



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

Agriculture et Agroalimentaire Canada

Saskatchewan

RRN Connection Rural Remote Northern



Rural Secretariat / Rural Team Saskatchewan

Winter 2008

Working With Partners To Diversify Rural Forest Communities

Rural communities on the fringe between Saskatchewan's boreal forest and agricultural lands are getting help to build opportunities to diversify through the new Prince Albert Model Forest Communities Program.

Building on 15 years of partners working together to achieve sustainable forest management, the Prince Albert Model Forest (PAMF) was selected as one of 11 sites across Canada in Natural Resources Canada's new Forest Communities Program. The new program helps forest communities stabilize economies amid a forest sector in transition.

Susan Carr, PAMF general manager, looks forward to a broadening partnership that will continue to explore new approaches to capacity building in resource-based communities. "We're looking at ways we can play a role in facilitating cross-sector relationships among forestry, agriculture, and the bioenergy sectors in Saskatchewan. We remain committed to our work with our partners in Aboriginal communities to build opportunities that encourage youth to pursue their education and consider resource-based careers," she commented.

The four-and-a-half year program will provide PAMF with \$325,000 per year to examine issues such as integrated land management, local governance models, climate change mitigation, building skills and economic capacity, and the shift from a single to a multiple industry focus.

For more information, visit www.pamodelforest.sk.ca or call Susan Carr at (306) 953-8921.

Upcoming Events

2008 National CED Conference

Waves of Change:
Building People-Centred Economies

May 21-24, 2008

University of Saskatchewan
(Saskatoon, SK)

For more information visit,
www.ccednet-rcdec.ca

Community Development Society (CDS) Annual Conference 2008

Conversation, Collaboration and Democracy - Creative Community Engagement

June 22 - 25, 2008

Delta Bessborough Hotel
Saskatoon, Saskatchewan

For more information, visit
www.comm-dev.org or call
1 877 202-2268

Aboriginal youth exchange linked Saskatchewan and Sweden

Five youth from Saskatchewan and six youth from Sweden enjoyed the experience of a lifetime in 2007 thanks to the Prince Albert Model Forest (PAMF), the Vilhelmina Model Forest (VMF), the Prince Albert Grand Council, and the Government of Canada.

The youths participated in a Sami-Aboriginal Leadership Exchange Program that gave them the opportunity to visit each other's Model Forests to exchange information about their culture and heritage. The Sami are the indigenous people of northern Sweden.

Through the International Model Forest Program, created by the Government of Canada, PAMF has been linked with the Vilhelmina Model Forest in Sweden since its creation in 2004. Delegates of the two model forest organizations had visited each other in the past.



Photo: Aboriginal student leaders from the Prince Albert Model Forest pose with their hosts in the Vilhelmina Model Forest in Sweden.

With the assistance of the Canadian Embassy in Sweden, these 11 students were able to share ideas and experiences and further reinforce that link. In March, six youth leaders (including four Sami) from VMF spent a week visiting PAMF. In September, five Aboriginal youth from Saskatchewan were guests of VMF, where they learned about traditional practices and visited cultural and educational sites.

For more information, visit www.pamodelforest.sk.ca or call Susan Carr at (306) 953-8921.



Photo: Canadian and Swedish Aboriginal students visited the office of the Vilhelmina Model Forest in Vilhelmina, northern Sweden.

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NuSask ISP (International Student Program Inc)

There is a small but growing movement afoot in Saskatchewan. An innovative and grassroots initiative is coming out of Kenaston, a small farming community in central Saskatchewan.

A North American university degree is prized and sought after by young people in many Asian and European countries. In order to attend a North American university, fluency in the English language is a prerequisite. By attending a year or two at a North American high school, honing the ability to communicate in English at all levels and graduating with a grade 12 Saskatchewan diploma helps the international students strengthen their application to a university of their choice.

Low grain prices, drought, BSE, high input costs and a mass exodus of our youth and trades have had an adverse effect on our farm families, our schools and on our rural communities. Even with the recent "boom" many schools still face the threat of closure.

It would appear that their problem is our solution, and vice versa.

With the consolidation of school districts, 18 high schools within 16,000 square kms in west central Saskatchewan, it was hoped that this ambitious plan would help secure and enhance all the participating high schools in the division.

A successful international student program in our schools requires a Homestay/Farmstay Program. An international student paying on average \$600 per month to a family for room and board brings in \$6,000 per year to a family, and in turn, the community. Approximately \$8,000 goes to the school division to educate the student. If all high schools throughout the division participated, the economic spin offs and the international spotlight this could bring to the region would be enormous. This approach would not only enhance rural schools, but would also help to alleviate some of the economic despair prevalent in the region.

