



**BRANDON  
UNIVERSITY**  
Founded 1899

# 2013 Annual Report



## Table of Contents

Message from Brandon University	1
Director's Message	2
Shelterbelt Adoption by Beef Producers	3
Manitoba's Food and Beverage Processing Industry	4
Manitoba Immigration Settlement and Integration	5
Integrated Community Settlement	5
Digital Skills for Rural Youth	6
RDI's 25th Year Anniversary	6
Certificate Social Media Engagement	7
Rural Policy Learning Commons	8
RDI — Sponsored Community Activities	9
International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Program	10
Knowledge Dissemination	11
Brandon University Community Outreach Service	13
Looking Ahead to 2014	16

## Message from Brandon University Vice-President

### (Academic and Research)

Gervan Fearon, Ph.D.



We are proud of Rural Development Institute's (RDI) research accomplishments and collaborative projects undertaken over this past year with its many partnerships with community stakeholders, government representatives, and many academic colleagues.

This 2013-2014 Annual Report describes the invaluable contributions achieved by RDI through its numerous applied research projects as well as knowledge dissemination and community sponsored activities. We are proud of the breadth of its projects and its capacity to engage in new projects that build on its collective expertise and networks. Brandon University wishes to extend its appreciation to Dr. Ashton for his leadership as Director of RDI and for his engagement with colleagues in the university community and his many collaborators and friends in the rural development field. Indeed, the entire RDI team should be congratulated for their efforts and contributions.

The projects described in this report demonstrate RDI's ongoing commitment to promote the prosperity of rural and northern communities here in Manitoba and elsewhere. RDI's extensive networking with provincial, national, and international organizations demonstrates its achievement as a significant player in the field of rural development and rural policy. This report acknowledges the important financial and in-kind support that Brandon University has made to RDI over this year. It also illustrates the necessity of working collaboratively with other project partners, universities, and research institutions to fulfill its mandate. Given this era of fiscal restraint, Brandon University is extremely grateful for the continuing support from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, and project funding from the Federal and Provincial governments, and other funders. I wish to express my appreciation for their continuing support and to emphasize that RDI remains committed to promote, facilitate, and conduct multidisciplinary academic and applied research on rural and northern issues.

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## Message from the Director

**William (Bill) Ashton, Ph.D.**

This 2013 Annual Report is a testament to its resilience and capacity to address major issues and opportunities impacting rural communities and regions. As in the past, RDI has been very active over this period finalizing research on a number of projects and engaging in community outreach activities. It has embarked on a number of initiatives that build on its past projects and community-based collaborations and is exploring opportunities with new projects.

Over the past year, RDI finished work on a project studying rural amalgamation in Manitoba, which was precipitated by the provincial government's legislation calling for municipalities with less than a thousand residents to join together. RDI explored two key questions in this project: What are the geographical areas in which existing municipalities share common economic interests? What are the indicators of a strong municipality? RDI hopes the two project publications will contribute to an informed debate on this important issue for rural municipalities and communities.

RDI concluded the third year's activities in its four-year Agriculture Greenhouse Gases Program project to study how shelterbelts can reduce agricultural greenhouse gas emissions. In collaboration with the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District, this year's activities focused on encouraging more beef producers to plant new or expand existing shelterbelts. The project also focused on assessing the use of social marketing to impact and inform beef producers' knowledge and adoption of shelterbelts.

RDI completed a research project that builds upon RDI's strategic research interest in the Agri-food industry and food processing in particular. The goal of this research was to analyze Manitoba's Food Processing Industry, identify key trends associated with it and envision the next seven years of the industry's progress. In addition, this research will attempt to identify key opportunities for public policy to positively impact the growth of the Agri-food industry.

RDI also explored the significant impacts that several provincial communities have experienced in light of their rapid growth, due in part through the expansion of enterprises involved in the Agri-food industry. This project aimed to explore how government departments and programs might be better coordinated to improve how their services can address the many challenges these communities face, such as immigration, labor shortages, and housing. While the town of Neepawa served as the focus of this project, the review of government programs and services will have province-wide implications. A second project, focusing on immigration settlement and integration, engaged key stakeholders in EAL and settlement services from across 12 rural regions and Winnipeg to review their respective operations, services, and programs, and to determine desired changes or improvements for priority setting and decision making.

Exploring new opportunities in the face of challenging circumstances was also the focus of a project developed in

cooperation with the Southwest Regional Development Corporation (SRDC). Tasked with creating a number of rural economic development options tailored to address the economic needs of southwestern Manitoba, RDI presented two proposals to SRDC: both designed to impact regional business continuance and foster an environment of entrepreneurship, innovation and economic prosperity. Having completed the project's conceptual design phase, RDI will help the SRDC operationalize both initiatives in 2014.

