



Initiative on the New Economy

**Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places:
A Report for Hussar, Alberta**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
Initiative on the New Economy - About the Project	3
About the Service Inventory	4
Availability	5
Site Description - Hussar, Alberta	6
Population Profile - Hussar, Alberta	7
Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places	8
Education	8
Health	9
Protection Services	10
Legal Services	11
Financial Services	11
Communications	12
Elderly and Childcare Services	12
Government Services	13
Community Services	14
Transportation	14
Recreational Services	15
Shopping	16
Economic Development Organizations	18
Housing	18
Challenges and Opportunities for Hussar, Alberta	19
Sources of Interest	20

INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY - ABOUT THE PROJECT

The *Initiative on the New Economy* project of the Canadian Rural and Restructuring Foundation works closely with residents, service providers, voluntary organizations, business members, and decision makers to identify factors that contribute to building capacity in rural and small town places across Canada. Capacity is the ability of people residing in a place to mobilize their assets and resources to cope with stress and transition, or to capitalize on opportunities. Such capacity is built from trust and relationships grounded in institutions, organizations, businesses, and services alike. The Initiative on the New Economy is built on four key themes to explore capacity including *local governance, communications, services, and the environment*. This report explores the relationship between services and capacity.

The Services Research Centre conducted site profile surveys in the summer of 2003. This is the third survey conducted since 1998 with a goal to track services over time. Services play two key functions in building capacity. First, services help rural and small towns to cope with restructuring and transition as a result of economic downturns or even plant closures. Job losses stemming from industrial restructuring or closure can place increased demands on local services for education and training, welfare, counselling, health care, and other support services. Without such services, residents would have to cope with the additional burden of having to leave their town to access assistance. Job and service losses present a significant challenge to rural and small towns places working on revitalization.

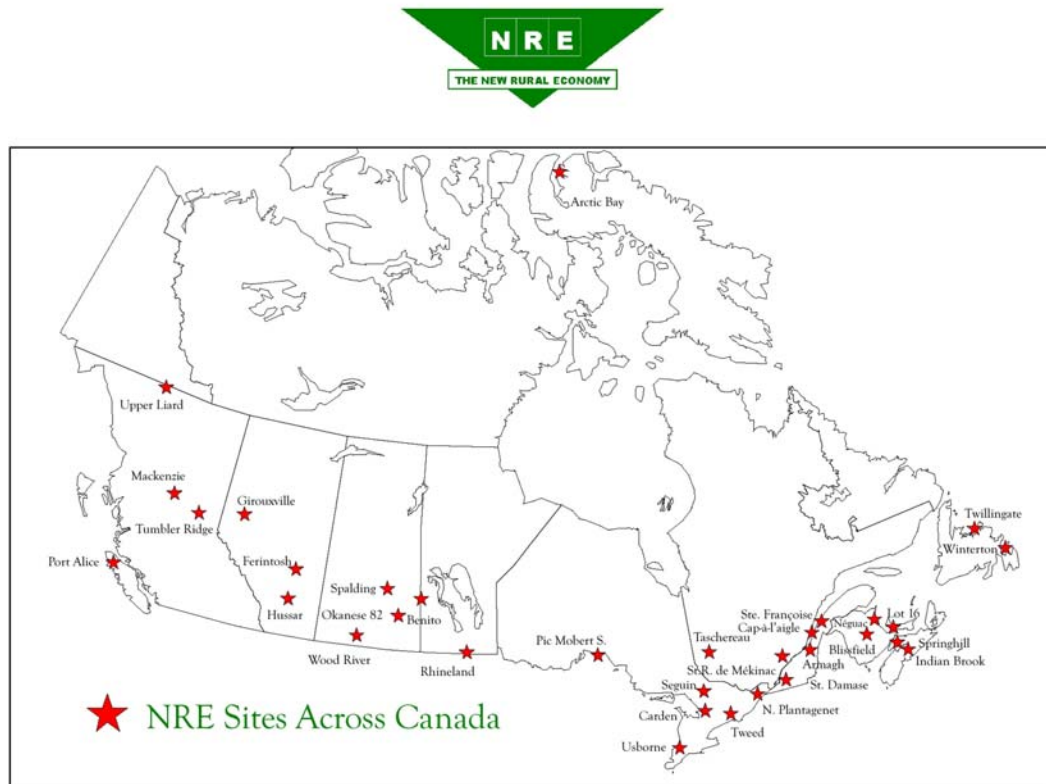
Second, services provide opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust. Together, these can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. For example, schools or senior centres can act as multi-functional facilities for the community where local volunteer groups, sporting clubs, local theatre, and others can do their work in the absence of other facilities. Another example might be the way that post offices can act as a one stop shop for a range of government services. This report focuses on the current service provision levels in rural and small town Canada. In particular, this report will compare the availability of services in Hussar, Alberta with services available in other research sites across Canada, as well as with services available in other study sites within Western Canada. In each of these tables in this report, the availability of services in Hussar is compared to the 22 sites surveyed across Canada and to the 8 study sites in Western Canada.

