



BRANDON
UNIVERSITY



Rural Development Institute

2015-2016 ANNUAL REPORT





Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

Brandon University established the Rural Development Institute in 1989 as an academic research centre and a leading source of information on issues affecting rural communities in Western Canada and elsewhere.

RDI functions as a not-for-profit research and development organization designed to promote, facilitate, coordinate, initiate and conduct multi-disciplinary academic and applied research on rural issues. The Institute provides an interface between academic research efforts and the community by acting as a conduit of rural research information and by facilitating community involvement in rural development. RDI projects are characterized by cooperative and collaborative efforts of multi-stakeholders.

The Institute has diverse research affiliations, and multiple community and government linkages related to its rural development mandate. RDI disseminates information to a variety of constituents and stakeholders and makes research information and results widely available to the public either in printed form or by means of public lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences.

For more information, please visit www.brandonu.ca/rdi.

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Introduction



Steve Robinson, PhD

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This 2015 Annual Report outlines the significant achievements made by the Rural Development Institute (RDI) through its many applied research projects, as well as its knowledge dissemination and community sponsored activities over the last twelve months. Brandon University extends its appreciation to Dr. Bill Ashton for his leadership and guidance as RDI Director and to Dr. Kim Lemky who has assumed the critical leadership role as Acting RDI Director while Bill has undertaken his sabbatical research term. Their leadership speaks volumes of RDI's current and future capacity to undertake new research endeavors, extend the reach of its collaborations and networks, and to deepen RDI's expertise in rural research and rural community development.

The projects detailed in this report cover a broad spectrum of issues ranging from immigration policies and programs, to broadband access and use in rural communities, to applications of social media in agricultural sectors and innovations strategies in the Manitoba Agri-food sector. Each draws attention to RDI's research expertise and expanding networking and engagement with regional, provincial, national, and international organizations, agencies, and research involved in rural community development and rural policy. We remain immensely pleased that Brandon University and RDI have continued to show, as project host of the Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC), the vital importance of community outreach. The RPLC is itself a reminder of RDI's longstanding commitment to faculty and student engagement and

learning about rural issues that are accomplished locally with other faculty across campus, regionally with community stakeholders and government agencies involved in applied research projects, and both nationally and internationally through conference and research exchange opportunities with project partners and collaborators.

This report recognizes the important financial and in-kind support that Brandon University has made to RDI as well as the significant funding support provided by Federal and Provincial governments and other organizations, and from Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD). We remain proud of Rural Development Institute's research accomplishments, collaborations, and exchanges with its many academic colleagues and community stakeholders. We at Brandon University hold firmly to the belief that thriving rural regions and communities contribute fundamentally to the well-being of Canadian society and that RDI will continue to enhance rural vitality and prosperity through the renewal of the Funding Agreement with MAFRD.



Kim Lemky, PhD

Acting Director, Rural Development Institute,
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January 1 to March 31, 2016

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I am pleased to present the 2015/2016 Annual Report for the Rural Development Institute (RDI). RDI has been very active this period finalizing research on a number of projects and engaging in community outreach activities. It has built on past projects and community based collaborations.

RDI has continued to develop key outcomes from the “Rural Works! A Rural Policy Think Tank” (2014), by fully participating on the Rural Economic Development Strategy (REDS) Steering Committee and with a study on Functional Economic Rural Regions (FERR). The REDS provides strategic direction for all stakeholders in rural development and a path towards implementation.

In a similar view, the FERR research on examining Economic Models and Regional Layers in Rural Manitoba provided a visual overview of the boundaries used by rural government departments to provide services. This research identified economic models and alternatives for using of existing data to improve our understanding of local economies. Future research on FERRs would assist in identifying specific growth strategies that could optimally be used depending on the characteristics of a region.

The importance of rural broadband as an economic driver is well known and has been studied by RDI in the past. A new project was undertaken to gauge the current state of rural broadband connectivity in Manitoba. A key question was to determine how this technology could benefit rural regions and communities. Recommendations that focus

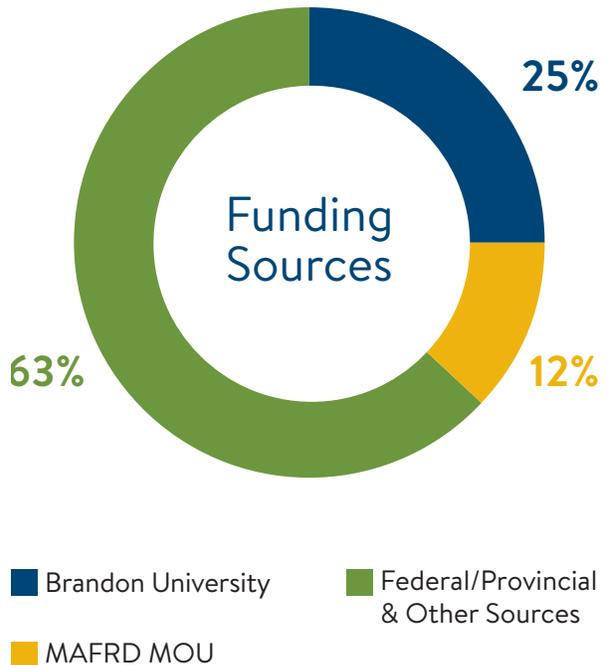
on provincial level efforts and highlight the need for collaboration by all stakeholders was outlined in a policy brief and sets the stage for further research in this area.

Research on Immigrant Settlement Service Providers was extended to include an assessment of service availability in the territories (providing baseline data in this region). Innovative research was rewarded with the procurement of a SSHRC Knowledge Synthesis Grant to examine Big Data that can be used in immigration research. Other research is ongoing with respect to a study on settlement services for Syrian refugees.

Ongoing investigations in Manitoba's bulk food processing industry resulted in five more case studies. The cases confirmed that change in this sector was vibrant as one innovation along a supply chain often had a cascading effect leading to successive improvements and advancement. The research also demonstrated the importance of a collaborative mindset. This has generated a new project on 101 Ideas in Innovation, which will be pursued in the next fiscal year.

Community outreach and workshops led by Dr. Gillian Richards on shelterbelt and greenhouse gases provided insights into the methods that could be used to mitigate greenhouse gases in the context of global warming and climate change. A proposal was developed (Prairie Shelterbelts: Working Trees) to seek funding to support the planting and maintenance of shelterbelts as a legacy of the AGGP.

2015-2016 Funding Sources



Special thank you to the RDI Team of Researchers, Student Researchers, and administrative assistance of Eileen Silvius and Brandon University Administration and IT Services for their support over the last year.

“RDI comprises academics, professionals and students whose knowledge, skills and abilities enables us to be a hub of rural development, research policy and practice.”

RDI has a long history of conducting research on community foundations. A study conducted in 2015 developed a framework to assess the economic impact of community foundations in Manitoba (outside of Winnipeg). This framework will provide a tool for communities to use to understand the impact of their not-for-profit sector and the importance for leveraging funds.

The Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC), a SSHRC funded partnership initiative, completed its second year of a seven year mandate. Last year they increased their network and developed close connections with European and American universities. They continue with outreach projects through a website and a webinar series, as well as co-presenting at conferences and regular meetings.

