

RDI: Research Activities Update

About RDI

Brandon University's Rural Development Institute (RDI) fosters community development and resiliency through Applied Research, Knowledge Dissemination, and Learning on issues and opportunities unique to rural, remote and northern communities.

Since 1989, RDI has conducted multi-disciplinary research and initiated the development of many community projects in the prairies and across rural areas in Canada, covering a range of issues, such as community economic development, community leadership, environment and agro-economic issues, information management and technology utilizations, policy and program research and development, rural adaptation and change, rural health, rural tourism, and others.

For over 20 years, research conducted by RDI has helped define issues and opportunities in rural areas, and often informed new public policies, clarified related implications, and suggested public programs.

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Applied Research...Community-based Solutions

Pathfinder for Communities: Selecting Tools for Community Economic Development

The original purpose of this 2-year project begun in 2010 was to help communities make better decisions when choosing CED Tools and improve their development efforts. Using feedback provided from its community stakeholders and project partners, the RDI team refocused and developed a more user friendly website to identify CED tools right for their situation or project.

The result is the **Choice Matrix**, a web-based platform launched in June 2012. This website www.choicematrix.ca/ has multiple search options to speedily select from a database of over 200 tools, checklists or processes that are organized in ways preferred by community development practitioners.

The **Choice Matrix** is the centre-piece of the project's Sustainability Plan, that is to move the website to the next level. This plan focuses on attracting regional / national organizations or foundations to become visible supporters in rural development. Choice Matrix Sponsors can provide financial support earmarked for enhancing the functionality and capabilities of the website. Organizations or

Demonstration and Investigation into Shelterbelt Adoption

This 4-year project aims to demonstrate unfamiliar practices such as alley cropping systems that, combined with proven winter feeding strategies, will reduce agricultural emissions, increase carbon levels in the soil, and enhance production efficiencies. The primary targeted audience is beef producers, with secondary audiences including extension personnel, government policy and program people and the general public.

The project has achieved a number of milestones to date. First, the demonstration field scale alley cropping system to grow winter fee stock and double as a winter feeding site has been designed and planted in Kenton (Manitoba) with a participating beef producer, Douglas Caldwell. Second, researchers have begun to investigate the attitudes of beef producers toward, and the adaptation of shelterbelts through a social marketing framework, using multiple tools:

RDI Research Projects and Activities

Demonstration and Investigation into Shelterbelt Adoption

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- A total of 16 video interviews of exemplary shelterbelts were completed along with feedback survey
- A Baseline Survey with 231 responses about producer interest and awareness of shelterbelts. Key findings include:
 - 87% of producers in Manitoba have shelterbelts



Participants of the Great Plains Windbreak Renovation and Innovation Conference

- 94% declare shelterbelts increase livestock protection
- 93% acknowledge shelterbelts improve management of drifting snow

Project presentations were made at the official announcement of the project funding on February 21, 2012 in Miniota (Manitoba); AGGP Technical Information and Co-ordination Workshop in Saskatoon held on March 6-7, 2012; Great Plains Windbreak Renovation and Innovation Conference at the International

ARDN / CRRF Conference in Olds, Alberta

CREATING RURAL CONNECTIONS CONFERENCE AND TRADESHOW



RDI Director, Bill Ashton is scheduled to present a paper titled "Reconciling regional initiatives with local autonomy: examining Winkler, Manitoba" at the 3rd Annual Creating Rural Connections 2012 Conference and Tradeshow: *Regional Realities and Approaches*.

The conference is being held in Olds, Alberta, October 11-13, 2012, and is hosted by the Alberta Rural Development Network (ARDN) in partnership with The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF).

As a longstanding member of CRRF, RDI is pleased

to announce the success of its applications to receive SSHRC and Heritage Canada funding. In excess of \$20,000 was approved to cover conference costs and host 5 keynote speakers, Rob Greenwood, Dave Ivan, Peter Kenyon, June Holley, and Cornelia, Butler Flora.

Dr. Ashton was co-chair of the steering committee for this conference. For more information visit: www.ardn.ca/news-events/creating-rural-connections-2012/

MB Food Processing Research: Jobs, Immigrant and Food Processing in Rural MB

RDI has recently started a research project on food processing in rural Manitoba in partnership with Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives and the Food Development Centre (Portage la Prairie). With emphasis on SMEs, this research examines job creation, retention, and scenario planning.

Specific outcomes for the research include:

- Identify how jobs are created and provide recommendations on how to support future job creation.
- Identify current employee retention strategies and determine preferred strategies with emphasis on immigrant employees.
- Contribute to regional and sectoral planning discussions by identifying future issues and opportunities

Geographically, the project is focusing on the central region of Manitoba, a rural area with a diverse selection of food processing SMEs. The Food Development Centre, a project stakeholder and contributor is also located in central Manitoba.