ABOUT THE SERVICE INVENTORY

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation has been conducting research in 32 rural and small town sites from across Canada. These sites form a type of “rural observatory” in which aspects of the *Initiative on the New Economy* project may be examined. The sites participating in this project reflect the diversity of the Canadian landscape, and include forestry and mining towns, farming communities, and tourism towns. Furthermore, some of these places are located adjacent to metropolitan areas, while others are more isolated.

In the summer of 2003, researchers visited 22 sites across Canada to update a service provision inventory. Data were collected to examine the availability of a range of services including:

education	community
health	transportation
protection services	recreational
legal	basic shopping
business services	commercial shopping
communication	economic development organizations
elderly and childcare	housing
government	



AVAILABILITY

Copies of all site reports on services availability were distributed within to participating sites. Additionally, copies have been posted on the INE website (nre.concordia.ca) and on Greg Halseth's website (<http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>).

Copies of the larger *Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Canada* report are available in a number of locations. At the University of Northern British Columbia, copies have been deposited at the Weller Library or can be accessed on Greg Halseth's website: <http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>. Copies are also available on the website of the Initiative of the New Economy at: nre.concordia.ca.

For further information about this report or other available reports on services, please contact Greg Halseth at:

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INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY - SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES: A REPORT FOR HUSSAR, ALBERTA

Site Description - Hussar, Alberta

Located in southern Alberta, Hussar's economy is based on agriculture, oil and gas, services, and retirement. The village is 100 km east of Calgary. The population of 181 has been increasing slowly in recent years.

The forthcoming removal of grain elevators, with the imminent closure of the CPR branchline, weighs heavily on the community. Loss of the elevators will result in a substantial reduction in the tax base for the village. The continuing struggle to retain the high school has unified a wider community, providing much of the glue holding the community together.

Farms are consolidating as farmers retire without a willing successor, or give up because of high land prices. Very large commercial private operations and Hutterite colonies compete for the land. The colonies are relatively closed communities with their own schools and social arrangements. Consolidation and considerable historical foreign ownership are weakening commerce, thinning the school population and diluting social life for Hussar.

Good road transportation, low cost housing, and lifestyle are attracting people who work elsewhere to live in Hussar. The wide open rolling topography with its grassland ecology and the large dried marshy bed of Deadhorse Lake are viewed as amenities by the citizens. The economy is restructuring as its former commercial hinterland gives way to the influence and opportunities of its adjacency to Calgary. However, Hussar has also capitalized on its recreational facilities by selling ice time at the local arena to people as far away as Calgary.



POPULATION PROFILE - HUSSAR, ALBERTA

The population of Hussar, Alberta has grown from 157 residents in 1996 to 181 residents in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2001). Overall, it still has a family oriented population that includes a substantial population of seniors. This has important implications when planning the delivery of a range of services, such as recreational, educational, health, and senior services. A challenge facing this community is youth out-migration. Of particular interest, most of the newcomers to the village have been female. Today, the gender distribution in Hussar is evenly split.

Population	Site: Hussar		
	Total	Male	Female
Population in 2001	181	90	90
Population in 1996	157	85	75
1996 to 2001 population change (%)	15.3	5.9	20.0
Total - All persons	180	90	90
Age 0-4	15	10	5
Age 5-14	25	10	15
Age 15-19	15	5	5
Age 20-24	15	5	5
Age 25-44	55	25	25
Age 45-54	20	10	10
Age 55-64	20	10	10
Age 65-74	20	10	5
Age 75-84	10	0	5
Age 85 and over	0	0	0
Median age of the population	36.5%	40.0%	34.5%

Source: Statistics Canada 2001.

SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES

Services play an important role in retaining and attracting residents and businesses as they enhance local quality of life. However, rural and small town places across Canada are experiencing tremendous change stemming from economic and social restructuring in an increasing global economy. As a result of industrial restructuring, some small towns have been experiencing population declines. At the same time, federal and provincial government policies have been withdrawing some of the service infrastructure that can provide a foundation for revitalizing rural and small town places and assist residents to cope with stress. Some rural and small town places adjusted to transition through establishing innovative services or diversifying their local economies. These types of innovation suggest one way by which services help to build capacity within a place.

Services also help to build capacity by providing opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust, which subsequently can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. Together, services can help to enhance local quality of life and mitigate out-migration from rural and small town places.

Educational Services

Educational institutions are playing a changing role in maintaining quality of life in rural and small town places. Schools have provided other amenities through their libraries, theatres, and art galleries in places that would otherwise not have access to such services. They have also played a larger economic development role. Community colleges can provide skilled and professional workers, act as a broker of services, and act as a repository of information. They can also design programs and services that are relevant and respond to the changing labour market conditions of small places.

Table 1: Availability of Education Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Pre-school/kindergarten	50.0%	62.5%	Y	
Elementary school	63.6%	62.5%	Y	
High school	27.3%	37.5%	Y	
CEGEP / College	18.2%	25.0%	X	X
Continuing Education	27.3%	37.5%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Results indicate that educational services are available in a greater proportion of sites in Western Canada when compared to the total sites across Canada (Table 1). Furthermore, more than half the sites in Western Canada provide early childhood educational services, including pre-school and elementary school services. Early childhood education services, as well as a high school are

available in Hussar. To access continuing education, Hussar residents must travel 52 kilometres to Drumheller. To attend the closest community college, residents must travel 112 kilometres to Calgary.

Health Services

Health services play an important role in attracting new labour and retaining residents. However, during times of economic and social restructuring, closures in hospitals and the centralization of physical and mental health services can be difficult on the elderly and the poor who do not have access to a vehicle and who live in a place with limited transportation services. However, it is not just the utility of health services that is of concern, but also the potential loss of health care jobs that can lead to a further decline in the local economy and population.

Table 2a: Availability of Health Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Hospital	18.2%	25.0%	X	X
Health centre / CLSC	27.3%	25.0%	X	X
Medical clinic	40.9%	50.0%	Y	
Blood / urine testing facility	36.4%	37.5%	X	X
X-ray facility	22.7%	37.5%	X	X
Baby delivery facility	4.5%	12.5%	X	X
CT scan facility	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Pharmacy	40.9%	37.5%	X	X
Ambulance	36.4%	37.5%	X	X
Emergency services	18.2%	25.0%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Health care facilities are limited in most of the rural and small towns examined (Table 2a). Of particular interest is that fewer than 40% of sites have a health centre, hospital, or pharmacy, and just over one-third of the sites have ambulance services. This carries important implications for residents commuting for medical emergencies or health care reasons. However, half of the sites in Western Canada have a medical clinic. Overall, medical facilities are more available in Western Canadian sites when compared to the national sample. Residents in Hussar may access medical services at the part-time medical clinic. However, other health care facilities are located more than 30 minutes away in Drumheller and Strathmore.

The availability of health care professionals is also limited in small places (Table 2b). In fact, only home care visits are available in more than half of the sites. Even those services deemed as essential, such as doctors, are only located in just over 35% of the sites across Canada. Sites in Western Canada are slightly better equipped with health care services when compared to the national sample. The majority of sites in Western Canada have a medical clinic, doctors, home care visits, a public health nurse, and even speech therapy. In Hussar, home care visits are provided as needed. A public health nurse and speech therapy are also available locally on a

part-time basis. Many other health care services are accessible just over 30 minutes away in Drumheller and Strathmore. However, some specialized health care services, notably a dental surgeon, as well as the Victorian Order of Nurses, are accessible over an hour away in Calgary.