RDI's Community Outreach program has continued to play a vital role in connecting with rural researchers, community stakeholders and other agencies. A Webinar series has been maintained and continues to work to draw in new and different presenters to reflect on rural. Further classroom presentations and participation in outreach meetings have increased people's awareness of RDI and the RPLC at Brandon University. Two reviews conducted through 2015, one of the Rural Development Institute and the other of the Community Outreach program, offer new opportunities to enrich these research activities and exchanges within the university community and RDI's many external project partners. An action plan will be submitted to Brandon University Senate in the upcoming year.

RDI continued to demonstrate its capacity to share knowledge and project findings with multiple publications and presentations both in Manitoba and other parts of Canada as well as internationally. Much of the rural research is published in the Journal of Rural and Community Development.

Our research is relevant to people who live and work in rural areas of Canada and to rural policy makers. RDI's research is funded by a wide variety of organizations both from the not profit sector and government. Such funding ensures that we continue to strive to build new partnerships.

Highlights of 2015-2016

APPLIED RESEARCH with community and government partners enables RDI to inform discussions on rural and regional issues and opportunities by completing 7 projects and commencing 2 new ones this year.

160+ senior officials assess settlement services in 32 rural communities in Western and Northern Canada.

2 million households in rural Canada are underserved with broadband.



8 case studies of Manitoba Bulk-Food enterprises reveal how 1 innovation is a catalyst for other improvements along the firm's supply-chain.



A model was developed to assess the economic impact of 50 community foundations in rural Manitoba.



KNOWLEDGE MOBILIZATION enables RDI to share our research findings and gather important perceptions through 49 reports, 21 presentations and 10 webinars.

35 authors share expertise for each province and territory in The State of Rural Canada 2015.

80 RDI publications and presentations on five strategic research directions, free to download.



10 Webinars reach over 250 rural researchers and professionals in 7 countries, spanning 4 continents.



TEACHING AND LEARNING is central to RDI's mandate, as is student and faculty engagement, be they in Manitoba, across Canada, and Internationally.

130+ students participate in 7 Service Learning projects for a total of 3700 volunteer hours.

280+ Learning Outcomes are mapped from the 2015 International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Summer Institute in Ireland.



4 Master students' thesis advisory committees at Brandon University and University of Manitoba.



Applied Research

Building Innovation Capacity in the Manitoba Agri-Food Sector

The Rural Development Institute has commenced work on a new two-year applied research project. It's main goal is to close the "knowledge gap" clouding our understanding of complex issues and barriers in commercialization in the Manitoba Agri-Food sector. This research builds on RDI's recent efforts to understand the nature, timing and added value of innovation in the Agri-Food sector. This project is unique in that it focuses on innovation in rural Manitoba, where limited information exists about the commercialization aspects of innovation. One objective is to identify and address systemic barriers to commercializing innovation in the food processing industry. Another objective is to investigate barriers and supports for innovation and innovation culture in southwest Manitoba.

The project researchers will be:

- ▶ *Conducting literature reviews and contacting innovation centers and organizations supporting innovators and entrepreneurship development;*
- ▶ *Interviewing Manitoba Agri-Food innovators and associated Manitoba Agri-Food stakeholders; and*
- ▶ *Surveying communities and SME owners, including Agri-Food processors in several southwest communities.*

Currently, the literature review is underway as are the initial series of interviews with the Agri-food innovators and stakeholders.

This project, funded by Growing Forward 2 as a federal and provincial initiative, relies on the participation and expertise of partners, including Southwest Regional Development Corporation, Community Futures Westman, Westman Agriculture Diversification Organization, Innovate Manitoba, Life Sciences Association of Manitoba, and the Manitoba Food Development Centre.

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RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

Rural Innovation In Manitoba:
 Reducing Barriers to Commercialization and Growing Capacity in the Agri-Food Sector
 A place-based approach to facilitating commercialization

BACKGROUND

While there is convincing, distinct and science across Canada, the Conference Board of Canada reports an "innovation gap" that is steadily related to commercialization – the transformation of ideas and knowledge into value. This "innovation gap" is complex, not well understood and can be largely attributed to systemic barriers. These such barriers are access to venture capital, fragmented services to innovators and commercialization, and a wide spread risk-averse culture. The research and activities undertaken in this project aim to close the knowledge gap that exists around understanding the complex issues that slow down innovation in the Manitoba Agri-Food sector.

This applied research project is funded by the Canada and Manitoba governments through Growing Forward 2, a federal-provincial-territorial initiative. It attempts to create new knowledge that enhances the process of innovation by addressing barriers and opportunities in commercialization in Manitoba's Agri-Food sector, and improves

capacity in organizations so they can facilitate innovation. Often innovation services and processes are located in larger urban areas where both density and specialization exist. The project aims to focus on innovation in rural Manitoba, a less studied area, where limited information exists about the commercialization aspects of innovation.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this project is two-fold. First to identify and address systemic barriers impacting on the commercialization cycle as experienced by selected innovators and stakeholders involved in the Manitoba Agri-food industry. Second to investigate the innovation culture and leadership in Manitoba's Southwest region within the context of the Manitoba Agri-food industry.

The project will determine the commercialization gap that exists in Manitoba's Agri-Food industry based on recent experience of Agri-Food Innovators and aims to enhance existing capacity and leadership in Manitoba's Southwest region for commercialization activity in the Agri-Food industry.

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DISSEMINATION

This research project will generate a variety of research products over its two-year duration such as research reports and organized information resources (e.g. resources of innovation programs, strategies and tools from both existing websites and networks, but also gained from interviews and roundtables, summary assets to better utilize infrastructure and knowledge of commercialization). The project will apply a variety of modes (webinars, webinars, and print) to disseminate this research. This research will produce a comprehensive package of strategies, tools and support programs available to Agri-Food innovators in Manitoba and Agri-Food sector stakeholders involved in innovation and commercialization (including scientists and researchers, economic and business professionals, financing agencies, patent lawyers, business advisors, government agencies organizations). The Rural Innovation in Manitoba research project will assist in enhancing reporting and manufacturing opportunities as well as in facilitating entrepreneurship in rural Manitoba.

Community Futures Westman, LSAM, Growing Forward 2, Manitoba, Brandon University, Canada, Life Sciences Association of Manitoba, Southwest Regional Development Corporation, Innovate Manitoba, Westman Agriculture Diversification Organization.

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101 Ideas for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

This Agri-food innovation project is itself the inspiration to spin off a new project tracking the successes of small rural enterprises. This project involves identifying and documenting the business's product line, the business owner's motivation as well as their challenges moving their business forward. Close to 10 innovators from across all sectors of Manitoba have already been interviewed with more to come. The range of products varies considerably from exercise supplements, dairy products, non-timber forest foods, wild rice berry bars, organic seed snacks, birch syrup and honey.

These business snap-shots will be publically accessible, hoping to inspire new rural entrepreneurship. Many of the enterprises echo similar sentiments and concerns: believing in themselves and in their product or service as well as seeking outside help and advice are of paramount importance.

This project is a student Internship supported through Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development.