A non-profit corporation, *NuSask International Student Program Inc.*, was officially launched in April of 2007 with nine municipal governments partnering to bring international students to five schools. The *Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada* is ever vigilant when looking for ways to assist in 'empowering communities and help build capacity' by supporting this innovative rural initiative.

For more information, contact, ML Whittles by phone at **(306) 252-2236**, by email at r.m.whittles@sasktel.net or visit www.nusask.ca

Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage

Is your community commemorating the 100th anniversary (or greater in multiples of 25 years) of a local, historically significant event or person?

Are you planning an event or activity that is open and accessible to the public and strongly encourages and promotes the participation of everyone in your community?

If so, you may be eligible for funding under the Government of Canada's new *Building Communities Through Arts and Heritage Program*. This program was created to support local arts and heritage festivals and events, and to engage Canadians in their communities through the expression, celebration and preservation of local culture. Eligible events and activities must be local – created by and for your community. They must be open and accessible to the public and strongly encourage and promote the participation of everyone in your community.

For more information on eligibility, applications and deadlines, go to www.pch.gc.ca/communities or call **1-800-661-0585**.



Canadian Heritage
Patrimoine canadien

"Making Data and Information Count for Communities"

That was this year's theme for Saskatoon's Learning Seminar hosted by the *Rural Secretariat's Rural Team Saskatchewan* held on January 28, 2008. It was the fourth in a series of learning events that have taken place over the last few years in western and northern Canada. Over 75 people attended this seminar, listening to expert speakers and taking part in discussions around the topic of data tools and information.

"Are communities getting the benefit from all this investment in data and information?" This learning seminar focused in on this question while exploring several factors such as: what information sources are available, what are the potential uses of data found in these sources, and how can communities derive the most benefit from this information? The seminar addressed the knowledge and skill gaps so that communities can indeed draw on the benefits from this information for greater efficiencies and better focus.

Similar sessions were also held in Whitehorse, Yukon and Yellowknife, NWT.



For more information or to obtain a copy of the CD containing the presentations and final report, please call Lauraine Watson at (204) 983-8376 or email at watsonla@agr.gc.ca

Congratulations Marieval Enterprise Centre (MEC)

Project named one of the 2007 Conference Award finalists in Nova Scotia

A unique partnership linking partners from the rural heartland of Saskatchewan to Cape Breton Island of Nova Scotia delivers wireless internet service.

Saying, "no, that can't be done" is not part of Cherylynn Walters' (MEC), Marie Bandet-Prebushewski' (Thickwood Hills Business and Learning Network) and Colleen Stinson's (CAP Society of Cape Breton) vocabulary...and Little Lorraine, a small fishing port with a population of only 106, is thankful for it.



Little Lorraine, NS

What other community leaders have seen as roadblocks, these women identify as opportunities. Their alliance was based on a shared vision to build community socio-economic capacity with Information and Communications Technology (ICT).

The CAP Society of Cape Breton County and MEC laid out the basic framework for the development of the Extra Mile Strategy. The goal of the strategy was to refine the Wireless Wide Area Network (WAN) model currently being implemented in Saskatchewan to meet the needs of rural Nova Scotia and potentially rural Canada.



Launched last spring in Little Lorraine, Nova Scotia, the project has already stimulated the community's economic and social development, giving residents a chance to promote their businesses and community, and to access services and information online.

Funding for this project provided in part by the *Rural Secretariat's Networking Initiative*.

The Art of Big River First Nation

For the first time in the history of the Big River First Nation community the artisans of the community and the surrounding area were brought together to explore their artistic gifts, as well as the potential to become recognized and to earn income from their abilities through a locally based co-operative.

Prospective membership in the Artisans Co-operative of Big River First Nation has increased from 20 to 63 ranging in age from 23-92. The main goal has now evolved into not only the development of an artisan co-operative but also into the development of small businesses. The Big River First Nation Artisans Co-operative Project is providing a structured environment for the sharing and passing on of traditional indigenous arts and crafts to other members of their community. Further, this project is starting to help this isolated rural community by bringing the hope of creating activities that will bring the elders and young people of the community closer together and to develop the elements of skills and co-operation.

The main priority of this project is to focus on the development skills in the community as well as to stimulate some economic development.

"This project is providing participants with the opportunity to learn the legal and administrative components of running a business, as we are presenting the elements of all kinds of businesses, not only the business elements of a co-operative," said Marie Prebushewski, executive director of Thickwood Hills Business & Learning Centres.

