

# Saskatchewan RRN Connection

(Rural, Remote, Northern)

Winter 2005

## Rural Team Saskatchewan talks to youth groups

Youth issues have been and continue to be a Rural Team Saskatchewan (RTS) priority. RTS, a team of government representatives and rural organizations, works together to respond to the needs of rural, remote and northern citizens of Saskatchewan by building networks and providing support at the grassroots level.

In 2003, a regional youth workshop was held in Moose Jaw where approximately 30 youth delegates from the province took part. The workshops confirmed that there were many issues that youth wished to address.

Many other youth workshops and dialogues have taken place throughout the province. In 2004, a report was written summarizing the outcomes of the past activities including recommendations to the team on how to move forward. The report, written by Aasa Marshal, called Saskatchewan Youth Forums: Summaries and Recommendations highlights four major areas of concern for youth in Saskatchewan.

- Education
- Employment
- Health
- Community Involvement

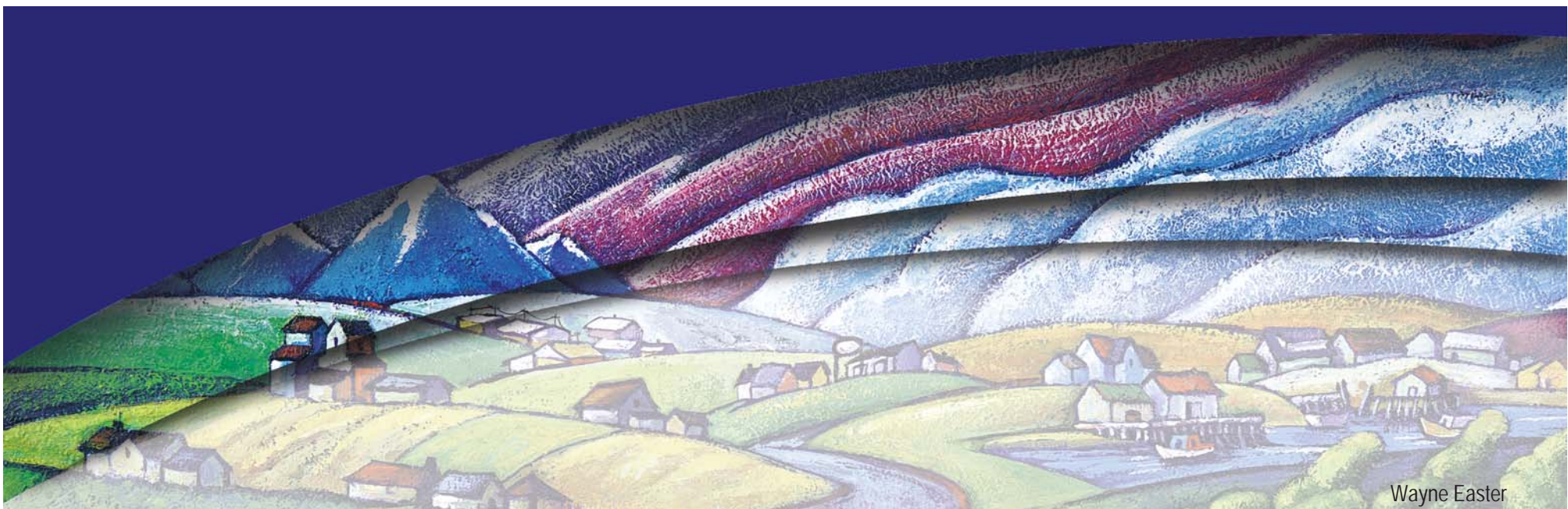
In 2005, youth from local areas of La Ronge, Watrous and Swift Current will facilitate, plan and organize regional workshops with local health boards and related staff. Blaser & Associates will serve as coach and facilitator.



mentors have the chance to have a life-changing impact on a young person's future by providing guidance and training. The youth receive a monthly stipend while they are working to improve their future.

in this issue





Wayne Easter

## Rural Canadians speak their minds in Red Deer

A message from the Honourable Wayne Easter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with Special Emphasis on Rural



Rural Canada is where there's heart and where there's hope.

"We were offered jobs all over Canada, but we're not going because we are where there's heart and where there's hope."