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101 Ideas

for Innovation and Entrepreneurship



Economic Models and Regions in Rural Manitoba

This research project arose from the many conversations exchanged during Rural Works!: A Rural Policy Think Tank, which was coordinated by RDI in November, 2014. Two of its recommendations are the underlying reasons for undertaking this project:

1. *Economic activities based on functional economic rural regions should be encouraged and pursued by governments, stakeholders, and citizens.*
2. *Energy and resources should be invested in collaborative approaches to rural economic development.*

This project investigates economic models used to determine functional economic rural regions (FERRs) and takes a closer look at the regional complexities in rural Manitoba. The data and analysis will inform the ongoing conversation about economic development in rural Manitoba. Canadian examples of economic models help establish FERRs coupled with census data to improve the accuracy of local economies.

A number of key activities were undertaken to complete this research, including:

- ▶ *Developing a definition of region,*
- ▶ *Inventorizing the regional structures within 12 Manitoba government departments and 12 organizations in Manitoba to provide a governmental and administrative understanding of current regions,*
- ▶ *Analyzing self-selected partnerships found in two MAFRD initiatives to identify instances where rural municipalities are already partnering on economic development, and*
- ▶ *Analyzing economic models to help illustrate what is meant by functional economic rural regions in Manitoba and better understand local economies.*

Through the research, two economic models and two ways of using data to improve our understanding of local economies have been identified. The two economic models are:

1. *Functional Economic Areas*
2. *Self-contained Labour Areas*

The two ways of using data to improve understanding of local economies are:

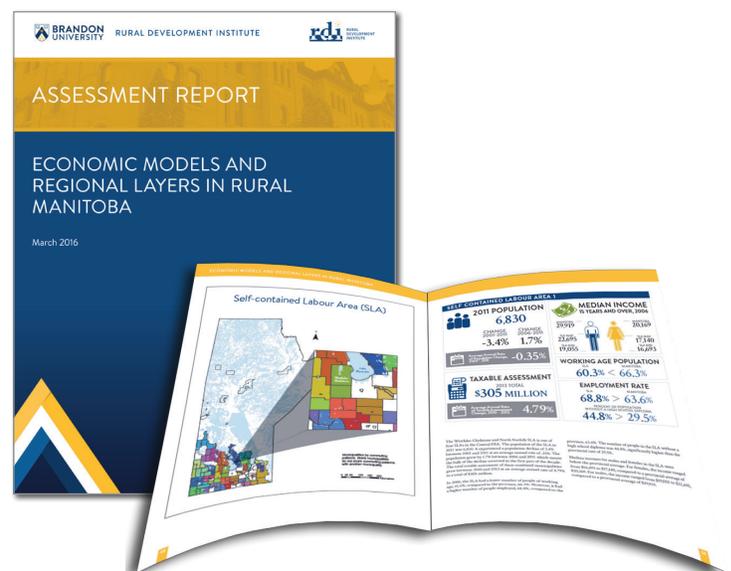
1. *Population and Income Classification of Resource Dependent Economies*
2. *Creative Class*

The data analysis of the regions found in rural Manitoba indicates that there are many regions, with little overlap. The findings of this project could lead to future research on FERRs and a broader analysis of identifying and adapting growth strategies that would best advantage these distinctive regions. This project will be completed by the fall of 2016.

Support and funding for this project was provided by Manitoba, Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development (MAFRD), while some mapping resources were provided by Manitoba Municipal Government (MMG).

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Digital Action in Rural Manitoba

Rural broadband has been a fact of life in Manitoba for some time now. What is less well known is the state of rural broadband in Manitoba and the means of taking advantage of this technology for the benefit of rural regions and communities. This research project was conducted to fill this knowledge gap and to gauge some of the tangible benefits that could be achieved by increasing rural broadband in Manitoba, for example:

- ▶ *Enhancing rural economic development opportunities by accessing online markets,*
- ▶ *Increasing local businesses productivity through better use of digital tools and apps,*
- ▶ *Providing wider access to educational opportunities otherwise unavailable to rural communities, and*
- ▶ *Increasing health system benefits from online health services.*

These benefits are critical for the ongoing health and continued viability of rural Manitoba communities; unfortunately, these benefits are being frustrated by rural Manitoba's current "digital divide" that exists on two fronts—access and use.

To develop the baseline on broadband in rural Manitoba, the project team made use of two data sets in its analyses:

1. *Data from CRTC and Industry Canada on Internet Service Providers that focused on the type and speed of broadband delivery to estimate how well households in an areas are served, and*
2. *Data from the Statistics Canada's National Household Survey (2010) and RDI's data on Self-contained Labour Areas*

The combined data sets led to the development of five maps each comparing estimated underserved households against a new variable: (1) the population density per 25km² geographical area, (2) the population density by Census sub-Division, (3) the population density per Self-contained Labour Area, (4) Average After Tax Incomes of Families, and (5) Education Level. In all, the overlay of the various datasets provided a comprehensive picture of both access to and use of broadband in the southern region of the province.

The broader social and economic goal of this research was to develop a series of recommendations to help Manitoba's rural regions more effectively participate in the digital economy and harness digital opportunities. Leadership is required from all levels of government to embrace a culture of change to become

a digital society and realize the potential benefits that exist for rural Manitoba.

Actions for improving rural broadband ACCESS in Manitoba include providing incentives to Internet Service Providers and rural Small to Medium Enterprises (SME) and community organizations, or possibly capital grants to rural municipalities to extend broadband networks in rural Manitoba where broadband access is not meeting current federal or international targets.

Actions for increasing rural broadband USE in Manitoba include establishing Broadband Plans at the provincial and community level with clear targets for rural broadband usage that will make rural municipalities more competitive. This means all levels of governments need to be leaders in developing local content in rural municipalities and regions as well as supporters of the development of digital literacy.

These recommendations focus on provincial level efforts and serve as a call to digital action in rural Manitoba.

This project was a collaborative effort between Rural Development Institute, Brandon University, Institute of Urban Studies, University of Winnipeg, and Function Four Ltd. as well as the Manitoba Government.



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Immigration Settlement Services – from Immigrants to Refugees

Over the last year RDI completed one of the largest surveys of immigrant service organizations in Western Canada. It involved 32 communities across four provinces and three northern Territories. This research project was called “Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Citizenship and Immigration Canada’s Western Region.” The final report provides a comprehensive analysis of settlement services based on interviews with 160 senior officials from the communities and regions. A complete set of the project’s reports is available at:

<https://www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publication/immigration-settlement-services-and-gaps-in-citizenship-and-immigration-canadas-western-region/> & <http://umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/3747.html>).