Innovation is also the central feature of a collaborative project undertaken with researchers from the University of British Columbia and Wilfred Laurier University. This study aims to design an online portfolio of digital skills to help youth with their employment opportunities and aid rural communities that are experiencing a decline in their youth population stay competitive. The study will explore how the use of this online system can assist in job searches by aligning youths' existing digital skills with rural business needs.

New projects are always exciting. I especially pleased to announce the success of RDI's SSHRC Partnership Grant application that centres on developing a Rural Policy Learning Commons. With 29 international partners from Canada, the USA, Europe and Mexico, this project will establish a number of knowledge sharing and training opportunities whereby community leaders, rural policy professionals, researchers and students can hone their skills in applying comparative analytical methods that are pertinent in addressing key rural policy themes impacting rural and northern communities across international jurisdictions.

Over the past year, RDI continued to demonstrate its capacity to share knowledge and project findings. Some 30 publications, presentations and webinars were completed or are forthcoming from projects undertaken by RDI and its research affiliates. RDI made use of website platforms to post updates and factsheets on the current status of its projects and to host forums for exchanging insights among rural and community researchers and practitioners.

RDI's mandate would not have been possible without the broad expertise of its twenty Research Affiliates, researchers and assistants. Their efforts were essential to RDI's involvement and success in its projects and other activities. RDI remained very supportive of students' learning and networking opportunities, providing financial support for participating at numerous conference events and the institutes. Through this last year, RDI also saw the departure of two staff, Bev Lischka and Sylvia Henry. It was a pleasure to work with both, knowing how much each contributed to RDI's operations over their 13 year stay. I want to wish both all the best in their future endeavors, on behalf of everyone engaged in RDI. I also want to extend a very warm welcome to Eileen Silvius, who has assumed the role of administrative support at RDI.



## Demonstration and Investigation into Shelter-belt Adoption by Beef Producers

This year marked the completion of the third year of this project that aims to demonstrate how alley cropping systems are effective tools in reducing agricultural emissions, which also increase soil carbon levels and enhance production efficiencies, when combined with proven winter-feeding strategies.

The project team engaged in a number of key activities through the past year:

In April 2013, RDI presented a paper at the World Social Marketing Conference in Toronto titled “Beef and Trees: Engaging Beef Producers in Reducing GHG.” This event provided an opportunity to illustrate how social marketing tools can be adapted to new circumstances such as agriculture and yet still inform and impact on best practices in the industry.

Through the summer and fall of 2013, the project continued to engage beef producers involved in shelterbelt usage, soliciting their input on how they can enhance the use of alley cropping systems. The project team has turned its attention increasingly towards assessing the use of social media tools designed to impact and inform beef producers’ knowledge and adoption of shelterbelts.

Through the fall, the project website has been updated with a series of new videos documenting shelter-belt usage by Manitoban beef producers. In conjunction with this expanded profiling of shelter-belt usage, the project team has begun the process of analyzing the shelter-belt and beef producers videos to glean insights relating to beef management practices using shelter-belts. The team hopes to use these results when developing future social marketing tools aimed at the project’s main target audiences, beef producers as well as agricultural organizations.

To this end, the project team led a Social Marketing Interactive Workshop on November 22, 2013 at Brandon University. Nineteen participants from across Manitoba, including social marketers, beef producers, provincial and federal government agencies, and conservation districts, came together to learn about social marketing and especially to discuss strategies for developing social marketing tools for promoting shelter-belts.

Looking to enhance the project’s deliverables, upcoming activities for 2014 include:

- Further enhancements of the project website to include additional links and resources pertinent to shelter-belt development and usage, as well as their environmental and economic impacts on the beef industry.
- Continued development of social market plans in consultation with Change Makers Inc. and with the cooperation from leaders among the province’s beef producers.
- Release of reports on the baseline survey and social marketing workshop.

For more information, please visit:

[www.brandonu.ca/rdi/projects/demonstration-and-investigation-into-livestock-systems-adoption/](http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/projects/demonstration-and-investigation-into-livestock-systems-adoption/)

<http://prairieshelterbelts.ca/>

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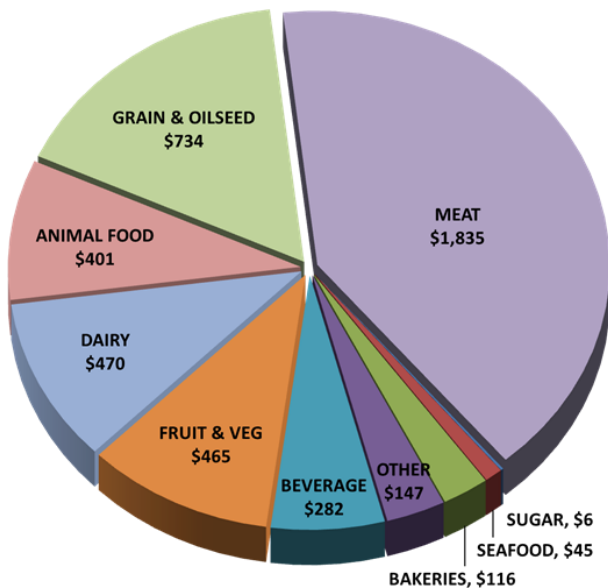
## Manitoba's Food and Beverage Processing Industry

In 2013 Rural Development Institute completed a research project on the Manitoba Food and Beverage Processing Industry with funding provided by Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD).