Currently, the cooperative model seems to fit the artisan group the best and the artisan co-operative remains the goal for that particular group of participants. The model teaches and motivates the participants to recruit, train and retain new members to their cooperative, thus increasing capacity and earning potential in their community.

"This will greatly enhance the potential for sustainability. We are molding the model so that it will be easily transferable and adaptable in other First Nation communities as well as non-native communities," said Marie.

We are encouraged that the interest in business generally will support local entrepreneurship. The participants are creating ideas for spin-off businesses or value added businesses such as a small tannery, which would incorporate traditional and modern tanning processes; and a sewing and quilting group, which would focus on the traditional start quilt given to each family once a year.

The participants would like to build a relationship with hunters and outfitters to prevent the misuse of the remains of wild animals. They would like to set up a plan to salvage the meat and the hides. This salvage would assist with the availability of rawhide products in the community.

After just a few months, Big River First Nation is demonstrating that there is potential for renewal and economic development in their community. By March 2008, the group of 60+ who are involved in building an artisans' co-operative, hope to have their business incorporated.

For more information, contact Marie Prebushewski, executive director of Thickwood Hills Business & Learning Centres at **(306) 549-4726**.

Action Humboldt Brings Leadership Training

Community leaders of the Humboldt region in Saskatchewan gathered in late Fall 2007 to learn more about effective leadership. The learning event entitled, *"Building 24/7 Community Champions"* was organized by Action Humboldt, a group of regional volunteers with a mission to foster economic and community development.

Trainer/facilitator Krish Dhanam of Ziglar Corporations lead the event bringing approximately 150 people from across the region and beyond to train and develop in the areas of personal leadership and how to be effective community leaders.

"The biggest impact on me" said Dave Gullacher of Action Humboldt, who attended the event, *"was learning again how to plan for even the smallest, most modest accomplishments."*

Trainer Krish Dhanam provided a very thorough step-by-step guide.

- Step 1 – Prepare a "WISH" list
- Step 2 – Develop a process to move things from your "WISH" list to your "TO DO" list
- Step 3 – Assemble a "TO DO" list
- Step 4 – Note your "ACCOMPLISHMENTS" list!

"As we all know, this is hard enough to do at the personal level, where we have control over the people involved (ourselves)" admits Gullacher. It is hugely more challenging at the community level, where people from many different mindsets and walks-of-life come together voluntarily, to conduct a developmental work. Krish also trained us in the diversity of mindsets among people, and how to actually harness this diversity for greater impact, instead of condemning it as a source of conflict.

"Getting leadership right must start at the personal level before it can ever be an effective tool at the community level," said Gullacher. *"The process that Krish instilled in us will now be a tool that we will all readily recognize in this region, and will be able to use jointly in community development work in the years ahead!"* This tool joins three other tools in our community toolbox which were delivered to us by the Estey Centre (www.esteycentre.com)

"All of this development work was made possible by funding from the Rural Secretariat and partnering businesses from our community. We're grateful for their help and we can already see tangible impacts in this region as a result of this work," he said.

For more information on Action Humboldt:
Visit: www.cityofhumboldt.ca or www.actionhumboldt.blogspot.com
Call: (306) 682-3444
Email: kmartin.cityofhumboldt@sasktel.net



PM unveils new Community Development Trust

A major new national initiative that will support provincial and territorial efforts to help communities and workers buffeted by international economic turbulence

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the Government of Canada will provide \$1 billion in new funding, allocated to the provinces and territories, to assist communities and workers suffering economic hardship caused by volatility in global financial and commodities markets. The initiative is known as the national Community Development Trust.

"The Government of Canada will assist vulnerable communities and laid-off workers by investing \$1 billion in the Community Development Trust," Prime Minister Harper said. *"This is a major new national initiative under which our Government will support provincial and territorial efforts to build a stronger, better future for communities and workers who have been hurt by international economic volatility."*

Canada's economic fundamentals are strong and the national economy is well-positioned for long-term growth and prosperity. But, as an open-trading country in a world that is faced with increasing economic uncertainty, there will be difficult challenges ahead. Some Canadian communities are more vulnerable to this uncertainty due to a dependence on a single industry or employer, pressure because of exchange rate fluctuations or declining demands, most notably in the United States.

"The program is aimed at one-industry towns facing major downturns, communities plagued by chronic high unemployment or regions suffering from layoffs across a range of sectors," said Prime Minister Harper. *"Among other things, the funds will support job training to create opportunities for workers in sectors facing labour shortages and community transition plans that foster economic development and job creation in addition to infrastructure development that stimulates economic diversification."*

To that end, some of the investments from the Community Development Trust include:

- Job training and skills development to meet local or regional gaps;
- Measures to assist workers who are faced with adjustment challenges;
- Funds to develop community transition plans;
- Infrastructure projects to support diversification; and
- Other economic development and diversification initiatives that will help communities manage a transition/adjustment such as public utilities projects, industrial park development, science and technology development, access to broadband technology, downtown revitalization and communication and transportation service.