Though the represented communities are unique in providing services to new immigrants, the project’s findings showed surprising consistency about the services offered, challenges faced as well as gaps in services:

- ▶ *The participants felt that newcomers could settle easily in the provinces and territories mainly due to the size of the communities, employment opportunities, and cultural diversity, yet language barriers experienced by newcomers, housing, cost of living, and climate were challenges.*
- ▶ *The main settlement services currently offered by service provider organizations (SPOs) in the provinces and territories were information and orientation, help with daily living, finding a job and housing, language assessment and training, and greeting upon arrival.*
- ▶ *Participants felt that newcomers could easily find employment though these jobs are often entry level.*
- ▶ *The key challenges to finding employment for newcomers are English language skills, Canadian work experience, understanding Canadian workplace etiquette, and foreign credential recognition.*

- ▶ *Participants stated that settlement services needed to be expanded to meet the needs of newcomers especially to offer services in more rural communities.*
- ▶ *The service providers interviewed reported having organizational capacity in a variety of areas but inadequate capacity to develop strategic and governing plans or to offer services in both official languages. More funding and capacity to expand services will be required to meet the needs of a growing population of newcomers.*
- ▶ *Settlement service providers reported stretching their resources, funding, and volunteers to support the successful settlement of a growing newcomer population. To do so, participants reported their organization is working in partnership with other organizations in their community.*

This research was funded by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRC) (formerly Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC)) through Immigration Research West (IRW) at the University of Manitoba and directed by the Rural Development Institute at Brandon University. It also involved leadership from academic and provincial settlement agencies across western and northern Canada.

Thanks go to Citizen and Immigration Canada, Immigration Research West, the many service provider organizations, and the co-principal investigators, who included:

Joe Garcea, University of Saskatchewan; Anna Kirova, University of Alberta; Miu Chung Yan, University of British Columbia; and Lori Wilkinson, University of Manitoba.

The completion of this project affirms RDI’s growing capacity and leadership in the area of settlement service providers and immigration, and provided the background for commencing a new project focused on settlement services provided to refugees. This project has some urgency since Canada has welcomed more than 25,000 Syrian refugees as part of the Welcome Refugees initiative up to February 2016 with even



more expected to arrive through the year. Given the number of refugees welcomed to settle in Manitoba, there is a definite need to study resettlement services offered to refugees and to examine the capacity of rural communities to receive refugees.

This project will inventory the immigration settlement services available in six rural communities in Manitoba and examine gaps in services offered, newcomer needs and partnerships in place to better serve newcomers in the communities. The goal of this research is to assess the capacity of the Service Provider Organizations (SPOs) and refugee sponsors (where applicable) to respond to refugee needs.

This research has been requested by Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada through Manitoba Association of Newcomer Serving Organizations (MANSO) and is conducted by RDI.

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Community Foundations in Rural Manitoba

Community Foundations (CF) are charitable organizations created by and for a local community or region. These organizations provide a venue for Manitobans to contribute to their community by making grants available to charitable groups. Since the first CF was established outside of Winnipeg in the 1960s, CFs have grown to over 50 registered currently (Canada Revenue Agency 2014). The Winnipeg Foundation (TWF), as Manitoba's first and largest CF, has contributed to the success of CFs across Manitoba.

While The Winnipeg Foundation acknowledges the importance social and community role for all CFs, it has become increasingly interested in quantifying the economic impacts of CFs in rural Manitoba. To this end, TWF commissioned RDI to conduct research on the economic impact of Manitoba community foundations outside of Winnipeg for 2014. Three important questions guided this research:

- ▶ *What are the economic impacts of CFs on their communities?*
- ▶ *What data are available to conduct an economic impact analysis?*
- ▶ *What economic models can be used to explain or analyze this economic impact year over year?*

To address these questions publically available data was gathered from the internet, e.g. Canadian Revenue Agency data, financial statements and annual reports. This formed the basis of developing a model for calculating the direct economic impact based on donor contributions to the community foundation, and expenditures. Indirect economic impacts were estimated by applying a multiplier to the different sectors to which CFs contribute grants, e.g., Health, Education, Community Benefits, Social Services, Arts and Culture, and the Environment.

By analyzing various examples, the input-output model showed how CFs had a profound impact. The research findings also showed that in 2014 CFs in Manitoba granted mostly to the sectors of education (49%) and community services (27%) with Health (12%), and culture and arts (8%) trailing, with smaller grants given to environment and religious organizations. Despite the small dollar value that CFs contribute to projects, their real value were in leveraging the dollar amounts needed to secure other government funding for much larger projects.

This research was funded through The Winnipeg Foundation.

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Innovation in Manitoba's Bulk Food Processing Sector

The food processing sector in Manitoba is a major economic contributor with \$4.7 billion in annual sales (2011). Previous RDI research asked for more cases to better understand the nature of innovation. Knowing more about innovation in this sector will contribute directly to provincial and local prosperity. As a result eight case studies were compiled from diverse bulk ingredient processors, which sell large volumes to manufacturers, distributors or other businesses.

This research started with a critical investigation of innovation and found multiple definitions that formed the framework of the investigation. Drawing extensively from the OECD categorization of innovation types: product, process, marketing and organizational, we also added novelty, involvement along the supply chain in innovation, duration or length of time for innovation to be realized, and specific nature of growth resulting from innovation.

The eight companies included in this study are:

- ▶ **Richardson Milling**, a part of Richardson International, is a world leader in production of oat flours and flakes for the ingredient market
- ▶ **Shape Foods** produces flax oil and meal, mostly for the export market in the USA and Asia
- ▶ **Canadian Prairie Garden Puree Products** produces fruit, vegetable and pulse purees, currently selling to the US and Canada
- ▶ **Hemp Oil Canada Inc.** is the world's largest producer of hemp oil with export markets in Europe and the US.
- ▶ **Floating Leaf Fine Foods (FL)** sells bulk wild rice and retail blends to customers around the world.
- ▶ **Bee Maid Honey (BM)**, the largest producer owned honey processor in Canada, sells retail and bulk honey mostly to domestic and US customers.
- ▶ **True North Foods (TNF)** plans to process cattle, bison and elk in a federally licensed facility.
- ▶ **Brar Natural Flour Mills (BNFM)** mills specialty grain and pulse flours to supply authentic, traditional, South Asian ingredients to the North American market.

Based on 61 interviews and 66 innovation initiatives among the 8 case studies, each were validated by the participants. The key findings include:

- ▶ All 8 cases provided clear evidence of innovation across all four types, including multiples examples of innovative practices all along the supply chain as well as interlinked innovations (e.g. product & marketing together)
- ▶ Confirmation that innovation demands collaboration and cooperation between multiple players: including processors, growers and customers as well as researchers, commodity organizations
- ▶ Innovations create opportunity for growth by expanding sales geographically, entering new export markets, providing new ingredients or turning existing ingredients into food products to meet demand for healthy, natural products.

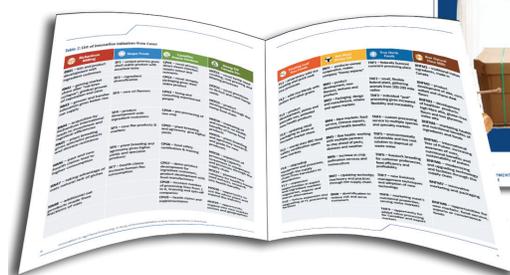
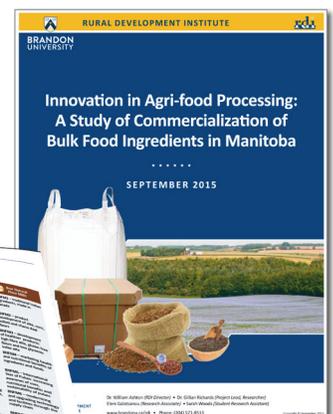
The scale and impact of innovation seen in the industry underscores the current strength and future potential of the food processing sector in the Manitoban economy. The research provides evidence of the importance of ongoing public investment in research and related centres to support these initiatives.