Table 2b: Availability of Health Professionals - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Doctors	36.4%	50.0%	X	X
Nurses	36.4%	37.5%	X	X
Dentists	27.3%	12.5%	X	X
Dental surgeons	9.1%	0.0%	X	X
Optometrists	18.2%	25.0%	X	X
Home care visits	54.5%	75.0%	Y	
VON	13.6%	0.0%	X	X
Social workers	22.7%	12.5%	X	X
Public health nurse	31.8%	50.0%	Y	
Physiotherapy	22.7%	25.0%	X	X
Speech therapy	31.8%	50.0%	Y	
Occupational therapy	13.6%	12.5%	X	X
Respite care	22.7%	12.5%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Protection Services

Protection services contribute to community capacity in a number of ways. For example, volunteer fire departments and various crime watch programs provide opportunities for community involvement and interaction, both of which can build trust and leadership.

Table 3: Availability of Protection Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Police (Local / RCMP)	22.7%	25.0%	X	Y
Fire department	68.2%	87.5%	Y	
911 emergency line	86.4%	100.0%	Y	
Neighbourhood Watch	31.8%	37.5%	Y	
Rural Crime Watch	13.6%	25.0%	Y	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Protection services are more available than most other service areas (Table 3). Most notably, fire departments and 911 are in more than half the sites across Canada. Local police or RCMP services are limited in sites across Canada overall, including sites in Western Canada. A range of protection services are available in Hussar, including a volunteer fire department, 911 service,

a neighbourhood watch program, and a rural crime watch program. The closest communities to offer policing services are located just under 50 kilometres away in Gleichen and Bassano.

Legal Services

Legal services are another example of specialized services that are often not found in rural areas. The absence of legal services has important implications as residents must commute to go to court, to access legal services to prepare wills or purchase real estate, or have passports or affidavits signed.

Overall, legal services are very limited in the INE sites across Canada (Table 4). In this case, half of the sites in Western Canada have a notary public, including Hussar. The closest community with lawyers is Standard, 31 kilometres away, and the closest places with a court are more than 30 minutes away in Strathmore and Drumheller.

Table 4: Availability of Legal Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Lawyer	18.2%	12.5%	X	Y
Notary	40.9%	50.0%	Y	
Court	18.2%	25.0%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Financial Services

Businesses also play a role in providing a range of activities that enhance the quality of life of a place, as well as the economic viability and stability of the place. Business members also play an important role in community development as they can provide leadership in volunteer groups either as members or in a leadership role. Small local businesses are also an important source for fundraisers and sponsor specific local organizations or events.

Overall, credit unions, ATMs, and insurance offices are found in half the sites across Canada (Table 5). More than half the Western Canada sites also have a credit union, ATMs, and insurance offices. This has important implications for not just retaining residents, but also for retaining and attracting businesses as well. In Hussar, there is a credit union, an ATM, an insurance office, and an industrial park. Other financial services, including real estate and accounting services, are accessible within 30 minutes of Hussar. In fact, accounting services are available at a home-based business on a farm just four kilometres outside of Hussar.

Table 5: Availability of Business Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Banks	36.4%	37.5%	X	X
Credit Union / Caisse Populaire	50.0%	62.5%	Y	
ATM	50.0%	62.5%	Y	
Micro-financing	9.1%	25.0%	X	X
Insurance office	50.0%	62.5%	Y	
Industrial park	22.7%	37.5%	Y	
Real estate	18.2%	12.5%	X	Y
Accounting	45.5%	42.9%	X	Y

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Communications

Connectivity is crucial in the new economy. Communication services also allow residents to maintain contact with family and friends. With improved communication infrastructure, such as telephone services, Internet, and cell phone service, rural and small town places can attract businesses that no longer have to be located in cities, and they can improve local employment opportunities. They can also use communications services to support business networks.

Table 6: Availability of Communication Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Cell phone – analog	86.4%	87.5%	Y	
Cell phone – digital	40.9%	25.0%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Overall, analog cell phone service is widely available across the INE sites in Canada, including Hussar (Table 6). Almost 41% of the sites also enjoy digital cell phone service. Fewer sites in Western Canada have digital cell phone service when compared to all the sites across Canada.

