

Manitoba / Saskatchewan

# RRN Connection

Rural, Remote, Northern



Rural Immigration

Winter 2011

## Welcoming Communities - Brandon's rural immigration advantage

By Stephanie Clifford, Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat

Seventeen-year-old **Rebecca Schueler** loves her new home. Never mind that she had to leave family and friends and couldn't speak English, it's all about the space for her horses. This avid animal lover came to Canada with her family three years ago from the Netherlands. Today, she has made new friends, keeps in touch with family via internet and speaks English well. Still, it's all about the horses. And the goats.

Parents Peter and Rina moved their leather business to Minnedosa, located 45-minutes north of Brandon, Manitoba, after visiting friends who had already made the move. Having connections to this rural community was one reason for selecting the location; Welcoming Communities was another.

Brandon has seemingly cornered the market when it comes to attracting immigrants, and they're definitely in the lead when it comes to rural immigration. The Welcoming Communities Initiative has played an integral part of that success.

Located in Brandon, the Rural Development Institute (RDI) is in a perfect position to explore the effect of temporary foreign workers on the demographics of Brandon and the community's ability to absorb and support newcomers.

Operating under "Building Welcoming Communities: A multi-sector regional collaborative approach to rural immigration, 2009 – 2010", RDI continues to study rural immigration.

*The Schueler Family*

*continued on page 2*



## Addressing Labour Shortages

The Humboldt Regional Newcomer Centre (HRNC) opened its doors to newcomers in April 2010 under the Government of Saskatchewan's new settlement service delivery model for the Province, which is administered by the Ministry of Advanced Education, Employment and Immigration. The HRNC contract is held by Prairie Innovation Enterprise Region (PIER), the organisation representing the economic development interests including labour and immigration of east central Saskatchewan. The HRNC is one of 11 provincial newcomer gateways designed to be an integral support mechanism for newcomers to access.

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*“Earlier immigration-related projects have resulted in the forming of groups and networks that gathered information on what constitutes a welcoming community,”* said **Dr. Bill Ashton**, director of the RDI. *“Rural Secretariat funding has enabled rural communities to improve our ability to be welcoming within the stages of invite, settle and retain by working with multiple stakeholders. This new research will blend community development practices and participatory action research to examine a regional approach to immigration.”*

Ashton notes that the current project will drill deeper into the rural areas of southwestern Manitoba as they too have experienced an influx of immigrants. Immigration to southwestern Manitoba has increased dramatically within the last few years.

Businesses such as Hytech/Springhill Farms in Neepawa have brought in two hundred temporary foreign workers to address labour shortages; 32 Filipino nurses were recruited by the Assiniboine Regional Health Authority; and entrepreneurs from other countries are acquiring businesses and agricultural land within the region as the local population ages.

*“New regional collaborative groups are forming as a means of collective problem solving within this recent era of immigration,”* said Ashton.

Brandon Economic Development Officer **Sandy Trudel** is convinced that without the guidance of Welcoming Communities, the region wouldn't be integrating nearly as many newcomers.

*“It's truly been a transformation,”* Trudel said, *“Brandon was a typical prairie community – everyone looked the same, you spoke English - a very friendly, open embracing community. Now, we've kept all of what I consider the great traits – that open, welcome prairie hospitality, but we've added that whole cultural flair.”*

That transformation was rapid, concentrated and large. As Trudel said, the numbers aren't small. In the 2001 the census, 2.5 per cent of Brandon's population was made up of visible minorities and in 2006 that number rose to four per cent. Trudel is expecting the next census to hit the 10 per cent mark – that's 1,000 landed immigrants per year.

So what makes a welcoming community?

*“I think we've set the example,”* said Brandon's former Mayor **Dave Burgess**. *“All of our organizations have been very accommodating in working with those who are moving here. With Brandon and the Province working together to help with the language transition; it all leads to newcomers finding us a community where they feel welcome. If we hadn't done that I think we'd have some problems.”*

*“It's been a positive experience and I think it's because we've made the efforts to make them feel at home – ensure they have housing, language skills, even social activities! Then they feel at home and the outcome is totally positive.”*

Local festivals and events hosted throughout the year have been just one way Brandon has integrated newcomers into the community.