For the full report see www.brandonu.ca/rdi/files/2016/01/2015.12.02.-Agri-Food-Innovation-Analysis-of-8-Manitoba-Cases.pdf.

This research was supported and funded by Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD).

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Shelterbelts and Agricultural Greenhouse Gases

Over the course of 5 years, this project involved beef producers and the importance of alley cropping and shelterbelts on the prairies. The series of surveys and consultations have consistently shown that many agricultural producers have shelterbelts on their properties and that most producers are aware of the benefits of shelterbelts in preventing soil erosion and sheltering livestock. However, many producers are not always aware of other benefits of shelterbelts such as reducing agricultural emissions, increasing carbon levels in the soil, and enhancing production efficiencies, when combined with winter feeding strategies.

To close out this project, two final legacy pieces were completed. The first was an inventory and mapping of shelterbelts in Manitoba and the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District, and a comparative analysis of changes in shelterbelt density, spatial distribution and fragmentation from the late 1970s to late 2000. This inventory provides a valuable base-line for the numbers and locations of shelterbelt in the project's study area. This work was conducted in conjunction with Dr. Dion Wiseman from BU's Geography Department and Samantha Smyth, BU graduate.

The second and final stage to the project was the completion of a strategic proposal, *Prairie Shelterbelts: Working Trees*. The goal is to seek funding to mobilize tree planting activities, building on the foundation of the AGGP project. The fundamental rationale of this proposal is to support the planting and maintenance of shelterbelts which is far from uniform across the prairies, let alone in Manitoba. The funding proposal sets an ambitious target of in-kind and financial support over four years from one or more sponsors to develop a program that encourages use of shelterbelts on the prairies. A significant portion of the funding is to go directly toward trees and producer support for planting.

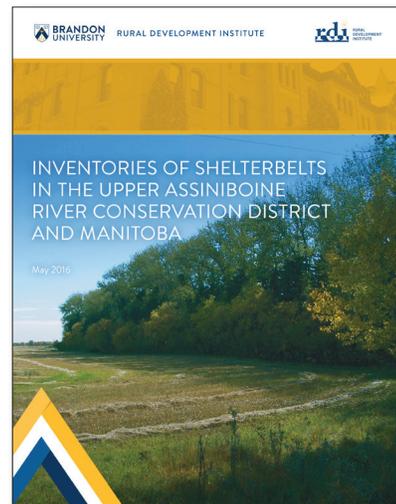
Funding for this project was provided by the Agricultural Greenhouse Gases Program (AGGP), a federal AAFC program through the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District (UARCD). Support and collaboration was provided by other organizations such as Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development (MAFRD), Manitoba Beef Producers, Manitoba Conservation Districts Association and the Manitoba Forage and Grassland Association.

Those interested in shelterbelt usage and their benefits are encouraged to visit the project website: <http://www.prairieshelterbelts.ca/>

Those interested in Prairie Shelterbelts: Working Trees are asked to contact:

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Brandon University
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Brandon University Community Outreach Service



The Community Outreach Service (COS) provides an opportunity to share learning and build community capacity by drawing together community organizations, faculty members of Brandon University and students around a community-based project. Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development (MAFRD) provides funding for applied research projects, while Brandon University funds a student and RDI provides direction for this service.

After operating for about 10 years, a review of the outreach service was conducted with the goal to determine improvements and adjustments to its current operations. Funding for this project was provided by Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development and Brandon University. This research focused on three objectives:

- ▶ *Identify the Outreach Program's achievements and contributions,*
- ▶ *Identify how the COS can be improved, and*
- ▶ *Identify what in COS should remain the same.*

The research sample covered the last five fiscal years from 2009-10 to 2014-15, and examined 52 projects undertaken during this period. Research participants included four main groups: the community organizations, Brandon University faculty, members of the COS Steering Committee, as well as project applicants whose proposal was not accepted. In total, 43 participants were interviewed.

Based on the findings, three main recommendations were identified to aid in supporting and improving COS:

1. Improve the program's application process and administration
2. Engage stakeholders, especially community organizations and students
3. Keep funding the Outreach program

The results of this research will help to ensure that Brandon University remains an active community member, providing opportunities to collaborate and share knowledge and expertise with community groups and to build enriching learning experiences for students. The findings clearly indicated that the COS remains invaluable for community organizations, and for faculty and students.

The Outreach Advisory Committee includes:

- Steve Robinson, *Acting Vice-President (Academic and Provost), Co-chair*
- Kim Lemky, *Acting RDI Director, Co-chair*
- Roberta Graham, *Faculty of Health Studies*
- David Playfair, *School of Music*
- Balfour Spence, *Faculty of Science*
- Cam Symons, *Faculty of Education*
- Lin Xu, *Faculty of Arts*

In addition, the COS also coordinates the Service Learning Program that encourages community volunteer participation of Brandon University students. The program acknowledges the value of student activities beyond the 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 the Service Learning Program, they receive official recognition of their activities on their Brandon University transcripts.

Through April 2015 to March 2016, 133 Student Service Learning applications were approved, a huge increase from the 80 approved in the previous year. On-campus projects involved 117 students while 16 students participated in off-campus projects. In total they contributed 3,696 volunteer hours in community service activities. Over the year, 7 separate projects were completed, including:

- ▶ *Student Leader Program, Brandon University (114 students)*
- ▶ *Volunteer, BU Health Studies Student Association (12 students)*
- ▶ *BU Ceramic Studio, Brandon University (3 students)*
- ▶ *Crisis Counsellor, Klinik Community Health (1 student)*
- ▶ *Life in the Regiment Documentary, 26th Field Regiment RCA – XII Manitoba Dragoons Museum (1 student)*
- ▶ *Community Gardening for Social Justice, Brandon Neighborhood Renewal Corporation (1 student)*
- ▶ *Early-years Volunteer, MacGregor Elementary School (1 student)*



For more information on the community outreach service, contact

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RECIPIENTS OF THE RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE ANNUAL SCHOLARSHIP AWARDS

Rural Development Institute Annual Scholarship - \$3,000

2015/16 Meghan Wrathall
 Masters of Rural Development

\$500 Award

2015/16 Fobete Dingha Ngoh
 Masters of Rural Development





Knowledge Mobilization

The State of Rural Canada 2015

The State of Rural Canada 2015 is significant publication, and for many, a long time in coming. It takes stock of the current Canadian rural landscape, including separate provincial and territorial vignettes of their peoples, challenges and opportunities, and a closing discussion with provocative recommendations.

The State of Rural Canada presents a telling story of neglect in rural Canada despite the real contributions of rural places to the social and economic wellbeing for the entire country. A number of important lessons stand out. The first is that rural and urban Canada are inextricably interlinked, where the success and failures of one has an impact on the other. This relationship is all the more consequential since its rural regions and communities are also interlinked within an ever-changing globalized world, shifting economies, climate change, and where isolation is now an impossibility. Second, Canada needs to be properly acknowledged as a “diversity of rurals” rather than treated as a homogeneous region. The Report’s main 15 chapters clearly demonstrate this plurality. As well, rural voices must contribute to discussions and negotiations while establishing new rural-urban relations.

