

RESEARCH ACTIVITIES UPDATE

SPRING 2016

Innovation in the Manitoba Agri-Food Sector



The Rural Development Institute has commenced work on a new two-year applied research project with a main goal 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 (2015). This project is unique in that it focuses on innovation in rural Manitoba, a less studied area, where limited information exists about the commercialization aspects of innovation. One objective is to identify and address systemic barriers impacting on commercializing innovation. Another objective is to investigate the innovation culture and risk-adversity in southwest Manitoba.

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101 Ideas for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

The Growing Forward 2 funded 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 reaches 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.

The key deliverable of this project is to make these business snap-shots publically accessible so as 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.

**For more information on this project, contact:
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Cornell Crème Limited



Owner: Lisa Dyck
Product: Ice Cream
Established: 2013
Market: Local
Number of Employees: one
Website: www.cornellcreme.com



Manitoba
Assiniboia

"Food is very personal and everyone seems to love ice cream"

The Business
Lisa Dyck, owner of Cornell Crème Limited, started her business in her kitchen in 2013. Lisa was inspired to make an artisan ice cream she and her husband William were a 100% organic farm in Assiniboia, Manitoba and the cream was produced using the milk from their farm. By creating Cornell Crème, Lisa developed a local and real product that is made by hand. The business is owned and operated by the North Delta Community Centre in North Delta and Lisa and William work in a retail food service, restaurant and farm-to-table throughout Manitoba.

The Motive and Skills
Lisa chose to bring her business to rural Manitoba for two reasons. First, it's where her heart is and second, she believes Manitoba is a great place to have a business because of its natural resources, distribution channels and networks.

A Place of Advice from Lisa
"If you're really, especially if you're in a rural area, you need to be able to explain what you're doing and why you're doing it. You need to be able to explain what you're doing and why you're doing it. You need to be able to explain what you're doing and why you're doing it."

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www.BrandonU.ca/RDI

101 ideas
for Innovation and Entrepreneurship

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Economic Models and Regional Layers in Rural Manitoba



This research project arose from the stakeholder conversations generated during Rural Works!: A Rural Policy Think Tank, which was coordinated by RDI in November 2014, and resulted in a recommendation to approach economic activities based on functional economic regions.

The purpose of this project was to further investigate economic models used to determine functional economic rural regions (FERRs) and take a closer look at the regional complexities in rural Manitoba. The goal of the project was to provide data and analysis that could be used to inform the ongoing conversation about economic development in rural Manitoba. This project examined Canadian examples of economic models to establish FERRs and used census data to improve our understanding 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.*

The project's findings are currently being finalized. 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 (*see www.brandonu.ca/rdi/wp-content/blogs.dir/116/files/2015/08/Growth-Strategies-for-Rural-Communities-A-Preliminary-Investigation.pdf*).

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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Innovation in the Manitoba Agri-Food Sector Cont...

The project researchers will be:

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

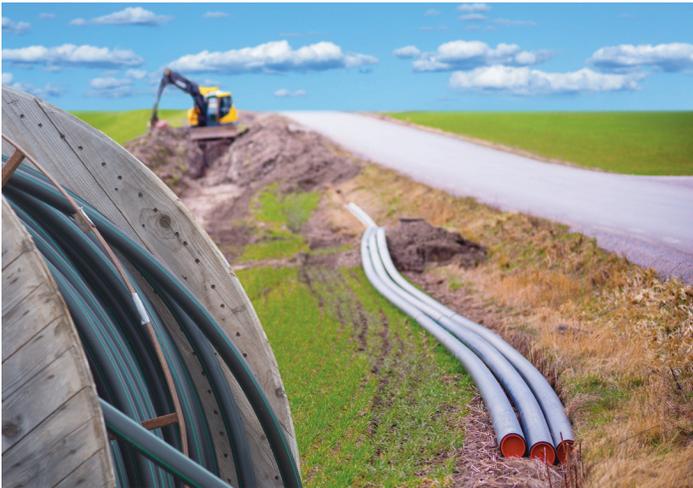
To date, the literature review is underway as are the initial series of interviews with the Agri-food innovators and stakeholders.

This project, funded by Growing Forward 2, 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 Manitoba Food Development Centre.

**For more information on this project, contact:
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This research builds on RDI's recent efforts to understand the nature, timing and added value of innovation in the Agri-Food sector (2015).