*“One of our focuses was that our new residents not only feel comfortable here but that they share their culture with us. This is probably one of the nicest steps we've ever taken. At last count, there were more than 13 pavilions showcasing different histories, cultures, foods and entertainment from our new residents.”*

Burgess agreed that while people come to Brandon for the jobs, they stay, selecting it as the community in which to raise their families and experience a better standard of living.

*“I think you have to be well prepared. Talk about what's needed and over-do if you can. Think about all the aspects of what they want in their lives to have a quality of life – jobs for spouses, for example. The language part is ultimate. You have to have it where you work to accommodate them in the community; you can't expect them to come here, suffer through it and just try to adapt. Integrate them into the community so that they're not in pockets or little subdivisions all on their own. It's crucial that you make sure they're listened to. We're doing that even on the recreation side; we're listening to what they want. Don't just get them here and then drop the ball.”*

Speaking from an immigrant's point of view, **Peter Schueler**: *“Mentoring is important. Matching up a Dutch-speaking immigrant with one living in Manitoba is definitely beneficial. It helps to have a contact on the ground who has worked through the process.”*

Further evidence of Brandon's welcoming community is the love which the **Olivares family** feels for their new home. Oscar began traveling from El Salvador to Brandon as a temporary foreign service worker for work at the Maple Leaf plant. Today, Oscar, along with his wife Jeannette and two daughters, claim Brandon as their home – even with the snow!

Oscar said that every step was and is being taken to welcome newcomers throughout the entire community right down to multi-lingual church services, hospital services and multi-cultural events.

Well ahead of the immigration curve is **Doctor Gavin Roche**, a family physician who relocated from South Africa more than 19 years ago. When he settled his family in Minnedosa, it was not meant to be for the long term.

*“At the time, there were numerous jobs in rural Manitoba so I applied and got a call asking me to come. I found a fantastic practice offering a broad spectrum of medicine. A phenomenal community.”*

*“In rural Manitoba, people are the main commodity and it's one of the reasons we decided to stay. You're really made to feel a part of everything. In the end it was the community itself; you get embraced, you grow up, you get older and you stay. From a work perspective – excellent. From a family perspective – excellent. I love small towns.”*

To learn more about Welcoming Communities Initiative at the Rural Development Institute: [www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/welcomingcommunity.asp](http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/welcomingcommunity.asp)

Telephone: (204) 571-8515 Fax: (204) 725-0364 Email: [rdi@brandonu.ca](mailto:rdi@brandonu.ca)

The Olivares Family



## Focus Regionally, Think Globally – Manitoba’s Promising Practices for Immigration

By Christina Prasad, Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat

Our Canadian Prairies have a history rooted in immigrant settlement that dates back to the late 19th century; it continues today as many immigrants choose regions within these western provinces as permanent homes.

As we move ahead in the 21st century, immigration is being credited with expansion of the country’s population base, counteracting the impacts of an aging population. Currently however, many immigrants are settling in cities and larger urban areas as opposed to rural regions and smaller towns. Rural Canada needs to attract new immigrants to remain competitive and prosperous and as such Manitoba stands out with several examples of communities that have succeeded in all aspects of settlement and retention.

Why is Francophone immigration in Manitoba so successful? What could we do better for rural immigration?

These were the questions that 60 participants came to discuss at the “Francophone Immigration: Manitoba’s Key to Success” symposium, held this past October in Brandon, at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Conference. This national event was organized by the Metropolis Secretariat and brought speakers from the Manitoba government, community partners and academics to share their experiences and lessons.