Some 35 researchers and rural professionals authored the introduction and the chapters that overview key rural trends in the provinces and territories and essentially encouraged others to engage in positive dialogue, to be part of the solutions to the significant demographic, social, economic, and environmental changes and participate in sustained meaningful dialogue with Aboriginal peoples.

The report calls for new thinking, new models, and new practices by governments, community leaders, and practitioners to face our presumptions and commence an open respectful dialogue that also acknowledges how much rural Canada has to offer and teach us.

The Report’s three closing recommendations signal just how important this new dialogue will be in shaping the future of rural Canada:

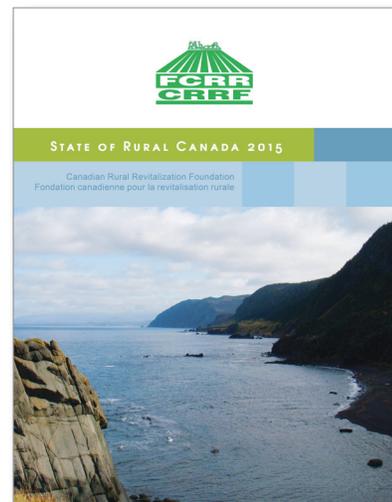
- ▶ *Provincial, Territorial, and Federal governments must develop a new and robust vision and policy framework for rural Canada.*
- ▶ *Rural communities and stakeholders must be active participants in understanding, planning and investing in their own futures.*
- ▶ *Following the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, all Canadians must acknowledge and seek serious corrective steps to heal the “historical trauma” suffered by Aboriginal peoples.*

The Rural Development Institute (RDI) is especially pleased to have partnered with the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF), and the Rural Policy Learning Commons in its development. The report is available online at: <http://sorc.crrf.ca/wp-content/uploads/2015/09/SORC2015.pdf>

More information on CRRF can be found at: <http://sorc.crrf.ca/>

For more information, contact:

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Rural Policy Learning Commons



The last 12 months have been a very eventful one for the Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC). The RPLC Steering Committee has continued to meet throughout the year providing strategic direction on the project's ongoing activities, new initiatives, and forging both linkages with new rural policy researchers and developing potential new partnerships. These efforts were aided by full slate of 3 Liaison Officers who join the RPLC Secretariat: Dr. Marco Pagani at the University of Bologna, Michael Blatherwick at Brandon University, and Pam Kelrick at the University of Missouri. Collectively, they are instrumental in coordinating activities among the research and knowledge mobilization teams.

In March 2016, team leads from all twelve RPLC Research and Knowledge Mobilization teams, along with the RPLC Secretariat, met in Montreal for an in-person update and planning meeting. The team leads gave a yearly recap outlining a long list of measured deliverables. The meeting also provided a venue for identifying upcoming action items to strengthen the RPLC network. A few of note include:

- ▶ *Developing a new RPLC communications strategy,*
- ▶ *Reviewing the use of social media tools to help aid dissemination of information to members*
- ▶ *Continuing enhancement of the Website portal,*
- ▶ *Identifying new strategic European partners and re-engaging with existing European and North American partners,*
- ▶ *Developing a guide for RPLC partners to host webinars, and*
- ▶ *Increasing the presence of RPLC members at focus events and conferences.*

The RPLC expanded its presence through a number of notable developments. The first was the establishment of a fifth research theme with the new Transformation in Indigenous Communities Team led by Mark Watson. This research team based out of Concordia University will focus on a variety of rural and northern issues impacting Indigenous communities. A few include: natural resource extraction and environmental impacts, local governance and effects of imposed governmental policies, and impacts of changes on the cultural, social and economic structure of Indigenous communities.

The second was the launch of the Rural Policy Master's Series, a new online journal for graduate students. Potential papers could include recent research on rural and regional development and comparative rural policy. The journal is a collaborative effort between two RPLC partners – the Università Di Bologna, Italy and the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University. The journal is currently looking for submissions. For more information, check out the journal webpage at: <http://journals.brandonu.ca/rpms>

Third, research was undertaken to begin the development of a graduate certificate in international comparative rural policy, one of the RPLC's key deliverables. Thus far, a comparative case study analyzing 22 Canadian Masters of Public Policy (MPP) and Public Administration (MPA) programs and the subject areas delivered at the 2015 International Comparative Rural Policy Study (ICRPS) Summer Institute in Ireland has been completed. As well, the Canadian round of consultations focusing on identifying the core subject areas of study in rural policy and resolving key pedagogical concerns is nearing completion. Discussions with colleagues for the USA and the EU are expected to follow through 2016.

Also in late 2015, the Rural Routes Podcasts (RRP) venture was initiated and is now led by RPLC member, Boyan Furst. With a background in radio, Boyan interviews academic researchers, farmers, artists, rural entrepreneurs, fishermen, those who have something to say about what it means to “live rural” in the 21st century. To find out more, visit the webpage: ruralroutespodcasts.com.

Similarly, RPLC has continued to be active in hosting webinars with rural policy experts and practitioners. In all this year ten events have attracted an audience of close to 250 national and international participants.

Topics have ranged from municipal governance, food waste policies and practices, and growth in Canada's food industry, rural labour, rural health, to philanthropy in rural regions, farm succession, and policing policy.

The RPLC continued to get the message out about rural issues, challenges and opportunities. It supported the development and release of The State of Rural Canada Report 2015. This publication was a collaborative effort of CRRF, RPLC, RDI, and Brandon University.

Financial and logistical support has been provided for a number of learning events and activities such as the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Summer Institute in Ireland as well as a national conference with the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and travel funding for students.

Support for this project is provided by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada and over 30 partners.



For more information about this project, check the website at <http://rplc-capr.ca>, or contact:

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Publications and Presentations

A significant part of RDI's mandate is the dissemination of RDI research and promotion of its community involvement and activities. Through 2015-2016, RDI continued to report on its activities in various modes of publication and in presentations, including 49 publications and reports, 4 journal articles, 4 journal issues, and 21 conference presentations.

RDI continued its open-source electronic publishing of the Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD). 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.

In addition, RDI worked in concert with the Rural Policy Learning Commons and the University of Bologna to launch the new Rural Policy Master's Series, an online journal dedicated to graduate students.

For more information on this initiative, visit the website: <http://journals.brandonu.ca/rpms> or contact: Michael Blatherwick, blatherwickM@Brandonu.ca

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10 articles and 1 case study

Ramsey, D. (Ed.). (2015). *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 10(2)

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9 articles and 2 case studies

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6 articles

Ramsey, D. (Ed.). (2015). *Journal of Rural and Community Development*, 10(4).

From : <http://journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/>

5 articles, 1 case study, and 1 policy evaluation

Presentations

Galatsanou, E. (2015, June). Immigration settlement services and gaps in Citizenship and Immigration Canada's western region: Focus on the Manitoba case, presented at Manitoba Immigrant and Refugee Settlement Sector Association's Learning and Networking event, Winnipeg, MB.