Elderly and Childcare Services

Childcare services provide an important part of the educational and care services in rural and small town places. Childcare also provides men and women with children an opportunity to participate in the labour force. Other services of importance are seniors' services including nursing homes and retirement homes. These services are particularly important given the aging of the Canadian population and that many rural and small town places are not yet well equipped to deal with seniors' needs.

Table 7: Availability of Child and Elderly Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Daycare	45.5%	37.5%	X	X
Senior citizen's nursing home	18.2%	12.5%	X	X
Senior citizen's retirement home	31.8%	25.0%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

An inventory of 22 sites across Canada indicates that many are not equipped to meet the needs of young families or seniors (Table 7). While some such services are provided by formal groups recorded in site profiles, there is considerable informal care offered by family and friends. In particular, sites in Western Canada are less equipped to offer these services. A challenge for Hussar is there are no daycare or senior care facilities within 30 minutes. The closest regional centres that provide child and elderly services are Drumheller and Strathmore.

Government Services

Town halls and post offices are the most frequently available government services in rural and small town places. Post offices not only provide a service and identity, but also opportunities for routine social interaction to build relationships. Other government services play an important role in community capacity by providing a local source of expertise and knowledge upon which the community can draw.

Table 8: Availability of Government Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Human Resources Dev. Canada	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Employment Insurance	4.5%	0.0%	X	X
Provincial Auto License Office	18.2%	50.0%	X	Y
Social Assistance Office	22.7%	37.5%	X	X
Town hall	68.2%	87.5%	Y	
Post office	81.8%	100.0%	Y	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

The rural and small town sites examined do not have access to many government services overall, although the listed government services are offered by a greater proportion of sites in Western Canada (Table 8). Of particular concern to sites experiencing social and economic restructuring is that none of the sites have HRDC or Employment Insurance offices. Furthermore, few sites have social assistance offices. Consequently, during economic and industrial restructuring or plant closures, households experiencing stress will have to go outside the site for services to help them cope. Hussar residents must travel more than 30 minutes to

access these services in Drumheller. However, Hussar has a town hall and a post office that function as important components within the community. A provincial auto license office is accessible for Hussar residents in less than 30 minutes in Standard.

Community Services

Community services can provide an important foundation from which to build relationships, and can be important sources to draw upon during times of economic and social stress. The availability of community services in rural and small town places varied considerably (Table 9).

Overall, sites in Western Canada have more community services with the exception of food banks, clothing exchanges, and second hand stores. Regardless, youth drop-in centres, women's drop-in centres, and senior's drop-in centres are available in more than half of the sites in Western Canada. The senior population in Hussar can enjoy the local senior's drop-in centre. All other community services are located more than 30 minutes away. Given the substantial influx of women into Hussar since 1996, it may be of interest to develop a drop-in centre for women.

Table 9: Availability of Community Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Food bank	31.8%	25.0%	X	X
Clothing exchange / depot	18.2%	0.0%	X	X
Second hand stores	40.9%	37.5%	X	X
Youth drop-in centre	22.7%	50.0%	X	X
Women's drop-in centre	22.7%	50.0%	X	X
Senior's drop-in centre	31.8%	75.0%	Y	
Half-way house	4.5%	12.5%	X	X
Women's resource centre	9.1%	0.0%	X	X
Personal aid services	31.8%	37.5%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure can have important implications not only for attracting economic activity to a place, but also for enhancing the quality of life of vulnerable groups in rural and small town. Transportation services, especially freight services, can play an important role in attracting industry by providing additional options to export products. However, without adequate, affordable transportation options, mobility can be difficult for women, seniors, or those with disabilities to move within the community and to access services in adjacent centres. Being mobile enables citizens to have access to services, to be involved in the community, and to develop local friendship ties and support networks, and to experience social activities.

The higher availability of gas stations and automobile repair services in these places reflects Canada's general reliance on the automobile (Table 10). Other transportation services are less frequently available, most notably local transit service, passenger rail service, boat / ferry services, and airport service. However, sites in Western Canada offer a greater variety of transportation services. In fact, while the majority of sites in other regions did not have inter community bus service or train freight services, most sites in Western Canada have these services. Freight train services are available in Hussar to load producer cars. In Hussar, there is also a gas station and an automobile repair shop. Limited transportation options within the community makes many residents dependent upon the automobile. The closest inter-community bus station is located more than 30 minutes away in Strathmore, and the closest airport is located more than 30 minutes away in Drumheller.