*“There is extensive collaboration and effort between the federal government, provinces and territories as well as community partners to recruit, to integrate and to retain Francophone immigrants outside of Quebec”* said **Julie Boyer**, deputy executive head of Metropolis Secretariat, Citizenship and Immigration Canada. *“It is very successful in attracting immigrants to its linguistic minority communities.”*

*“The purpose of this event was to examine Manitoba’s promising practices and identify the elements of success of their Francophone immigration strategy which is closely linked to rural development objectives. Participants at this event were also asked to discuss if these elements could be replicated across Canada. An interesting and unique aspect to Manitoba’s strategy is its focus on partnerships that lead to a positive settlement experience in French which ultimately lead to better retention results.”*

Access to services is a key barrier to any settlement process but this challenge is further complicated when needing to access those same services in another language. The first half of the conference addressed some of these settlement factors of Francophone newcomers and showcased the best practices from non-governmental organizations.

In addition to strong provincial support, a good settlement experience is as important for retention. The settlement process includes a number of factors: greeting the immigrant at the airport; offering transitional housing; assisting with paper work; and helping them to settle in a French-speaking community. A range of responses to meet the demand for services and supports are needed in this process and it is challenging for the francophone organizations to try and meet these alone.

Business Advisor **Mohamed Doumbia** of Conseil de développement économique des municipalités bilingues du Manitoba (CDEM) spoke at the

Symposium about the integration of francophone immigrants. CDEM acts as a business advisory service and connects potential investors with services. He has learned that newcomers require assistance in understanding laws and regulations when coming to Canada to start a business.

*“CDEM and its partners offer many one-on-one services to our immigrant clientele. We also co-ordinate many bilingual services for members of the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities through their web portal [DirectionManitoba.com](http://DirectionManitoba.com), which acts additionally as a communication tool for international Francophones interested in living, investing or immigrating to Manitoba,”* said Doumbia.

Discussions surrounding the challenges and successes of rural immigration in Manitoba dominated the remainder of the day with several organizations stressing that links to larger regional organizations are essential when providing settlement/integration services.

Many noted that smaller communities have limited culturally-based social networks and local organizations have found that volunteers are critical to creating the right conditions for effective integration.

A local contact to recruit and mobilize community volunteers is essential for the preliminary steps of settlement and retention of rural immigrants. Bringing immigrants together with the community is necessary for creating an awareness of the different backgrounds/values and assists the newcomer in learning about the community’s way of life. Making these connections early on bridge cultural gaps and create an environment where immigrants feel like a member of a community.

The discussions and learning from both sessions have shown that Manitoba is significantly different in terms of settlement and retention of immigrants. A strong sense of community and involvement of the local population has welcomed several generations of immigrants to this province and encouraged them to call this part of the country home.

For more information on immigration in Canada visit, [www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers](http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/newcomers).

Or call toll-free at, **1-888-242-2100**.

Also visit the Metropolis website at, [http://canada.metropolis.net/publications/index\\_e.htm](http://canada.metropolis.net/publications/index_e.htm) for a publication called, “Best Practices Manual on Francophone Immigration in Canada.”

*Pat Lachance, Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat*



## A Welcoming Move

By Fatima Narvaez, Eastman Immigrant Services and Jill Ritchot, Citizenship and Immigration Canada

**Kris and Peegy Ontong** emigrated from a big city in the Philippines to rural Manitoba in March 2010. Before coming to Canada, they owned their own IT business in Manila, building websites and graphic designs for corporate companies. Kris performed most of the technical tasks while Peegy looked after promotional activities.



Kris and Peegy Ontong

In 2005, Kris and Peegy applied to come to Canada. It was while they were waiting for their visas that typhoon Ondoy (International Name: Ketsana) hit the Philippines in September 2009. Like many others in Manila, the typhoon was devastating to them. It washed away all their belongings, including their business projects. *“Before we evacuated our place, all we could save was a laptop. It was impossible to find anything savable when we went back,”* Kris said. Everything was destroyed. *“But after the disaster, our immigration papers were expedited. Two months later, we arrived in Steinbach,”* Peegy said with relief.

Like many newcomers, Kris and Peegy were stunned by the climate in Manitoba. *“We were shocked by the cold the moment we stepped out of the airport. It was -1°C!”* Peegy recalled. They were greeted by Kris’ uncle’s family and as they surveyed their new surroundings, Kris and Peegy were amazed at the friendliness of strangers and the warmth of the welcoming community. They also noticed that the houses didn’t even have fences! *“The Filipino community is a big thing, too. Knowing people makes a big difference,”* Kris mentioned.