Ashton, W. (2015, July). *Innovation and commercialization: rural challenges & multi-level responses strategies for rural Manitoba*. Presented at National Rural Development Conference. Limerick, Ireland.

Ashton, W. (2015, September). Settlement Services in Western Canada: Results from 29 Rural and Small Centres. Presented at Immigration Settlement Service Delivery in Canada: Rural/Urban Challenges & Public Policy Response event, New Glasgow, NS.

Ashton, W. (2015, September). New Researchers Forum. Co-hosted by the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and the Rural Development Institute, Brandon University, Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Building Community Resilience Conference, Summerside, PEI.

Ashton, W. & Kelly, W. (2015, September). Building communities with new rural regions in Manitoba, Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Building Community Resilience Conference, Summerside, PEI.

Reimer, R. (2015, September). Managing Education and Research Partnerships: Tips from the Trenches, Network Leadership Symposium 2015, Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, Edmonton, AB.

Smyth, S. (with Wiseman, D., Richards, G., & Canart, R.) (2015, September). Update and Comparative Analysis of Shelterbelts in the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District (UARCD) of Manitoba, presented at the Prairie Division of the Canadian Association of Geographers, Annual Meeting, Kenora, ON.

Ashton, W. (2015, October). i-Strategies in Rural Manitoba, Rural Alberta Innovation & Learning Commons, Camrose, AB.

Galatsanou, E. (2015, October). Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in CIC's Western Region and Innovation in Agri-food Processing: A Study of Commercialization of Bulk Food Ingredients in MB. Presented project overview at Brandon University Homecoming.

Kelly, W. (2015, October). Issues and Next steps for Rural Broadband Enablement, Invited Panelist, Digital Futures Symposium on Rural Broadband Enablement, Olds, AB.

Kelly, W. & Ashton, W. (2015, October). Rural communities are not realizing the potential of the Internet – can today's youth flip the script?, Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Building Community Resilience Conference, Summerside, PEI.

- Lemky, K. (2015, October). Community Foundations in Manitoba. Presented project overview at Brandon University Homecoming.
- McNeely, G. & Ashton, W. (2015, October). *Ireland's Comparative Rural Policy Studies (ICRPS) Summer Institute: Identifying Learning Outcomes in Rural Policy for Practitioners*. Canadian Association of Prior Learning Assessment. Annual Conference. Recognizing Learning: In People, Partnerships, and Quality Practices, Toronto, ON.
- Patterson, L. (2015, October). Telling the Story of Rural Manitoba Through Statistics. Presented project overview at Brandon University Homecoming.
- Patterson L. (2015, October). Shifting Gears: From writing briefing notes to writing journal articles. Presentation at Brandon University Homecoming.
- Ashton, W. (2015, November). Discussant at The Forum on Canada's Agri-Food Future 2015, Canadian Agri-Food Policy Institute, Ottawa, ON.
- Blatherwick, M., Campos-Flores, L., MacMichael, M., Ryser, L., & Penn, H. (2015, November). Panel Presentation on the Rural Policy Learning Commons Goals and Network. Delivered at the Association of Canadian Universities for Northern Studies, Student Conference. Calgary, AB.
- Patterson L. (2015, November). Factors Associated with Growing and Declining Rural Communities. Presentation at Saskatchewan Economic Development Association Creating Intersections for Growth Conference, Humboldt, SK.
- Ashton, W. & McNeely, G. (2016, January). *Ireland's Comparative Rural Policy Studies (ICRPS) Summer Institute: Identifying Learning Outcomes in Rural Policy for Practitioners*. 14th Annual International Conference on Education. Honolulu, Hawaii.
- Lemky, K. (2016, March). Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps. Presented at the 18th National Metropolis Conference, Toronto, ON.
- Pettigrew, R. (2016, March). Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Yukon, NWT and Nunavut. Presented at the 18th National Metropolis Conference, Toronto, ON.

RDI – Sponsored Community Activities

Over the last year RDI presented research to members of the university community, residents of the Westman regions, as well as others elsewhere in Canada and farther afield. These events featured scholars and speakers who offered their expertise and experiences on rural issues.

Ten webinars with international audiences were presented in collaboration with the Rural Policy Learning Commons.



Power Relations between Mayors and Councilors

May 11, 2015

Presenter: Meir Serfaty

Dr. Serfaty is Professor of Political Science at Brandon University, Manitoba, Canada. Municipal government is one of his fields of specialization. Since 2000, he has served as a consultant on governance to a number of Manitoba municipalities.



Food Waste Reduction Practices and Policies: North America and EU

June 4, 2015

Presenter: Abdel Felfel and Matteo Vittuari

Dr. Felfel has worked on several agricultural policy issues including international trade, competitiveness, productivity and food processing, as a Policy Analyst with the Strategic Policy Branch at Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC) in Ottawa. He also participated in developing Canada's agricultural and agri-food sector policy framework, Growing Forward 2.



Growing the Food Industry in Canada: Successful SMEs

September 29, 2015

Presenters: Tim Hore and Jim Smith

Tim Hore has served as the Chief Operating Officer/ General Manager at the Food Development Centre (FDC) in Portage la Prairie, Manitoba since 2013. Prior to joining the FDC, he worked for Manitoba Agriculture, Food and Rural Development for six years.

Dr. Smith is the Executive Director of BioFood Tech and a professional innovation leader with experience and passion for helping companies commercialize new product ideas to improve their business and develop the economy.



Improving Dementia in Rural and Small Town Settings: a view from Ontario

October 6, 2015

Presenters: Rachel Herron

Rachel Herron is a health geographer with an interest in rural aging, mental health, and care and caregiving. Her current research examines the broad range of supports for persons living with dementia in rural and small town settings.



Philanthropy in Rural Nova Scotia

November 24, 2015

Presenters: Teresa MacNeil, Arthur Bull, Ryan Gibson, and Kathleen Kevany

Dr. MacNeil is Chair of the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia. She is retired from St. Francis Xavier University where she worked as a faculty member and senior administrator. Her public service activities have included: Chair of the Board and Acting President of the Cape Breton Development Corporation, Chair of the Board of Sydney Steel Corporation, among many other positions.

Arthur Bull is Vice-Chair of the Rural Communities Foundation of Nova Scotia. His past positions include, among others, Chairperson of the Coastal Communities Network, Co-Director of the Rural Communities Impacting Policy Project, Executive Director of the Bay of Fundy Marine Resource Centre, and Executive Director of Saltwater Network.

Dr. Gibson is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Geography and Environmental Studies at St. Mary's University, Nova Scotia. His research interests include: the changing dynamics of rural and regional development, models of governance in OECD countries, rural immigration and mobility and its impact on rural community sustainability, and philanthropy in community development.

Dr. Kevany is Associate Professor and Faculty Liaison for Extended Learning in the Faculty of Agriculture at Dalhousie University, Nova Scotia. She is also Team Lead for the RPLC Governance Theme Research Team. Her research interests focus on Well-being, Social change, Community development, Community learning, Consciousness, and Positive psychology.



Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program: Motivations of Mexican Workers

January 27, 2016

Presenters: Lidia Carvajal & Judith Stallman

Dr. Carvajal is a full-time faculty in the Department of Economics at the UAEM, Toluca, Estado de México. She currently teaches econometrics models, time series and econometrics methods. She has co-authored several articles and chapters in books concerning migration, remittances and rural policy and development.