The purpose of this research was to analyze Manitoba's Food Processing Industry, identify key trends associated with it and envision the next seven years of the industry's progress. In addition, this research will attempt to identify key opportunities for public policy to positively impact the growth of the Food Processing sector.

Statistics Canada data, MAFRD reports and other sources were used to identify key indicators, drivers, and trends for the Manitoba food processing industry and related sub-sectors, in particular key factors such as transportation, water availability, country of origin labeling, monetary exchange rates, labor availability, and costs. This information was used to calculate a projected best-case scenario for the food processing subsectors through to 2020. Fact sheets and initial projections are to be prepared for each subsector of the food processing industry.

The significance of this project is especially apparent given the diversity and financial impart of the province's food processing industry. The food and beverage processing (FBP) industry represents close to 30% of all manufacturing revenue in the province and around 15% of all exports. This industry employs over 12,000 people, representing nearly one quarter of those employed in manufacturing. Sales estimates for the represented sectors exceed \$4.6 billion for 2011.



Estimates of Manitoba Food & Beverage Processing Industry Sales for 2011 (NAICS 311 & 3121; figs. in \$millions)



The project team has finished conducting semi-structured 25 interviews with stakeholders, including associations and representatives from a range of sectors, to identify opportunities and innovations, barriers and challenges, and examine how public policy can support the growth of the industry. Leaders with a broad knowledge of each industry or sub-sector were recruited research participants. Findings from these interviews will be used to understand past trends and identify possible growth projections to 2020.

The public report presents two scenarios for future growth. Plan A (Business as Usual) outlines a steady as you go framework that relies on maintaining existing markets with a focus on the 3 main industries of pork, potatoes, and canola. Plan B (Effective Action) looks to expand existing markets, again focusing on the strength of the latter sectors, while also envisages opportunities for new entrants in the industry and developing new niche market.

All in all the project revealed some of the real challenges facing the industry, some based locally while others are more global in reach; yet it also highlights the resilience and innovation that are the hallmarks of the province's food processing industry.

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## Manitoba Immigration Settlement and Integration

This research has engaged in discussions with experts in the field of EAL and settlement in order to determine best practices that can be developed and implemented in light of the federal government's decision to resume responsibilities over labor and immigration that had been undertaken by provincial government departments or other local agencies. RDI was tasked with consulting with these experts in order to provide regional framework prototypes for the identified rural regions and Winnipeg. The project's key goals were centred around engaging key informant stakeholders in Winnipeg and 12 immigration settlement or EAL language training regions across the province to review settlement, EAL, labour integration, refugee operations, priority setting, and to determine desired changes/improvements for priority setting and decision-making. These regions include Central, Eastman, Interlake, Norman, Parkland, Pembina Valley, and Westman.

A total 82 interviews have been completed, canvassing perspectives from immigration settlement coordinators, EAL advisory board members, as well as community stakeholders such as local government leaders, and members from local school boards, churches, and chambers of commerce. Thus far, the interviews revealed that most of the stakeholders reaffirmed their interest in remaining involved

in labour and immigration; many also emphasized that local communities need to be involved so labour and immigration policy can more effectively address the unique circumstances of communities. The stakeholders agreed that funding for labour and immigration services was critical for their ongoing successes, but so was the need for broad partnerships between the federal and provincial governments and local services providers. RDI expects to present the project report and recommendations to the province in the near future.

RDI was provided funding through Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism to conduct this project.

For more information on this project, contact:

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## Integrated Community Adjustment

In 2013, RDI commenced a project to study how government agencies and provincial organizations can provide more effective and relevant programming to rural communities that are undergoing rapid growth and are encountering real challenges coping with these circumstances. This new project builds on the results of RDI's recently completed project: Immigration and Rural Communities: People, Plans and Actions

Earlier in December the project team applied for ethics approval to engage in a series of semi-structured interviews with representatives from the Manitoban government to discover how key governmental departments work together to respond to issues and provide support as a result of the recent rapid growth in certain rural communities. Ten extensive interviews have been completed involving both regional managers and representatives from five key provincial government departments, including Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development, Labour and Immigration, Housing, Jobs and Economy, and Municipal Government.

