academics can publish findings in the field of development studies in either or both rural and community contexts. Early in 2006, RDI published its Rural Report newsletter highlighting the Broadband economic impact study, Leafy Spurge projects and regional round tables.

Agro-Environmental

Community Collaboration/Regional Round Tables
Rural Development Institute’s Regional Round Table Handbook for the Community Collaboration Process. Annis, R. C., Beattie, M. & Gibson R.
Regional Round Table Overview. Annis, R. C.

Rural Adaptation and Change
One City, One Voice: Strategic Planning for the City of Brandon - Report from the Youth 1 Forum. Gibson, R., & Bessant, K.

Rural Information and Communication Technology/ Broadband
Using Information Communication Technology to Facilitate Community Economic Development Networks. Cameron, S.

Research Presentations
The RDI Team gave several presentations throughout 2006. These included presentations relating to:

Community Collaboration/Regional Round Tables

Rural Immigration

Rural Immigration (continued)

Rural/Northern Health & Well-Being
Picturing a Rural Community: Using Photovoice in Community Development. Paper presented at 7th Canadian Rural Health Research Society Conference, Prince George BC. Racher, F.
Picturing Rural Communities: Photovoice as Research Method. Presentation to Graduate Students in Community Health Sciences at University of Calgary, Calgary AB. Racher, F.

Contributions to Literature
Literature contributions include:

Rural Information and Communication Technology/Broadband

Rural/Northern Health & Well-Being
Promoting Youth Participation in Community Development through Photovoice (forthcoming). In A. Vollman, E. Anderson, & J. McFarlane (Eds.), Canadian Community as Partner (2nd ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins. Racher, F.
Honouring Culture and Diversity. (forthcoming). In A. Vollman, E. Anderson, & J. McFarlane (Eds.), Canadian Community as Partner (2nd ed.). Philadelphia: Lippincott, Williams & Wilkins. Racher, F.

Brandon University Community Outreach Service

The **Brandon University Community Outreach Service** is a service for communities, organizations, university students and faculty and is coordinated by **Victoria Krahn**.

Housed at RDI and funded through RDI and MAFRI, the Outreach Service assists in matching the needs of community organizations with the learning and research interests of university students and faculty. The role of the Outreach Service is to coordinate and facilitate the initiation of projects. These projects are usually undertaken on a volunteer basis by faculty and/or students in partnership with community organizations. The Outreach Service does not itself design, manage or undertake specific projects.

The Outreach Service also offers Service Learning, a Brandon University program that allows students to receive recognition on their transcripts for their service/volunteer work in community organizations, such as government agencies, non-profit organizations, and schools. The Service Learning program acknowledges the value of activities beyond the academic setting, in which students contribute to the community through previous learning, or gain knowledge and experience that will benefit their future studies and careers.

Through special project funding support from MAFRI, the Outreach Service also holds an annual Call for Proposals every February and provides concept development funding in small amounts through an Open Call for Proposals.

The Outreach process is based primarily on an initial request from one source of the outreach triad (students, faculty or a community resident/organization). Usually requests fall under three main categories: projects, services or other. Upon receiving the request, the person making the request may be asked to complete a project request form or explain in more detail the assistance they require. Outreach responds by putting the person making the request in contact with other members of the triad to facilitate the request. Not all requests can be matched. In the case of an unmatched request, the requester may be directed to other sources of assistance outside Brandon University.

Brandon University Community Outreach strongly supports collaborative research, community connections and service learning opportunities for students. In 2006, $15,000 was granted to the following:

- **Helen Armstrong**, Faculty of Education ($2500),
- **Fran Racher**, School of Health Studies ($2500),
- **Mike Malazdrewicz**, Department of Business Administration ($2500),
- **Wenonah Fraser**, Department of Geography ($2500),
- **Jason Levy**, Department of Applied Disaster & Emergency Studies ($2500), and
- **Barbara Gfellner** Department of Psychology ($2500).

