The New Rural... is Regional?
Moving beyond Municipal Boundaries

Bill Ashton and Wayne Kelly
Rural Development Institute
Brandon University, Brandon, MB
204 571-8513  ashtonw@branondonu.ca
Overview – Discussions in MB

• Aligning territory – functional economic regions
• Negotiation chronology
• Results to date
• Aligning partnerships
• Summary
Aligning Territory – Functional Economic Regions
Functional Economic Rural Region

What if: align boundaries with Where people live & work TODAY!
**Functional Economic Rural Region**

Reciprocal commuting flows based on daily exchanges between CSD of where people live and travel to work: more travel the stronger the relationship (Munro et al. 2011)
90+

municipalities
< 1000 pop.
Circa 2012
RED – Regional Economic Development

The new Rural is Regional
RED – Regional Economic Development

The **new** Rural is Regional

What does ‘regional’ mean?
RED - Regional Economic Development

• **A process** – local stakeholders (govt, organization) engaged to stimulate or maintain business activity and employment ... goal is to create job opportunities in sectors that improve community with human, natural and institutional resources (Blakey, 1994)

• **RED** offers all sectors and citizens opportunities to work together to improve local economy via
  – enhancing competitiveness,
  – increasing growth &
  – ensuring growth is inclusive (World Bank, 2014)
RED -is peppered with problems

**THE DIFFICULTY**

Lies not so much in developing new ideas as escaping from old ones

(John Keynes)
RED - New rural is regional

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old approach to rural policy</th>
<th>New approach to rural policy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Objectives of policy</strong></td>
<td>Competitiveness of rural areas, valorization of local assets</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equalization, natural resource-based income</td>
<td>Various sectors of rural economies (ex: tourism, manufacturing, ICT)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Key target sector</strong></td>
<td>Investments</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Natural resources</td>
<td>All levels of government, various local stakeholders (public, private, NGOs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Main tools</strong></td>
<td><strong>Key actors</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subsidies</td>
<td>National government, workers in natural resource-based industries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Source:</strong> OECD (2006)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Key Words

More top down

Amalgamation

Annexation

More bottom up

Local Partnerships

Coordination
- Common rec program
- Regional tourism

Cooperation
- Shared services
- Shared purchases

Collaboration
- Tax sharing
- Joint development
Amalgamation Reasons

Why not amalgamate?

Why amalgamate?
Amalgamation Reasons

Why **not** amalgamate?
- A competitor
- Different service levels
- Unwanted debt
- Unequal - larger population, dominate decisions
- No history of working together

Why amalgamate?
- Sharing services & activities
- Similar history & future
- Same economic region
- Successfully working together
- Similar benefits and costs
Negotiation Chronology

**Top-down** (Prov)
- **Nov ‘12** Throne speech
- **Dec’12** Minister’s letter to Councils, CAOs too
- **Feb-Sept’13** Regional sessions, guide, field consultants, & new law to expedited process
- **Oct’14** Municipal election

**Bottom up** (Municipal)
- Voluntary amalgamation
- **Dec’12** AMM says “No”
- **Mar’12** Confirm local partners to Minister
- **Dec’13** Amalgamation plans to Minister
- **Jan’15 - ’19** Amalgamation
The New Rural... is Regional?
Amalgamating 112 Municipalities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>SLAs (southern Manitoba)</th>
<th>SLAs matched with new municipal amalgamations (Aug’14)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Amalgamation same as SLAs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Aligning Partnerships

3 steps in building municipal partnerships

1\textsuperscript{st} 2014
Partners, new name, council size & structure, office location, ruling by-law

2\textsuperscript{nd} 2015+
Name CAO, Council mtg date, financial & equipment assets

3\textsuperscript{rd} By 2019
After a yr or more determine: staffing levels, facilities, other by-laws, etc
Summary

• Rural to regional – not easy
• Local boundaries
  - where residents live & work
• Functional economic rural regions - geographic footprint
• Municipal leadership & enabling Provincial decisions
• Negotiated processes
  - time consuming for all
Thank You

Special thanks to

• Ray Bollman & Ryan Gibson
• MB Municipal Government
• MB Agricultural, Food and Rural Development
• Rural Policy Learning Commons
• Brandon University
• Conference Organizers
References


World Bank 2014. Local economic development and urban poverty alleviation: the experience of post-apartheid South Africa