The town of Neepawa was selected as the case study for the project. It too identified the challenge of rapid growth as a priority issue. Some of the town's most urgent concerns focused on how to deal with immigration and employment needs, the housing crunch, and business development. (For

more information on RDI's earlier report on Neepawa and the challenges and opportunities it faces, see <http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2011/02/Neepawa-and-Area-Research-Report-FINAL-ElecCopy.pdf>)

The intent of these discussions is to examine the coordination between selected government departments and their programs and to ascertain whether there are opportunities for improving and maximizing the benefits arising from their cooperation.

A key goal of this project is to develop a new inventory of programs in response to the MB government's recent cabinet shuffles and its department budgetary planning. The challenge of this project is to realign the government's programs while still providing substantial value and benefits to rural communities in a timely fashion.

RDI was provided funding through Manitoba Immigration and Multiculturalism and Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development to conduct this project.

For more information on this project, contact:

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## Digital Skills for Rural Youth Retention

This project is a collaboration between the University of British Columbia, Wilfred Laurier University and RDI, with funding provided by SSHRC.

The purpose of this study is to design an online portfolio of digital skills to help rural youth with employment opportunities and to help small businesses stay competitive. In particular, this project targets rural communities that are experiencing a decline in their youth population. The study will involve the use of an online system to explore the actual utility of these portfolios once developed in job searches. This project focuses on the high engagement levels exhibited by youth who exercise new digital skills regularly, for example, when making use of the wide array of applications found on cellular phones. By aligning their existing skills set with local business needs, immediate employment opportunities can be facilitated.

Youth will benefit by:

- Building digital and social media skills for employment purposes
- Being better positioning in the technology industry
- Learning about jobs in the digital economy
- Improving digital skills with friends

Businesses will benefit by:

- Taking advantage of technology in their business operations
- Promoting their business online in the right venues
- Gaining opportunities for online marketing
- Staying competitive in the digital economy



a place of mind



Youths and businesses participating in this project will be asked to:

- Attend a project information session (to be scheduled)
- Attend small design sessions with our researcher
- Try out the software that each group helped design
- Provide feedback on the software for future improvement

Questions about this project can be directed to the project's Principal Investigator:

Dr. Bowen Hui, University of British Columbia

Email: [bowen.hui@ubc.ca](mailto:bowen.hui@ubc.ca)

For local project information contact:

Bill Ashton, Director, RDI

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## RDI's 25th Year Anniversary



Rural Development Institute's grand opening was marked on October 25, 1989. To celebrate its accomplishments and rural development more generally, Dr. Ashton is working closely with Dr. Poff, Brandon University President, to bring about several events, while engaging in discussions about the state of the rural in Canada and its future.

Sponsors will be invited to participate and build a series of activities.

## Certificate in Social Media Engagement

RDI continued to offer its *Social Media Engagement Certificate* with instructors from the Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing, Digital Relay, and Brandon University. The Certificate is specifically developed for public sector organizations, non-profits, NGOs, and associations to enable them to develop, use and adapt social media, so they can communicate and maintain their stakeholder and client relations.

A second offering of Modules 1 & 2 in the Social Media Certificate were presented in Winnipeg on October 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup>. Twenty participants from across Manitoba and Saskatchewan engaged in this learning event, bring to a total of 44 who have completed Modules 1 & 2. Those participated in the certificate program thus far come from a range of occupations, including communications officers, managers, human resource administrators, educators, as well as social media practitioners.

The first offering of Modules 3 & 4 was offered online on November 21<sup>st</sup> and 28<sup>th</sup>. The modules were delivered and facilitated by Roger Miranda, from Digital Relay, Inc., a social media and web-consulting firm headquartered in Winnipeg. Twelve registrants from Winnipeg, Brandon and other rural centres participated in the modules, focused on learning how to listen and monitor your organization's social media and learning how to structure and organize their organization's online presence.

RDI delivered Modules 5 & 6 online one January 23<sup>rd</sup> and 30<sup>th</sup>, 2014. Nine participants enrolled in each. Modules 7 and 8 were conducted in person in Winnipeg recently on March 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup>, 7 participants were involved in these learning events. These last two modules will culminate in a cap-stone presentation of the various social media projects completed by the program's participants. This Module 9 – Project Presentations – will occur on May 6<sup>th</sup> at BU. Seven participants are anticipated to complete their certificate.

These projects entail developing, in consultation with the program peers and the certificates instructor, practicable social media plans for their respective organizations. Certificates will be awarded after the satisfactory completion of the project and its presentation.

For more information, check out:

<http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/social-media>

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Social media has revolutionized the way that we communicate with each other and has led to a fundamental shift in how organizations and businesses need to function in order to maintain stakeholder and client relations. Non-profit and public sector organizations are no exception and must adopt and adapt to this new era. Social media provides a tremendous opportunity to build a vibrant community that is invested in your organization and initiatives. Using a strategic approach to engaging on social channels allows organizations to continually build relationships with stakeholders and audiences in a sustainable manner while being able to measure results and mitigate potential risks associated with open, two-way conversation online.