**Invasive Plants Council Facilitation**

Early in 2006, RDI agreed to facilitate discussions with various stakeholders on the feasibility of forming a Manitoba Invasive Plants Council. RDI also offered administrative support for the facilitation process. To initiate the process, RDI invited the assistance of a planning committee consisting of Beth Peers (Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group), Garth Ball (Manitoba Conservation), Karen Rempel (RDI), and facilitators Herb Goulden and Marian Beattie. The planning committee’s purpose was to bring together people with similar interests regarding invasive plant species to explore the possibility of creating a provincial group to serve as an umbrella organization for invasive plants. The planning committee developed an invitation list and format for a meeting that was held on June 19, 2006 in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba. The participants of this meeting decided to move forward on creating a provincial Invasive Plants Council. A Working Group was formed and was given the task of researching other similar organizations across Canada, and recommending an organizational and funding structure. The Working Group met in October and early November and formulated their recommendations. On December 8, a second meeting of the Invasive Plants Council was held, and plans to move forward were put into action.

**Herb Goulden and Marian Beattie** facilitated this process with RDI students **Jennifer McKinnon**, **April Peers** and **Alison Moss** recording the meetings and assisting in creating the reports.

**Capacity Building with Manitoba Communities for Chronic Disease Prevention**

In March 2006, Manitoba Health engaged RDI researchers, **Robert Annis**, **Fran Racher**, **Ryan Gibson** and **Marian Beattie**, to assist in the identification of training and capacity building that would be required to implement the **Chronic Disease Prevention Initiative (CDPI)** projects. RDI researchers reviewed 54 Community Action Plans and conducted interviews with 20 CDPI executive and program leaders and facilitators with each of the regional health authorities in Manitoba. Information from both sources provided an increased understanding of the variation that existed in structures and processes being used to undertake the CDPI in different regions; the stages and levels of community engagement and project planning that had occurred; resource capacity, availability, and allocation; and the training, education and capacity building needs that currently existed and are anticipated in the future. Other challenges experienced by regions since the inception of the CDPI project were identified from the perspectives of those interviewed. The knowledge gleaned was shared with the Regional Health Authorities and will provide a foundation for planning and implementing CDPI in Manitoba.
The Community Collaboration Model (CCP) is a research project that provides opportunities for new forms of collaboration and governance and tests the applicability and replicability of the CCP model, developed in Manitoba, elsewhere in rural and northern Canada. Communities collaborating together in community development processes can increase their capacity to improve quality of life, better manage change and sustain long-term well-being. The CCP model is a collaborative partnership between a group of communities that come together to form a regional round table, the Rural Team in their province/territory and academic institutions.

The Rural Secretariat is funding this model under the Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Program. This research program intends to gather evidence and knowledge that contributes to the understanding of what approaches (models) to community development and capacity building work in rural, remote and northern communities.

The information will be used to inform all levels of government to support their decisions on programs and services for rural Canadians, as well as future policy directions.

Three regional round tables emerged in this project, one in central Saskatchewan, the Waterwolf Regional Round Table, one in northeastern British Columbia, the Northeastern British Columbia Regional Round Table, and one in the Yukon, the Yukon Regional Round Table. RDI Director Robert Annis is leading and Marian Beattie and Ryan Gibson, Research Affiliates, are managing this project.