The research team will be interviewing about a dozen SMEs to discuss job creation and employee retention. After analyzing and validating the interview re-



sults, the project team will conduct a scenario planning session early in 2013 to identify sectoral impacts of predicted population change in the region. The project's research reporting and dissemination will be completed by March 2013.

Age-Friendly Communities

Age-Friendly First Nations Project

Since the launch of the Age Friendly Manitoba Initiative (AFMI) in 2008, currently 86 Manitoba communities are committed to becoming more age friendly. The eight domains of age-friendliness include: outdoor spaces & buildings, transportation, housing, respect & social inclusion, social participation, communication & information, civic participation & employment, and community spirit & health services. One of the key results a survey of age-friendly (AF) communities conducted in 2011 by the Centre on aging at the University of Manitoba is that rural Aboriginal communities outside of Winnipeg are under represented among the AF communities. This result identified the real need to develop a plan or strategy on how to best introduce the AF initiatives to First Nation communities in rural Manitoba.

RDI responded by initiating a collaborative project funded by MB Seniors & Healthy Aging Secretariat. Members of the research team include Project Director,

Dr. Bill Ashton, RDI Director; Dr. Alanise Goodwill, BU Professor and faculty member in the School of Health Studies as Co-applicant; and Veronica Kulyanyinga, RDI researcher.

The project has completed a number of key tasks through 2012. These include preparing an inventory of key materials, models, and practices of introducing programs into the cultural context of First Nations, as well as an inventory of public and NGO organizations currently active in First Nation communities in Manitoba. Particular reference was made to those that may assist with the introduction of AF initiatives in First Nation communities. The team also identified the most promising pathways to establish partnerships and approaches to introduce AF initiative with First Nation communities in Manitoba.

A draft report of these findings titled "Potential Pathways for Initiating Age-Friendly Activities with First Nations Communities" was discussed with MB Seniors & Healthy Aging Secretariat in September 2012.

RDI Research Projects and Activities

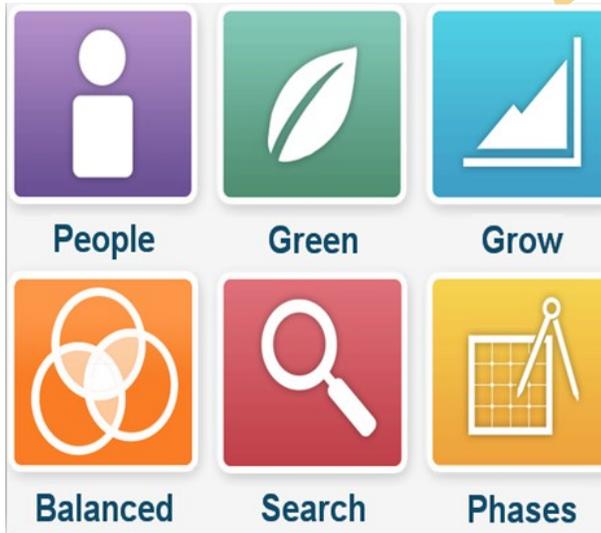
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The **Choice Matrix** is the centre-piece of the project's Sustainability Plan, that is to move the website to the next level. This plan focuses on attracting regional / national organizations or foundations to become visible supporters in rural development. Choice Matrix Sponsors can provide financial support earmarked for enhancing the functionality and capabilities of the website. Organizations or agencies are also welcomed to invest in the site as Choice Matrix Partners if they want to add and showcase their sets of tools within the current suite of CED Tools or to catalogue them in a new suite such as Immigration or Social Enterprise. Both Sponsors and Partners gain significant brand exposure by taking advantage of this exciting opportunity.

RDI will host the Choice Matrix for five years which will ensure users have open and free access to the tools. Twitter and Facebook accounts have also been added to provide venues for users to exchange experiences about how the Choice Matrix contributes to the success of their community's development projects and activities.



Upcoming Choice Matrix Presentations:

- Bill Ashton, RDI Director and Matt Grills, Student Research Assistant, are scheduled to present at the 2012 CIP/APPI Conference "The Great Exchange: Putting Ideas into Action in Banff, Alberta, October 9-12, 2012.
- Matt Grill will present at the 10th Annual CD/CED Gathering, "Community Economies: Enough, for all, Forever" hosted by CCEDNet in Winnipeg, Oct. 19, 2012.

RDI is confident the Choice Matrix will continue to grow by engaging users who require effective solutions to development issues.