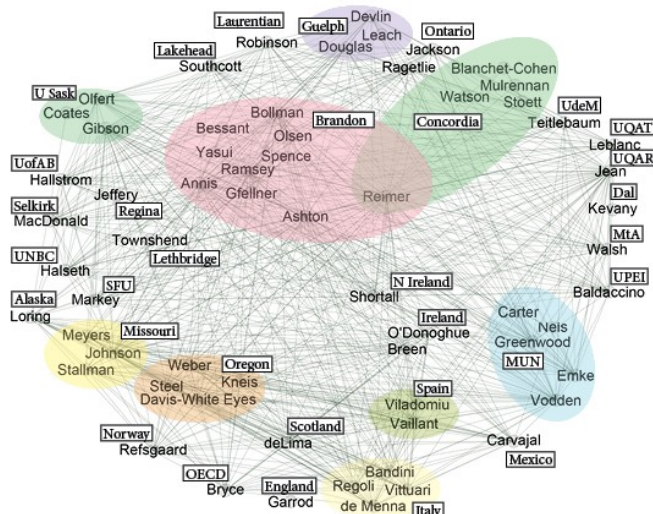


## Rural Policy Learning Commons

In late March 2014, RDI was informed of its success in applying to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) Partnership program. The RDI team and project partners are very pleased to bring the *Rural Policy Learning Commons: Building Rural Policy through International Comparative Analysis* to its various constituencies, national and international, who are involved in shaping and implementing rural and northern policy.

The proposal's success was due in no small part to the hard work undertaken through the fall of 2013, by the RDI project team and, Project Director, Dr. Bill Reimer, to revise and strengthen the original Letter of Intent. This collaborative revision process, so central in applied research, engaged a broad cross-section of its internationally-based partners from across each of the project's three regions—Canada, United States, and Europe. These consultations led to four important improvements:

First, the initial 13 Canadian, US and European partners that agreed to invest nearly \$1.3 million to the Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) as cash and in-kind contributions, has more than doubled to 29 with contributions also doubling to over \$2.7 million. These include 4 from the United States and Mexico, 5 from Europe and 20 from across Canada. This expansion is a testament to the 25 years of collaboration among researchers, policy-makers, practitioners, and citizens from the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF), the Rural Development Institute (RDI), and the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies program (ICRPS) that serves as its core. It shows the extent to which this learning commons was already established and active.



Current networks and exchanges among the project's co-applicants and collaborators.

Second, this process reaffirmed the commitment and breadth of expertise that the project's partners, co-

applicants, and collaborators can bring to the RPLC to enable multiple stakeholders—faculty, students, practitioners, and policy-makers—to generate new policy insights and strengthen comparative research around key policy themes that are pressing to rural and northern regions and communities. These policy themes include: Human Resources and Migration, Natural Resource Development, Governance, and Infrastructure and Services, but over the duration of the project these themes may change to reflect the partners' interests. This 7-year project aims to innovative and advance rural policy analyses and initiatives which result in the social and economic betterment of rural and northern communities.

Third, these consultations led to significant stream-lining of the project's governance and operational structure. This revamping has strengthened the project's capacity to focus directly on collaboration among the project partners, while maximizing opportunities to train the next generation of analysts.

Fourth, the discussion reinforced the partner's commitment to a core set of activities and deliverables each of which is designed to enhance comparative research and HQP training around rural and northern policy:

- Creating Memoranda of Understanding among the participating universities to recognize each other's courses.
- Developing a Comparative Rural Policy Study Abroad program for students to study comparative rural policy at a host institution in a partner country.
- Developing a credit-based Graduate Certificate in Comparative Rural Policy, targeting professionals active in rural policy formation.
- Increasing cooperation and exchange among the partner researchers and academic institutions through comparative research projects
- Collaborating with national and international research centers, governments and other agencies in the partner countries on rural policy analysis.

The project team expects to begin very soon bringing its rural policy research and knowledge dissemination teams together to start building the framework of the learning common and initiating events to showcase this important opportunity to collaborate, learn, and share expertise regarding rural and northern policy.

For more information on this initiative contact:

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Dr. (Wm.) Bill Reimer (Project PI)  
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## RDI — Sponsored Community Activities

Through 2013 and 2014, RDI was active in offering members of the university community, the residents of the Westman region and elsewhere in Canada opportunities to attend various events featuring scholars and speakers who shared their unique perspectives on the rural experience.

### National Webinar

**November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

RDI, McMaster Complex  
Brandon University

**Dr. Lars Hallstrom** – Presentation titled: Public Policy and Implementation in Canada – Rethinking the Implementation Gap.

Dr. Hallstrom is the Director of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities. The Centre is charged with linking the research, outreach and educational capacity of the University of Alberta with students, researchers, rural communities, rural community organizations and policy makers at multiple levels across the province, nationally, and internationally.