What a great comment this was by a participant at the Third National Rural Conference held in Red Deer, Alberta last October. It reflects the passion rural Canadians have for those unique places we call "rural Canada."

We saw a lot of this passion at the Red Deer conference. And we saw a lot of enthusiasm, drive and willingness to find ways to take action and build strategies to strengthen and sustain rural Canada. It is this sort of positive and forward-thinking human effort that will make a difference in rural Canada.

The National Rural Conference focused on five subjects important to rural Canada: entrepreneurship, community capacity building, infrastructure, northern issues and youth.

Participants talked about projects going on in their communities, what makes them successful and what could be done to better support them and similar projects. They spoke of the need for collaboration, partnerships and communication within and between communities, and the value of cooperatives in

Northerners too were clear in their message: northern communities face many challenges, but northerners have the creativity and the

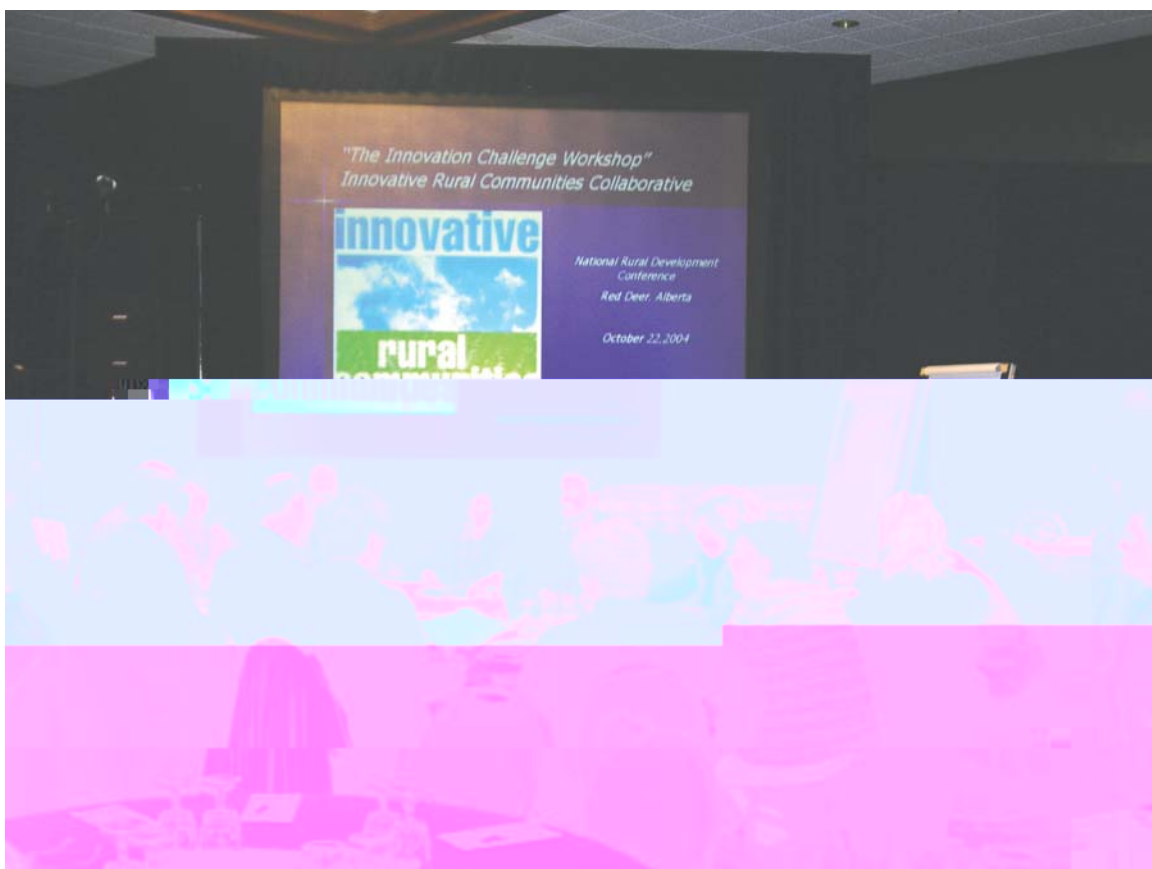
*"We were offered jobs all over Canada, but we're not going because we are where there's heart and where there's hope"*

rural communities. They also spoke of the importance of long-term and stable government programs that rural communities could count on, and quality information they could use for planning. Increasing the awareness and understanding of the interdependency between rural and urban Canada was also raised.