Dr. Stallmann is a Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Missouri. Her current research focuses on the impact of US states' revenue and expenditure legislation on state economic growth, state infrastructure, credit rating, etc. Previous research focused on the impacts of elderly, both in-migrants and those who age-in-place, on rural communities in the US.



Remote Control: Lessons in Governance as a Resource for Rural and Remote Regions

February 4, 2016

Presenter: Rob Greenwood

Dr. Greenwood is Executive Director, Public Engagement for Memorial University and of the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy Development.



Farm Succession and Inheritance: an Irish perspective on policy and support programs

March 8, 2016

Presenter: Tomás Russell

Tomás Russell is a PhD candidate in the School of Agriculture and Food Science at University College Dublin, Ireland. His PhD research topic is on decision-making by farmers in relation to succession and inheritance.



Rural Labour Mobility: cohesion and social inclusion policy in Europe

March 23, 2016

Presenter: Philomena de Lima

Dr. de Lima is a Sociologist and the Director of the Centre for Remote and Rural Studies at University of the Highlands and Islands, Inverness College. She has a particular interest in exploring the complex and intersecting relationships between 'communities of place' (rural places in particular) and 'communities of interests', challenging normative assumptions about rural places and communities.



Centralized and Decentralized Police Systems: examining citizen trust

March 30, 2016

Presenters: Grichawat Lowatcharin
& Judith Stallman

Dr. Lowatcharin is a faculty member at the College of Local Administration, Khon Kaen University, Thailand. His research interests include governance, decentralization, intergovernmental relations, fiscal federalism, citizen engagement, and transparency.

Dr. Stallmann is a Professor of Agricultural and Applied Economics at the University of Missouri. Her current research focuses on the impact of US states' revenue and expenditure legislation on state economic growth, state infrastructure, credit rating, etc.



International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Program



The 12th Annual International Comparative Rural Policy Studies (ICRPS) Summer Institute was co-hosted by University College Dublin, the National University of Ireland, Galway, and Teagasc, the Irish Agriculture and Food Development Authority. Over 30 faculty and guest speakers and 35 students participated in the 2015 event. The two-week program focused on a number of general themes such as rural policies focused on sustainability, contemporary policy challenges for rural communities, and research and analysis methods. In addition, a number of sessions addressed specific Irish and EU themes: Agriculture and food systems, coastal economies and ecosystem services, rural development, services regional development, social structure and change, and governance. The range of presentations speaking from the Irish and EU context drew special attention to the international and comparative nature of the institute. The wide variety of field excursions were most instructive in terms highlighting Irish approaches to rural labour training, community development, rural entrepreneurship, innovative agricultural practices, and rural tourism, to name a few.

Brandon University's contingent this year included, RDI Director, Bill Ashton, Dr. Bill Reimer, adjunct faculty and RPLC Project Director, Wayne Kelly, RPLC Project Coordinator, Sarah Woods, RPLC Liaison Officer, and Michael Blatherwick, MRD student. Funding was also made available to Gary McNeely to research learning outcomes delivered throughout the ICRPS program.

As a faculty member, Bill Ashton coordinated the session on Contemporary rural policy challenges: Innovation and presented on the "Innovation deficit and systemic challenges with innovation in rural areas." Wayne Kelly also shared in the student learning experience presenting on the impact of the rural-urban digital divide on rural broadband access and use during the session on Access to Services in Rural Areas.

To inquire about the program and scheduled events, contact the event coordinator:

**Dr. Phil Loring, School of Environment and Sustainability,
University of Saskatchewan, phil.loring@usask.ca**

For more information about ICRPS, check out:
<http://icrps.org/>

Participation in Master Thesis Advisory Committees

- Masters Advisory committee member and Thesis Defense committee member for Kelly McRae, City Planning Department, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba.
- Masters Advisory committee member for Naomi Finseth. Department of Rural Development, Brandon University.
- Masters Advisory committee member for Meleanne Searle City Planning Department, Faculty of Architecture, University of Manitoba.
- Masters Advisory committee member for Mehdei Hasan. Faculty of Kinesiology and Recreation Management, University of Manitoba.

ICRPS Consortium Members



Brandon University



Norwegian Agricultural Economics Research Institute in partnership with the Norwegian University of Life Sciences



Oregon State University



Universidad Autònoma de Barcelona



Université du Québec à Rimouski



University of Guelph



University of Highlands and Islands



University of Missouri



Universidad Autónoma del Estado de México



University College Dublin



University of Alaska – Fairbanks



Tuskegee University



Looking Ahead to 2016-2017



New Models for Rural Research



Defining Rural as Place-based

Research on Functional Economic Rural Regions and Self-contained Labour Areas (SLAs) has helped redefine rural places and offers one approach to address rural areas with declining populations. This new approach indicates that these two economic models could serve to adapt and implement specific growth strategies that would be most advantageous to the many distinctive regions in rural Manitoba.

The hard work ahead for such areas involves gaining some size (particularly population) to help turn the tide toward becoming more resilient and better positioned to pursue growth – economical, social, and environmental.



Resources for Growth Strategies in Rural Communities

The emerging model from recent RDI's research suggests population growth in rural communities result from undertaking more initiatives for retaining and attracting people, attracting new businesses, and pursuing regional cooperation. These require using social and political capital, but also for declining communities to shift away from a reliance on built, natural, and cultural capitals. More efforts on evaluation are needed to see what is working and what is not, especially when dealing with limited resources in rural areas.



Welcoming Newcomers

Research regarding immigrations services and the challenges around meeting newcomers' needs continue to show relevance. New research on refugee specific services suggests that partnerships are central for supporting Settlement Service Providers so a broader suite of services and programs can be made available in more rural communities.



Rural Broadband Strategy

This strategy continues to explore dimensions of an earlier research into an Integrated Action Framework (Ashton and Gerard, 2013), which explored how rural communities are advantaged by playing a vital stakeholder role in expanding broadband access and utilization. Doctoral candidate at the University of Galway and MRD alumnus, Wayne Kelly, is examining this stakeholder role by developing an action research project focused on rural youth's access and use of broadband in rural Manitoba.



Commercializing Innovation in Rural Areas

RDI has identified key components of how ideas are the fuel to growth and prosperity in the food processing industry. RDI examined eight very diverse food processors and discerned key aspects of commercializing innovation. These cases will turn these preliminary findings into a more valid model and identify suggested strategies. New research on commercialization in the Agro-food sector has turned RDI's attention to an analysis of the systemic barriers impacting on commercializing innovation in this industry and to investigate the barriers to and supports for developing an innovation culture in southwest Manitoba.



Promising Applied Research Method

Based on diversity across a number of projects, RDI's recent research highlights the successful nature of qualitative research methods. This method is critical for projects with limited funding and time, yet carries with them high expectations for trustworthy results both by those participating in the study and those wanting to inform public policy. This model, utilized in projects such as the Bulk-Food and the Immigration Settlement Service studies, seeks to strengthen findings by validating results across many different stakeholders and by drawing on a sample that is purposefully very diverse.



RDI Team



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