Table 10: Availability of Transport Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Local bus transit	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Inter-community bus station	31.8%	62.5%	X	X
Train – passenger	4.5%	0.0%	X	X
Train – freight	36.4%	87.5%	Y	
Airport	18.2%	37.5%	X	X
Helicopter port	22.7%	37.5%	X	X
Boat / ferry terminal	13.6%	12.5%	X	Y
Taxi	27.3%	25.0%	X	X
Gas station	86.4%	87.5%	Y	
Automobile repair	63.6%	87.5%	Y	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Recreation Services

When examining all of the sites, recreational services showed the greatest range of availability compared to any other service category (Table 11). This bodes well for the retention and attraction of residents, as well as the overall quality of life of these places. More notable recreational services available include indoor skating rinks, community playing fields, community centres, libraries, municipal parks, skiing and hiking trails, and campgrounds. Many of these services can be important places where events can be held to foster a sense of community.

Across Canada, most sites offer either an indoor skating rink or an outdoor skating rink. Recreational services less frequently available across Canada include fitness facilities, such as athletic clubs, as well as entertainment features such as live theatre or cinemas. A greater range of recreational services are available by a majority of sites in Western Canada. In fact, all of the sites in Western Canada offer municipal parks and campgrounds.

Table 11: Availability of Recreation Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Curling rink	31.8%	75.0%	Y	
Bowling lanes	22.7%	25.0%	X	X
Indoor municipal swimming pool	13.6%	25.0%	X	X
Outdoor municipal swimming pool	18.2%	25.0%	X	X
Indoor municipal skating rink	50.0%	75.0%	Y	
Outdoor municipal skating rink	31.8%	25.0%	X	X
Community playing field	81.8%	87.5%	Y	
Community gym	50.0%	62.5%	Y	
Community centre	81.8%	87.5%	Y	
Private athletic club	13.6%	12.5%	X	X
Municipal athletic club	18.2%	37.5%	X	X
Theatre (live performance)		13.6%		Y
Cinema (movie theatre)	4.5%	0.0%	X	X
Museum	36.4%	37.5%	X	X
Library	77.3%	62.5%	Y	
Municipal parks	77.3%	100.0%	Y	
Provincial parks	22.7%	25.0%	X	X
Tennis courts	31.8%	37.5%	X	X
Skiing trails	50.0%	62.5%	X	X
Hiking trails	63.6%	62.5%	X	X
Golf courses	36.4%	50.0%	X	X
Campgrounds	68.2%	100.0%	Y	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Hussar has many recreational assets that are symbolic of local community spirit. Some recreational amenities include a curling rink, a community playing field, a community gym, a community centre, a library, municipal parks, and campgrounds. Also, there is a dinner theatre twice a year. Furthermore, the indoor ice rink received boards and glass from the Goals and Dreams Program of the National Hockey League. Today, people book ice time at the arena from as far away as Calgary. The arena has also provided an important venue for youth in the community.

Shopping

Shopping services contribute to the success of the local economy, and are considered to be an important gauge of economic health of rural and small town places. Shopping is also an important recreational activity and provides opportunities for social interaction. Low levels of shopping services can lead to out-of-town shopping and perhaps even out-migration.

The service inventory indicates that most sites across Canada are able to offer shopping services that residents would need to access on a more frequent basis, notably grocery stores (Table 12). A greater proportion of sites in Western Canada have a grocery store and a liquor store, including Hussar. Other basic shopping services, notably a bakery and a farmer's market, are accessible more than 30 minutes away in Drumheller.