### National Webinar

**November 28<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

RDI, McMaster Complex  
Brandon University

**Dr. Charles Conteh** – Presentation title: Implementation Canada's Rural development Policy in a Knowledge-driven Economy: Case of Manitoba.

Dr. Conteh is an Associate Professor in the Department of Political Science at Brock University. He specializes in Public Policy & Management, Political Economy and Governance. His current research focuses on governance structures and processes in complex and dynamic policy systems, particularly examining collaborative and strategic policy formulation and implementation.

### International Webinar

**November 25<sup>th</sup>, 2013**

RDI, McMaster Complex  
Brandon University

**Dr. Bill Reimer** – Presentation title: Seven Strategies for Sustainable Community Futures.

Dr. Reimer is a Professor Emeritus in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Concordia University in

Montréal. From 1997 to 2008 he directed a Canadian national research project on the New Rural Economy which included 13 universities, 35 partners, and 32 rural communities from all parts of Canada.

### Provincial Workshop

**February 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

RDI, McMaster Complex  
Brandon University

**Dr. Nick Wilding** – Resilient Communities – a discussion

Dr. Wilding is a fellow of the Carnegie Foundation (UK) and retired professor. Scotland His research interests span action research, community resilience and organizational transformation. He is a community development worker, University lecturer, group facilitator and designer of learning networks. He presented at a joint collaborative discussion organized by BU-RDI, Urban Studies Institute of University of Winnipeg, University of Manitoba, and Manitoba Professional Planners Institute.

The next day Dr. Wilding presented a one-day workshop on community resilience at the Manitoba Planner's Conference. His session was introduced and moderated by Dr. Ashton.

### National Webinar

**March 25<sup>th</sup>, 2014**

RDI, McMaster Complex  
Brandon University

**Dr. Jacquelyn Oncescu** – Presentation title: Recreation's Role in Community Resiliency.

Dr. Oncescu is an Assistant Professor in the Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Studies at University of Manitoba, a researcher in the area of recreation, community development, and leisure education.

## International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Institute & 10th Year Anniversary

The 2013 International Comparative Rural Policy Studies (ICRPS) Summer Institute brought students, faculty and other policy professionals from Canada, United States, and Europe where they shared rural research interests, learned comparative methods, and examined food system practices in various regional sites around Bertinoro, Italy. This year's institute was hosted by the University of Bologna. The two week summer school was comprised of both workshops and field trips that allowed students and faculty members to explore this year's topic—Agri-food systems and rural development: tradition, innovation and green governance. These issues and related questions were explored using Italy as a central example, which was compared to other countries such as USA, Canada, Mexico, Norway, and other 'Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development' (OECD) countries.



Rural Development Institute sponsored the attendance of two Department of Rural Development Masters students—Immaculate Nabisere and Jack Lovell. Both students graduated from the program on June 28th. On day 12 of the institute one panel discussion examined the impact of economic crisis on rural areas. Bill Ashton, RDI Director, offered a presentation on the municipality amalgamation project, titled “Manitoba responds with stronger rural municipalities.”

This summer's institute also served as the perfect occasion and location for hosting a 10th year anniversary ICRPS Conference. At this event, Bill Ashton, RDI Director, along side Bill Reimer, offered a comprehensive vision of the Rural Policy Learning Commons, titled “A Future Trajectory of ICRPS: A Long View.” The preparation of this presentation benefitted from the assistance of Wayne Kelly and Gary McNeely.

### ICRPS Consortium Members

Brandon University  
(Canada)

Colegio de Posgraduados –  
Puebla (Mexico)

Colegio de Tlaxcala  
(Mexico)

Corinus University of  
Budapest (Hungary)

Katholieke Universiteit  
Leuven (Belgium)

Oregon State  
University (USA)

Pennsylvania State  
University (USA)

Universidad Autònoma de  
Barcelona (Spain)

Universidad Nacional  
Autònoma de México (Mexico)

Université du Québec à  
Rimouski (Canada)

University of  
Aberdeen (Scotland)

University of  
Guelph (Canada)

University of Highlands  
and Islands (Scotland)

University of Missouri-  
Columbia (USA)

### International Comparative

#### Rural Policy Studies

#### Summer Institute

June 29—July 13, 2014

Toluca, Mexico

Hosted by:

University Autonomous of the State of Mexico

More information on ICRPS is available at

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

## Knowledge Mobilization

A significant part of RDI's mandate is the dissemination of RDI research and promotion of its community involvement and activities. Through 2013-2014, RDI continued to report on its activities through various modes of publication and in presentations, including 10 publications and reports, 3 journal issues, and 14 conference presentations.

RDI continued its open-source electronic publishing of the Journal of Rural and Community Development. The JRCD is based in the Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Brandon University. The JRCD is funded through annual grants from the Manitoba Department of Agriculture, Food and Rural Development and SSHRC.

