

co-operatives first

Small Towns Need a New Approach

Ideas for Service Delivery and Policy



About us

- Who we are
- What we do
- How we do what we do
- How what we do helps communities



Overview

- Where we started
- New challenges
- New Approaches
- Cases from Rural Canada
- New Ideas and Policy Implications





WHERE WE STARTED



Rural Communities

- Declining populations
- Challenging market conditions
- Problems with succession planning
- Focus on investment attraction
- Challenging business retention



Decline in Services

- Co-operative Innovation Project:
 - Policy environment
 - Changing demographics
 - Top 10 Needs
- Need a new approach





NEW CHALLENGES



The Pandemic

- Accelerated business challenges
- New possibilities for small towns
- Appreciation for local
- Sizeable government spending



The Aftermath

- Business-not-as-usual
- Government austerity
- New service gaps
- Desire for new approaches



A group of people are gathered around a wooden table in a meeting. Several hands are visible, some pointing at documents or blueprints spread across the table. One person is holding a silver pen. In the foreground, a black coffee mug is slightly out of focus. The overall scene suggests a collaborative work environment.

NEW APPROACH



New approaches

- BIA to BRE
- Homegrown solutions
- Invest in ourselves
- Co-operative ownership



Mossbank, SK

- Population: 360
- Unable to age in place
- Furrows and Faith Retirement Villa Co-operative
- Fundraising, donations, volunteerism
- New approach to housing



Hamiota, MB

- Population: 850
- High speed fibre optic network
- Park West Fibre Optic Co-operative
- Opportunities for greater connectivity, remote work
- New approach to infrastructure



Sangudo, AB

- Population: 300
- Problems with succession planning, access to capital
- Sangudo Opportunity Development Co-operative
- New approach to financing



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NEW IDEAS AND POLICY IMPACTS



New Approaches

- New approach for accessing services
- New approach for financing new businesses
- Increasing appreciation for local
- New opportunities for small towns



Policy Impacts

- Big role for local government
- Shift from BIA to BRE
- Leverage existing programs
- Incentives and support for local endeavors
- Flexibility at provincial and federal levels





HOW WE HELP



Co-operatives First

- Tools and resources
- Business planning and feasibility analysis
- Advising and support
- Online courses and workshops



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**THANK YOU!
QUESTIONS?**



Stay in Touch

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