WaterWolf Regional Round Table

The Waterwolf Regional Round Table (WWRRT), in central Saskatchewan, was established in 2005 because there was no structure for addressing regional development issues, no consensus for planning infrastructure and development, and no regional table to encourage and facilitate initiatives. WWRRT has five committees that are working on: a governance model to provide good stewardship and oversight of development in the South Saskatchewan River valley south of Beaver Creek; potential solutions to the issue of long term stability and sustainability in providing technical oversight for water quality to small communities in accordance with provincial regulations; a process and time table for development at or near Danielson Park as a demonstration pilot for tax and investment sharing; concerning medium and long term land use planning and make recommendations for priorities in the development of data layers within the region (in other words, what should be the priorities for GIS digitization in the region); and a framework for municipal sharing of the cost of infrastructure development and for the sharing of taxes on new regional developments. October 23, 2006 saw the announcement of the #219 highway partnership. Under the groundbreaking agreement, a First Nation community, rural municipalities, and the provincial Department of Highways have come together with resources in common cause to fund the redevelopment of #219 highway as a tourism corridor between Saskatoon and Lake Diefenbaker. More information about WaterWolf Regional Round Table can be found at www.waterwolf.org.
Established in April 2006, the Yukon Regional Round Table (YRRT) consists of six communities and four First Nations in the Yukon. The YRRT provides a unique forum as there currently is no one organization which First Nations, incorporated communities, and non-incorporated communities can come together as equal partners to discuss regional issues. The vision of the YRRT consists of six themes: collaborative community economic development; accountability/credibility; healthy respectful relations; networking; coordinated promotion; and social development initiatives.

At each meeting, YRRT members organize a one-half day training and capacity building session. Members identified a desire for training on issues such as conflict resolution, community engagement, cross-cultural communications, and tourism marketing.

YRRT is exploring three potential projects. One first project would conduct community asset mapping activities to gain an increased understanding of community assets and resources. The second project would increase the awareness of community-based activities through working with government departments and tourism organizations to enhance the community calendar of events website. And the third project would be to gain knowledge of how to integrate First Nations practices into the YRRT. YRRT’s website is: www.brandonu.ca/rdi/yrrt.asp

Over the past year, members of the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association, the Rural Team British Columbia and RDI have attempted to initiate the regional round table and advisory group according to the criteria, roles and responsibilities of the CCP model. However, there are differences amongst the three partners on how to initiate the regional round table and advisory group, including viewpoints and requirements of data ownership and evaluation, as well as the design of the regional round table and advisory group. While it is clear that a dynamic regional round table has emerged, and it is believed that it will continue to grow and move forward, the three partners have mutually come to the conclusion that the design characteristics of the regional round table and advisory group and the relationships of the partners are sufficiently different from those expected of the CCP model. Therefore, the Northern Rockies Alaska Highway Tourism Association, the Rural Team British Columbia and RDI agreed that the regional round table would transition to a new format of regional round table. All parties also agreed to end the role of RDI in the facilitation of the regional round table as of October 1, 2006. In order to assist with the regional round table’s transition, RDI is providing some financial resources as well as gathering an understanding of the processes used for the transition as part of the learning process envisioned under the Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Program.
Residents of First Nation and Métis communities, large regional centres and smaller communities 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, health promotion and education. Related issues of transportation compound the difficulties.

Dr. Robert Annis of RDI and co-applicants, Dr. Fran Racher of the School of Health Studies, Brandon University and Dr. Bonnie Jeffery of the University of Regina, have received a Canadian Institutes of Health Research (CIHR) grant to undertake the facilitation of dialogue across northern communities in the provinces of Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Researchers are exploring access dimensions of availability, accessibility, accommodation, affordability and acceptability. Population characteristics, environmental factors, health behaviours and related outcomes are being examined from the perspective of community members and health care providers. Issues of access for northern residents are being documented and clarified from the perspectives of northern residents as well as their health care providers.

As jurisdictional issues often plague northern health service delivery, researchers are seeking the participation of government stakeholders at local, provincial and federal levels. Research strategies have included focus groups and key informant interviews with northern residents, local health providers and community leaders to discuss experiences in accessing health services. Northern people value the opportunity to participate in the identification of the issues as well as discussions to develop solutions.

In Manitoba the Bayline Regional Round Table (BRRT) is comprised of communities whose leaders have identified health access as an issue to residents not only in their communities but across the north. The BRRT is keen to work with RDI and northern communities in Manitoba and Saskatchewan to examine these issues. Recently the BRRT met to hear the preliminary findings and to begin identifying priorities for action.