### RDI Publications & Reports

Ashton, W., Kelly, W., & McCollough, S. (2014). *Settlement Summary Report*. Brandon, MB. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Ashton, W., Kelly, W., Zarry, X., & Galatsanou, E. (2014). *Integrated Community Adjustment Report*. Brandon, MB. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Ashton, W., Richards, G., Galatsanou, E., & Bollman, R. (2014). *Food & Beverage Processing Industry Growth Pathways to 2020*. Brandon, MB. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Ashton, W., Richards, G., & Nabisere, I. (2013). *Report on AGGP Social Marketing Interactive Workshop*. Brandon, MB. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Ashton, W. & Richards, G. (2013). *Report on Assessment of AGGP Social Marketing Interactive Workshop*. Brandon, MB. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Ashton, W., Richards, G., Kelly, B., & Kulyanyingi, V. (2013). *Attitudes Toward shelterbelts for beef production among Manitoba beef producers - Baseline Survey Report*. Brandon, MB. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

Ashton, W., Bollman, R., & Kelly, W. (2013). *A proposal to identify "strong" municipalities in Manitoba*. Brandon, MB. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University.

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10 articles and 2 case studies

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- Ashton, W. (March 2014). *Integrated responses to fast growth with TFWs: two Manitoba cases*. Presented at 16<sup>th</sup> National Metropolis Conference. Partnering for success: facilitating integration and inclusion. Ottawa, ON.
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- Reimer, B., Ashton, W., Kelly, W. & McNeely, G. (June 2013). *A future trajectory of ICRPS: a long view*. Presented at the International Conference on Rural Transformations in Troubled Times: A Policy Decade in Review. Bertinoro, Italy.
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- Ashton, W. (April 2013) *Rural Immigration: Research, Partnerships, Insights & Policy*. Presented at Conference Board of Canada's Leaders Roundtable on Immigration Conference. Brandon, MB.



## Brandon University Community Outreach Service

The mandate of the Brandon University Community Outreach Service is to match the needs of community organizations in Brandon and rural Manitoba with the learning and research interests of Brandon University Students and faculty. The Outreach Service coordinates two main programs, Annual Calls for Proposals, and Service Learning program for students.

This year's **Calls for Community Outreach Proposals** were held in September 2013 and February 2014. The Outreach office received eight proposals, six of which were approved for funding. Altogether \$19,527.00 was allocated in project funding in 2013-14, with participating communities and organizations contributing \$27,494.00 in total cash and in-kind funding. The project participants included local, regional, and provincial community organizations who teamed up with faculty and students from the departments of Biology, Anthropology, Health Studies Nursing, Geography and Rural Development.

The **Service Learning program** encourages community volunteer participation of Brandon University students in the areas of their study. The program acknowledges the value of student activities beyond academic setting, and provides a valuable opportunity for students to apply their knowledge and skills to the benefit of the community. Once students successfully complete Service Learning program, they receive official recognition of their activities on their Brandon University transcripts.

Ninety-six (96) Student Service Learning applications were received with a total of 42 being approved. This amounts to 1920 volunteer hours in community service. Their volunteer activities included program coordination, student tutoring, event promotion and student leadership program, project marketing and other duties with a wide variety of community organizations including World University Service of Canada, Child and Family Services, Brandon University Student Leader Program, BU Health Studies Student Association (BUHSSA), and others.

### 2013-2014 Funded Projects

#### *Development of a Geospatial Database for Monitoring Bluebirds and their Habitat*

##### *Project Partners:*

Community: Herb Goulden, Friends of the Bluebird, Brandon

Faculty: Dion Wiseman, Department of Geography, Brandon University

Student: Rob Shearer, Department of Geography

**Funding Approved:** \$3,000

Currently, Bluebird monitoring records are recorded on paper forms and members have hand-sketched maps showing the location of the nestlines along which the nestboxes are placed. The intent of this research is to compile nestbox and monitoring data into a spatially-enabled database to allow for more detailed analysis of trends in Bluebird populations in Manitoba.

The database will be integrated into the Friend of the Bluebird website ([mbbluebirds.org](http://mbbluebirds.org)) allowing members to enter future monitoring data online or via a mobile app and have summary information. By centralizing data storage, the organization will be generating a large dataset which will allow for further evaluation of trends in Bluebird populations in Manitoba. Any trends could be evaluated against trends in climate conditions and changes in land use.

Researchers will track changes in land use and landscape metrics and evaluate this against bluebird population thus, creating an insightful analysis of the condition of these species in Manitoba, which will eventually inform bird watchers, and may lead to an increase in tourism income.



### ***Downtown Hub Business Research***

#### ***Project Partners:***

Community: Braden Pilling, Renaissance Brandon

Faculty: Mike Malazdrewicz, Department of Business Administration, Brandon University

***Funding Approved:*** \$2,996

This research project aims to revitalize the downtown Brandon by collecting data from the downtown businesses in order to understand what the present situation is and proffer, if needed a better and far reaching strategy. The revitalization is about evolving from a civic/business/commercial centre to a more diverse and complete community with more residents.

