



Understanding the New Rural Economy: Options and Choices
 a project of
The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
 August 2004

The New Rural Economy Project (NRE) is a nine-year research and education program focusing on rural Canada. It is a collaborative undertaking bringing together policy-analysts, rural leaders, researchers, the business community, and government agencies at all levels to identify and address vital rural issues. It is conducted at the national level with historical and statistical data analysis, and at the local level with case studies involving community and household surveys.

The project produces:

- **learning forums** to discuss and debate opportunities, options, and choices that include the interests of all rural Canadians and stakeholders;
- documented **recommendations** for long run rural business performance, inclusive development, and public policy; and
- **informed questions** on new issues, unimaginable in the present, but requiring timely answers for the future.

For the first 5 years we have been guided by the questions: ***What are the major changes taking place in rural Canada?*** and ***What are some of their consequences?*** We have identified how:

- rural Canada has been devitalized by globalization, urbanization, and policy processes;
- traditional institutions have limited capacity to deal with these challenges; and
- urban interests are directly served by a strong rural economy, society, and environment.

For the final 4 years we will be guided by the question: ***How can we build capacity so that rural Canada can revitalize in the face of these challenges?*** Our answers reflect 4 research themes:

- **Governance** – to explore new formal and informal political and social institutions;
- **Services** – to examine innovations in service delivery;
- **Environment** – to explore improved management of natural resources; and
- **Communications** – to examine innovations in communications.

Since its inauguration in May, 1997 the project has held 16 national meetings, prepared over 200 reports and presentations, established a Centre for rural data, profiled 32 carefully selected rural sites, and organized a network of more than 11 partners, 15 researchers, 13 universities, and seven government departments in all provinces and territories of Canada. Through its connection with the Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation (CRRF), the NRE project has involved over 100 partners and created a research and education network of international stature.

Representation from Canada is complemented by colleagues from Europe, Mexico, and Japan.

For further information see the CRRF Web site: <http://www.crrf.ca>
 or the NRE Web page: <http://nre.concordia.ca>

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SUMMARY OF ACCOMPLISHMENTS
August, 2004

Selected Research Activities

- A **Rural Observatory**: 32 rural sites selected to represent 5 critical comparisons:
 - exposure to the global economy
 - stability of the local economy
 - adjacency to metropolitan regions
 - levels of institutional capacity
 - leading or lagging status (with 2 additional Japanese sites on this last dimension)
- A **Rural Canada Database**: census and survey data on rural Canada (1986, 1991, 1996, 2001)
- The **NRE Database**: site level data on the history, major events, enterprises, cooperatives, voluntary associations, communications, governance, and local resources for NRE and Japanese field sites.
- The **NRE Household Database**: Interview information from 1,995 households in 20 NRE field sites in Canada and 2 field sites in Japan.
- **Network and Learning Forums**:
 - National Workshops (North Bay ON, 1997; St. Donat QC, 1998; Newtown NL, 1999; Nanaimo BC, 2000; Sackville NB, 2001; Altona MB, 2002; Ferintosh, AB, 2003; Prince George BC, 2004)
 - National Conferences (Lot 16 PEI, 1997; Nelson BC, 1998; Trois Pistoles QC, 1999; Alfred ON, 2000; Meunster SK, 2001; Mirimachi, 2002; Gatineau QC, 2003; Tweed ON, 2004)

Selected Research Products

- **A Preliminary History of Rural Development Policy and Programmes, 1945-1995**
- **Analysis of Leading and Lagging CSDs in Rural Canada**
- **Economic Integration and Isolation of First Nations Communities: An Exploratory Review**
- **Access to Federal Government Services in Rural Canada: Field Site Findings**
- **Predictability and Trapping: Under Conditions of Globalization of Agricultural Trade**
- **Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada: Survey Results**
- **An Education Strategy for Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada**
- **Leading and Lagging Sites in Rural Canada: a Literature Review**
- **Leading and Lagging CSDs: Statistical Summary**
- **Self-Employment in Rural Canada: Statistical Summary**
- **Factors of Growth in Rural Regions: Canadian Case Studies**
- **Long Run Role of Institutions in Fostering Community Economic Development**
- **A Sample Frame for Rural Canada Design and Evaluation**
- **Sustaining Care at Home in Small Rural Communities**
- **Opportunities and Actions in the New Rural Economy**
- **Les conditions gagnantes pour réussir le développement des communautés rurales**
- **Building Community in an Instant Town: A Social Geography of 2 BC Towns**
- **Les enjeux des résistances de la société acadienne**
- **Tumbler Ridge Community Transition Survey 2001**
- **Information Needs - Internet Opportunities and Constraints**
- **The Informal Economy in Rural Canada**

NOTE: Several of these items can be found via the NRE web page: <http://nre.concordia.ca>