Youth from rural communities made their presence felt throughout the conference. This began with a youth forum organized by the National Rural Youth Network, and continued throughout the weekend. Their message was clear and heartfelt: youth don't just want to be listened to by government; they want the tools to be active and productive leaders in their communities. They also insisted that youth programs need to be developed with youth, not just for youth.

initiative to overcome them. They are also great producers of wealth for the rest of Canada. The North needs government to supply the tools and the support they need to bring to life the vision they have for their communities. Northerners spoke of the need for infrastructure programs suited to their needs, streamlined governance, and for all levels of government to work together and to share information. They also spoke of the need for municipal governments to work towards common goals for both their community and their area.

As I said in my closing remarks in Red Deer, the fabric of this country rests in rural Canada. We are going to continue to build our communities in rural Canada because we deserve our share, because we are producers of wealth in this nation. Together we will build on what we have, and we will take action for sustainable rural communities—where there's heart and where there's hope.



## First Nation communities get protection against wildfire

**W**ildfire is a danger that rural residents know only too well, whether they are living in a forested area or on the grassy plains. Once a fire starts, it can burn through farms, forests and communities.

First Nations in Saskatchewan are taking action to ensure they will be prepared to deal with fires that could affect their communities and reserve lands. With assistance from the federal government's First Nations Forestry Program (FNFP), they are giving band members basic firefighting training and are working to fireproof their communities and lands.

FNFP is a national program, delivered by Natural Resources Canada in cooperation with Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, to create jobs, encourage forest-based economic development, and build skills capacity for First Nations.

During 2004–2005, the FNFP funded six fire-related projects, including firefighting training courses and activities to promote FireSmart practices, while other projects focused on forest management planning and practices.

The Day Star First Nation, located 100 km north of Regina, started a project to build a fire guard in 2003. Soon after 30 band members had been trained in basic firefighting under an earlier FNFP project, they were called into action to deal with a brush fire that had moved onto the reserve from an adjacent farm.

The fire highlighted the need for fire protection, so the Day Star First Nation applied for and received funds to help create a fire guard. During 2004, nine band members hand cleared over 14 km of brush around the boundary of the reserve and around the houses of some elders. This successful project provided training and employment for band members and encouraged the band to apply FireSmart principles for future protection.

For more information, please contact Michael Newman at (306) 953-8546 or visit the First Nations Forestry Program Web site at [www.fnfp.gc.ca/index\\_e.php](http://www.fnfp.gc.ca/index_e.php)

## "Aboriginal Participation in the Rural Economy"

A learning seminar hosted by Rural Team Saskatchewan

**A**boriginal people make up an increasing share of the population in the Prairie provinces and are well positioned to make a substantial contribution to the provincial and national economies of Canada. In recognition of this, Rural Team Saskatchewan and its partners hosted a one-day learning seminar in Regina on January 11, 2005, the theme of which was, "Aboriginal Participation in the Rural Economy."

Speakers such as Tony Shirt of Peace Hills Trust, Bob Kayseas of the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations and Gary Bosgoed of Bosgoed Project Consultants provided a new perspective on, and a greater understanding of, the potential for economic and social investment and development in Aboriginal communities. Overall participants were satisfied with the event and offered excellent suggestions for future learning seminars.

A report of this event including participant feedback will be available at [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca) or by contacting Jock Witkowski, Rural Team Saskatchewan Regional Advisor by phone (306) 953-8430 or e-mail [jock.witkowski@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca](mailto:jock.witkowski@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca)



## Water on tap

**H**ow much will it cost to repair? That's everyone's first question when something breaks.

Many municipal governments throughout Saskatchewan and the rest of Canada are facing this dilemma when it comes to their aging water and transportation infrastructure. They are now searching for the means to maintain and upgrade these basic services to ratepayers in a cost effective manner.

The communities of Balcarres, Margo and Porcupine Plain had similar issues. They were using old filtration systems for well water that had high iron and manganese content which resulted in color and odour problems. More importantly, these minerals interfered with the water filtration process, which created the potential for contaminants to remain in the water and pose a health risk to residents.