Table 12: Availability of Basic Shopping Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Grocery store	68.2%	87.5%	Y	
Farmer's market	13.6%	12.5%	X	X
Liquor store	54.5%	75.0%	Y	
Bakery	27.3%	25.0%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Most of the sites across Canada are minimum convenience service centres (Table 13). These places generally offer a hardware store, a drug store, a bank, and two other convenience functions such as a variety store. About one-third of the sites function as a full convenience centre. These places offer all the services of a minimum convenience centre, plus a laundry or dry cleaning store, jewelry, appliances, or furniture, clothing, lumber, building materials, shoes, garden supplies, and a motel or hotel. Finally, just under 20% of the sites fulfill the role of a partial shopping centre. These towns carry all the services of a full convenience centre plus some specialty services such as a camera shop, a floral store, radio or television store, or women's accessories. Full convenience centres and partial shopping centres were more likely to be located in sites that were not adjacent to metropolitan areas. The availability of commercial shopping services in Western Canada are very similar to the national average. Hussar functions as a minimum convenience centre. Other shopping centres are more than 30 minutes away in Drumheller, Strathmore, and Calgary.

Table 13: Availability of Commercial Shopping Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Minimum Convenience Centre	86.4%	87.5%	Y	
Full Convenience Centre	36.4%	37.5%	X	X
Partial Shopping Centre	18.2%	25.0%	X	X
Complete Shopping Centre	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Secondary Wholesale Retail Ctr	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Primary Wholesale Retail Ctr	0.0%	0.0%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Economic Development Organizations

Economic development organizations can play an important role in promoting the community to attract not only additional businesses, but also to attract a wider population base. While there is not a wide range of economic development organizations in these sites, it is particularly critical to note that there are only approximately 20% of the sites across Canada with local business development corporations and rotary clubs (Table 14). As these organizations are comprised of local business individuals, they are important sources to draw upon during economic and social restructuring.

Table 14: Availability of Economic / Development Organizations - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:	
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Community Business Dev. Ctrs	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Fed / Prov Econ. Dev. Agencies	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Chamber of Commerce	18.2%	25.0%	X	X
Local Business Dev. Corporation	18.2%	37.5%	X	X
Economic / Community Trust	4.5%	12.5%	X	X
Career Training / Placement	13.6%	25.0%	X	X
Financial / Business Consulting	27.3%	37.5%	Y	
Real Estate Boards	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Tourism Associations	27.3%	25.0%	X	X
Rotary clubs	18.2%	12.5%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Economic development organizations appear to have a stronger presence in sites in Western Canada than the national sample. Financial and business consulting is available in Hussar through the local credit union. Other economic development organizations are more than thirty minutes away.

Housing

A new category added to the service inventory in 2003 was housing. Housing has been used as an incentive to attract residents to rural and small town places. However, lack of housing options is a problem in rural and small town places that can lead to out-migration. Housing options can improve the quality of life of residents, especially the more vulnerable citizens, including senior citizens or those with disabilities.

Although, initially, social housing does not appear to be widely available in sites across Canada, there are strong regional differences (Table 15). A greater proportion of sites in Western Canada offer the widest range of social housing options. In fact, half of the sites in Western Canada have assisted or subsidized housing for seniors. There is no social housing within close proximity to Hussar.

Table 15: Availability of Social Housing Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Hussar:		
	Canada % Yes	West % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes	
Co-op Housing	13.6%	25.0%	X	X	
Rent Supplement Units	22.7%	37.5%	X	X	
Subsidized Housing - Seniors	31.8%	50.0%	X	X	
Subsidized Housing - Families	31.8%	37.5%	X	X	
Subsidized Housing - Single People		9.1%	25.0%	X	X
Subsidized Housing - Special Needs	13.6%	25.0%	X	X	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Challenges and Opportunities for Hussar, Alberta

Although Hussar faces challenges to cope with on-going restructuring of the agricultural sector, it has a foundation of services that enable the community to cope with change. A challenge for Hussar has been limited access to health care services and government services, particularly during economic and social restructuring. Economic leakage may occur as residents leave the community to shop or access health care and government services in regional centres. However, Hussar can build upon its strengths to continue to diversify its local economy. The availability of freight train services is not just good news for the local agricultural sector, but may attract other economic activity as well. Hussar also offers a fairly good range of business services, including the local credit union that provides financial / business consulting in the area.

Furthermore, Hussar has been able to build upon its strengths that have created a sense of community. Hussar has fought hard to maintain educational facilities that provide a foundation to retain families with children. In fact, local students have scored amongst the best in the province of Alberta. Residents have also come together to rebuild the local arena that not only retains youth locally, but is attracting people to book ice time from distant places. Together, these services will go a long way, not just in attracting tourists and economic activity, but also for retaining residents.

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