In Saskatchewan, researchers are working in collaboration with the Athabasca Health Authority, which provides health services to both First Nation and provincial communities in the Athabasca Basin area of Northern Saskatchewan, allowing for exploration of issues related to an inter-jurisdictional health delivery model. Interviews and focus groups with residents and health care providers have been completed and data analysis is in process. The creation of a forum for dialogue involving community residents, community organizations, health-related organizations, health service providers, regional health authorities and others interested in access issues is an important aspect of this project. Plans are being discussed for cross-jurisdictional meetings in spring of 2007.

In this project, information is being gathered and organized in a manner that will be useful for future program planning, service delivery and health policy development. Researchers will not only capture the content of the dialogue but also the process undertaken to generate an understanding in the scientific world of how the participatory action research approach can support community empowerment and movement to action. Knowledge translation of both the content and the process will enable use of the findings in other communities and for other community development topics of concern. More information about this project can be found on RDI’s website at: www.bradomu.ca/rdi/cihr.asp.
Managing Invasive Species: Leafy Spurge Control 2006-2007

Leafy spurge is a perennial weed species native to Europe that spreads rapidly in pastures and wildlife areas. Leafy spurge is highly competitive and considered impossible to eradicate. The highly invasive, adaptable and pernicious nature of leafy spurge allows the plant to grow in a variety of soil types and eco-zones including aspen forests, marshes, native grasslands and pastures. Infestation levels of leafy spurge are highest across the northern plains of the US and the three prairie provinces of Canada. Manitoba is the most severely affected province resulting in an economic loss estimated at $20 million. The control and containment of leafy spurge affects a variety of individuals and agencies including landowners and managers, municipalities, land developers, government services, highways, railways and wildlife organizations.

RDI is coordinating the Managing Invasive Species: Leafy Spurge Control project that aims to enhance control of leafy spurge in Manitoba by increasing awareness, encouraging the adoption of integrated pest management (IPM) plans, prevention stewardship, and enhancing the biocontrol component. This project is building on RDI’s work in biocontrol, technology transfer activities and coordination of the Leafy Spurge Stakeholders Group (LSSG).

The LSSG is comprised of more than 20 members from agricultural and conservation agencies plus all three levels of government. It was established to increase awareness of leafy spurge, examine its issues and impacts, provide related communication and outreach, and enhance coordination among stakeholder agencies. RDI coordinates the LSSG, which is a partner in this project.

Beth Peers, LSSG Coordinator, is project manager, and MAFRI and other stakeholders provide input into project activities. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada contributes financially to the Leafy Spurge Control project through the Agri-Food Research and Development Initiative (ARDI).

The major components of Managing Invasive Species: Leafy Spurge Control are:

- **IPM Planning**: Producers in moderate and high infestation areas were involved in assessing their leafy spurge infestation, and in developing and implementing specific site-based Integrated Pest Management (IPM) plans for control and containment. A total of ten producers participated in the project.

- **Biocontrol**: The focus was on the collection of beetles from North Dakota and distributing them in Manitoba. Project personnel and partners identified two beetle nurse sites in Manitoba at which beetles were released in the hope of establishing a population large enough to support future harvest.

- **Producer Assistance**: Participating producers received financial assistance for control and management activities. Partnerships were developed with other agencies, such as conservation districts and weed districts, for delivery of this assistance. Each of the ten participating producers received financial assistance.

- **Evaluation**: Ongoing monitoring and evaluation will be undertaken to assess the impact and success of program activities. Feedback will be used to make ongoing improvements to project activities. Project personnel designed and administered a number of tracking tools and conducted interviews with project participants.

RDI is providing opportunities for applied research to students and graduates of Brandon University. During the summer of 2006, recent Brandon University graduates Jennifer McKinnon and April Peers monitored biocontrol field sites, assisted with awareness activities and events and worked with producers to build their IPM plans. They also contributed to evaluation activities.