Digital Action in Rural Manitoba



Rural broadband has been around Manitoba for some time, yet a clear picture on the state of rural broadband in Manitoba has not been taken. Nor has any systematic effort been made to offer suggestions for taking advantage of this technology for the social and economic betterment of rural regions and communities. This research project's two main goals include filling in this knowledge gap and providing recommendations on how to realize the benefits of expanding access to and use of rural broadband in Manitoba.

The snapshot of rural broadband in Manitoba used an analysis of a range of data sets from:

- ▶ *CRTC and Industry Canada on Internet Service Providers focusing on their respective type and speed of broadband delivery to estimate how well households in rural areas are served, and*
- ▶ *Census Canada's National Household Survey and RDI's data on Self-contained Labor Areas*

This analysis led to the development of five maps each comparing estimated underserved households against a series of variables. The overview provided a comprehensive picture of both access to and use of broadband in the province's southern region. Further analysis led to recommendations intended to focus on provincial level efforts and outcomes.

Actions for improving rural broadband ACCESS:

1. *Provide incentives for Internet Service Providers to expand broadband networks to meet broadband targets in currently underserved areas of rural Manitoba;*
2. *Provide financing for rural municipalities and regions to develop their own broadband networks with priority given to areas with limited access to broadband; and*
3. *Encourage rural businesses and community organizations to invest in broadband infrastructure and their Internet presence through tax incentives/small grants.*

Actions for increasing rural broadband USE:

1. *Establish Broadband Plans at Provincial and Community levels to implement Next Generation Access as minimum broadband levels so rural municipalities can become more competitive;*

2. *Develop Benchmarks to evaluate progress in broadband access, literacy and use;*
3. *Support digital literacy development across a broad range of skills with an emphasis on education, labor force training and citizen engagement;*
4. *Ensure governments in rural municipalities and regions are leaders in developing local content and using digital tools to engage local residents; and*
5. *Conduct more research on rural broadband in other rural municipalities and regions.*

These action plans will require leadership 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.

NATIONAL CONTEXT

“In the absence of government direction, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), Canada’s telecommunications regulator, has defined aspirational minimum service quality targets, stating that speeds of 5 Mbps (download) and 1 Mbps (upload) should be available to all Canadians by the end of 2015.”

Rajabiun & Middleton, 2013

NATIONAL CONTEXT

“Currently, 2 million rural households across Canada are under-served with broadband.”

Ashton & Girard, 2013

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

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Shelterbelts and Agricultural Greenhouse Gases

Over the course of 5 years, this project involved beef producers and examined the importance of alley cropping and shelterbelts on the prairies. Throughout the term of the project, the series of surveys and consultations have consistently shown that most agricultural producers are aware of the benefits of shelterbelts in preventing soil erosion and sheltering livestock, and that many producers have them on their properties.

To close out this project, two final legacy pieces were completed. The first was an inventory and mapping of shelterbelts in the landscape, and a comparative analysis of changes in shelterbelt density, spatial distribution and fragmentation from the late 1970s to late 2000. This work was conducted in conjunction with Dr. Dion Wiseman from BU's Geography Department and student, Samantha Smyth.

The second and final stage to the project was the completion of a strategic proposal, Prairie Shelterbelts: Working Trees. 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: www.prairieshelterbelts.ca

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

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Settlement Services for Immigrants and Refugees



Over the last year RDI completed a research project called "Immigration Settlement Services and Gaps in Citizenship and Immigration Canada's Western Region." The final report draws attention to the findings from 32 individual case studies providing a comprehensive analysis of settlement services in the representative communities from across the four western provinces and the three territories. In total, 160 senior officials from the communities and regions were interviewed in the consultative process. 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.

A complete set of the project's reports is available at: www.brandonu.ca/rdi/publication/immigration-settlement-services-and-gaps-in-citizenship-and-immigration-canadas-western-region/ & www.umanitoba.ca/faculties/arts/research/immigration/3747.html.

This research was funded by Citizenship and Immigration Canada (CIC) through Immigration Research West (IRW) at the University of Manitoba and directed by the Rural Development Institute (RDI) of Brandon University.

The completion of this project continues to show RDI's capacity and leadership in the area of labour and immigration. It also provided the background and rationale for further research on a new project focused on settlement services provided to refugees. This project has some urgency given that Canada 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 settling in various areas of 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 both in the short and long term.

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

For more information on both projects, contact:

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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 1960s when the first CF was established outside of Winnipeg in Brandon, 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 framework for calculating the direct economic impact based on donor contributions to the community foundation, and expenditures. Indirect economic impacts were estimated by applying a return on investment value 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 size of the grant that CFs contributes to projects, their real value was helping to leverage the dollars necessary to secure other government funding for much larger projects.