This revitalization project will investigate ways to increase the satisfaction of existing business in the hub as well as to create strategies for improving the business environment and increasing traffic into the hub such as incorporating aesthetic enhancements and improving parking, transit, land zoning, and site planning in the downtown area.

### ***Capacity Development in Rural Chapters of Habitat for Humanity***

#### ***Project Partners:***

Community: Danielle Adriaasen, Habitat for Humanity Manitoba: Brandon

Sessional Instructor: Dr. Glen Gatin, Department of Creative Writing, Brandon University

***Funding Approved:*** \$3,000

This project seeks to gain a deeper understanding of the ways that Habitat for Humanity Manitoba, Brandon chapter, can fulfill its mission in providing housing to partner families particularly in rural communities in Manitoba.

This project will employ survey instrument to determine how Habitat for Humanity - Manitoba accesses the impact of social media, web-based Social Marketing and Information and Communication Technology (ICT) strategies as instruments to improve communications among partners and donors.

Also, the project will test whether web-based instruments can streamline the administration of rural chapters of Habitat for Humanity. The Research findings will help Habitat for Humanity - Manitoba determine the effectiveness of current patterns of communication and provide evidence that can be used to engage partners and donors who are involved in addressing the goal of affordable housing for all.

### ***Participatory and Effective Landscapes: Community Gardening and Social Justice***

#### ***Project Partners:***

Community: Naomi Leadbeater, Brandon Neighbourhood Renewal Corporation

Faculty: Dr. Serena Patrella, Department of Sociology, Brandon University

Student: Venantie Nutmendie, Department of Political Science

***Funding Approved:*** \$3,000

Community gardening is often undertaken by low income families and newcomers as a way to increase the healthy food available in their day to day diet. Tracking the people involved with community garden has often been very problematic for the Community Garden Network.

Having an informed understanding of resident's participation is very important, especially for the purpose of increasing reporting requirements. It is essential that the Garden Network develops tracking tools. The Community Garden Network is also interested in finding ways to help with planning for the future development of community gardens in Brandon.

This research aims to help improve the organization and operation of community gardens by collecting information that would enhance gardening practices in the Westman region. This research hopes to create an effective community and grass root community organization as a strategy to mitigate the systematic barriers that many low income families experience.



### ***Business and Service Providers Perception of the Impacts of the Sand Hills Casino***

#### ***Project Partners:***

Community: Ralph Oliver, Rural Municipality of North Cypress

Faculty: Doug Ramsey, Department of Rural Development, Brandon University

#### ***Funding Approved:*** \$2,970

Opportunities and risk comes with Casino Business, as observed in several researches carried out in both USA and Canada. There are many unknowns with casino business especially in a rural community; this is why the community around the Sand Hill casino to be opened in Swan Lake, Rm of Cypress wants to know what impact the casino would have on their environment.

How will the casino affect, for example, employment prospects, impacts on seasonal labour pools in agriculture, the need for highway improvements, business opportunities, service demands, and Housing demands.

This project will give a baseline of views and planning that business and service providers have taken (or not) with respect to the casino.

This project will provide opportunity for Brandon University student to gain valuable knowledge at all stages of the survey-research process as well as gain important experience in collaboration building in rural communities.



### ***Building Community through Percussion Ensemble***

#### ***Project Partners:***

Community: Graydon Cramer, Waverly park School

Sessional Instructor: Victoria Spark, School of Music, Brandon University

#### ***Funding Approved:*** \$1,788

Percussion ensemble presents a unique opportunity to present world cultures and history through musical instruments, Brandon university percussion studio is looking to use percussion ensemble to develop stronger ties with the community.

It will involve Brandon University music students who have shown an interest in education to develop percussion-ensemble with student's from the Waverly Park School. The project involves teaching of music by students to students, while occasionally guest artist will be brought in to inject professional details into the teaching.

This project wants to encourage student to be community leaders and independent learners as they grow into their role in the music community. The exercise will include a survey of the participants at the end of the exercise to understand the impact of the projects in the community.



## Looking Ahead to 2014

### Social Media Engagement Certificate:

#### Modules 1 & 2—On-line delivery

April 18 & 19, 2014

Instructor: Mike Kujawski, VP/Senior Consultant,  
Centre of Excellence for Public Sector Marketing

Module 1: Our Modern Digital Landscape

Module 2: Formulating Your Social Media Engagement Plan

For more information visit the RDI website at:

<http://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/social-media>

### International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Summer Institute 2014

The Universidad Autónoma del Estado de Mexico  
will host the Summer Institute

June 29-July 13, 2014

Students in Brandon University's Master of Rural Development program  
will have an opportunity to participate in the two-week summer institute.

More information on ICRPS is available at [www.ICRPS.com](http://www.ICRPS.com).

### Contributors

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