"Working together, Ottawa and all the provinces and territories can turn the economic challenges we face today into economic opportunities for all Canadians tomorrow," said the Prime Minister.

The Community Development Trust will run for three years, funded out of the 2007-2008 budget surplus. A base amount of \$10 million will be allocated to each province and \$3 million to each territory with the balance being allocated on a per capita basis.

New Business Risk Management Programs roll out under Growing Forward

A new suite of business risk management programs is rolling out under Growing Forward. These programs have been designed based on ideas put forward by producers. They are simple, responsive, predictable, and bankable.

The new programs work together by providing protection for different types of losses:

- **AgriInvest** producer accounts help cover small margin declines or can be used for investments. AgriInvest replaces coverage for margin declines of 15% or less, previously covered by the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program.
- **AgriStability** covers larger margin declines caused by circumstances such as low prices, production losses, and rising input costs. It replaces the coverage previously available under CAIS, for margin declines of more than 15%.
- **AgriInsurance** offers protection for production losses in specific crops caused by uncontrollable weather-related perils. It includes existing production insurance and is being expanded to include other commodities.
- **AgriRecovery** is intended to help producers hit by natural disasters at a regional level.
- **Advance Payments Program** provides cash advances to help producers with cash flow.

The Government of Canada is providing \$600 million to kickstart AgriInvest accounts.

Most producers will have already received a letter which tells them the amount of their AgriInvest Kickstart benefit and outlines their options. Those who did not automatically receive a letter need to apply before **March 31, 2008**.

For more information on AgriInvest Kickstart, call **1-866-367-8506**, or visit **www.agr.gc.ca/agriinvest**.

In Quebec, call La Financière agricole toll free at **1-800-749-3646** or visit **www.fadq.qc.ca**.

Need a hand with your taxes?

The *Community Volunteer Income Tax Program (CVITP)* is a community-based outreach program that has been sponsored by the Canada Revenue Agency since 1971. We want to help eligible individuals who are unable to complete their income tax and benefit returns themselves and are unable to pay for assistance.

Specially trained volunteers can help you complete your income tax and benefit return if your income is low and your tax situation is simple.

Volunteers do not complete income tax and benefit returns for deceased persons, bankrupt individuals, or individuals who have capital gains or losses, employment expenses, or business or rental income and expenses.

Volunteer tax preparation clinics are offered between February and April of each year in various locations across Saskatchewan.

For more information about this free service, call us at **1-800-959-8281** or visit our website at **www.cra.gc.ca**

Nature-Deficit Disorder

Have you heard of *Nature-Deficit Disorder (NDD)*? This is the sub-title of a recent book by Richard Louv called *Last Child in the Woods*.

Louv does not describe NDD as a medical condition but rather as a contemporary human condition that has seen us increasingly alienated from nature. Nature Therapy is prescribed and described as the antidote. What better place for Nature Therapy than Prince Albert National Park?! Try this: Take off your watch and turn off your cell phone. Alone or with a friend, walk slowly and deliberately along one of the many winding trails in the park.

Biophilia by Edward O. Wilson and Stephan R. Kellert, does make a case for NDD being akin to a medical condition. It suggests an innate bond between humans and other living organisms that must be expressed in order to be healthy. It is the reason we keep plants in our homes. If you want to experience biophilia, come to Prince Albert National Park in the springtime and wash yourself with vibrant greens, earthy smells and the sounds of trickling creeks and early frogs.

Don't be the *"last child in the woods."* Be the first one there and set an example for the rest.

New Rural Economy - Rural Videos



Since 1998 the *New Rural Economy Project*, also known as the NRE, has been collaborating with a number of partners in order to identify the issues that are vital to rural communities. A series of videos has been created that explores different parts of the country and how many different citizens and organizations are taking advantage of the opportunities they have to build sustainable and viable communities.

Opportunities for rural Canada is the product of these efforts and are available to you at no cost. The Web site has all of the videos in the series as well as additional resources to inspire further learning. Hopefully they will become a valuable tool for community organizations, development practitioners, teachers and you.

For more information visit the website at **www.mta.ca/rstp/nrevideos/**



The Honourable Christian Paradis, Secretary of State (Agriculture) responsible for the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariats

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- Web: www.canada.gc.ca
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