This research was funded through The Winnipeg Foundation

For more information on this project, contact:
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Learning Outcomes in Rural Policy



A central goal of the Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) is to sustain an open dialogue between researchers, students, policy practitioners, government agencies and community stakeholders on issues of comparative rural policy. Acknowledging that this conversation is dependent on the breadth and depth of knowledge, skills, and training around rural policy such representatives can bring to the table, the RPLC included a graduate certificate in international comparative rural policy as a key deliverable. Since training is central to its mandate, RDI has taken up this challenge as a new research project, whose central question is: what subject areas could constitute a graduate certificate in rural policy analysis for an increasingly globalized world? This project team has undertaken two major activities to help resolve this question:

- ▶ *A comparative case analysis of 22 Canadian Masters of Public Policy (MPP) and Public Administration (MPA) programs and the learning undertaken at the 2015 International Comparative Rural Policy Study (ICRPS) Summer Institute in Ireland.*
- ▶ *A consultation with rural policy experts from Canada, the USA, and the EU to inform the design and delivery of this certificate.*

The case study, which is in the peer-review process, revealed a number of key findings that could inform discussions on the new graduate certificate:

- ▶ *Close to 75% of the learning outcomes in the ICRPS institute correspond to the majority of the 33 subject areas in the 22 graduate programs organized similarly into four domains (Analysis & Skills, Institutions & Context, Management Functions, Policy Sectors)*
- ▶ *Subtle percentage differences between the subject areas in the four domains (e.g. Policy Sectors and Institutions and Context) suggests the relative importance of subject areas in the 22 programs and the ICRPS institute*
- ▶ *Study of rural issues appeared to be de-emphasized in the 22 graduate programs even in subject areas such as agriculture and resources, or the environment and sustainability.*

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 from the USA and EU are expected to follow through 2016.

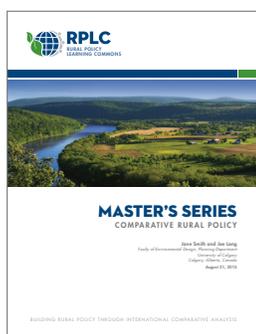
Funding for this research was provided by RDI and the RPLC.

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Rural Policy Learning Commons

To close out the Rural Policy Learning Commons (RPLC) activities this year, all 12 Research and Knowledge Mobilization teams, along with the RPLC Secretariat, converged on Montreal in March for a strategic planning meeting. Team leads outlined this year's achievements, and the entire group identified a number of key action items. A few of note include:

- ▶ *Developing a new RPLC communications strategy*
- ▶ *Reviewing how social media tools can aid in disseminating information to members*
- ▶ *Identifying new strategic European partners and re-engaging with current partners*
- ▶ *Increasing the presence of RPLC members at focus events and conferences*



The RPLC expanded its presence through a number of notable developments. The launch of the Rural Policy Master's Series, an online journal, will give graduate students an opportunity to publish on research dealing with rural and regional development and comparative rural policy. The journal is a collaborative effort between the Università Di Bologna, Italy and the Rural

Development Institute, Brandon University. For more information, check out the journal webpage: www.journals.brandonu.ca/rpms. The Rural Routes Podcasts (RRP) venture was also started. The podcasts offer interviews of academic researchers, farmers, artists, and rural entrepreneurs, etc., who have something to say about living rural in the 21st century. For more information, visit: ruralroutespodcasts.com.

The RPLC has continued to be active in hosting webinars. Since October 6 events have attracted an audience of over 120 national and international participants. Topics have ranged from rural seasonal labour, rural labour mobility and rural governance to philanthropy in rural regions, farm succession, and policing policy.



Financial and logistical support through the RPLC has been provided for learning events and activities such as the International Comparative Rural Policy Studies Summer Institute as well as the 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 www.rplc-capr.ca, or contact:

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Knowledge Dissemination

Webinars

(Hosted by RDI at Brandon University with the RPLC):

Teresa MacNeil, Arthur Bull, Ryan Gibson, & Kathleen Kevany (2015, November 24).
Philanthropy in Rural Nova Scotia.

Lidia Carvajal & Judith Stallman (2016, January 27).
Canada's Seasonal Agricultural Workers Program: Motivations of Mexican Workers.

Rob Greenwood (2016, February 4).
Remote Control: Lessons in Governance as a Resource for Rural and Remote Regions.