Their collective solution was the Canada–Saskatchewan Infrastructure Program (CSIP). "I've been on council for 20 years and the project has been in the planning stages that long," said Dwight Dixon, Mayor of Balcarres. "Without the [CSIP] help we'd probably still be trying to figure it out."

CSIP provides up to two-thirds of the project's costs through federal and provincial contributions. The total cost for the three separate projects was \$890,357. CSIP invested \$593,568 to give the residents of these communities better quality drinking water. "[The water] is right back to A-1," says Myrna Daviduk, Mayor of Margo. Barry Warsylewicz, administrator for Porcupine Plain agrees; he says the town receives compliments on its water quality.

Mayor Dixon noted that a spurt in home sales followed the upgrade of the Balcarres water treatment plant. In at least one instance, the new water treatment plant was a contributing factor in the purchase of a home.

Environmentally responsible projects like water and wastewater developments or upgrades, solid waste management and recycling, and improving the energy efficiency of municipally owned buildings are the first priority for CSIP investments. Since 2001, the Government of Canada has invested more than \$111 million in 296 communities across Saskatchewan.

For more information about CSIP, visit [http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/infrastructure/default\\_e.asp](http://www.wd.gc.ca/ced/infrastructure/default_e.asp) or <http://www.municipal.gov.sk.ca/mrd/procanadainfra.shtml>

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## Action Southwest

The Action Southwest Business Networks Coalition is a pilot project initiated to help harness the power of partnerships in southwest Saskatchewan. The Coalition is working towards the development of strategic alliances among small- and medium-sized businesses and fostering a climate in which these networks can grow and flourish.

Their strategic approach to addressing challenges and opportunities faced by business in the southwest is based on but not limited to four key components:

- A bottom-up approach, allowing businesses and communities to develop strategies and approaches for long-term sustainability.
- The use of strategic alliances and business networks designed to make sure that in cooperation with other federal, provincial and municipal governments and agencies initiatives are developed that make sense for all businesses and communities in the region.
- Continuing to build community capacity—the ability to evaluate a community's assets, build consensus and develop a plan to enhance that capacity.
- Continuing to give businesses and communities the tools they need to carry out their strategies.

To date, numerous roundtable meetings represented by over 120 industry stakeholders have been conducted all over the southwest in the agribusiness, energy, manufacturing and tourism sectors. Each industry has provided the Coalition with a SWOT (strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats) analysis of their industries and identified several flagship initiatives to move their sector and region forward. Plans are now being developed to move these initiatives into action in phase II of the project.

If you are interested in learning more about the project and the tools you can also use to form your own business network visit their Web site at [www.actionsouthwest.com](http://www.actionsouthwest.com)

## Community Volunteer Income Tax Program

Canada Revenue Agency is dedicated to helping Canadians meet their tax filing requirements through awareness and education. The Community Volunteer Income Tax Program is a community-based outreach program. The success of the program depends on the commitment of Canadians who, since 1971, have volunteered their time and effort individually or while working with organizations to help people in their communities. Year after year, through the dedication of these volunteers, thousands of Canadians understand and meet their tax obligations, and receive their tax credits and benefits on time. All Canadians must file income tax returns and they must file to possibly be eligible for benefits such as Child Tax Benefits, Goods and Services Tax Credit, as well as other Government Departments Benefits such as Old Age Security and Federal Income Supplement.

The Program helps individuals who are unable to complete their income tax and benefit returns on their own and are unable to pay for assistance. This service is available to qualified Canadians who earn \$20,000.00 or less. Low-income individuals must meet all of the following criteria to be eligible for the Program:

1. Unable to complete their income tax and benefit returns by themselves;
2. Unable to pay for assistance;
3. Must have low income; and
4. Must have a simple tax return.

To determine if you are considered a qualifying individual, please contact your local Tax Services Office for more information.

### Share your thoughts...

about this newsletter by answering the following questions and returning them to the Managing Editor

1) Did you find this issue informative?

Yes \_\_\_\_\_  
No \_\_\_\_\_

3) I would like to be kept informed of Government of Canada Initiatives by:

Community radio \_\_\_\_\_ Mail to my home \_\_\_\_\_  
Community newspaper \_\_\_\_\_ Internet \_\_\_\_\_

2) What other topics would you like to see covered?

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Thank you

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AAFC Publication No. 49162B  
ISSN No. 1712-9303  
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