After their arrival, Kris and Peegy were concerned that the rural community may not have many employment opportunities for their specific skills. But Kris now works as a website administrator and computer instructor, and Peegy is working in her field as well. The couple plans to raise their family in rural Manitoba. *“I appreciate the simple living, small town feel and the tightly-knit community,”* Kris said. *“The town feels safe for children. And the schools, like everything else, are just close by,”* Peegy added.

*“Do your homework,”* is Peegy’s advice to immigrants hoping to come to Canada. *“Prepare yourselves and have a plan.”* Kris advised that perseverance, courage and faith are your strongest assets.

Of the 13,520 immigrants who came to Manitoba in 2009, 1,586 settled in areas outside of Winnipeg and Brandon. Winkler, Steinbach, and Morden were the three most popular spots. Similarly, of the 6,890 who settled in Saskatchewan, 18 per cent went to destinations other than Saskatoon and Regina. Rural communities Lloydminster, North Battleford, Leroy and Swift Current all attracted more than 150 immigrants in 2009.

## Manitoba Immigration Facts

Manitoba and Canada work together to:

- develop ethical and effective recruitment of temporary foreign workers and permanent immigrants to meet current and foreseeable economic demands;
- provide immigrants with efficient pre-arrival and post-arrival services to ensure their successful participation and long-term settlement in the province; and
- promote and support communities that welcome newcomers and embrace cultural diversity.

In 2009, immigration to Manitoba reached 13,520, the most the province has received in more than 60 years. This represented a 20.5 per cent increase over the previous year’s total. Since 1999, Manitoba has received more than 85,000 immigrants.

**Manitoba’s Provincial Nominee Program** is responsible for much of the success. Under the Canada-Manitoba Immigration Agreement, the Province recruits and nominates skilled workers and business immigrants who have a strong likelihood of establishing successfully and making a positive contribution.

The Manitoba Provincial Nominee Program – A Success Story:

- 85 per cent of provincial nominees were working after three months
- 89 per cent of those had full-time jobs
- 76 per cent owned a home within three to five
- The retention rate for provincial nominees in Manitoba between 2000 and 2006 was 80 per cent, higher than the retention rate for both federal skilled workers and refugees.
- More than 1,628 employers have registered to hire foreign workers through this program.
- Business immigrants in the Provincial Nominee Program have invested more than \$155 million since 2001.

## Saskatchewan Immigration Facts

Saskatchewan has committed to increasing international immigration at an exponential rate and revamped its **Immigration Nominee Program** to focus on attracting immigrants with job skills fitting labour market needs.

Over the next year, the provincial government has committed to nominating 3,400 new immigrants to Saskatchewan, which could mean some 10,000 newcomers when families are included.

Saskatchewan has launched an innovative website to provide prospective residents with the tools and information they need to move to Saskatchewan. This website – the first of its kind in Canada – allows immigrants to submit applications online, and a new gateway provides information in many languages, connecting newcomers with settlement services, employment opportunities and resources to help the province compete for workers from abroad.

Visit the website at, [www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/sinp](http://www.aeei.gov.sk.ca/sinp)



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*“The aim is retention in the workplace, and settlement and integration in rural communities throughout our region,”* explains **Sylvia Waterer**, CEO of PIER. *“As more people are looking towards retirement, and as the economy of our province continues to expand, the demand for labour will surely increase. With the aging population, declining birth rates and a higher proportion of retirees, nearly 2/3 of the trades will experience a shortage of skilled workers in the next two years.”*

*“Rural Saskatchewan has become the destination for many immigrants from around the world; drawing on the skilled labour forces from countries such as Germany, Ukraine, South Africa, Philippines, Ghana, England, Uruguay, Brazil and Ireland,”* says **Janine Hart**, Manager of the HRNC.

The PIER region has seen labour shortages filled by immigration through the Saskatchewan Immigration Nominee Program (SINP). Growth was 66.1 per cent (2005-09) in the Primary Industry sector, and 13.7 per cent (2005-09) in Trades and Transport. This growth pattern is forecast to continue with 100 per cent of net labour growth from immigration in 2011-2012.