More information and project materials can be found at RDI’s and LSSG’s websites:

RDI: [www.brandonu.ca/rdi/managing_invasive_species.asp](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/managing_invasive_species.asp)

LSSG: [www.brandonu.ca/rdi/leafyspurge.html](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/leafyspurge.html)
In 2004, the Greencover Canada Technical Assistance Program, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada awarded RDI with funding support for a three-year project aimed at increasing the use of integrated pest management (IPM) strategies for leafy spurge, a highly invasive perennial weed species, which has infested more than 650,000 acres in Manitoba and about 300,000 acres in Saskatchewan and Alberta. The major objectives of the project are to develop a pan-Western coalition of stakeholders involved in invasive plant control; undertake a demonstration site for control methods of spurge; and develop a database of information about leafy spurge infestation.

To date, the project has made significant progress on several outcomes. For example, a Western Canadian coalition on invasive plant species has begun to take shape and develop into a stakeholder network. Another outcome is the demonstration site that used a combination of spring fertilization of hay land and fall herbicide application. Observations and plant counts from the demonstration plots indicate that this combined approach was highly effective in controlling spurge. A further outcome is the development of a web based invasive plant database and mapping tool for use by land owners and managers.

The project has also helped build other activities including collaboration with several rural municipalities and the Grasslands National Park in southwestern Saskatchewan on the development of a regional weed management plan for the area. This area is one of only two native mixed grass regions in North America and it is highly vulnerable to infestation of invasive alien plant species. Karen Rempel helped facilitate discussion on the collaborative effort and Alex Martin, student research assistant, helped map the spurge infestation in the area. The project is one of the first regional weed management plans in the Prairie region.

Karen Rempel, Research Affiliate with RDI manages the project with input from a pan-Western working group of representatives from Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and most recently, British Columbia. Partners in the project include the Brandon Research Station, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Ducks Unlimited Canada and the Canada Rural Economy Research Lab at the University of Saskatchewan. Several Brandon University students have worked on the project over the past three years including a student internship for a Masters student in Rural Development. In 2006, Jennifer McKinnon and Alex Martin student research assistants worked on this project.

Over the three year period the overall value of the project is estimated at more than $300,000 with contributions from the Greencover Canada Technical Assistance program amounting to $200,000. More information can be found at: www.brandonu.ca/rdi/ipmstrategies.asp.

The Rural Development Institute invites you to attend:

**Leafy Spurge Field Day**

_July 26, 2006_

**Points of Interest:**
- Leafy spurge information
- Guest speakers
- Tour of plot and demonstration site
- A look at integrated pest management

_Turn North at the intersection of Veteran’s Way (low road to Shilo) and Curries Landing Rd._

For more information or to RSVP please contact:
Karen Rempel at 571-8518
rempel@brandontu.ca
or
Jennifer McKinnon at 571-8523
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The image contains a map of the Integrated Pest Management of Leafy Spurge 2004-2007 project with various labels and symbols indicating the location and details of the project's activities. The map illustrates the distribution of leafy spurge infestation and the areas targeted by the project for demonstration and control efforts.
Establishment of the Prairie Region Invasive Noxious Weed Survey and Mapping System 2006-2008

In 2006, RDI received approval under the Invasive Alien Species Partnership Program (IASPP), Environment Canada for the establishment of an invasive noxious weed survey and mapping system for the Prairie region. This project is aimed at achieving three overarching goals. Firstly, the project will build and enhance a weed survey inventory and mapping system for the Prairie Region that can be used by and is accessible to RM’s, organizations, government agencies and individuals. Secondly, the project will help encourage the sharing of resources and information across the Prairie Region and link with the database proposed under the Action Plan for Invasive Alien Terrestrial Plants and Plant Pests. Thirdly, the proposal is aimed at helping provincial organizations and agencies build capacity at the provincial and local levels.