Tomás Russell (2016, March 8).
Farm Succession and Inheritance: an Irish perspective on policy and support programs.

Philomena de Lima (2016, March 23).
Rural Labor Mobility: cohesion and social inclusion policy in Europe.

Grichawat Lowarcharin & Judith Stallman (2016, March 30).
Centralized and Decentralized Police Systems: examining citizen trust

Publications and Reports

Smyth, S., Wiseman, D. J., Richards, G., & Canart, R. (2016).
Inventories of shelterbelts In the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District and Manitoba. Rural Development Institute, Brandon University

Journal Articles

Ashton, B., Kelly, W. & Bollman, R. (2016).
Municipalities Amalgamate in Manitoba: Moving towards Rural Regions.
Underneath the Golden Boy, 38(2), 123-154.

Ashton, W., Pettigrew, R. N., & Galatsanou, E. (2016).
Immigration settlement service organizations' report of capacity and partnership in rural western Canada.
Manuscript submitted for publication.

Hallstron, L. K., Ashton, W., Bollman, R., Gibson, R., & Johnson, T. (2016).
Policy Design in Rural Manitoba: Alternatives and Opportunities in the Midst of Change.
Underneath the Golden Boy, 38(2), 184-219.

Pettigrew, R. N., Ashton, W., & Galatsanou, E. (2016).
Rural Settlement Services in Western Canada: An Inventory and Opportunity Assessment.
Canadian Diversity, 13(1), 34-38.

Presentations

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.

Richards, G. (with Smyth, S., & Lemky, K.) (2015, December 7 & 8).
Prairie Shelterbelts: Working Trees? Workshop presented at the 40th Manitoba Conservation Districts Association Conference. Brandon, MB.

Richards, G. (2015, December).
Watershed Success: Collaboration - UARCD & BU's RDI. presented at the 40th Manitoba Conservation Districts Association Conference. Brandon, MB.

Richards, G. (2016, February).
Working Trees? Shelterbelts, GHG Mitigation and Climate Change Adaptation. Presented at Climate Change and Climate Friendly Agriculture Practice, MAFRD, Winnipeg, MB.

Smyth, S. (2015, December).
Update and Comparative Analysis of Shelterbelts in the Upper Assiniboine River Conservation District (UARCD) of Manitoba. Presented at the 40th Manitoba Conservation Districts Association Conference. Brandon, MB.

Journal of Rural and Community Development

RDI continues to take an active role in supporting the publication and distribution of the Journal of Rural and Community Development (JRCD). Dr. Doug Ramsey, Chair of BU's Department of Rural Development, remains chief editor of the JRCD.

Volume 10(4) was published with 5 articles, 1 case study and 1 policy evaluation. The articles included topics climate-induced migration in South Asia, education and workforce as determinants of economic growth, youth in-migrations in Nova Scotia, on and off-farm income in Kansas, and rural-urban regional partnerships. The case study focused on medicinal and aromatic plants as alternative crops for rural development in Turkey, while the policy evaluation dealt with rural homelessness in Canada.

For more information, see:
www.journals.brandonu.ca/jrcd/



Looking Forward to Tomorrow:

This spring marks the closure of the current funding agreement between the Government of Manitoba's Department of Manitoba Agriculture, Food, and Rural Development, Brandon University, and Rural Development Institute. These latest five-years have been very fruitful. Applied research projects in a number of key provincial priorities have continued to bear positive insights in areas such as immigration and rural community development as well as moved to embrace new initiatives in terms of agricultural innovation and commercialization, and rural broadband. The Rural Development Institute welcomes the opportunity to forge a new agreement so that it is better able to participate with rural regions and stakeholders in meeting their needs, challenges and aspirations.

Upcoming Events

International Comparative Rural Policy Studies

Summer Institute 2016, July 14-26

Hosted by the University of Alaska, Fairbanks

Building Vibrant Rural Futures: Mobilizing Knowledge and Informing Policy - 2016 CRRF-RPLC Conference

Guelph, Ontario, October 12-15, 2016

www.brandonu.ca/rdi

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.

Strategic Research Direction

To respond to rural trends, challenges, and opportunities, the needs of various stakeholders, and the necessity to sustain a viable organization, RDI is committed to pursue five strategic research directions: rural immigration, regional economic development, governance and capacity building, rural infrastructure and services, and rural innovation. These directions build on both past and current 20 research initiatives, and will also incorporate emerging research needs and contribute both directly and indirectly to BU's strategic plan, academic plan, and research plan.

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