Rural Saskatchewan was built from the hard work of immigrants and now our region and the province will again rely on a new wave of newcomers to sustain and ensure prosperous rural communities.

For more information:

Humboldt Regional Newcomer Centre  
Chamney Platz, Main Street  
Humboldt, SK S0K 2A0  
Website: [www.thehrnc.com](http://www.thehrnc.com)  
Telephone: **306-682-4277**

## CYBF Newcomer Entrepreneur Program

The Canadian Youth Business Foundation (CYBF) recognizes that newcomers to Canada need unique support and resources in order to start their own business. That's why they developed the CYBF Newcomer Entrepreneur Program, to help recent immigrants to Canada, ages 18-34, navigate the challenges of entrepreneurship.

The program offers financing up to \$15,000 with low interest rates and a flexible three to five year repayment schedule. There are no principal payments in the first year and no collateral is needed. CYBF will also hand-match the entrepreneur with a business mentor who will provide invaluable insight into running a business in Canada.

To qualify for this program, the entrepreneur must:

- Be a permanent resident of Canada
- Have lived in Canada for less than 36 months from the application date
- Have a SIN that does not begin with '9'
- Possess a solid working knowledge of English or French
- Provide three character-based references (at least two must be Canadian citizens)

More information can be obtained at:

<http://cybf.ca/entrepreneurs/newcomer/>

or contact, Joelle Foster, Regional CYBF Director at: [jfoster@cybf.ca](mailto:jfoster@cybf.ca), or call toll-free, **1-800-464-2923**.



## Economic Integration of New Immigrants

The **Conseil de la Coopération de la Saskatchewan (CCS)** has, in the past 10 years, seen a transformation of its employees. The organization employs 16 full time staff at present, of which nine are visible minorities, all coming from various parts of Africa. The integration of new immigrants in the organization has been not only beneficial in terms of recruiting qualified staff and bringing new ideas, but also very beneficial in understanding the challenges immigrants face when arriving in their new country.

Understanding these challenges has permitted the organization to adapt programs and services that facilitate the economic integration of newcomers. Whether it is through networking events, job fairs where employers are matched with prospective employees or facilitating the integration through counseling services for business start-ups, the presence of immigrants within the organization helps aid in cultural understanding - how Canadians can interact with new immigrants in the most effective manner.

The CCS truly is better positioned today to adapt to the next wave of skilled and professional workers through the experiences within the organization.

For more information visit, [www.ccs-sk.ca](http://www.ccs-sk.ca) or call toll-free, **1-800-670-0879**.

## The International Year of Co-operatives in 2012... The countdown has begun!

For over 100 years, co-operatives have enabled thousands of people to meet their needs effectively. In Canada, more than 9,000 co-operatives contribute to local economic development, especially in rural regions where they create long-term jobs and provide essential goods and services.

In just a few months, co-operatives around the world will take advantage of an exceptional platform. The United Nations has declared the year 2012 "International Year of Co-operatives" in order to recognize the contribution of this business model to economic and social development. This will be a unique opportunity for co-operatives to showcase their achievements!

In Canada, the work is already well underway. You can now consult the website dedicated to the International Year of Co-operatives at [www.canada2012.coop](http://www.canada2012.coop). You can learn more about the activities that are being implemented all over the country to publicize how co-operatives contribute to the well-being and prosperity of Canadian society.

## Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services

The Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services is a booklet of Government of Canada programs and services, put together specifically for Canadians living in rural and northern communities. Whether you're looking for business advice, a cultural exchange or a boating safety program, this handy Guide was designed for you.

In addition to a short description of each program and service, there is also a point of contact where Canadians can go for information by telephone, Internet or both.

To obtain a copy, contact the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat toll-free at **1-888-757-8725** or send an email to [rccs-src@agr.gc.ca](mailto:rccs-src@agr.gc.ca) requesting a copy to be mailed to you. A copy is also available for download at [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca).