For more information visit:

www.brandonu.ca/rdi/projects/pathfinder-for-communities-selecting-tools-for-ced/

Rural BroadBand in under-served Communities

On April 12, RDI presented and discussed a proposed Integrated Action Framework (IAF) with members of the MB Rural Broadband Forum, which includes representatives for Manitoba Government, Health Canada, and Industry Canada. This IAF takes a multi-year view of connecting 40 rural under-served communities to broadband while increasing users and uses. Learning from each community is essential to the success of IAF.

This proposal marks an exciting research for RDI as it draws attention to the significant economic disadvantage that rural communities face without access to broadband network and the information they provide.

To bring this IAF to a broader audience as a point of discussion, RDI Director Dr. Ashton and Roger Girard, CIO at Manitoba eHealth, will deliver a presentation "Disrupting Policy with Vision and Action to Deliver Broadband to Under-served Rural Communities-A Manitoba Case Study" at Connection the Future: Rural Broadband and Technology, Policy and Impact Conference to be held at Queens' University, Kingston, Ontario, December 3-4, 2012. RDI is currently preparing a paper related to the key themes of this presentation.

RDI Research Projects and Activities

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A draft report of these findings titled “Potential Pathways for Initiating Age-Friendly Activities with First Nations Communities” was discussed with MB Seniors & Healthy Aging Secretariat in September 2012.

The draft report was based on the seventeen exploratory discussions conducted with key contacts of organizations currently involved with FN communities in Manitoba including 7 from First Nations, 7 non-government organizations, and 2 government departments. The draft identifies four main pathways or routes to follow to enable introduction to FN communities:

- A Formal Pathway is based on existing organizational structure of FNs. The Secretariat introduces itself to the FN organization, explains its intentions and waits for a response. This pathway will require time for all parties to consider the request.
- The Lead Pathway includes working via organiza-



RDI's Non-Credit Certificates in Social Media

RDI is recognized as a research organization and continues to expand its expertise in the use and strategic impact of social media. Through its long history and involvement in applied research with rural and northern communities as well as its working relationship with many organizations in the public and private sectors, RDI detected an interest in on-going learning about social media topics. To determine the level of interest and knowledge of social media, RDI conducted a learning needs analysis in January 2012. The 97 survey respondents indicated a strong demand for the delivery of training within a certificate.

Working with key stakeholders at Brandon University, RDI developed a proposal to deliver a non-credit certificate “Strategic Social Media Engagement”. At the same time, Senate of BU passed a new policy unanimously in June 2012 to permit non-credit certificates. RDI has since hired, Joanna Chang, from the Centre of Excellence for Public Sector (CEPSM) as project manager. RDI is hiring instructors for the certificate aiming to early 2013.

Offering continuing education extends RDI's learning mandate beyond applied research and embraces continuing education for non-traditional adult learners and professionals in Manitoba and elsewhere.

RDI Research Projects and Activities



Rural Sustainability

RDI, as a co-applicant with the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, was successful in its Phase I SSHRC application to the Federal Gas Tax Fund, which promotes sustainability planning as a key to community infrastructure and socio-economic development.

A Phase II SSHRC Application will be submitted in November 2012, the focus of which is policy implementation. "Rural Sustainability: Complexity, Informality, and Partnerships in Planning, Policy and Governance."

RDI Student-Lead Legacy Project

Hosted by the Brandon and Area Planning District, the **Manitoba 2012 Planning Conference—Beyond Surviving: Planning to Thrive** brought elected officials, administrators, educators, students, and public and private planners together for three days of learning about key issues facing planners today.

A team led by Brandon University students captured the spirit of the proceedings in a series of 8 digital recordings of key presentations from the conference.

For more information on these recordings, visit: www.brandonu.ca/rdi/projects/mb-2012-planning-conference-legacyproject/



Spring Activities at RDI

On April 23, 2012, RDI and MAFRI co-hosted MB Rural Team. There were over two dozen members of federal and provincial government departments and agencies, and involvement by non-profit agencies and academics. This meeting discussed the implications and opportunities related to the fiscal constraint measures across the public sector.

On April 27, in the spirit of building strategic partnerships, research teams from RDI and the Institute of Urban Studies of the University of Winnipeg showcased their current projects. This information exchange benefitted from the CISCO TelePresence facilities on both campuses.

RDI Awarded

Rural Development Institute received an Honorable Mention at the 2011 Manitoba Excellence in Sustainability Awards on April 5th, 2012 at the Manitoba Legislature in Winnipeg, Manitoba.



RDI Director, Dr. William Ashton receives the award from Hon. Gord Mackintosh, Minister of Conservation and Water Stewardship.