Weed surveying and mapping are necessary to accurately identify pathways, delineate land, understand the biology of the invasive weeds, and develop, implement and evaluate weed management plans. This project builds on the initial efforts of RDI through a Greencover Canada Technical Assistance Project on leafy spurge, to develop a platform and framework for a prairie region weed survey database. The ‘lessons learned’ from RDI’s work to date indicates that (a) no comprehensive, standardized and sustained database of noxious weeds in the prairie region currently exists in any single agency or location; that (b) a tangible product (i.e. map of infestation) has a considerable impact on helping to identify pathways and levels of infestation; that (c) mapping and monitoring are necessary components of effective weed management plans; and that (d) there is a strong desire for weed management plans but a considerable range of resources and expertise.

This proposal is aimed at addressing these lessons learned by using the framework developed as part of the Greencover Canada project to expand the database, enhance the functionality to include interactive, user-friendly mapping system that accommodates all levels of resources and expertise; and provide workshops and training opportunities to other organizations from across Western Canada to use the database and weed mapping survey.

Karen Rempel, Research Affiliate with RDI will manage the project with input from a pan-Western working group of representatives from Manitoba, Saskatchewan and Alberta. In late 2006, a representative from British Columbia joined the working group. A major partner in the project is the Canada Rural Economy Research Lab at the University of Saskatchewan. Over the two year period the overall value of the project is estimated at more than $100,000. More information can be found at: www.brandonu.ca/rdi/iaspp.asp.
Looking Ahead to 2007

Community Collaboration Model Project
A workshop that brings representatives of all regional round tables, advisory groups and academic partners is being planned for late May in Haines Junction, Yukon. At this workshop, representatives will share their stories and present their collaborative evaluation reports.

Health Care Access of Northern Residents
RDI is in the process of planning a workshop for representatives of the Bayline Regional Round Table, northern regional health authorities, and project partners to discuss access to health care challenges and opportunities.

Managing Invasive Species: Leafy Spurge Control
This project wraps up in 2007 with an evaluation component that measures, in particular, the success of the IPM planning with participating producers. Evaluation will also look at partnership development and awareness activities.

Integrated Pest Management of Leafy Spurge
Funding for this project expires in March 2007. In preparation for this, an internal evaluation will be carried out including the organization of various documents and reports. The project has been a significant success as evidenced by the legacy of a pan-Western collaboration and approval of new funding to carry on with the database and weed mapping survey.

Establishment of the Prairie Region Invasive Noxious Weed Survey and Mapping
The first workshop for selected participants from across the Prairie Region was held in late 2006. From this ‘train the trainer’ style workshop, participants took back what they have learned to their home provinces and work with their own local communities and organizations. The objective of the project is to establish and use an invasive noxious weed survey and mapping system for the development of local weed management plans.

RDI will administer a project, funded by the federal Invasive Alien Species Partnership Project, on behalf of the LSSG. The overall goals are to prevent the spread of and enhance management efforts for leafy spurge in Manitoba and to provide a forum whereby stakeholders can discuss the formation of and add their support to an Invasive Plants Council for the Province of Manitoba.

Rural Education Research Agenda
Rural school divisions face a number of issues specific to rural areas. Late in 2006, RDI began working with the Westman Superintendents’ Group on developing a rural education research agenda that could inform or respond to educational policies and programs. Early in 2007, RDI will present a framework for discussion with the superintendents and their boards of trustees. The framework will describe a rural education research agenda including priority issues, potential research questions and strategies and options for action.

Geography of Manitoba from the Air
RDI is publishing an electronic book by Dr. John Welsted (Professor Emeritus, Department of Geography, Brandon University) entitled Geography of Manitoba from the Air. The online book will utilize interactive and dynamic aerial photographs to describe the geography of Manitoba.

2007 International Comparative Rural Study Program
The International Comparative Rural Study Program will be hosted by the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The program will be held in the Pyrenees Mountains of Spain. RDI and the Department of Rural Development are active partners in this study program.