# Community Information Database (CID): Community and Regional Information at Your Fingertips



Community Information Database  
Base de données sur les collectivités

Whether you're developing a community initiative, starting a business or studying a region's economic potential, statistical data is a must.

The CID, a FREE internet-based mapping and data tool, can help you to compare your community with other similar-sized communities. Discover trends and changes, download maps and data tables, and create your own community and regional profiles. The CID incorporates facts and figures from Statistics Canada's 1996, 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Population, with more than 900 indicators, such as education, income, population, families, employment, immigration and citizenship, Aboriginal peoples, language, crime, health, agriculture, co-operatives and much more!

The CID reduces the amount of time and resources required to obtain and analyze community and regional level data.

## New in 2011 - Community Profile Feature

This feature will enable users to generate a multi-page community profile based on the most recent Census data available.

- Each community profile will have its own unique URL link that the user can copy. The user can send the link by email or place the link into a web page for a direct link to data on a community.
- A visitor to the web site can view all of the data on that community and utilize the mapping features.

The CID was developed by the Rural Secretariat's Canada's Rural Partnership together with provincial, territorial and community partners.

For more information about the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat, visit [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca) (rural) / [www.coop.gc.ca](http://www.coop.gc.ca) (coops) or call toll-free at 1-888-757-8725.

## Upcoming Events

### • Canada Revenue Agency

Tax seminars:

These popular tax seminars provide important information about starting a small business, registering for a GST/HST account, payroll requirements, T4 slip preparation, and more. Find out about the events, seminars and webinars offered by the Canada Revenue Agency, <http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/vnts/menu-eng.html>

Need a hand to complete your tax return? Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)? Volunteer tax preparation clinics are generally offered between February and April of each year in various locations across Canada, however, some tax clinics operate year round.

For more information about this free service or to get information on community organizations in your area that participate in the CVITP, call us at 1-800-959-8281 or view our website at:

<http://www.cra-arc.gc.ca/tx/ndvdl/vlntr/nd-eng.html>

### • Co-operative Association SK Regional CED and Co-operatives Conference - April 8, 2011

Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

For more info, visit [www.sask.coop/events.html](http://www.sask.coop/events.html) or call (306) 244-3702.

### For More Information:

Lauraine Watson, Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat  
Tel: (204) 983-8376, Email: [lauraine.watson@agr.gc.ca](mailto:lauraine.watson@agr.gc.ca)  
[www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca) / [www.coop.gc.ca](http://www.coop.gc.ca)

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## Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat

Quality of life, new opportunities and dynamic communities are just some of the realities found in smaller communities all across the country. Being able to maintain and build upon this central foundation is necessary for rural Canadian regions to compete in an ever-increasing global economy.

That's where Canada's Rural Partnership (CRP) comes into play. This initiative, developed under the leadership of the Rural Secretariat, provides rural communities and regions with the opportunities needed to take advantage of their diversity and unused potential to further develop and compete.

The Government of Canada works in partnership with Canadians in rural and northern areas to build strong, competitive communities; the Rural Secretariat ensures that federal policies and programs respond to the needs of our rural and northern communities.

The Co-operatives Secretariat was established to help the federal government respond more effectively to the concerns and needs of co-operatives in Canada.

The Secretariat advises the government on policies affecting co-operatives, co-ordinates the implementation of policies, and encourages use of the co-operative model for social and economic development of Canada's communities. The Secretariat also provides a link between the co-op sector and the many federal departments and agencies with which they interact.

The Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI), a program under the leadership of the Co-operatives Secretariat is delivered in partnership with the co-operative sector. CDI is designed to help people develop co-ops and to research and test innovative ways of using the co-operative model. CDI makes the co-op option more readily available to Canadians and helps to respond to challenges.

For more information about the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat, visit [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca) (rural) / [www.coop.gc.ca](http://www.coop.gc.ca) (coops), or call toll-free at 1-888-757-8725.

**For information on Government of Canada programs and services:**  
Phone: 1-800-O-Canada (1-800-622-6232), TTY/TDD: 1-800-465-7735  
Web: [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca), Service Canada Access Centres  
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