Photo courtesy of Tracey Goncalves, Government of Manitoba Photographer

RDI Publications

The Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD) is published by the Rural Development Institute (RDI) at Brandon University and edited by Dr. Doug Ramsey, Chair of BU's Department of Rural Development.

The JRCD is pleased to announce the release of Volume 7, Issue 2. These articles touch on rural and community issues from Canada, the US, the Caribbean, and Australia. Two forthcoming special issues are expected in 2012: "From Rural Research to Policy and Back Again" and "Palliative and End-of-Life Services in Rural and Remote Geographies".

The JRCD is also pleased to announce that it has received funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada through their 'Aid to Scholarly Publications' programme. This funding will assist in improving the review and publication process, including the use of social media for increasing awareness.

For more information visit: www.jrcd.ca

RDI Research Projects and Activities

In the Fold: New RDI Research Affiliates for 2012

Ray Bollman, Rural Development Institute

Dr. Bollman has held a number of positions with Statistics Canada and the position of Chief of the Rural Research Group in Statistics Canada. He has served as President of the Canadian Association of Rural Studies and the Canadian Agricultural Economic Society. His research interests have evolved from the structure of agriculture and the pluriactivity of farm family members to all socio-economic aspects of rural populations.

Tom Carter, University of Winnipeg

Dr. Carter (retired) from the University of Winnipeg's Institute of Urban Studies (IUS) was named the Canada Research Chair in Urban Change and Adaptation. Over the last 25 years, he has gained worldwide recognition as an international authority on urban policy and housing issues. His research on inner city decline and revitalization, poverty and social policy, housing policy and programs, and immigration policy issues continues to play a major role in generating workable solutions for many communities in Canada and abroad.

David Douglas, University of Guelph

Dr. Douglas is past-President (2009-11) and a Board Member on the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF), co-host of the national Rural Research Workshop (2011-12) in Ottawa, the Rural Development Expert Advisor for the Province of Zakarpattia, Ukraine (2011-13), and a Member of the OECD LEED Forum on Partnerships and Local Governance. His research interests include: rural community development and governance, local and community-based economic development, rural development policy, strategic and re-

gional planning and management, sustainable development, organizational analysis and development, and small community design.

Terence McGonigle, Brandon University

Dr. McGonigle conducts research on soil-plant relationships, including function of roots and mycorrhizae, and factors affecting the distribution and abundance of plants in prairie and tundra ecological systems.

Meir Serfaty, Brandon University

Dr. Serfaty is a specialist in the following areas (through formal education, teaching and/or research): Municipal Government and Politics; Canadian federal and provincial government and politics and federalism; Multiculturalism in Canada; Canadian municipal and regional politics; Public Policy and policy-making (federal and provincial); and Comparative governments (USA, Russian, European, Developing Countries, particularly Latin America and India).

Balfour Spence, Brandon University

Dr. Spence joined the ADES Department from the University of the West Indies, Jamaica in 2008. He researches and publishes extensively on issues related to disaster risk communication, disaster risk assessment, disaster and development as well as environmental management and food security. His teaching and research experience covers the Caribbean region but also Indonesia. Dr. Spence has also supervised and examined several PhD and Masters researchers in the Caribbean.

RDI Research Affiliates

Robert C. Annis	Brandon University
Kenneth Beesley	Brandon University
Kenneth Bessant	Brandon University
Jill Bucklaschuk	University of Manitoba
Barbara Gfellner	Brandon University
Ryan Gibson	Memorial University
Fran Racher	Brandon University
Doug Ramsey	Brandon University
Ray Silvius	Carleton University

Fall Activities at RDI

On September 19, 2012 RDI hosted a workshop titled, "Understanding Public Policy: A critical look at the impact of policy and the processes involved". Brendan Reimer, Regional Coordinator for the Canadian Community Economic Development Network, presented an overview on the issue of policy at Brandon University.

RDI welcomed Dr. Peter Dehne, from University of Applied Sciences, Neubrandenburg, Germany, as a Visiting Scholar to the Institute. His research is in the area of socio-demographic change and its effects on rural regions.

Our Future: Our Vision...

With partners in communities, agencies, and among academics and students, RDI continues to initiate new outreach activities, research, and learning options, and contributes to addressing rural development issues and responding to opportunities. The Institute builds on a strong history of collaborative activities while enhancing resource capabilities and programming. As a leading source of information on rural areas, RDI continues to deliver new knowledge of rural issues and helps create opportunities for vibrant rural communities and regions.



Our Partners

Past and present RDI research and project partners include: The Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat; Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Initiatives; Manitoba Labour and Immigration and other government, university, community and corporate partners who support applied rural research.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE