

Resource Materials for Community Economic Development:

Prospering with a Stable or Declining Population



Copyright 2010. All rights reserved.

Published and Distributed by School of Environmental Design and Rural Development.

Inquires regarding requests to re-print all, or part, of this publication should be addressed to:

Wayne Caldwell
University of Guelph
Guelph ON N1G 2W1
www.waynecaldwell.ca

Project Director: Dr. Wayne Caldwell
Contributing Authors: Dr. Jennifer Ball, Arthur Churchyard, Sara Holzman, Jackie Mercer, Nicole Sullivan, Katie Temple, Charlie Toman, and Bronwynne Wilton

School of Environmental Design and Rural Development
University of Guelph,
Ontario, Canada

March 31, 2010

Funded by:
The Community Adjustment Fund (CAF)
Industry Canada

Acknowledgements

The funding provided by the Community Adjustment Fund of Industry Canada made this project possible. This support has contributed to a report and Guide that municipalities across the province and elsewhere within the country can use and will hopefully find to be of value.

This project benefited from the advice of representatives from the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), The Ontario Rural Council (TORC), the federally funded Community Futures program (CFDC), and the County of Huron.

In the process of preparing this report, we have spoken to numerous people who have a passion for their own communities. Clearly these individuals make a difference in their communities. It is our hope that we have accurately documented their insights so that others can learn from their experience. Our sincere thanks to these practitioners who gave so freely of their time.

This project reflects the contributions and enthusiasm of a team of researchers at the University of Guelph. With the commitment and passion demonstrated by these individuals, we can have much hope in the future for rural Ontario.

- Dr. Wayne J. Caldwell

Table of Contents

INTRODUCTION	3
RESEARCH PROJECT OVERVIEW.....	5
RURAL CONTEXT AND ISSUES.....	7
DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN RURAL ONTARIO	17
COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND.....	29
BEST PRACTICES FOR AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND MANUFACTURING – LEASONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES.....	35
CASE STUDY ONE – Localization and Sustainability in the Town of Hearst	36
CASE STUDY TWO – Partnerships in Huron County	63
CASE STUDY THREE – Prince Edward County: “Prospering in a Creative Economy”	91
IMMIGRATION ATTRACTION STRATEGIES	115
VIGNETTES.....	131
Vignette One CALDECH: Supporting the Franco-Ontarian Community.....	132
Vignette Two Chatham-Kent: Downtown and Mainstreet Community Improvement Plan	134
Vignette Three Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs)- Making communities stronger and energized!.....	137
Vignette Four Community Quality Institute.....	139
Vignette Five Delhi: Committed to Rural Health.....	141
Vignette Six Economic Diversification	143
Vignette Seven Ingersoll: Fusion Youth Centre	148
Vignette Eight Innovative Community Improvement Plans	150
Vignette Nine Norfolk County: Eating at Home	156
Vignette Ten Norfolk County: Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Pilot Project	158
Vignette Eleven Owen Sound: Heritage Preservation	160
Vignette Twelve Marathon: Progressive Vision for the Future	163
Vignette Thirteen Oxford Fresh.....	165
Vignette Fourteen Pelee Island: Small Town, Big Plans	167
Vignette Fifteen Pukwis Community Wind: Leading the Way in Renewable Energy	169
Vignette Sixteen Social Enterprise: A New Force in Community Economic Development	171
Vignette Seventeen Stone Fence Theatre: Culture meets Economy	173

Vignette Eighteen Transition Towns: Planning for the Future..... 175

Vignette Nineteen Y-NOT!: Engaging Youth for the Future 177

Vignette Twenty Wallaceburg Community Task Force 179

A GUIDE TO RURAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: BEST PRACTICES FOR YOUR
COMMUNITY (AVAILABLE AS A SEPARATE REPORT)..... 183

INTRODUCTION

Many rural communities in Ontario, face one of two scenarios:

- i) Rural communities in proximity to large urban centres face levels of growth that will see them undergo a significant transformation. The 17 Counties and Regions in closest proximity to Toronto for example are forecast to grow by more than 45% between 2006 and 2031¹.
- ii) Other communities, however will struggle to maintain their existing population. Between 1996 and 2006 16 counties and districts² lost population. These same jurisdictions are forecast to collectively grow by only .3 % between 2006 and 2031.

Amongst municipalities losing population, there are those who have developed an integrated and innovative community-based approach to planning and economic development. These “best” practices offers hope and solutions that can be transferred to other communities with limited potential for population growth.

This report, entitled “Best Practices For Communities and Municipalities Leading to Innovation in Community Economic Development and Planning: Resource Materials”, identifies innovative practices to help communities prosper even where there is a stable or declining population. It focuses on municipal planning and economic development as a means for communities to influence their future. The research uses a case study methodology to identify innovative practices and apply and test these at a municipal

¹ All populations projections from Ontario Ministry of Finance (2007).

² Prince Edward, Renfrew, Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry, Bruce, Huron, Chatham-Kent, Lambton, Algoma, Cochrane, Nipissing, Greater Sudbury, Timiskaming, Kenora, Rainy River and Thunder Bay all lost population between 1996 and 2006.

level. The case studies focus on leading practices and explore their application. The research also targets innovative practices across certain sectors.

There are three components to this report. These include a series of case studies that focus on key economic sectors in three communities – Hearst, a series of vignettes that profile success stories from across Ontario, and a Best Practices Guide that summarizes key findings from the research and provides a recommended approach for communities seeking to improve their future.

RESEARCH PROJECT OVERVIEW

This research seeks to identify best practices in planning and development for communities experiencing a stable or declining population. As part of this goal, the research identified a variety of strategies, programs and processes to help municipalities and local, provincial and federal organizations deal with economic decline and stagnation. These issues are prevalent across much of rural Ontario where local economies do not share in the growth associated with large urban centres.

There are three key deliverables:

1. Resource Materials (including case studies and Best Practices Guide) to assist rural municipalities in planning for and delivering appropriate actions in response to a declining or stable population.
2. The identification of best practices for specific key sectors. These were drawn out of three case studies in the Town of Hearst, the County of Huron, and Prince Edward County. These focus on key aspects of the rural economy such as agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism, and highlight themes of localization and sustainability, partnerships, and the creative economy. An additional case study is included and focuses on rural immigration. As well, a series of success stories have been developed and are included.
3. The identification of best practices for communities and municipalities leading to innovation in Community Economic Development and Planning. These are included throughout the Resource Materials and are the foundation for the Best Practices Guide.

The project proceeded as follows:

A research advisory committee was established. Invitations were extended to representatives from OMAFRA, Community Futures, The Ontario Rural Council, the Ontario Professional Planning Institute, municipalities, and community groups. Members helped to set the initial research directions.

Best practices were identified using case studies:

a. Three jurisdictions, representing the North, South, and East, and known for local innovation in community economic development were selected (Town of Hearst, Huron County, and Prince Edward County). The case studies were identified reflecting the diversity and recognized success of programs in Prince Edward and Huron County. These successes become valuable because they can help to “show the way” for other communities that are struggling. Ideally we would like to see a more engaged and successful municipal sector across the province.

Final selection of these case studies was confirmed with the advisory committee. Interviews, literature and document review were used to identify a detailed understanding of the linkages, partnerships, programs and activities that lead to innovation and success . As part of these case studies, certain key economic sectors were identified and considered in detail - agriculture, manufacturing, and tourism. These sectors represent important aspects of the rural economy and bring additional focus to the research.

b) Development of Resource Materials and Best Practices Guide

Throughout the research there was ongoing preparation and evolution of best practices materials for rural communities. These approaches were reviewed and refined to determine the general applicability of these strategies for other municipalities across

Ontario. The end product includes Resource Materials and a Best Practices Guides to assist rural communities experiencing stable or declining populations.

RURAL CONTEXT AND ISSUES

The identification of issues affecting rural Ontario is important from several perspectives. First, the issues and their implications vary significantly between rural and urban communities. Recognition of these issues is fundamental from a policy development perspective. Sometimes, they are recognized at a provincial or federal level, but other times, these locally important issues fail to garner the attention of any of these governments. Therefore, there is the need for a thoughtful local response (municipal and/or NGO). Moreover, an intentional “scan of evolving issues” has the potential to identify key issues at an early stage, thereby contributing to the potential for enhanced effectiveness of policy. Finally, and perhaps most importantly, these issues matter. They matter to individuals and their livelihoods and to the social, economic, and environmental well-being of communities.

Across rural Ontario, local issues and their relative significance vary by region. Agriculture, for example, is an important activity in much of the settled area of rural Ontario, and the nature of agricultural production is largely a reflection of climate, soils, markets, and the overriding historic, economic, and political structure. Combined, these items produce a varied agricultural industry, which reflects the distribution of crops and livestock, farm productivity, and finances. The result of these differences in the agricultural industry is the generation of regionally specific issues. In some parts of the province, the concentration of livestock production has led to concerted municipal and provincial action. In other parts, tourism, forestry, and mining are dominant rural activities that have faced equally challenging times.

In order to deal with the wide range of issues that affect rural Ontario, six general headings have been identified: economic (e.g., employment, income, investment); environmental (e.g., ecological, conservation); political (e.g., government, administration, decision making); quality of life (e.g., variety, richness); social (e.g., education, welfare, health, housing); and land use (e.g., goods and services/population distribution). Each of these categories includes numerous individual issues and subcategories.

Economic Issues

The Ontario agricultural industry has been shedding farmers for decades. Many communities receive fewer and fewer benefits from agriculture. The traditional role of many small towns and villages as service centres for agriculture has changed. Input expenditures (e.g., for fertilizer, equipment) are often made directly out of the community. Agriculture continues to face an ongoing cost-price squeeze that has made making a livelihood from agriculture very difficult. To maintain profitability, there is a constant pressure to increase efficiency to keep the cost of production below the value of commodity prices. This drives the ongoing pressure for increased size related to economies of scale. Those who cannot compete are either forced out of production or forced to subsidize the farm with off-farm employment. Despite these issues, however, the business of agriculture has in some ways thrived. Farm productivity and gross farm sales are at record highs, and investment in the agriculture sector continues unabated. There does, however, appear to be an interesting parallel trend. While the numbers barely create a blip in census data, local food production and related consumption has an increasing profile. Across the province, for example, there are active “buy local, buy fresh” campaigns. Other primary industries such as forestry and mining have all experienced their own share of difficult economic circumstances. These sectors are equally affected by an increasingly global market, both in terms of demand and price.

Across the province, manufacturing and tourism are closely tied to broad economic factors. The value of the Canadian dollar, access to American markets (e.g., border crossings), and competition with emerging economies (particularly China and India) create issues that are not easily addressed. Although sometimes underappreciated, the manufacturing sector is a strong component of many rural economies. Moreover, while variable across the province, in many rural areas, there is an increasing concern related to the future availability of an adequate labour supply. In the future, the issue for much of rural Ontario is not likely to be a shortage of jobs but, rather, a shortage of people to occupy key positions. With impending retirements, continued youth out-migration, and the attraction of large urban centres to immigrants, it will be difficult to find skilled labour in many professions. An opportunity, albeit a challenging one, is for rural communities to target immigrants as a means to maintain essential services (Bauder, 2003; Silvius and Annis, 2007).

Environmental Issues

Rural Ontario is subject to a variety of local, regional, and continental environmental pressures. Broad issues, such as climate change, pose as yet unknown implications. It can be expected, however, that agriculture will witness greater extremes and fluctuating weather patterns. Peak oil, while equally an economic issue, speaks to the long-term implications of increasingly expensive and scarce conventional energy supplies. The impact on a dispersed rural population, and energy-dependent rural communities is uncertain. As well, the potential for increased urban-rural migration is unknown. A related trend with corresponding economic and land use implications is the increasing search for alternative energy supplies. The trend toward large-scale solar and wind energy projects is often the source of local debate and conflict. Moreover, the move toward large-scale ethanol production (based largely on corn) is changing cropping patterns, with a parallel increase in corn acreage and the potential for higher levels of erosion and fertilizer use.

Concerns over water quality are the source of ongoing tensions. The intensification of the livestock sector, for example, has fuelled debate in many parts of the province. In addition, faulty septic systems, discharges from municipal sewage treatment plants, and contamination from wildlife have also contributed to these concerns.

Increased public awareness is creating new pressures and demands on farms and businesses to be environmentally accountable. Examples include local concerns over water quality, environmental protection, and habitat preservation. Government is being pressured to regulate in these areas. Stewardship can also play an important role. In the case of agriculture, there is a need to adopt best management practices. Nutrient management planning (provincial and local) is an example of a government attempt to force environmental responsibility (Caldwell, 2001, 2003).

Political Issues

Politically, rural Ontario faces a number of issues. First, at the national and provincial level, the overall reduction of the rural population as a proportion of the total population has resulted in a loss of political influence. As the province has shifted from a nation of farmers to a nation of urban dwellers, the programs and attention of governments have shifted in response. Second, at the opposite end of the spectrum, the composition of many rural communities is changing, and, as a result, the direction of rural municipal councils is also shifting. This is particularly evident for certain rural communities within Ontario that have been amalgamated with large urban centres. The rural lands adjacent to the city of Ottawa or Hamilton, for example, have been incorporated into large municipalities dominated by a large urban population. In agricultural communities, the reduction in the farm population relative to the non-farm population has changed the composition of municipal councils and introduced a series of competing interests. Addressing these competing interests requires significant attention on the part of municipal councils.

Quality of Life

Quality of life is an all-encompassing, broad and yet ambiguous term. The concept, however, is of longstanding importance to residents of many rural communities (Sim, 1988). It speaks to an adequate standard of living, access to appropriate services, and the availability of cultural and social services that contribute to a meaningful, rewarding life. For many, it implies close ties within the community—regular contact with family and friends (Sim, 1988). In a recent (2008) public consultation process in Huron County, Ontario, for example, residents were asked as part of the development of a sustainability plan what they most valued about their community. Not surprisingly, the proximity of family and friends was at the top of the list. Rural communities offer much that enhances quality of life, but there are challenges. Traditional institutions, ranging from the post office to the local church to schools, have been threatened. Sometimes, this is driven by changing priorities, and in other instances, it is driven by the search for increasingly efficient means of service delivery (such as provincial formulas for school funding). Rural communities are inherently dependent upon larger centres, and the distances from these centres limit access to certain services that contribute to quality of life. Certain medical, cultural, and commercial services, for example, are not supported by a small population base. As a result, rural people sometimes need to look elsewhere for many needed services and amenities. In rural Ontario, the continued provision of quality services is an ongoing issue. Attracting and retaining professionals creates new challenges. In addition, the relatively low rural population density puts pressure on the ability of local governments to maintain acceptable public services related to roads and infrastructure. Likewise, it can be difficult for the private sector to provide certain services, such as high-speed Internet, given a relatively low population density (Statistics Canada, 2005).

Social Issues

Related to the above, there are two overriding social issues that affect rural Ontario: the availability of institutional services and the presence of stress in the rural

community. The change in the nature of the rural community combined with variable growth rates across the province, including depopulation in some areas, has negatively affected the viability of rural institutions such as schools, churches, and other community organizations. Further, the overall state of many rural economies and the combined effects of distance and dependency outlined above have created considerable stress at the community and family levels (Ginder, 1985). There is evidence of the challenge many people face in securing an adequate livelihood in the numbers of rural residents forced to leave employment in the primary sector (e.g., agriculture, forestry) and also in the ongoing transition within the manufacturing sector. This is also reflected in the significantly lower average family income and education levels among rural populations relative to the province as a whole (Statistics Canada, 2009). It is noteworthy that, while the total population of some areas of rural Ontario has changed very little over the past 30 years, the composition of the population has undergone significant changes. While education levels are improving, a disproportionate percentage of the working-age population, relative to the province as a whole, is without a high school certificate. This has implications for employment and the need for labour training. A number of these trends contribute to community vulnerability and to continuing population and employment decline. (Statistics Canada, 2008).

Land Use Issues

Land use and related issues are of particular importance in rural Ontario. There is a strong connection between land use, the environment, and the economy. Agriculture, forestry, mining, and tourism, for example, have a strong reliance upon natural resources and the amenity of the area, pointing to the importance of appropriate land use and environmental policies that protect these resources for future generations. No less important is the efficient allocation of lands for residential, industrial, commercial, recreational, institutional, and other uses. Important land use issues that impact rural planning may be considered under four separate but related headings: the changing

function of rural communities; agricultural land and rural non-farm development; the role of natural areas; and new land uses.

The Changing Function of Rural Communities

The changing nature of agriculture (e.g., larger farms, a reduced farm population, and a reduced reliance on local services) and the decline of the forestry sectors in some parts of the province contribute to the declining importance and change of many traditional service centres. For many rural communities, the closure of the mine, the closure of the lumber mill, the relocation of internationally owned branch plants, and many similar developments have manifested radical and oftentimes precipitous changes in the community's basic economic functions and, eventually, its viability. Across the province, there are examples of towns and villages with an overabundance of commercial space with abandoned, underutilized buildings. At the same time, some rural communities are experiencing an influx of commuters with resulting pressures for growth.

Agricultural Land and Rural non-farm Development

The growth of a non-farm population in rural areas has created its own set of issues. While people may argue the merits of this trend, it has affected rural communities by increasing land costs and creating issues of land use compatibility (Caldwell and Dodds-Weir, 2007).

The Role of Natural Areas

The role of natural areas within the rural community has been an evolving land use issue. Ongoing concerns over water quality and habitat preservation (e.g., wetlands and upland forests), for example, point to the need for appropriate policies, including ones for the protection of natural areas and improved farming practices.

New Land Uses

Wind turbines, gas wells, and the potential for solar farms introduce new land uses to the rural landscape with potentially significant implications. Wind towers have generated much local debate. At a minimum, policies sensitive to the protection of “heritage landscapes” are required to ensure that in the future those landscapes that are highly valued by residents and tourists alike are retained.

While attempting to identify the major issues that affect rural Ontario, the above discussion does not identify the relative importance of the issues. Further, depending upon individual perspectives, any one of the given issues could be considered the most important. It is clear, however, that rural Ontario is part of a global economy and subject to the broad forces of globalization. Many of the decisions that affect individual livelihoods, whether it is that of a farmer or an automotive worker in a small town, are made remotely, with little regard for the local community impacts. Consequently, this speaks to the importance of local action in responding to the types of changes that are affecting rural communities across the province.

The following section provides a more detailed overview of demographics in rural Ontario.

References

- Bauder, H. "Newcomers: Get Rich, Go Rural." *The Globe and Mail*. 2 Sept. 2003.
- Caldwell, W. J. "Risk Management and Agriculture: Coping With Change—A Municipal Perspective." *The Great Lakes Geographer* 8:1 (2001): 31–40.
- Caldwell, W. J. "*Municipalities and Nutrient Management: What Lies Ahead.*" Conference Proceedings, Manure Management an Ancient Resource, a Present Problem, a Future Opportunity. Hamilton, Ontario. (2003).
- Caldwell, W. J., and C. Dodds-Weir. "Rural Non-Farm Development and Ontario's Agricultural Industry." *Farmland Preservation: Land for Future Generations*. Eds. W. Caldwell, S. Hilts, and B. Wilton. Guelph, ON: Volumes Publishing, 2007. 229–52.
- Ginder, R. "Impact of the Farm Financial Crisis on Agribusiness Firms and Rural Communities." *American Journal of Agricultural Economics* 67.5 (1985): 1184–90.
- Silvius, R., and R. C. Annis. "Reflections on the Rural Immigration Experience in Manitoba's Diverse Rural Communities." *Our Diverse Cities* 3 (Summer, 2007): 126–33.
- Sim, A. R. *Land and Community. Crisis in Canada's Countryside*. Guelph, ON: University of Guelph, 1988.
- Statistics Canada. "Factors Associated with Internet Use: Does Rurality Matter?" *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin* 7.3 (2005):
- Statistics Canada. "Study: Community Vulnerability to Population and Employment Decline." *The Daily*. 14 April 2008.

Statistics Canada. "Rural and Urban Workers Living in Low Income." *Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin 7.4* (2009).

DEMOGRAPHIC TRENDS IN RURAL ONTARIO

Although the study of demographics in Ontario is quite prominent, little research has been conducted with an emphasis on rural Ontario. Greater emphasis is generally given for assessing trends and making projections for the urban areas, which house the vast majority of Ontario's population. However, it is just as important to study rural areas as changing demographics will equally affect these areas. In fact, rural trends are likely to be quite different than in neighbouring urban centres. In 2006, Census data from Statistics Canada indicate that of the over 12.2 million Ontarians, around 15% live in rural areas (Ontario Trillium Foundation, 2007).

This section on demographics provides a brief overview of some of the major trends affecting rural areas within Ontario. It includes growth and decline past patterns as well as future projections while using population growth and decline as indicators. Most of the maps were created using the Community Information Database, a free internet-based resource developed by the Government of Canada's Rural Secretariat. It was created for the public to access consistent and reliable socio-economic and demographic data for all communities across Canada. This is an excellent avenue for acquiring census data and map creation.

Past Trends

Maps and analysis are first provided at the provincial level to show an overview at the census level. Next, maps are presented in more detail at the census subdivision level and for each of the Regional levels used across the Ontario Public Service (e.g. Central, Southwest, Eastern, Northeast, and Northwest). It should be noted that the black lines delineating regional boundaries are approximate and do not represent true borders.

As can be seen in Figure 1, which delineates the 49 census divisions, there has been a general increase in population in the southern portions of Ontario, while the northern regions have seen either a slight increase, a constant growth, or a decline. This was to

be expected as only approximately 6% (786,290) of Ontario's population resides in the northern portion of the province (Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, 2008).

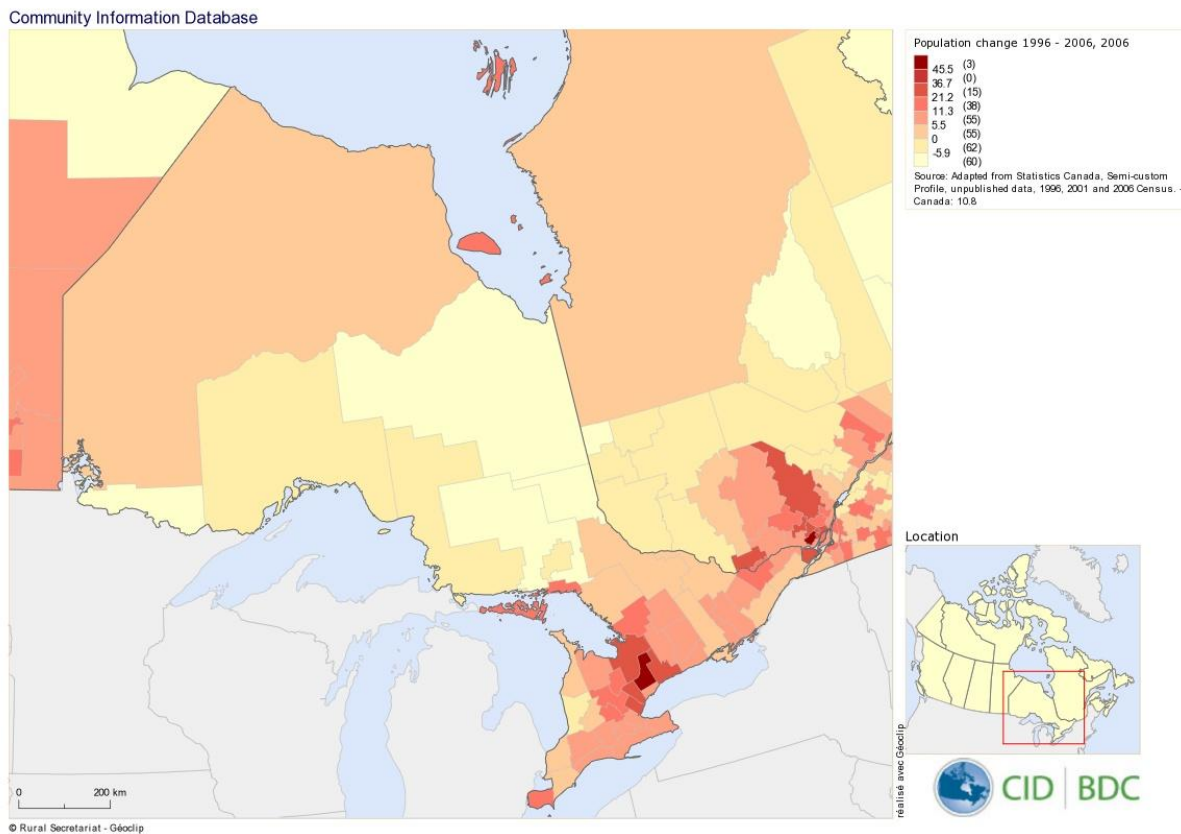


Figure 1 - Map of Ontario census divisions with a population percent change from 1996-2006

Figure 2 shows the population percent change for all of Ontario, but now shows the detail from all census subdivisions. There are a few items to note when analyzing the map. Clearly the most significant population growth is in the southern portions of the province. While there are pockets of growth in the north, such as in the city of Thunder Bay, there is little 'spill-over' of this growth into neighbouring rural areas, as is the case in the south. There are small areas of growth in Northern Ontario and these may include First Nations communities or small resource-based communities. It is recognized that First Nations communities are generally growing at a higher rate than much of the rest of Ontario.

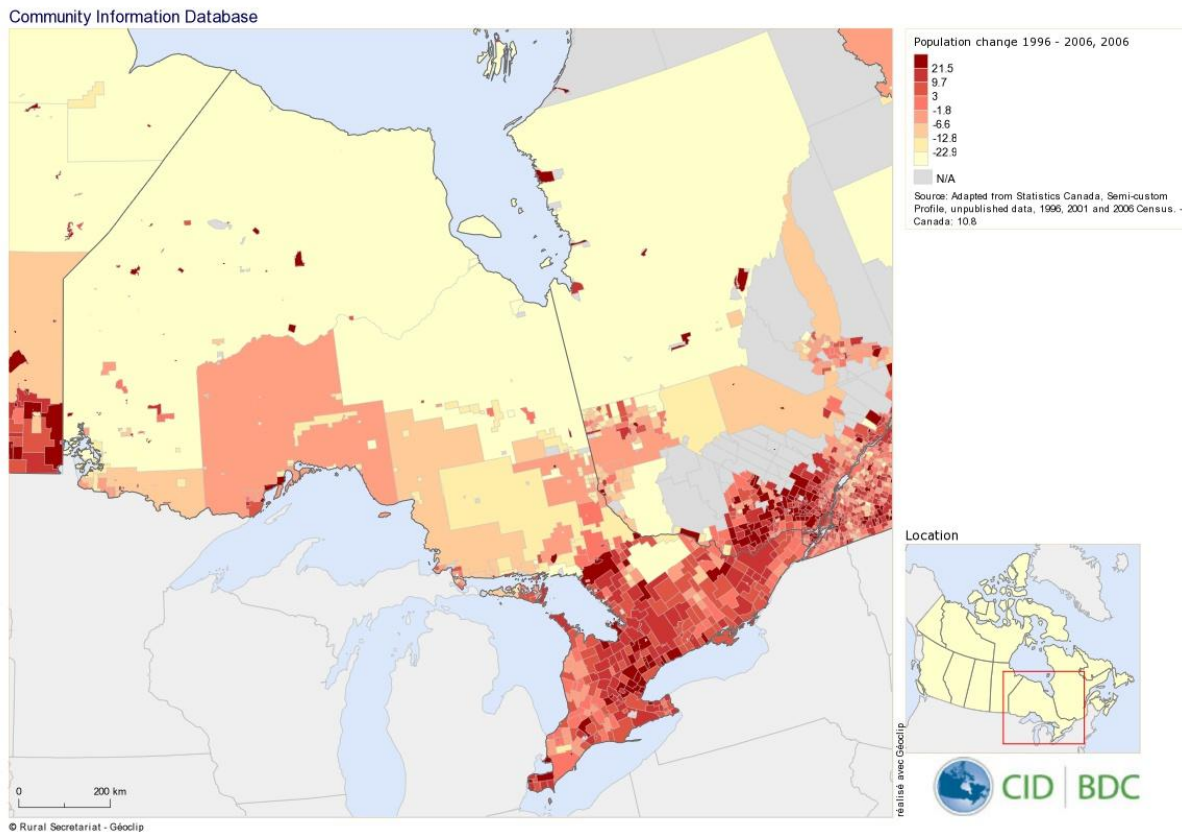


Figure 2 - Map of Ontario census subdivisions with population percent change from 1996-2006

Central Ontario has the highest population of all five regions, with 2.68 million people (Statistics Canada, 2007). This is excluding the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Of that, about 566 331 people are considered to be living rurally, making up 31% of Ontario’s rural population (Statistics Canada, 2007). Figure 3 shows a ‘zoomed-in’ look at the population percent change in Central Ontario. The delineation of the Greater Toronto Area has been outlined to demonstrate the extremely high increase of population in this area. As can be seen, there are a few white pockets of land, demonstrating lack of information in these areas. They are reservations; specifically, the area close to Hamilton is Six Nations Reserve, and the area close to Georgian Bay is Waha Mohawk Reserve. It has been found to be very difficult to collect census data on reservations, which ultimately leads to the inability to interpret aboriginal population data.

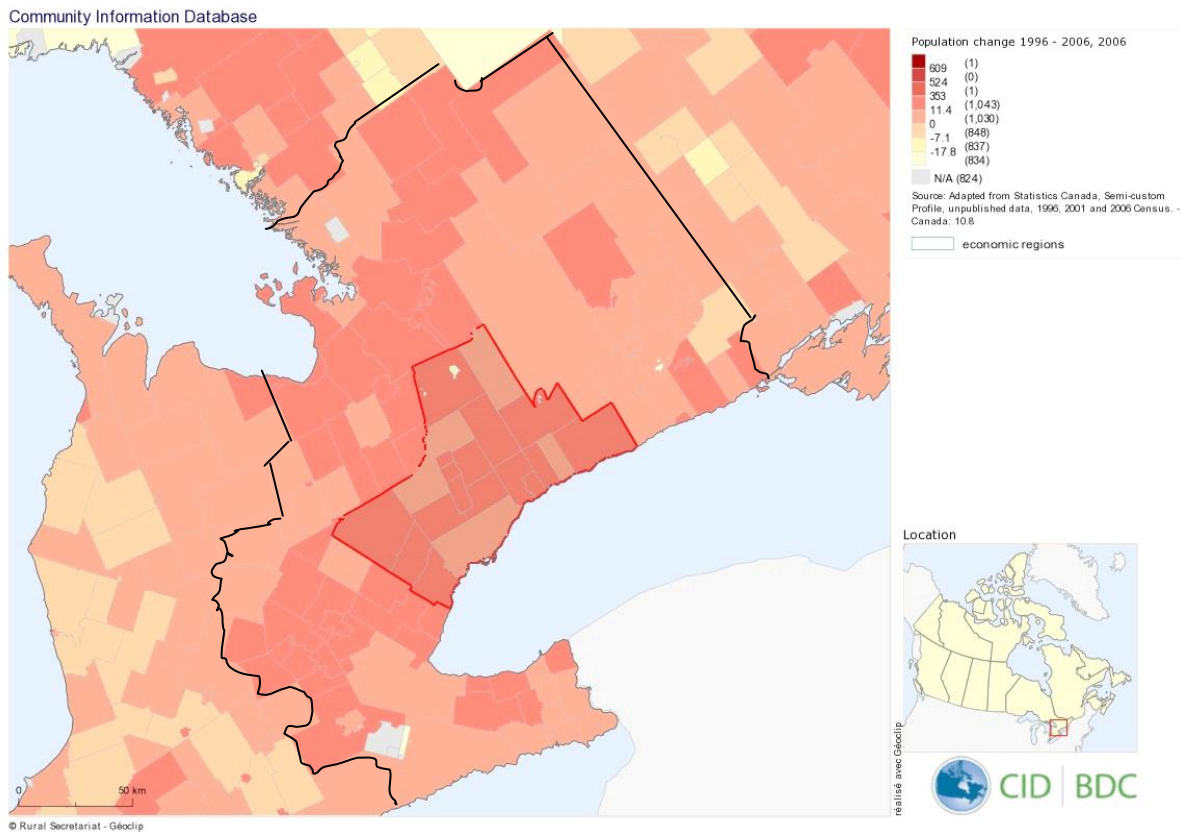


Figure 3 - Map of Central Ontario census subdivisions with population percent change from 1996-2006

From the 2006 census, Southwestern Ontario has a population of 1.53 million people, but only 25% are considered rural (Statistics Canada, 2006). Southwestern Ontario doesn't have urban areas as built up as in Central Ontario and are not experiencing the same type of growth. In particular, Southwestern Ontario (Figure 4) has almost half of its census subdivisions experiencing some sort of decline. There are obvious increases around the cities of London, Windsor, Sarnia etc.

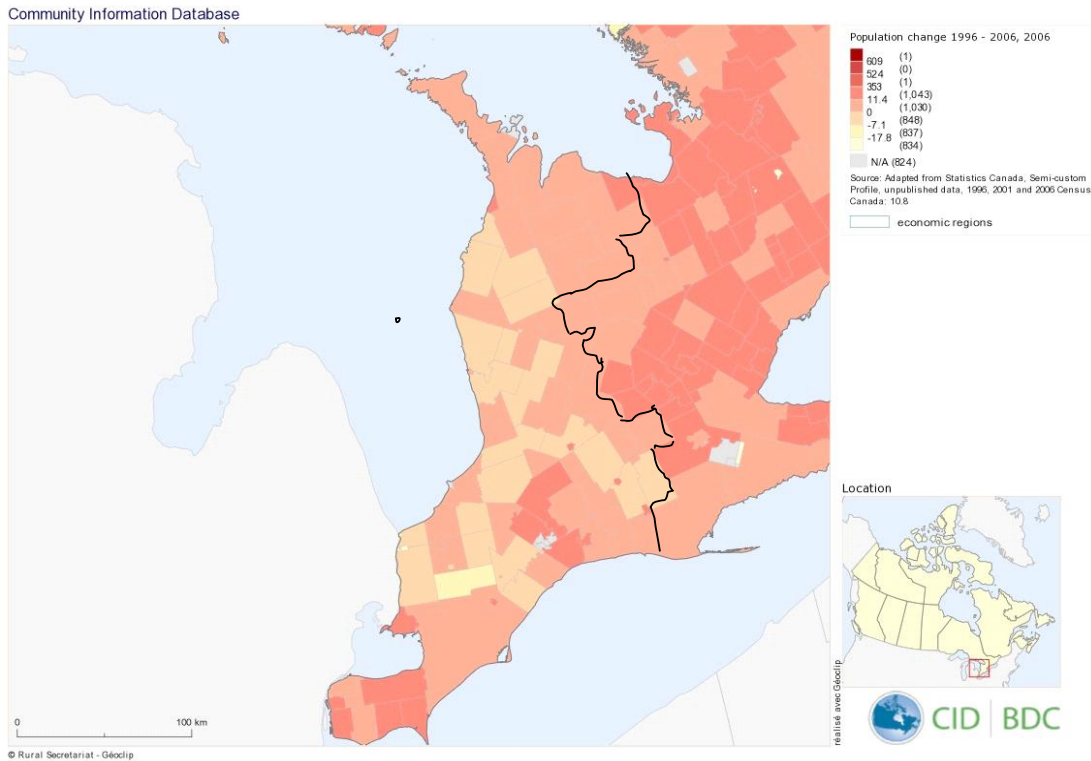


Figure 4 - Map of Southwest Ontario census subdivisions with population percent change from 1996-2006

From the 2006 census, Eastern Ontario has a population of 1.6 million people, but only 27.8% are considered rural (Statistics Canada, 2006). Eastern Ontario (Figure 5) has experienced a growth of 3.92% from 2001 to 2006, and almost half of this growth came from the rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2001). As can be seen in the figure, both the rural and urban areas are experiencing growth, but there also appears to be decline in mostly rural areas. These are primarily agricultural areas experiencing out-migration, a lack of economic stimulus, and an overall decline in community development. The overall goal of this research project is identifying these specific areas of stable or declining population and is highlighting communities that are working on solving their declining population problems in innovative ways.

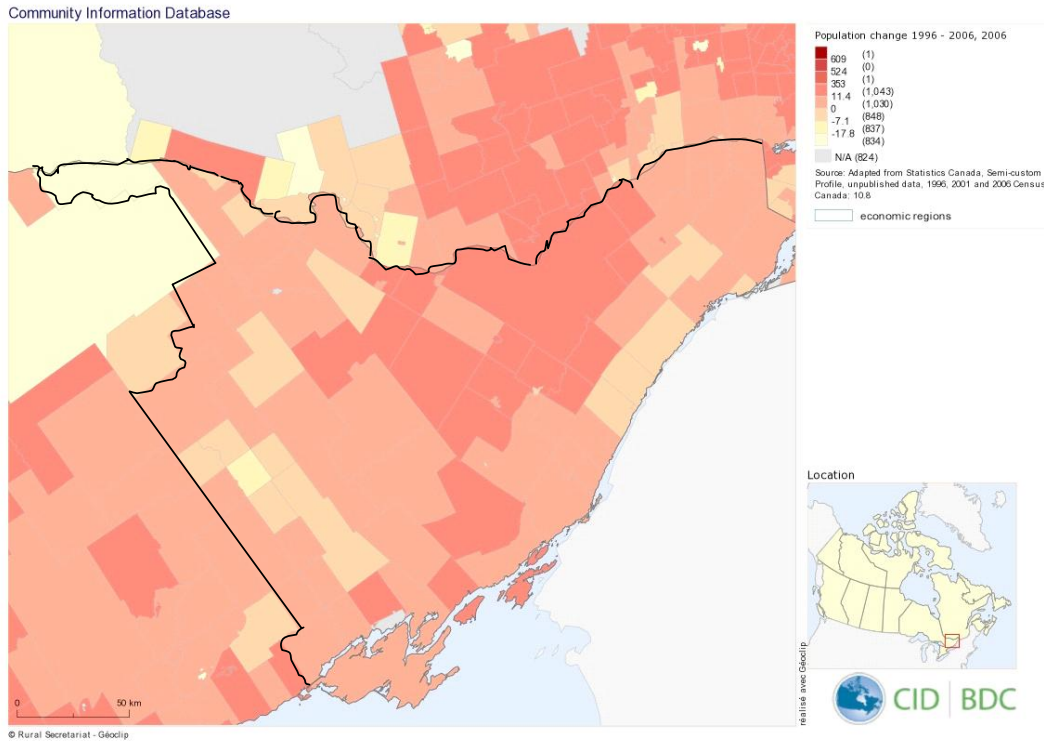


Figure 5 - Map of Eastern Ontario census subdivisions with population percent change from 1996-2006

As of 2006 Census data, Northeast Region has a population of 551,244, of which 30% live in rural areas (Statistics Canada, 2006). Figure 6 shows the map of Northeastern Ontario. There are generally areas of decline, but again there is an increase in population around urban centres such as Sudbury, Sault Ste Marie, and Elliot Lake. It is notable, given overall trends in northern Ontario that some of Northeast Ontario's rural areas actually experienced some growth between 2001 and 2006 (Statistics Canada, 2006).

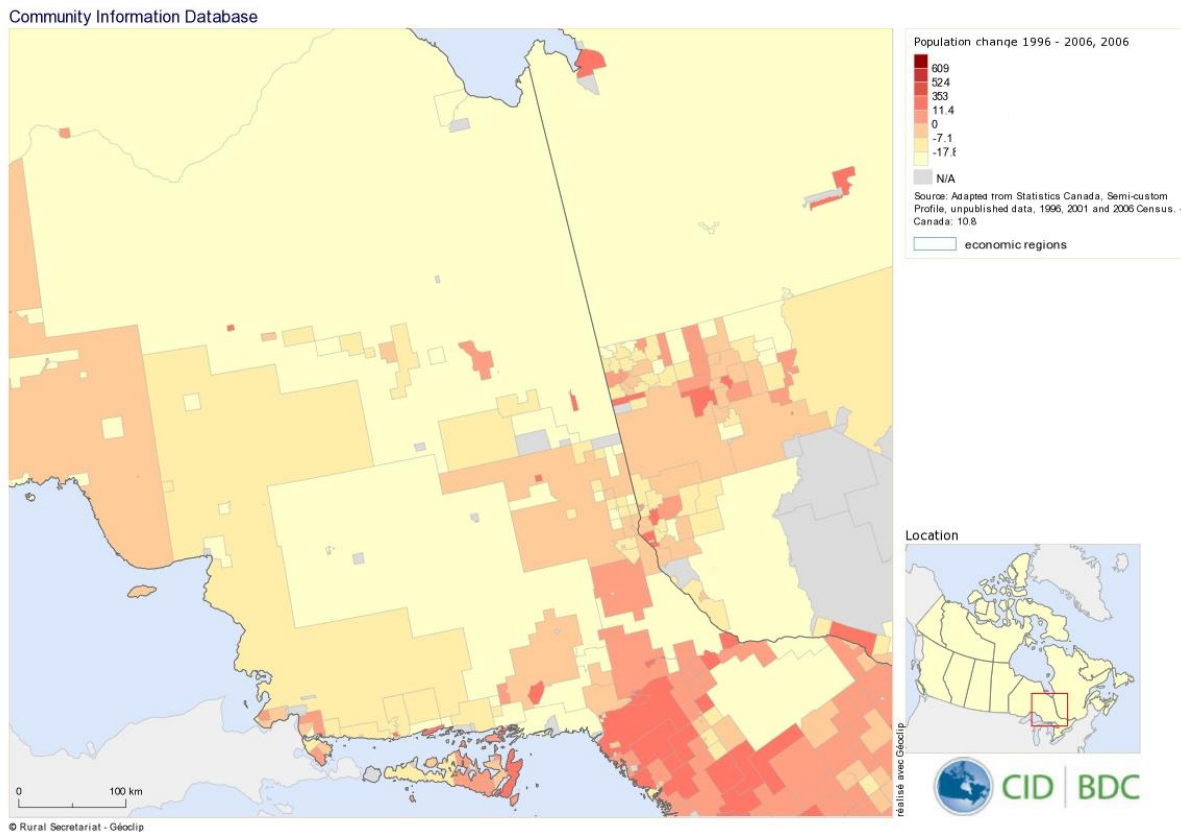


Figure 6 - Map of Northeast Ontario census subdivisions with population percent change from 1996-2006

Northwest Region has a population of 235,046 as noted in the 2006 census; 36.5% of this is considered rural (Statistics Canada, 2006). Over the period 2001 to 2006 the population of Northwest Region increased by only 0.12% (Statistics Canada, 2001). As can be seen in Figure 5, this growth seems to be coming from the urban area of Thunder Bay along with some rural communities. Of note, as was mentioned in Figure 2, there has been an increase of population in many aboriginal communities. Along with a few other maps previously displayed, there are a few areas lacking in data (probably First Nations reservations).

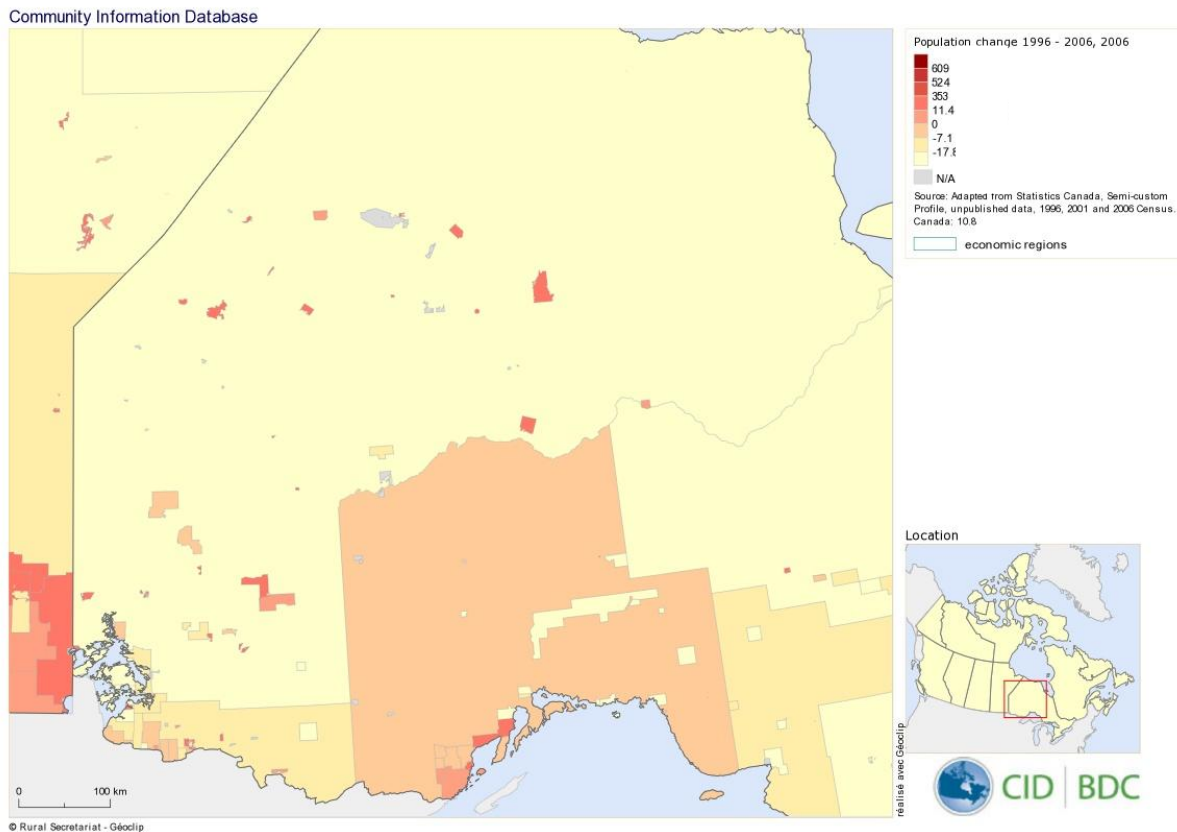


Figure 7 - Map of Northwest Ontario census subdivisions with population percent change from 1996-2006

Future scenarios

To understand future scenarios concerning population growth and decline it is useful to turn to the Ontario Ministry of Finance’s population projections. Their population scenario considers options ranging from high growth to low growth. The following discussion builds on their analysis using their references scenario. (Ministry of Finance, 2009). According to the Ministry of Finance population projections, Ontario’s population is expected to grow to 16.37 million by 2031, an increase of 27.8 percent (Ministry of Finance, 2009). But how much of this growth will be in rural areas? Sparling and Bucknell (2006) indicate that of the 2.2 million people increase Ontario will experience between 2005 and 2010, only 3.3% of that total growth will happen in rural areas.

In terms of regional growth, it is obvious that the GTA will experience the largest growth, with its population increasing by 3.1 million, or 51.7 per cent by 2036. The

GTA's share of provincial population is projected to rise from 46.5 per cent in 2008 to 51.2 per cent in 2036 (Ministry of Finance, 2009).

The other regions of the province will experience a slower growth than the GTA. The Northwest region is actually projected to experience a small decline (Ministry of Finance, 2009). This is a function of a number of factors including the closing of prominent industries in some single industry-communities, low birth rates and an aging population among other factors. With the decline of these communities, schools and other services are shut down, forcing people to leave. Central Ontario is projected to maintain its share of Ontario population, while the East, Southwest and Northern regions are projected to see limited growth (Ministry of Finance, 2009).

For this research project, three case study counties have been chosen: Prince Edward, Huron and Cochrane Counties. Table 1 shows the past and future population trends ranging from 1981 to 2036. It is interesting to see that the two southern counties are generally remaining in a stable growth pattern, but that Cochrane County has been steadily decreasing over the years and this decline is forecast to continue in the future. It is recognized that there are inherent difficulties predicting population for rural communities where the loss or gain of a single industry or business can affect populations trends.

Table 1- Population trends for Case Studied Counties

Population trends for Case Studied Counties (in the thousands)			
	Prince Edward County	Huron County	Cochrane
Actual population based on census information			
1981	22.3	56.1	96.8
1986	22.4	55.9	93.7
1991	23.7	59.0	93.9
1996	25.0	60.2	93.2
2001	25.9	62.0	89.5
2006	26.2	61.3	86.9
Forecasted population from the Ministry of Finance			
2011	26.2	60.3	85.4
2016	26.5	60.3	83.2
2021	27.1	60.7	82.3
2026	27.9	61.2	81.4
2031	28.7	61.4	80.3
2036	29.3	61.3	79.0

(OMAFRA, 1993), (OMAF, 1988), (OMF, 2009). (Statcan, 1996)

References

- Sparling, D. and D. Bucknell. (October 2006), *Ontario's Changing Population*, Institute of Agri-Food Policy Innovation: Guelph, Ontario.
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food, and Rural Affairs (1993). 1993 *Agricultural Statistics for Ontario*. Publication 20
- Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food, (1988). *1988 Agricultural Statistics for Ontario*. Publication 20
- Ontario Ministry of Finance. (2009), *Ontario Population Projections 2008 – 2036*, Ontario Ministry of Finance. Retrieved on January 29, 2010 from <http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/#s4>>
- Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. (2008), *Employment Ontario Northern Region 2007 Annual Labour Market Report*. Labour Market Information & Research and Planning Branch, MTCU Retrieved on February 23 2010 from <http://www.ontario.ca/ontprodconsume/groups/content/@gosp/@lmi/documents/document/247424.pdf>
- Ontario Trillium Foundation. (2007), *Small Towns: Big Impact*, Ontario Trillium Foundation. Retrieved on February 4, 2010 at: http://www.trilliumfoundation.org/cms/en/html/sm_towns_grantmaking07.aspx?menuid=255>
- Statistics Canada. (2007), *Population counts, for Canada, provinces and territories, census divisions by urban population size groups and rural, 2006 Census - 100% data (table)*. *Population and Dwelling Count Highlight Tables. 2006 Census*.

Retrieved on February 8, 2010 from < <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97550/Print.cfm?TPL=P3C&Page=INDX&LANG=Eng&T=703&SR=76&S=0&O=A&RPP=25&PR=24&CMA=0>>

Statistics Canada. (2006), *Population and dwelling counts, for Canada, provinces and territories, and census subdivisions (municipalities), 2006 and 2001 censuses - 100% data2*. Available on February 8, 2010 from <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/hlt/97550/Index.cfm?TPL=P1C&Page=RETR&LANG=Eng&T=302&PR=35&S=1&O=A&RPP=25>

Statistics Canada. (2001), *Population counts, for Canada, provinces and territories, and census divisions by urban and rural, 2001 Census - 100% data (table)*. 2001 Census of Population. Retrieved on February 8, 2010 from <<http://www12.statcan.ca/English/census01/products/standard/popdwell/Table-UR-D.cfm?PR=35>>

Statistics Canada. (1996). *Profile of Census Divisions and Subdivisions, 1996 Census*. 1996 Census of Population. Retrieved on February 25, 2010 from [http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/census96/data/profiles/DataTable.cfm?YEAR=1996 &LANG=E&PID=35782&S=A&GID=201928](http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/english/census96/data/profiles/DataTable.cfm?YEAR=1996&LANG=E&PID=35782&S=A&GID=201928)

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT BACKGROUND

Many rural communities across Ontario, and indeed both nationally and worldwide, are facing problems related to declining or non-growth population trends. Although some rural areas in close proximity to urban areas are expecting unprecedented growth in coming years, others will struggle to maintain their existing population. The 17 counties closest to Toronto, for example, are expected to collectively grow by 45% by 2031, whereas 16 other counties are predicted to have a mere 0.3% increase in the same timeframe (Ontario Ministry of Finance 2007). Population loss both contributes to and is a result of rural decline, as it can lead to the loss of services, shocks to the local economy, changes in demographic structures (ie. a growing elderly population) and other social and economic problems (Cawley 1995; Bryant 1997). These types of issues are evident in public workshops conducted across Eastern Ontario by the Monieson Centre (accessed <http://easternontarioknowledge.ca/index.php/discovery-workshop/discovery-workshop-reports.html>, May 1, 2009)

Because development is often equated with growth, population decline is often seen as inevitable and 'negative'. In certain cases, decline may certainly be unavoidable. However, it is important to recognize the significant value of rural areas in their role of defining a region's identity and culture (Greenwood and Storey 2004). Moreover, there are scholars that challenge the measures of success for small communities and point to other positive indicators such as reducing the pace of decline and creating small numbers of new jobs (Bryant 1997). A community with a declining population could therefore potentially have success in areas not related to population growth.

Some rural communities with declining populations are using a systematic planning approach to develop a community economic development strategy (Douglas 1994). Community economic development is defined by Markey et al (2005) as 'a process by which communities can initiate and generate their own solutions to common economic

problems and thereby build long term community capacity and foster the integration of economic, social and environmental objectives’.

The past couple of decades has seen a rise in interest in this type of locally controlled development among numerous groups including researchers, governments, funding bodies and communities themselves (Halseth & Lo 2009; Halseth 2005). The purpose of strategically planning for CED is to *proactively* undertake an intervention, rather than to simply *accommodate* change on a more reactive basis (Douglas 1994; Lauer 1993). In a recent review of Canadian and international rural and regional development policies, Goldenberg (2008) emphasizes the critical nature of strategic planning in the success of any such policies, as well as more community- and place-based approaches. This place based approach has become common in CED with the recognition of its contribution to long term sustainability (Greenwood and Storey 2004).

In earlier literature, it was understood that within CED there were a variety of ways to undertake CED interventions, each with different main goals, depending on which component of community economic development is emphasized: 1) sharing and caring (community) 2) job creation (economic) 3) stability and sustainability (development). (Boothroyd and Davis 1993). According to Bryant (1997), although municipalities had long been engaged in economic development with an emphasis purely on the E (economic), the emerging focus eventually became ‘quality of life’ and its interrelated social, economic and environmental dimensions. More recent literature goes a step further and makes a strong distinction between ‘conventional’ economic development and ‘community’ economic development with the latter equated with sustainability and local empowerment (McIlveen and Bradshaw 2009).

Community economic development is currently seen as having the express purpose of involving the community (McIlveen and Bradshaw 2009). Over the years there have been examples of communities that have had some economic success in spite of a

declining population. Huron County, for example, has a number of success stories which are attributed to a more locally based and cooperative approach to planning for community development (Caldwell 1997). Recent examples brought forth by Goldenberg (2008) share this cooperative approach, which Goldenberg refers to as a 'new governance model', and include partnerships across governments, with the state as an 'enabler', and with more control at the community level.

Community economic development is still evolving in Canada and there are still gaps in the literature where lessons from specific case studies could be applied to other communities (Savoie 2000). It is hoped that this study will not only contribute to helping fill that gap, but also offer some relevance to communities dealing with today's current economic climate.

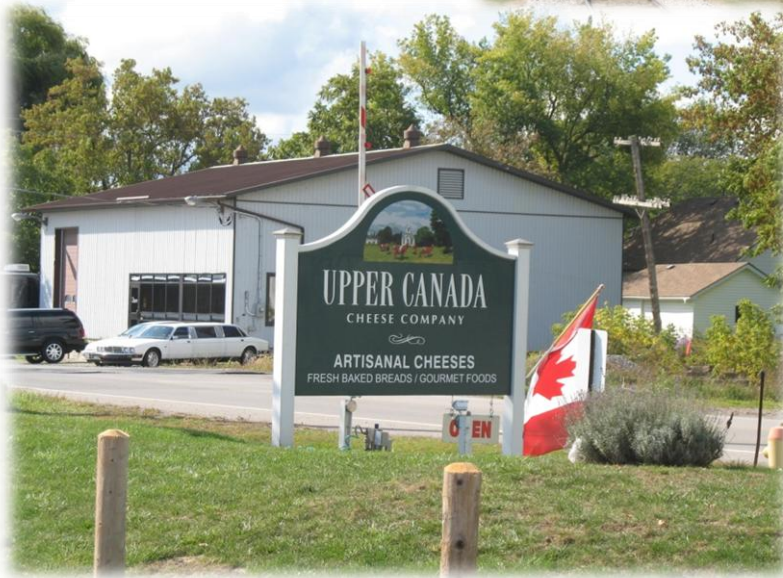
References

- Bryant, Christopher (1997). The Management of Processes of Change in Canada's Small Towns and Villages. In Mitchell, C., & Dahms, F. (Eds). *Challenge and opportunity: Managing change in Canadian towns and villages*. Waterloo, Ont.: Dept. of Geography, University of Waterloo.
- Caldwell, Wayne, Carol Leeming, Paul Nichol and Jim Niesen (1997). Rural Community Economic Development: A Model for a Cooperative Arrangement Between Local, Provincial and Federal Authorities. In Mitchell, C., & Dahms, F. (Eds). *Challenge and opportunity: Managing change in Canadian towns and villages*. Waterloo, Ont.: Dept. of Geography, University of Waterloo.
- Cawley, M. E. (. (1994). Desertification: Measuring population decline in rural Ireland. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 10(4), 395-407.
- Douglas, David J.A.(David James Anthony). (1994). *Community economic development in Canada*. Toronto: McGraw-Hill Ryerson.
- Goldenberg, M. (2008). *A review of rural and regional development policies and programs*. Inc./Réseaux Canadiens de Recherche en Politiques Publiques: Canadian Policy Research Networks.
- Greenwood, Robert and Keith Storey (2004). Newfoundland and Labrador Rural Dialogue Discussion Document. Retrieved May 3 2009 from <http://www.mun.ca/harriscentre/reports.php>
- Lauer (1993). Setting the Stage: Guideposts for Successful Community Development. In Bruce, D., & Whitla, M. (1993). *Community-based approaches to rural development: Principles and practices*. Sackville, N.B.: Rural and Small Town Research and Studies Programme, Mount Allison University.
- Lo, J., & Halseth, G. (2009). The practice of principles: An examination of CED groups in Vancouver, BC. *Community Development Journal*, 44(1), 80-110.

- Markey, S., Halseth, G., & Manson, D. (2008). Challenging the inevitability of rural decline: Advancing the policy of place in northern British Columbia. *Journal of Rural Studies*, 24(4), 409-421.
- Markey, S., Pierce, JT., Vodden, K. and Roseland, M. (2005) *Second Growth: Community Economic Development in Rural British Columbia*, UBC Press, Vancouver.
- McIlveen, K., & Bradshaw, B. (2009). Community forestry in British Columbia, Canada: The role of local community support and participation. *Local Environment*, 14(2), 193-205.
- Savoie, D. J. (2000). *Community economic development in Atlantic Canada: False hope or panacea?*. New Brunswick: The Canadian Institute for Research on Regional Development.

BEST PRACTICES FOR AGRICULTURE, TOURISM AND MANUFACTURING – LEASONS FROM THE CASE STUDIES

The following case studies of Hearst, Huron County and Prince Edward County provide interesting examples of how each of these communities have tackled individual issues within their communities. Sectoral issues related to agriculture, tourism and manufacturing have been approached in different ways. Key successes have been noted within the Case Studies and are also documented within the Best Practices Guide.



CASE STUDY ONE – Localization and Sustainability in the Town of Hearst

Table of Contents

Introduction	38
Community Profile	38
Demographics	38
Geography and Climate	39
Historical and Current Primary Industries	40
Conclusion	41
Organization for Community Economic Development	41
Challenges to Community Economic Development.....	45
Local Challenges.....	45
Broader Challenges	47
Examples of Community Economic Development.....	48
AGRIVA.....	48
La Maison Verte	48
Miky’s Smoke House	49
Villeneuve Construction.....	50
Economic Development Corporation	51
Sustainability.....	52
Bio-Com Project	53
The Hearst Forest Project	54
Community Characteristics Important in Community Economic Development.....	55
Community Participation	55
Community Leadership.....	56
Community Culture and Sense of Place.....	56
Key Transferable Best Practices from Case Examples	57
Community Participation and Engagement.....	57
Investment in Local Business (Building Organizational Capacity).....	58
Sustainability Planning and Adaptation to Change.....	58
Localization	59
Leadership and Innovation	59
References	61

Introduction

Beneficial or 'best' practices in economic development are processes, programs, or skills that are successful and can be adapted to other communities. Best practices, as used here, may be proven or new skills and processes that are beneficial to the economic development of a community. Economic development best practices can be determined through using case studies of successful programs or processes (Douglas, 2003). In the current case, Hearst, Ontario is profiled to present a positive illustration of how beneficial practices have been implemented in northern rural Ontario, and how these practices can be replicated and used in other communities to enhance the local economy.

The key elements of transferable best practices that have been elicited from the community of Hearst are demonstrated throughout the case study with examples. The transferable best practices from the examples will be emphasized at the end of the report. The community profile and organization will be outlined, and the challenges to economic development will be presented to further understand the components that are involved in implementing economic development initiatives. Not all best practices will be applicable to every community, but there may be more than one that will apply.

Community Profile

Demographics

The community of Hearst is a rural community of 5, 620 residents, located in the Cochrane District of Ontario. The population of Hearst, like many other rural communities, has seen a decreasing population in recent years. The current population is down from 5, 825 in 2001, a decline of 3.5% (Statistics Canada, 2006). Most of the population of Hearst are Caucasian, are more than 3rd generation Canadian citizens and nearly 40% of the population is between the ages of 40 and 60 (Statistics Canada, 2006). The population of Hearst is similar to other northern rural communities in most demographics (REDDI, 2006), but they are unique in that they are 90% Francophone, uncommon in the predominantly Anglophone province (Statistics Canada, 2006).



Geography and Climate

Hearst is located on Highway 11 in the northeastern region of Ontario in the Cochrane District. In many ways Hearst is set apart from other communities, and this is especially true in geography as the nearest larger center is Kapuskasing, 97km away.

Cochrane District is one of the more northern regions in the province and weather conditions are typical of the northern climate. They have long winters with widely fluctuating summer/winter temperatures, and the precipitation can be very high in the winter months. Also, the location in northern Ontario brings Hearst closer to the natural environment and resources. As can be seen in the graphic above, the community is located on the Mattawishkwia River and surrounded by forest, aptly named the Hearst Forest. Hearst is also located in the "Great Clay Belt", which was formed on a glacial

lake bed and is characterized by very fertile soil (The Story of Hearst, n.d.). This provides very productive agricultural lands. This is why agriculture is possible in Hearst but, as the following history will show, this industry has historically been overshadowed for a more lucrative product - wood.

Historical and Current Primary Industries

Hearst was settled in the early 1900s, later to be incorporated into a town in 1922 and the early immigrants, largely from Quebec, created the unique Francophone culture in the community. Hearst originally had its beginnings in agriculture, and later by the railway, but the location of Hearst and the conditions of the times did not allow for these industries to blossom (The Story of Hearst, n.d.). However, during the early 1940s, the forestry and lumber industry began to grow after many years of lobbying for cutting rights from the government (The Story of Hearst, n.d.). It is not hard to imagine that this industry was easily established in the area because there existed vast forests for lumber and dedicated, hard working individuals to extract it. The lumber industry in Hearst was originally based on locally owned sawmills, only one of which still remains. The rest have been sold to larger corporations. The history of the forestry industry is rich in the area and has traditionally been a large job base and economic generator in the community. Lumber, along with value-added wood products, still remains the largest industry in the community today. However, with production in the forestry industry waning in recent years, the community has been making attempts to diversify its economy and a recent temporary shutdown has increased efforts, and interest, in this initiative.

The ability to diversify is challenging, but the community's drive to succeed enables them to establish businesses in new sectors. For instance, Hearst has been focusing on increasing the localization of food production and currently sustains local farms, greenhouses, a local meat processor, and a store dealing exclusively in local products. They also have the locally-owned cooperative AGRIVA, which promotes and helps start businesses related to agriculture and value-added food products. There are also other

industries within the community of Hearst that have a background that is not associated with the logging industry, including a regional civil engineering company, service sector operations, and other smaller businesses. In the service sector, Hearst has the Hopital Notre-Dame, police and ambulance services, and also primary, elementary, and secondary public schools. They also have the Universite de Hearst and the College Boreal that offer post-secondary education. Hearst has a retail sector that is partially made up of local businesses located in the downtown district and is currently trying to improve and diversify this area.

Conclusion

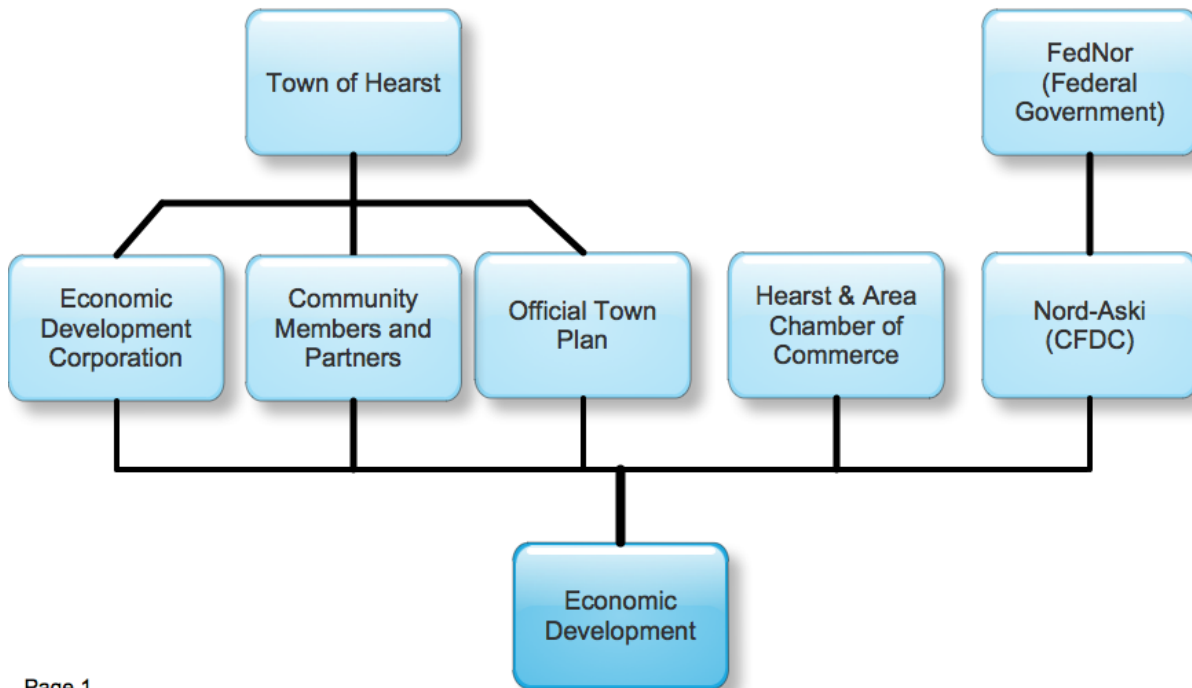
In comparison to much of the rest of the population in Ontario, Hearst experiences challenges to economic development that are not experienced to such an extent in the south. However, despite the challenges from its northern location and decline in population, Hearst has been recognized for its innovation and positive attitude by outside leaders in economic development (Innovation Initiatives Ontario North; Jason Ferrigan, City of Sudbury). Some of this success can be attributed to the organization of the community, which will now be reviewed followed by examples of the challenges the community faces and their successes.

Organization for Community Economic Development

Hearst is a single tier municipality in the Cochrane District of northern Ontario. The municipal government is made up of seven Town Council members and a staff of 24 people in various departments. The Town has an Official Town Plan as well as an Economic Development Plan which were developed concurrently to reflect each other and create the atmosphere for positive community economic development. The Official Plan is on a 20 year term and reviewed every 5 years, but it allows for flexibility to ensure that it can be modified as needed, a very important characteristic to adaptation and survival in a changing world. The Plan is in place to ensure positive economic development and the local government also places an investment in the local economy for this purpose, mostly in the form of funding.

There are no staff associated with economic development employed directly in the municipal government; this is the responsibility of the Hearst Economic Development Corporation. Employed in the Hearst EDC is the President, one full-time employee, one full time assistant, and other contract or part-time employees. The town council works closely with the EDC on issues of community economic development and funds its work. The municipal government funds the EDCs \$200,000 budget through local taxes. The EDC, in turn, provides the community with an avenue to help procure funding for their businesses, as well as providing some research on business options and viability. They work with provincial and federal levels of government, as well as non-government organizations such as Nord-Aski, to help procure funding for businesses. They are very proactive in this work and manage the upcoming funding opportunities so that businesses and entrepreneurs do not miss opportunities. Below is a diagram that outlines the basic structure of these and other inputs into Hearst economic development that will be discussed below.

Hearst Structure for Economic Development



Page 1

Figure 8. Inputs into Economic

Another important player in the economic development of Hearst is the Hearst Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber of Commerce services the Hearst, Mattice-val Cote area and partner with the Town of Hearst and Nord-Aski on projects related to economic development. The Chamber of Commerce provides marketing and other services for local businesses.

Nord-Aski is a regional partnership between the areas of Hearst and vicinity, Mattice-Val Cote, Constance Lake First Nation and Hornepayne. This organization for regional and community economic development was established in 1988 and is a Community Futures Development Corporation. Nord-Aski has been recognized by the Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations as a component of a partnership that contributed to youth entrepreneurship, which was rewarded by an Achievement Award in 2008 (Working Together, 2008).

Nord-Aski is funded by FedNor, which is a branch of the Industry Canada section of the Federal government (Working Together, 2008) and they can provide funding up to \$5000 to businesses in the area. The investments made by the local government and community organizations benefit Hearst by starting businesses, promoting entrepreneurs, creating jobs from both new businesses and research, and the localization of capital.

Nord-Aski and the Chamber of Commerce are two of many institutions associated with community economic development that services the Hearst region, including Forintek Northern Ontario Value-Added, Upper Lakes Environmental Network, Northeastern Development Network, Northern Claybelt Agri Network, Science Enterprise Algoma, and the Far Northeast Training Board, which provides many of the working partnerships necessary to further economic development in Hearst and the vicinity. Many of the leaders in the community want to form partnerships between businesses and between communities in the region because these partnerships will enable the sharing of information, success stories, and techniques, as well as the burden of issues. The promotion efforts for regionalization are based on these benefits, but also the benefit of better marketing capabilities and the reduction of the competition that currently exists.

Hearst also has a Community Improvement Plan funded through the local government. This plan is affiliated with the Business Improvement Area in the downtown district, and will allow for the enhancement of buildings through the provision of grants and loans. This funding adds to the appeal and operation of many businesses and has grants up to \$15,000 available for facade improvements, renovations, signage, etc., which gives local businesses the opportunity to develop their image.

Challenges to Community Economic Development

There are a variety of challenges to economic development in the community that make it difficult for Hearst to implement initiatives and have stable economic growth.

Challenges that have been identified include political issues, a lack of resources (both human and monetary), the current economy, and geography among others. Despite these challenges, however, Hearst has progressive and visionary goals for the community, and has initiated projects and programs that will enhance the local economy. It is the resiliency and drive that Hearst has proven in the face of difficult challenges that sets them apart from other communities and provides a positive example for other struggling communities to follow. Therefore, it is important to understand the challenges they face before presenting the successes that they will share.

Local Challenges

One of the challenges that innovators in Hearst face is collaborating with government. At times there can be divergent views on Town Council which make it more difficult to act on a singular vision. For example, should a focus be on boosting the declining forestry industry and trying to maintain it as the main economic generator, or should the focus be elsewhere. Sometimes it can be difficult to do things in a new way in the community but many feel that what the community now needs is innovators and entrepreneurs in a diversified economy. These divergent views can result in disagreements that can hinder moving forward.

WHAT THEY ARE DOING: There are many community leaders in Hearst who are not afraid to take risks and be innovative, and they are also unafraid to champion for the changes that need to be made (LEAD).

Another local political issue is the single tier structure of the municipality. Most northern communities are single tier, which creates competition between them and reduces the possibilities of partnerships and the ability to combine resources. Hearst, like many

other rural communities, has a difficulty with acquiring and maintaining the monetary resources necessary to progress with economic development. In their case, much of the funding comes from different sources so there is difficulty in creating long-term plans. However, if they were to collaborate with other communities in the area they could pool their resources, but this is proving to be a difficult process.

WHAT THEY ARE DOING: The community leaders in Hearst advocate for regionalization for the area, which would share burdens and increase marketing capabilities, to the other communities in the area.

Another challenge that Hearst faces is maintaining a positive relationship with First Nations peoples. Although communications have gotten progressively better, there is still mistrust and misunderstandings between the two groups. One of the main reasons for these challenges is the level of government that is governing each of them; Hearst is governed by the provincial government and the First Nations people are governed by the federal government, thus resulting in different regulations.

WHAT THEY ARE DOING: Hearst is making progress in communicating with First Nations peoples and forming positive relationships. They have designated liaisons in the community who make the connections with First Nations people, forming a bond of trust between them.

One of the most significant challenges that is faced by Hearst is the state of the current economy. They have recently had temporary shutdowns of the major logging operations in the community, which has resulted in significant job losses and very high unemployment rates.

WHAT THEY ARE DOING: They have turned the negative situation with their current economy into a positive one by recognizing that people are more

receptive and open to change in difficult times and presenting new economic options.

Broader Challenges

The people of Hearst feel as though they have minimal representation in provincial and federal government and that they have no control over how their essential resources are being used. One example here is the lack of ability to be involved in changing tenure on wood resources (most of the wood licensing is given to larger companies). The allotment of land to large companies makes it very difficult for small communities and businesses to get into the process and make their own living. Many people in the north feel that the benefits from the resources are not applied back to them for these and other reasons. For instance, they don't feel like the royalties from businesses come back into the communities (revenue-sharing).

The people of Hearst also feel that they have no voice in important economic and political centers such as Toronto or Ottawa. They see that many organizations go with lobbyists and lobby the government and they do not have the capacity to do this, which makes them feel as though they are not able to compete in the current political arena. In this and many other ways they do not have the same resources as many of the communities in the southern parts of the province, which puts them at a disadvantage. For instance, the lack of proximity to other communities is a disadvantage because it is costly for transport and difficult to make partnerships or transactions.

WHAT THEY ARE DOING: They are trying to build relationships with the industry and the government. For instance, they are looking to put in a submission related to the Hearst forest where they would collaborate with both the larger logging companies and the government to create a joint venture.

Examples of Community Economic Development

AGRIVA

AGRIVA is a community-based non-profit organization that works to promote agriculture, local food, and local food products. They began as a volunteer sub-committee of the Hearst EDC, and they continue to run based on a volunteer committee of various people from food related industry, economic development, and health, among others. AGRIVA is composed of two separate groups; one group works on education (local food promotion, workshops, etc.) and the other group helps people start businesses in the area of local food or value-added food products.

The education that AGRIVA provides promotes local food and increases community support and demand for local products. They also get people actively involved and interested in local foods in a variety of ways. For instance, AGRIVA held the “In Our Gardens” contest, in which the participants cultivated vegetables for a 3 month span and were judged based on esthetics and creativity. The winners got a prize basket and local recognition. This contest was a promotion of sustainable living and local food production but, more importantly, it was an innovative way to get the community involved in these initiatives (AGRIVA, 2009). Keeping people educated on the importance of local food for community health and local economy is an essential component in addressing food security issues and fostering self-sufficiency in the community.

La Maison Verte

La Maison Verte is another local agriculture-based business in the community of Hearst that also promotes local foods, but they provide a different service to the community economy than AGRIVA. As is indicated by its name, La Maison Verte is a greenhouse run by a volunteer group of women who provide employment exclusively for women in the community (both permanent and seasonal) and pay them through the profits from

the produce. The greenhouse has contracts with the provincial government that allows them to produce seedlings for reforestation, which is the basis of much of their business. They also produce some vegetables and landscaping plants that are sold locally.

La Maison Verte is a positive element in the Hearst economy, both because they promote environmental, social, and economic sustainability, with an emphasis on social sustainability and because they are giving an employment opportunity to women.

Miky's Smoke House

Miky's Smoke House is a community-based business which produces butchered meats and value-added meat products. The meat is grown locally by the same owner on Prune Creek Farm where they raise beef, pork, chicken, elk, highland beef, and buffalo for butchered meat and over 60 different value-added meat products.

The highland beef can withstand very low temperatures and difficult grazing conditions (Highland Cattle Society, 2010), which is very appropriate in a northern community where temperatures can reach below -24°C in the winter (Environment Canada, 2009). The farm started very small, but has grown and has been successful in producing a product that is in local demand, reducing the importing of meats and increasing the localization of foods. They have recently also added an abattoir which will provide a service to all the meat producers in the area and generates income for the local economy. The abattoir is both economically and environmentally viable because meat producers no longer have to transport animals outside of the community to be slaughtered which reduces both fossil fuel consumption and cost to new and existing farmers.

The owners of Miky's Smokehouse have taken many financial risks, mostly with their own funds. Taking risks obviously does not ensure financial security, but it is very important to diversifying and developing the local economy in a positive way.

Villeneuve Construction

Although it may sound like any other construction company, the Villeneuve Construction company of Hearst is on the leading edge in business, as well as community engagement. Villeneuve is an entrepreneur-based, family-owned civil engineering company, which began in the early 1970s. Currently they are working on the Bio-Com project that is a leading innovation in industry and brings hopes for the economic future of Hearst. It is this type of creativity and the drive to move to the next level that makes Villeneuve stand apart from other businesses.

Villeneuve depicts the mentality of self-sufficiency in the community of Hearst in two ways. Firstly, they not only do civil engineering, but they produce their own concrete and asphalt and they have several aggregate resources from which they get their materials. Therefore, they are not dependent on outside businesses for these commodities, which is important in a community that services many surrounding communities and would have to transport materials from a great distance otherwise. Secondly, they have a strong belief that the community can be "masters of their own destiny" and will be able to produce their own energy, grow their own foods and also create jobs in the future.

This progressive thinking is emanated out to the rest of the community through their support of local projects involving sustainability. They feel that it is necessary for them to look at the things in which they are responsible for, what differences can be made, and how they can be part of solutions. In this way they are a positive community member and role model whose work outside their operations will increase the quality of life in the community. For instance, Villeneuve Construction employs a Special Projects

Coordinator, who works with the community in various capacities. This initiative reflects the company's perspective that without the community, the company will not be successful and, in fact, the literature shows this to be the case (Besser, 1999).

Economic Development Corporation

The Economic Development Corporation provides services for local businesses to get started and maintain operations. Some of the services of the EDC include aid in procuring funding from the government and conducting research for businesses. The EDC is funded by the municipal government, but is not part of it. Therefore, the EDC operates within arm's length of the municipal government, but is closely tied to its structure. The separation of the EDC from the municipal government works well because they can get more community participation on the Board of Directors, which is volunteer-based and currently has a good representation of stakeholders in the community.

The EDC also works with many other groups in the community on community projects, etc. For instance, the President of the EDC (also an economics professor at l'Universite de Hearst) has developed an Economic Research/Intervention Centre out of the l'Universite de Hearst. They do research on economic issues and phenomena in Hearst and use this information to aid the businesses in the community.

The Economic Development Corporation has one full-time staff member, one full-time assistant and other part-time or contract employees devoted to economic development. Although more staff are needed, it is felt that devoting staff to this area is important because it ensures that economic development remains a priority. Some feel that economic development and administration duties should be separate to ensure full devotion to economic development tasks, and so that these tasks will not fall to the wayside in lieu of the administration duties.

Sustainability

Hearst is well-known for its initiatives in sustainability and sustainable practices in the community. Public interest in sustainability was not always the case in Hearst, but the spark was ignited after a conference on the bioeconomy was held in 2005. Through this interest sprung various projects, jobs, and the Sustainability Plan.

The purpose of the Plan is to outline action plans to achieve the community's goals of sustainability. Plans for its development began in 2007, along with a Green Technology Centre (which currently has 60% of its funding and is scheduled to begin in the Spring), and an Agro-producers Coop (now in its beginning phases). Although the Plan has not been implemented yet, the sustainability coordinator and the EDC are hoping to have the plan completed by March, 2010. As depicted in the graphic below, the Sustainability Plan will include quality of life and the environment, as well as the economic conditions, and they believe that community engagement is key to its success. They are working on areas such as water consumption and creating an integrative energy plan, and hope to promote Hearst as a hub for renewable energy. The development of all components of the Plan are in consultation with community members and their involvement is essential to goal development.

Community leaders in Hearst are always coming up with initiatives to get people involved and promote sustainability in residents and businesses. The most recent of these initiatives is the "Our Children; Their Future" Summit, which was a two day event based on climate change, sustainability for the future and how to

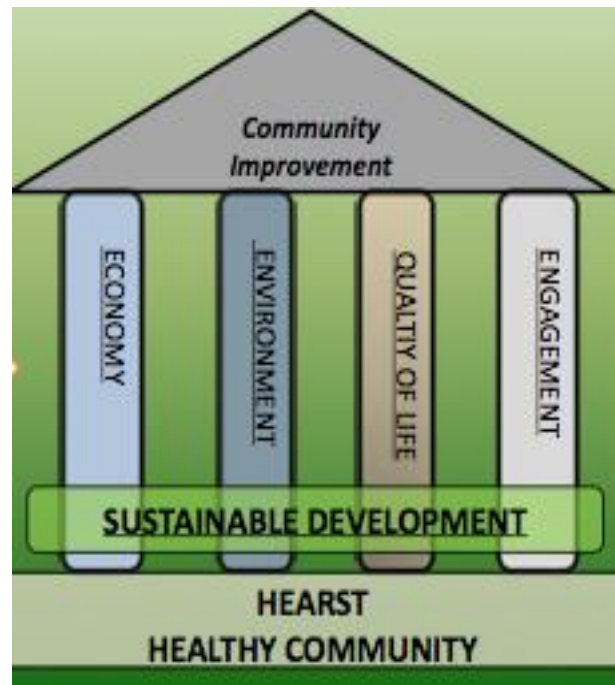


Figure 9 - Sustainability Plan

reduce individual carbon footprints. The Summit included multiple speakers from the local community and abroad lecturing on climate change, youth, and community involvement, among others. The Summit hosts appreciate that participation is an essential component for buy-in, support, and overall well-being, and so they made a great effort to have interesting and relevant topics for the event. The Summit succeeded in capturing participation and support, but also created the groundwork for participation in the community-wide creation of a “culture of sustainability”. The youth of the community were the focus of the event, the kind of involvement that is essential to keeping youth involved in their community and thinking sustainably, as well as creating future community leaders.



One of the reasons why Hearst is considered an innovative community is because the members of the community are not afraid to take risks. The “Our Children; Their Future” Summit was a risk that the town was willing to take to get the community involved in the sustainability initiative, and the Sustainability Plan is the necessary driver to make their goals a reality. The community feels like it needs to rethink its future and focus on creating a common vision for the community that everyone can strive towards, which is why these sustainability initiatives are important.

Bio-Com Project

The Bio-Com Project is based on the up and coming industry of bioeconomy. There are currently efforts from Villeneuve Construction and the Town of Hearst to bring in this type of business because 1) there is a high value for these products, and 2) they have a stockpile of wood chips, necessary for operations, that can be used to start the business and last for 15-20 years of production. “Energy and self-sufficiency is the way to go” (Paul Allaire, Special Projects Coordinator, Villeneuve Construction) really sums up the feeling and purpose for the Bio-Com project in Hearst. They want to diversify their economic base as well as become more independent, and they feel that this is one way

in which they can do both. They are also capitalizing on the lack of energy businesses in the area as well as the environmentally-focused client base, which will allow them access to a ready market for their product.

The creation of Bio-Com also promotes environmental sustainability in their community. They are currently working on developing a co-generation plant, in which the hot water that results from the production of biofuel will be used as district heating that will flow through pipes into the homes of the residents. They will incur an infrastructure/maintenance fee as a result of this process, but the heating will be clean, sustainable, and carbon neutral. The hot water will also be used in Columbia Forest Products, the hospital, and other large energy consumers in order to cut back on their fossil fuel use and energy costs.

Bringing in new initiatives like the Bio-Com project with the co-generation plant will start to erode the conservative views and the 'culture' starts to change. The project has already started some changes in the businesses in the community. For instance, there are electricians in the community who install solar panels due to an increase in demand for these products. There is an individual who exclusively works with geothermal energy. And there are local businesses that have started to make composters. Sustainability and diversification is at the core of the Bio-Com project, but the ripple effect on other areas of the economy is proving to be very positive.

The Hearst Forest Project

The Hearst Forest Project is a proposal developed by the community in an attempt to gain access to the tenure system and have direct access to the wood resources in the Hearst Forest. They plan to work in conjunction with some of the larger companies, First Nations, and government with the aim to be principle owner of the product. The purpose of this venture is to become more independent of corporate businesses and be able to start taking control of their natural resources. If they succeed they can reduce some of the barriers they have to economic development and become a more

economically viable community. The process of applying for tenure is going to be challenging because they have to successfully convince the government to give permission and develop their plans properly in collaboration with First Nations peoples.

Community Characteristics Important in Community Economic Development

Many of the individuals from the community of Hearst believe that it is the people that make Hearst successful in creating opportunities, such as those listed above, for community economic development. They attribute their ability to be successful to the citizens and leaders in the community that participate and believe in the vision for a positive future. They feel that the community of Hearst has a positive volunteer-base and they attribute this to community pride, personal satisfaction, and interest in community initiatives. Following are some of the ways in which community participation, leadership, and sense of place adds to community economic development.

Community Participation

Many of the citizens of Hearst are very involved in their community. Seemingly, one of the main reasons why people get involved in Hearst is because they are given the opportunity. Community involvement has been emphasized in important decision-making processes, such as that of the Economic Development Plan, the Official Plan, and the Sustainability Plan. There is a major effort on the part of the local businesses and organizations to ensure that the members of the community are always involved in community initiatives.

Associated with the opportunity to participate is the people who actually do participate. Hearst has a very good volunteer base, and many people participate in other capacities as well. Much of the volunteer work is done by the same group of people, but they have a strong sense of commitment to the community and there are ongoing efforts to increase the volunteer base. La Centrale, a community-based business which organizes events and maintains a database of all the volunteers in the community, actively recruits volunteers to be part of community events.

There are also many committees and organizations, committed to community economic development, that run on a volunteer base, such as the committee for AGRIVA, the operators for La Maison Verte, and the Board for the Economic Development Corporation. Volunteers are a necessity, and the community of Hearst rewards this essential aspect of their community through a volunteering reward program, in which they have a community picnic with rewards for the volunteers.

Community Leadership

The community of Hearst has a group of energetic, driven individuals that are willing to work hard for the success of their community. These people are willing to go beyond the norm and achieve something that is greater. The leaders of the community are present in the Town Council, Hearst Economic Development Corporation, Industry, etc. and all have a common goal of creating a sustainable, positive future for the community of Hearst. Many of the recent initiatives, such as the “Our Children; Their Future” summit, the Bio-Com project, and the Green Technology Center have been initiated by these leaders, who have since begun to spark the rest of the community. These people are very passionate about developing the “new economy” for Hearst, which will be diverse and include industries such as bioeconomy, local foods, and value-added products. These are included in the “vision” for the community of Hearst, whose development was also facilitated by the leaders in the community.

Community Culture and Sense of Place

The community culture and sense of place is a very abstract component to community economic development, albeit an important one. Hearst has a deep sense of culture. It is a largely Francophone community, which sets them apart from much of the rest of Ontario, and they feel that they have had to fight to maintain their distinct language. The capability to strive for things they want and need does not end with the language in Hearst. The strength of community and culture produces a sense of pride in the

community that not only produces quality of life, but allows them to expand economically in the community. For instance, the current leaders have faced opposition to diversifying the economy from some people in the municipal office and general community, but they have not relinquished their views. Instead, they have worked hard to begin a variety of innovative projects, programs, and business ventures that will be economically beneficial to the community.

The culture of Hearst is also location-based. It is difficult to imagine the difficulties that can be faced in a remote, northern rural community, but the necessary cohesiveness of the people in Hearst allows for their survival. It is noted by the residents that when the community goes through difficult economic periods, then the people of the community get more involved. For instance, when faced with recent economic difficulties due to the lumber industry, the community leaders began recruiting members of the community to form a consultative council that will address issues and challenges in the community. They have received only affirmative responses and support for their cause. The location of Hearst has also traditionally demanded self-sufficiency, and building upon this central town framework has enabled the community to create a spirit surrounding the theme of sustainable living. This builds another bond between the citizens and adds to their identity, both resulting in a more positive community attitude.

Key Transferable Best Practices from Case Examples

Community Participation and Engagement

It is important to encourage participation in all members of the community and get them involved in innovative ways (e.g. AGRIVA's "In Our Garden" contest). This is necessary in all initiatives and decision-making. It is also important to get the community involved by encouraging volunteering, which should be open and easy to access for both the volunteer and organization. Volunteers help reduce the costs of events and day-to-day operations and they promote a sense of pride in the community,

so it is important to show appreciation for this community service (e.g. Hearst volunteer awards ceremony).

Fostering a community spirit is also necessary to withstand economic difficulties. As evidenced in Hearst, when people feel like they have a common culture and sense of place, they will protect their community and work hard to build a positive future for it. Therefore, it is important to encourage community spirit and citizenship.

Investment in Local Business (Building Organizational Capacity)

It is necessary to have staff dedicated to economic development in the community (e.g. Hearst EDC). It is important to make it a priority, and ensure that this gets attention. As noted in other research (Douglas, 2003), having staff devoted to the area of economic development will be beneficial to the community.

Monetary investments, such as the funding of the EDC and the Community Improvement Plan, are also essential to local business development. Providing funding to the EDC to aid businesses also indirectly provides businesses with funding options through other organizations.

Sustainability Planning and Adaptation to Change

The community vision is an ideal for the future that is agreed-upon by the community. It is beneficial to put the vision and objectives together in a document, such as an Official Plan or Strategy, to ensure that goals are clear and that there will be progress towards them (e.g. Hearst Official Plan, Economic Development Plan, and Sustainability Plan).

The sustainability initiative is important in Hearst for survival and it is also creating a community image. When taking on initiatives such as these it is important to get information out to people in the community and get them involved (e.g. The “Our Children; Their Future” summit). A summit or a meeting may not apply to all

communities, so it is important to find a venue that people will most likely attend, and the key is to generate discussion and gain public participation.

It is also important to support local products in the economy to promote self-sufficiency and a sustainable future for future generations. This will reduce dependency on outside businesses and increase the amount of capital that remains in the community. A diverse economy is also important for the future of the community and will aid in the retention of jobs through changing community and economic dynamics.

The main point in the discussion of sustainability planning is to make active efforts to work toward the goals that are set. Hearst is making progress toward the plans for the green center, sustainability plan, and coop that were developed in 2007, ensuring that these goals do not diminish. It is necessary to ensure progress is made or the initiatives may fall flat in the community.

Localization

The sustainability planning hinges on the localization of products. It is important to invest the time and money to promote local foods and merchandise to advance the local economy (e.g. AGRIVA's education program) because having local products keeps capital local, provides jobs for people in the community, and creates a sense of community pride.

The localization of products also reduces the dependency on big box stores or large corporations and reduces the need for funding from the government. This creates more financial security and opportunity for long-term planning and investments.

Leadership and Innovation

It is essential to have the capacity to support leaders in innovation. There has to be flexibility in thinking and openness to new ideas in order to support the new possibilities that these leaders present for the community. It is also important to encourage local

businesses to be innovative, diverse, self-reliant and flexible to change in order to be economically successful. It is not possible for all business types to be materially self-sufficient (such as Villeneuve Construction), but it is important to make attempts to use the resources and markets that are available and build on them in time. It is good to re-examine existing industries to determine if there is another market that can be reached or objective that can be met through expansion, value-added products, or entirely new industries (such as Miky's Smokehouse or the Bio-Com project).

Increasing entrepreneurial activity is also very important for the growth of the local economy. The community of Hearst promotes innovation and entrepreneurship. They feel that this is necessary because it promotes localization of businesses and products which keeps the capital within the community, unlike the outsourcing of money that occurs with big box stores. It also increases quality of life through community self-reliance. At times it can be necessary to take financial risks based on research, financial feasibility, and community support to start a new business (e.g. Miky's Smokehouse), so it is important to have the capabilities to assess the risk, but also be flexible in support.

References

AGRIVA. (2009). Retrieved on November 20, 2009 from <http://www.agriva.ca/en/minutes/>

Besser, T. L. (1999). Community involvement and the perception of success among small business operators in small towns. *Journal of Small Business Management*, 37(4), 16-31.

Environment Canada. (2009). Canadian climate normals 1971-2000. Retrieved on January 26 from http://www.climate.weatheroffice.gc.ca/climate_normals/index_e.html

Highland Cattle Society. The highland breed. Retrieved on January 26, 2010 from http://www.highlandcattlesociety.com/highland_breedhighland_breed.aspx#

REDDI. (2006). Rural Ontario profiles. Retrieved January 16, 2010 from http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/insight_ruralontarioprofiles.htm

Statistics Canada. (2006). Hearst, Ontario. Retrieved January 16, 2010 from <http://www12.statcan.ca/census-recensement/2006/dp-pd/prof/92-591/details/page.cfmLang=E&Geo1=CSD&Code1=3556076&Geo2=PR&Code2=35&Data=Count&SearchText=hearst&SearchType=Begin&SearchPR=35&B1=All&Custom=>

The Story of Hearst. (n.d.). Retrieved on January 12, 2010 from <http://www.hearst.ca/portailIndex.aspxsect=0&module=5&module2=i1&MenuID=1553&CPage=1>

Working together to create future entrepreneurs. (2008, May). Retrieved on January 18 from <http://www.ontcfdc.com/success.asp?Code5=502>.

CASE STUDY TWO – Partnerships in Huron County

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	65
Huron County Profile.....	65
Demographics	68
Biogeography	71
Primary industries.....	72
Agriculture	72
Manufacturing	73
Tourism	73
Political context.....	74
How is Huron County organized for CED?.....	76
The story of CED in Huron County.....	79
Examples of Innovation and Best Practice.....	83
Key Best Practices	85
References	88
Appendices.....	90
Appendix A: Case Study Research Methods.....	90

Introduction

Is it possible for a rural economy to become more prosperous with a stable population, fewer tax dollars and more responsibilities? Although municipalities in Ontario may appear to be receiving more autonomy with the downloading of services, they are not actually autonomous unless they have the capacity to deliver those services. That would partly require more provincial funds, or a redistribution of tax dollars to increase the municipal share. But it would also involve better models for community engagement and a leading, political role for local government (Reimer and Lyons 2008).

Population growth is not always the best strategy for rural prosperity (Boothroyer and Davis 1993). The population of Huron County has remained relatively stable for years, yet it has greatly increased its ability to develop economically. Like many rural communities, Huron County's CED initiatives have allowed it to take greater control over the local economy and the future of the county by increasing its capacity through collaboration.

Huron provides a useful case study for exploring best practices in community economic development, revealing both local strategies and transferable approaches. In its most current form, the "Huron Economic Development Matters" partnership links County planning staff with the Huron Business Development Corporation, a unique arrangement. The partnership also links the OMAFRA Rural Economic Development Program and the Federal Community Futures funds. Huron has a strong economy and is currently benefiting from collaboration between lower-tier municipalities. Douglas (2005) identifies this style of partnership as a response to municipal restructuring, tightening budgets and increased planning direction from the province.

Huron County Profile

Huron is the French name for the Ouendats, who lived in the Georgian Bay region before the time of French and British contact. The Huron region itself was originally

inhabited by the Attawandarons, who were displaced by Iroquois tribes in the fur wars following European contact.

The British purchased the Huron Tract from the Mohawk and Chippewa in the early 1800s, and the Canada Company began a promotional campaign in 1820. Immigrants were of German, Irish, Scottish, English and Dutch descent. The County of Huron was established in 1841, with borders along the eastern shore of Lake Huron for 110km, extending inland.

Agriculture was the primary economic driver, resulting in the building of permanent dwellings and villages. By the mid-1800s, Huron agriculture was beginning to be more mechanized with the introduction of reapers, mowers, threshing machines, and the steam engine (Scott 1966).

Today, Huron County remains almost entirely rural, with half the population living in the Medium Metropolitan Influence Zone and the other half living in the Weak Metropolitan Influence Zone (Statistics Canada 2006). Huron depends on manufacturing, agriculture, natural resources, tourism and community services. Leaders of economic development in the area tend to be concerned with attracting funding, coordinating local industries, creating opportunities for entrepreneurship, local business retention and expansion, tourism, creative economy and community engagement.

Community in Profile – Township of Usborne

Usborne Township (now part of the Municipality of South Huron), which had a population of 1352 in 1996, is in southern Huron County and is dominated physically by a commercial farm landscape (172 farms, 1996). Cash-crop and livestock operations had a total value of \$34 million in sales in 1996 and provided employment for 40% of the workforce (one of the highest in the province and Canada). There is no town or village of any size in Usborne; most residents rely on the adjacent town of Exeter for service and some retail needs.

Usborne's population, which does not have a strong community identification with the site, is best described as dispersed. Usborne is categorized economically as having high global exposure with fluctuating tendencies.

Agriculture is of primary importance to Usborne's economic and community activity. Also significant for employment and income generation are the backward and forward linkages (both indirect and direct) that agriculture has into other sectors. It has a first-rate bio-physical base for farming operations with soil capability Class 1 land in close to 70 per cent of the township. Also relevant is its position among the top 5 per cent of Canada's farm land in terms of the agroclimatic resource index. Although, the number of census farms has declined by 34 per cent from 1971-1996, farm land area has remained stable over the same time period. In fact, the area under crops has increased 10 per cent (1971-1996). These conditions reflect a more intensive use of the farmland resource.

Excerpt from New Rural Economy project

Demographics

Huron County has an active workforce of over 30,000, and a total population that is stable at around 61,000. The population profile has a much lower percentage in the 25 to 54 age cohort than for the province as a whole and a higher percentage in the 10 to 19 age cohort. A larger percentage of the population is aged 55 and over. The median household income in Huron County is \$45,855. Wage rates in Huron County are lower than the provincial average, and housing costs plus other costs of living are significantly lower. At least 61% of those 15 or over have earned at least a high school or trade certificate. A large portion of the workforce includes tradesmen and apprentices, including ticketed welders, fitters and millwrights who serve the agricultural and manufacturing sectors. The current unemployment rate is 4.0%. The following series of figures demonstrates these and other notable trends in Huron demographics (<http://www.huroncounty.ca/econdev/workforce.php>).

Year	Huron County Population (000s)
1981	56.1
1986	55.9
1991	59.0
1996	60.2
2001	62.0
2006	61.3
2011	60.3
2016	60.3
2021	60.7
2026	61.2
2031	61.4
2036	61.3

Table 2: Population trend and projection for Huron County (OMF 2009)

Figure 10: Population by Age in Huron (selection) and Canada

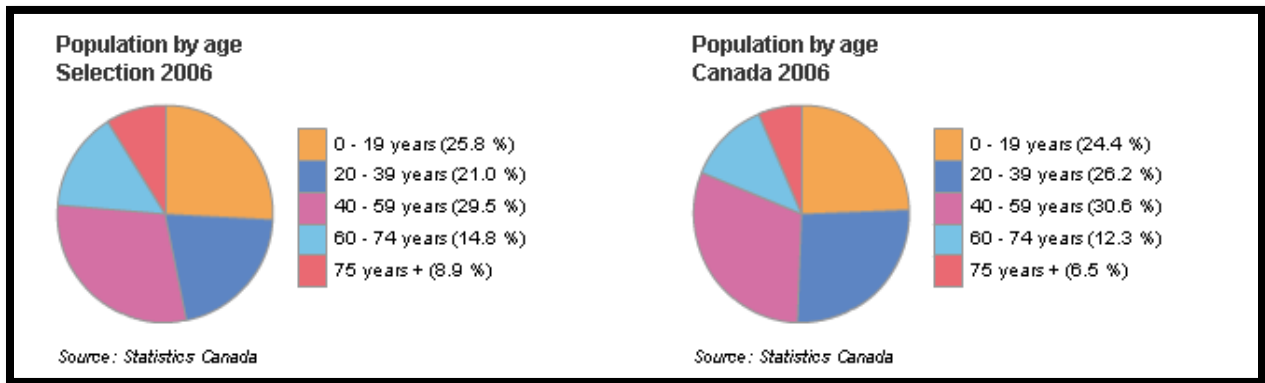


Figure 11: Population by Mother Tongue in Huron (selection) and Canada

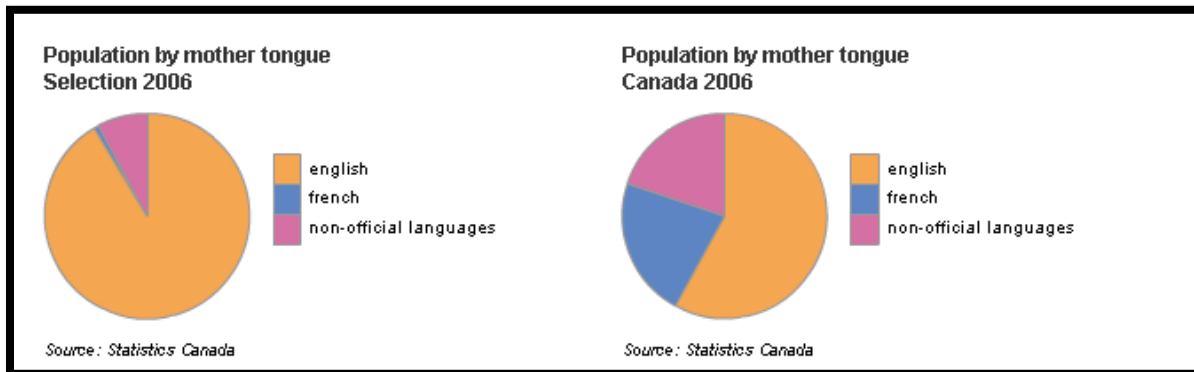


Figure 12: Number of owned vs. rented dwellings in Huron (selection) and Canada

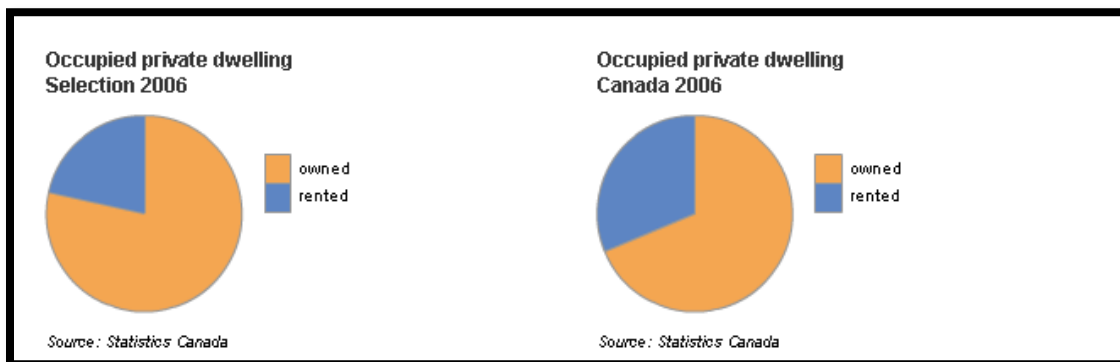


Figure 13: Male and Female population by occupation in Huron (selection)

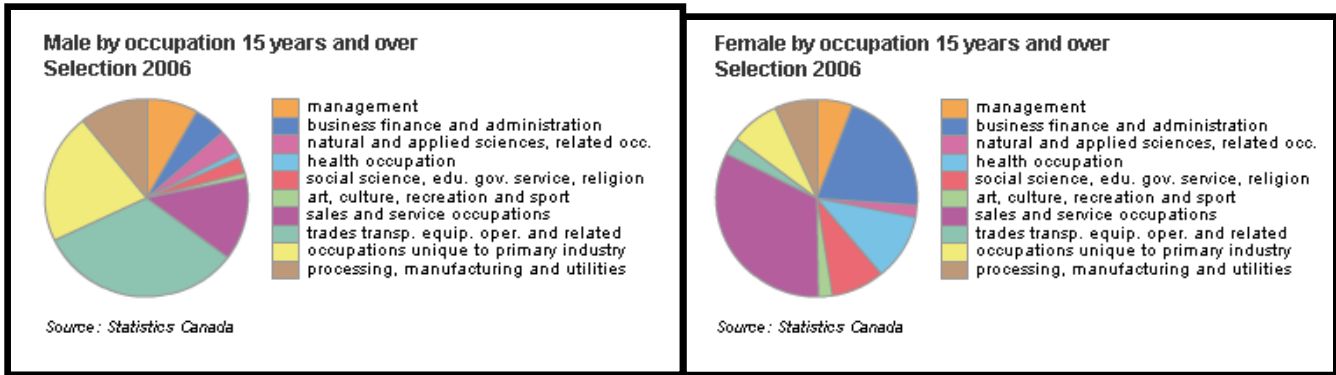


Figure 14: Education in population 15+ years in Ontario and Huron, 2006

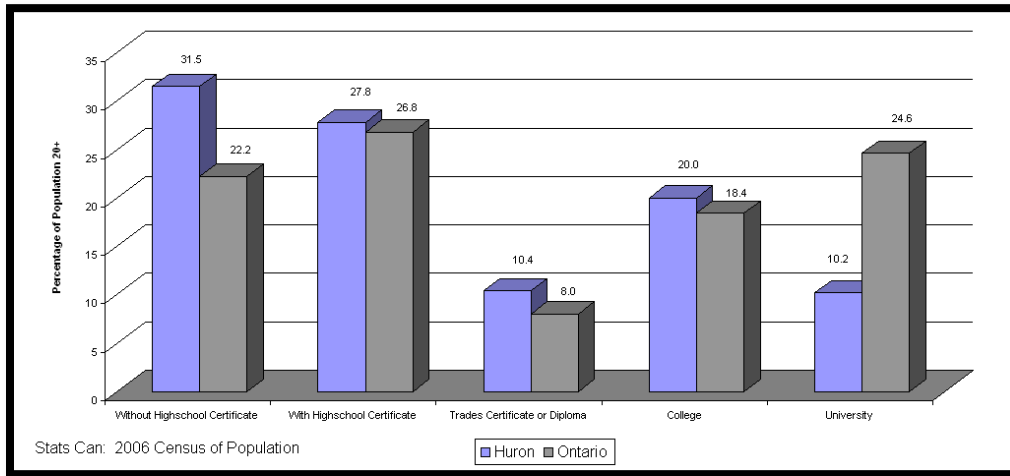
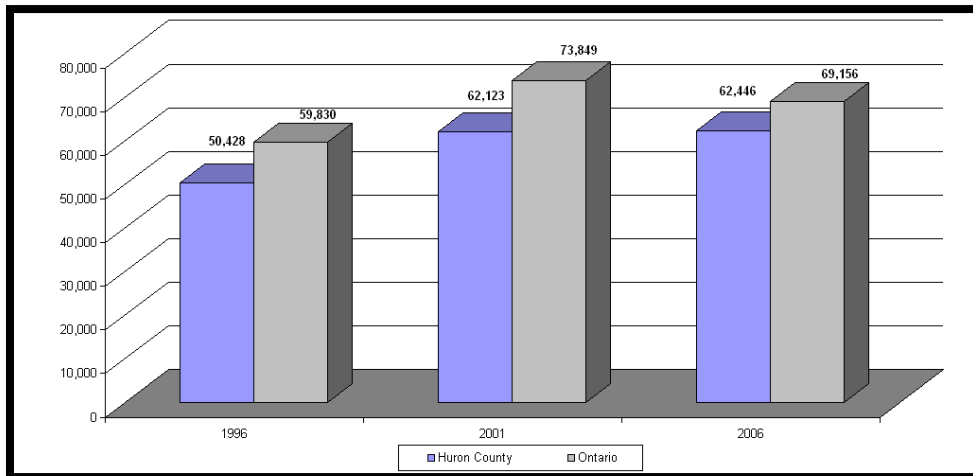


Figure 15: Average Family Income, Huron County and Ontario



Biogeography

Huron County is part of the Huron Bioregion, which includes the political entities of Huron, Perth, and Bruce Counties (excluding the Peninsula), as well as the western parts of Grey and Wellington Counties and the northern parts of Middlesex and Lambton counties.

Lake Huron forms the western boundary of Huron County and is the reason for "streamers" (snow squalls) off the lake in winter and intensive summer recreational uses. The area was formed during the retreat of the glaciers during the last ice age, which left behind some of the most productive soils in Ontario.

Huron County has a moderate humid continental climate with warm, humid summers and cold winters. Annual precipitation ranges from 75–100 cm and is well distributed throughout the year with a usual summer peak. Huron is part of the mixedwood plains biome. Several rivers, including the Maitland, Bayfield and Nine Mile along with Lake Huron provide significant sport fishing opportunities, though these are threatened by invasive species. The amount of natural cover varies from a low of 6% in one township to a high of 28% (HSC 2008). Fertile soils and a favourable climate contribute to very high quality hardwood forests.

Eighty-six per cent of Huron's landscape has

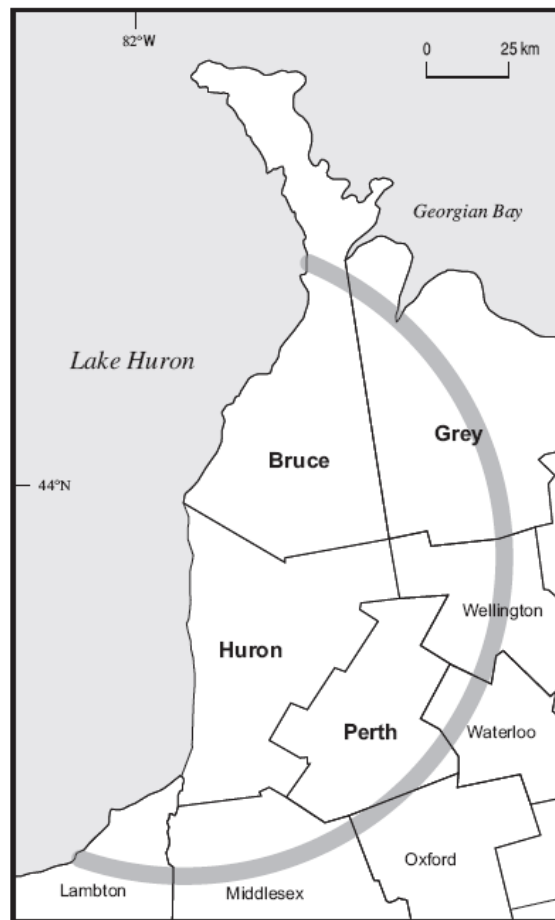


Figure 15: The Huron Bioregion

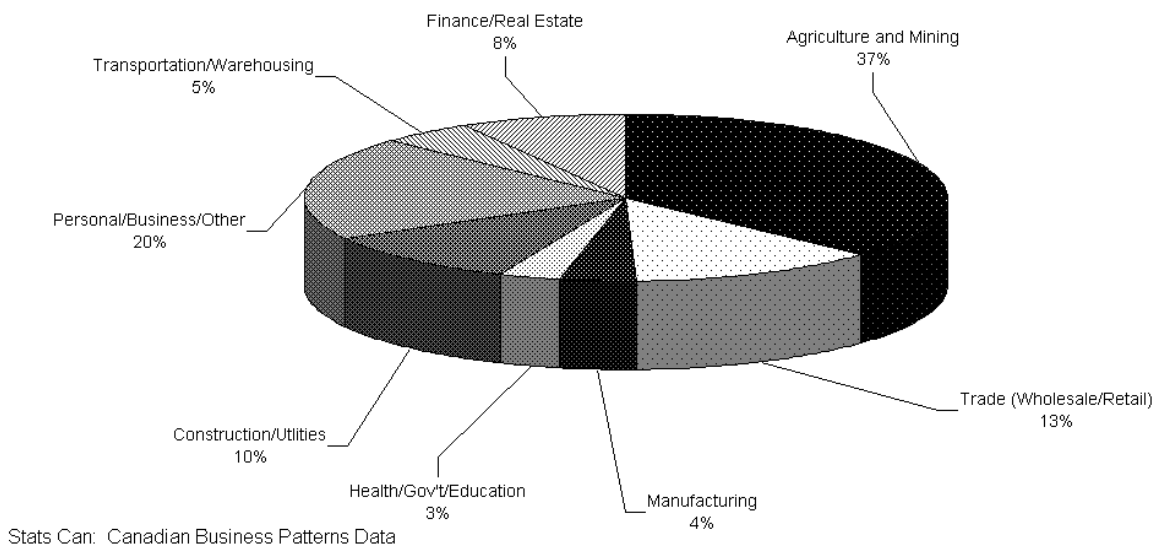
been cleared for agriculture.

Broad issues such as climate change will have implications that include more extreme weather events and erratic precipitation patterns.

Primary industries

The primary industries of Huron County are agriculture, manufacturing and tourism. These industries are supported by a network of highways, three airports and a short line railway. Several large metropolitan areas are within a day's drive, and there is also an industrial seaway depth harbor in Goderich. Entrepreneurial activity is prevalent with nearly 20% of the workforce being self-employed, compared to 11% provincially.

Figure 16: Businesses by Sector in Huron County, 2006



Agriculture

As stated in the Huron County Official Plan, agriculture in Huron is of national significance. Huron leads all counties and regions in Ontario in total value of production; and it also exceeds the production totals of several provinces. Huron has the advantage of an informed and progressive farm community, a supportive service sector, high capability soils, a diversified agricultural industry, a favourable climate, and limited non-farm intrusion.

Many of the manufacturing and service related jobs within the region are connected to agriculture, with 80% of jobs in Huron County related to agriculture either directly, indirectly, or induced.

Canada's largest in-land grain handling facilities are located in the Village of Hensall. The County has a growing livestock sector, housing 165,000 cattle (beef and dairy), 630,000 hogs and 5.2 million poultry. Many farmers in the area are represented by the Huron Federation of Agriculture.

Manufacturing

According to the Huron Business Centre, manufacturing shipments increased by 172% between 1992 and 2002. The value of manufacturing shipments in Huron County now exceeds the value of gross farm receipts. This sector is one of the largest employers (16%) with 188 manufacturers represented by the Huron Manufacturing Association.

Examples of large employers are Wecast Industries and Northlander Industries.

The manufacturing sector is closely tied to the value of the Canadian dollar, competition with China and India, and access to American markets. In 2008, the Volvo road grade plant in Goderich closed, cutting 500 jobs.

However, a long term issue for Huron will be a shortage of skilled people to occupy key positions. This is compounded by continued youth out migration and the attractiveness of large urban centres to immigrants.

Tourism

Beginning in the 1980s, Huron County planner Cindy Fisher began spending half her professional hours on raising the profile of Huron tourism. Beginning in 1988, Cindy gathered a group of volunteers and organized a brochure-swap, which continues today as an annual meeting of local tourism businesses and organization. By 1993, Cindy and community partners had incorporated the Huron Tourism Association (HTA). Initiatives continued to grow and a series of large scale events took off, such as the Belmore Maple Syrup Festival.

In 2006, a tourism marketer was hired in the Huron Planning and Development Department with a mandate to serve the HTA. Annually, the HTA and County produce a comprehensive Travel Guide and specialty brochures promoting Fishing, Cycling, Hiking, Heritage Walking Tours and Heritage & Culture amenities.

Tourism Opportunities in Huron County

- Blyth Festival
- Goderich Celtic Festival
- Blyth Threshers Reunion
- Farm to Table "Flavour Trail"
- Huron Harvest Trail
- Huron Heritage Partnership
- Shakespeare to the Shoreline

Political context

Huron County is an upper tier municipality composed of nine lower tier municipalities. The county seat is the Town of Goderich. Huron shares many overlapping institutions including school boards, health units, church conferences, political ridings, and training boards. Providing services in these areas becomes challenging when combined with variable growth rates across the region, including depopulation in some areas. For example, several schools may close in places like Blyth, in order to build one larger school in Wingham. As another example, an aging population will challenge the health care field, with incoming retirees destined for lakeshore areas, placing enhanced demands for care. The effects of distance and dependency on oil and other imports can create stress at the community and family level. It is often stated that new immigrants could be a means to maintain essential services.

Observers note there is currently a degree of separation between council and county staff. New projects and programs require political support which requires a strong level

of trust between staff and council. The trend toward large scale solar and wind energy projects has been a source of local conflict. There are also local concerns over water quality, environmental protection, and habitat preservation. Government is being pressured to regulate in these areas. Innovative solutions do exist, such as the Huron Water Protection Steering Committee.

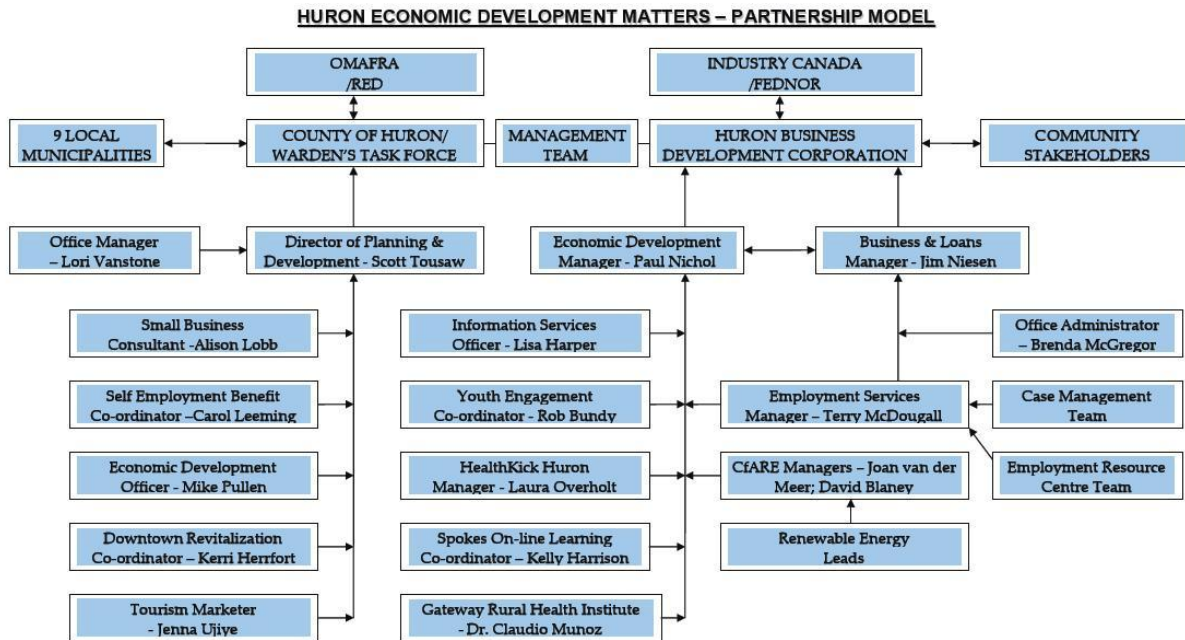
Huron Water Protection Steering Committee

The Huron Water Protection Steering Committee (WPSC) was established in the spring of 2004 by the Huron County Council as a municipal and community based response to the ongoing concerns over water quality in Lake Huron. The WPSC is composed of representatives from diverse agencies, groups and municipalities, including planning, health units, municipalities, conservation authorities, Ministry of the Environment (MOE), the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), agriculture, manufacturing, tourism, cottage associations, and watershed groups.

The committee has approximately twenty-five members who meet four times a year. To date, nearly \$2 million has been leveraged to pursue water quality work through collaborations between participating member groups. Several projects have been launched:

- Septic System Re-inspection program
- Stewardship Manual for Cottagers and Non-farm Rural Residents
- Anaerobic Digester Pilot Project
- Payment for Ecological Goods and Services

How is Huron County organized for CED?



The Partnership Model for Huron Economic Development Matters is a rare formal collaboration between a CED corporation and an upper tier municipality. Multiple collaborations link Huron County planning and development staff with staff at the Huron Business Development Corporation, all the way up to the director level. A management team helps to establish priorities and coordinate the multiple funding opportunities and reporting requirements between the OMAFRA Rural Economic Development Program, the Federal Community Futures funds and the new FedDev agency, among others. This Partnership Model won 'best strategy' from the Ontario Economic Development Council in 2008.

The HBDC places a large focus on creating employment and attracting business. The majority of businesses in Huron County are small (1-4 employees). Therefore, the HBDC strategy is to build capacity in individuals by providing loans, entrepreneurship skills, and business management advice. Another key strategy used in Huron is to house much of the activity under one roof: the Huron Business Centre

Through approval of a Communities in Transition application, the new Local Economic Development division will be growing the Partnership Model into the “Economic Development Opportunities Blueprint”, which is a future-oriented strategy with a mandate to coordinate economic development initiatives, recommend partnerships, address constraints on key sectors, and develop strategies for business retention and expansion.

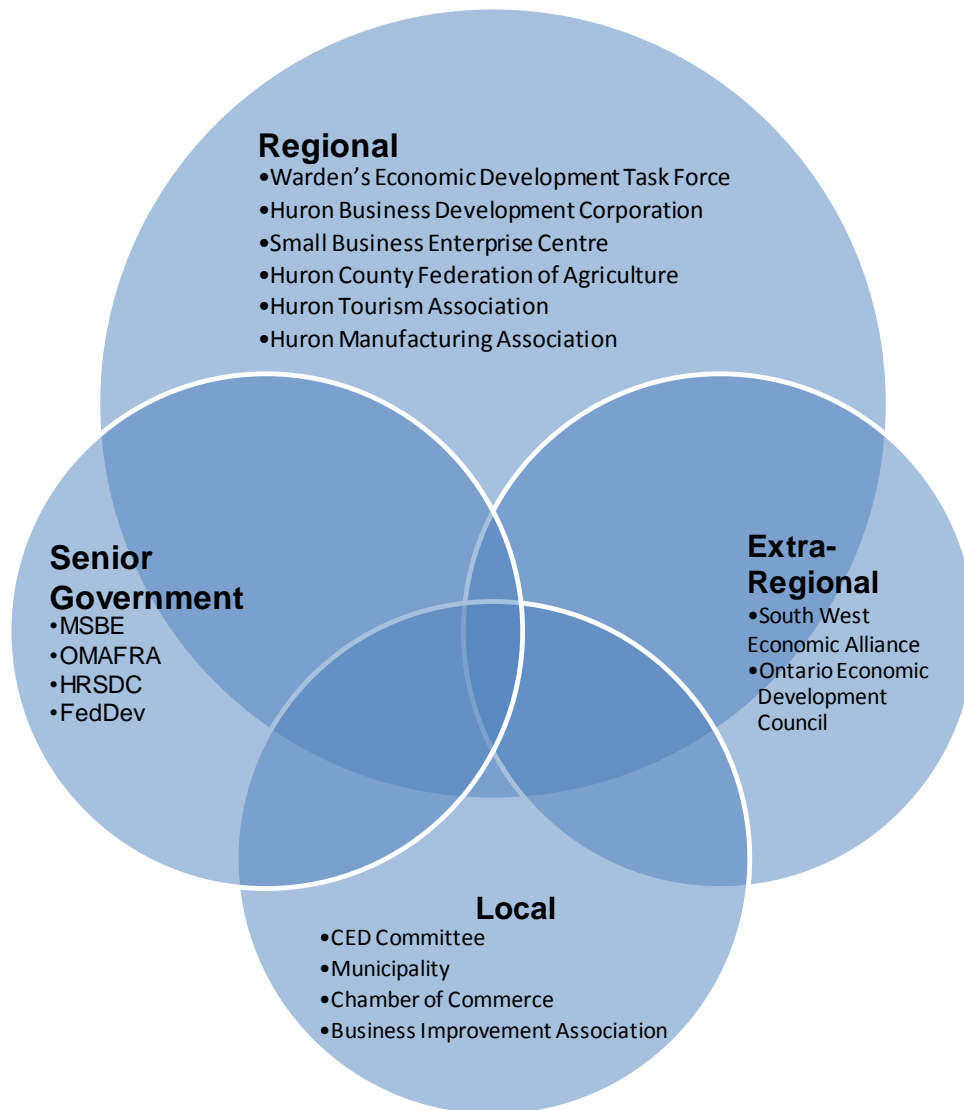
Huron Business Centre

The Huron Business Centre (HBC) is a co-operative of several community-based organizations that collaboratively assist Huron County entrepreneurs in developing viable and sustainable businesses. The following services are all represented in the same building in Seaforth:

- Huron Business Development Corporation
- Huron County Planning and Development Department
- Huron Employment Resource Centre
- Huron Small Business Enterprise Centre
- Office of Business Growth & Economic Development, Huron East
- Self Employment Benefit Program
- A well-stocked business library
- Seminars, workshops and presentations
- Computing facilities
- One-to-one business management and consulting services

http://www.huroncounty.ca/econdev/ed_mission.php

Figure 17: Partnerships within Huron County Community Economic Development



The story of CED in Huron County

Beginning **in the mid 1980s** the county of Huron began to implement a community development approach to economic development. **In 1991**, Paul Nichol was employed by Huron County to attract CFDC funding. Initial support came from the County council and planning director, Gary Davidson. At this time, the Chambers of Commerce were fairly weak and a new economic development organization was welcome. This approach was successful **in 1992** when the federal government gave preliminary approval to the establishment of a Community Futures and corresponding Business Development Corporation. At that time, OMAFRA also began funding projects related to rural quality of life. The Huron CFDC was established **in 1993**.

In 1995, the Huron CFDC merged with Huron Small Business Enterprise Centre to become the Huron Business Development Corporation (HBDC). There was only one support staff member with an operating budget of \$25,000. Similar mergers occurred across the province, but Huron County was unique in that it retained *both* its community development manager as well as its loan manager, whereas many CFDCs only retained a loans manager. At this time, CFDCs reported to the Industry Minister. The CFDC model was gaining international recognition from OECD because the model permits local community autonomy over loan approvals following an injection of federal dollars. Around this time, the Huron Business Centre was established to provide a one-stop service centre. This was very important not only in terms of better service but also in facilitating collaboration between municipalities and the HBDC, through shared space.

By 1997, the CFDCs in Brant and Perth were beginning to face major conflicts within their councils and fragmentation with Chambers of Commerce. A major area of contention in those areas was that CFDC funding was increasingly invested in urban businesses and not the rural businesses for which it was intended. Huron pulled ahead, absorbing a local NGO to provide employment services, and launching a nurse training

program and a good food box program. Huron was already going beyond the federal CFDC mandate by conducting community and staff evaluations with its volunteer board. A logic model was developed with researchers from the University of Guelph, which became extremely helpful in coordinating activities and partnerships.

The HBDC **continued** to grow over the years, adding many new services in addition to its loans and management consulting. Examples include: entrepreneurial development seminars and programs; business training and counselling initiatives; market research on new business opportunities; information for partnerships for new business development as well as joint marketing and promotional activities. This was also the time that municipalities experienced amalgamation and a push toward rationalization, making the community development functions of the HBDC all the more crucial.

By 2004, the HBDC had conducted its "Municipal Economic Development Readiness Initiative", with consultant Rick Hundey providing a review of CED Best Practices. Hundey recommended focusing on small bites of development, and engaging the community to share in creation of wealth, jobs and taxes. Hundey stated that there were several strategic choices to be made; first, continuing with tourism which by that point was growing rapidly, and second by revitalizing downtowns and the retail sector. Hundey suggested this could be done through a shop local campaign (which is now coming to fruition in 2010), niche development, cultural and heritage attraction, and a sensitivity to the need to promote higher paying jobs. As for agriculture, Hundey suggested building a reserve fund for an industrial park, which could be spent when needed, rather than developing at cost recovery rates. And given that agriculture continued to be an important economic driver, but was losing farm families fast, Hundey recommended building infrastructure to assist small farm viability.

But 2004 also brought a new threat from Ontario's Panel on the Role of Government, which produced the report, "Small, Rural, and Remote Communities: The Anatomy of Risk". The report concluded that much of rural Canada was economically unsustainable,

that it would be futile to continue to artificially sustain rural industry. Further, the report stated that rural population decline was inevitable, and that governments should abandon regional development programs. It was a dark time for many CED workers as misconceptions and distrust grew between the urban and rural development communities.

In 2005, the financial support for CFDCs was reduced as a result of the Panel conclusions. At the same time, the Places to Grow act introduced a new level of constraint on rural growth by designating growth areas in major urban centres. Huron County, like many rural areas, began to feel increasingly cut off from support, and forced into impossible levels of service delivery with too many restrictions. The HBDC published its State of the Economy report and continued to grow its relationship with the county through the Warden's Economic Development Task Force.

Support began to be restored **in 2007**, following the province-wide Rural Dialogue consultation. This was also the point at which Huron Economic Development Matters (HEDM) was announced as a partnership with the County, which included a \$200,000 annual investment from the County. OMAFRA's support for Rural Economic Development fund followed suit, doubling the HBDC's funding capacity and adding three new staff. As a result, the annual operating budget of the HBDC grew to \$450,000.

Other fronts began to develop as well. A youth engagement coordinator was hired to begin reconnecting youth with a sense of pride in their community. The Lake Huron Learning Collaborative announces its first 10 distance education courses. And a consultation was run by the Goderich BIA in partnership with HEDM to identify business opportunities in rural downtowns.

Three new County staff were hired **in 2008** as part of the HEDM strategy. Mike Pullen was hired as Senior Economic Development Officer, Kerri Herrfort as Downtown Revitalization Coordinator; and Jenna Ujiye as Tourism Marketer for the County. A CED youth internship was also introduced to hire a local student to develop a made-in-Huron program for Newcomers.

2008 was also a time of major economic crisis, with the closure of Can-Gro Foods, Campbells, Volvo and layoffs at Wescast. In total, 850 jobs were lost as manufacturing and other large industries moved out of the county. Although most were able to reskill and gain new employment, it was still a significant shock to have 30% of the region's manufacturing workforce temporarily unemployed.

After a concerted lobbying effort by mayors and CFDCs, **2009 brought good news:** the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario (FedDev Ontario) was established to transfer stimulus funds to Canadian regions recovering from the economic crisis. This changed the reporting requirements, moving the HBDC into the jurisdiction of FedDev Ontario minister Gary Goodyear.

As of 2009, the HBDC was beginning to experience strain from rapid growth. A review was conducted by a Public Administration course from the University of Guelph, which identified that;

- A multi-level approval process was slowing projects down, whereas loan approvals were needed very quickly
- Reporting requirements were consuming a great deal of time, even for grant renewals
- Board continued to resist evaluating management
- Partners of HBDC were failing to find their own core funding, and were splitting the time and money of the HBDC in several directions rather than building independence

Most recently, in 2010, three new economic development initiatives were approved by Council:

- FCM grant to hire a sustainability coordinator
- MTO grant to do a Transportation Demand Management (TDM) Plan
- CIC grant to develop an Immigration Partnership Council and Immigration Plan

Examples of Innovation and Best Practice

Gateway Rural Health Research Institute

A healthy economy needs a healthy population. Fortunately, health research can accomplish both. Using HEDM funding, a research centre focused on addressing medical and health issues in rural populations. The institute will attract additional health care support. The Institute considers any research initiative considered relevant to the rural population. This tends to be research which deals with the high prevalence of diabetes, obesity and heart disease. Ironically, because of the poor physical health of many Huron residents, the centre provides an ideal opportunity to both help residents and advance science at the same time.

(www.gatewayresearch.ca)

Walton TransCan Motocross Event

Motocross in Walton, Ontario, began when the Lee family took their first steps into promoting motocross at their family farm in 1974. Seeing the need for an even more prestigious motocross event, one that could rival what was happening in the U.S, the TransCan was born in 1992.

The TransCan draws 25,000 people every year from across Canada, the U.S and around the world. The tiny town of Walton has watched TransCan grow to become one of the biggest tourist attractions in Huron County. Walton's pride in TransCan is evident in the 'Motocross town' signs posted on the drive into town. Huron County sets up a tourism booth at the event with information about the nearby Blyth Festival and golf courses, in addition to many other tourist attractions. Further market capture opportunities were identified in 2008 by a CED Youth Internship funded through the HBDC.

www.waltontranscan.ca

Youth Engagement: Above the Falls "Challenge Course" Community Project

Cost: \$150,000

Funding sources: HBDC, Maitland Valley Conservation Authority, United Communities Credit Union, and local law and architectural firms. Grant proposals include Mountain Equipment Coop, Ontario Trillium Foundation, Ontario Communities in Action Fund, and Bruce Power

Motivation: Provide a local outdoor learning opportunity for school programming, while also developing a youth-operated business that satisfies social and environmental criteria. To Build social cohesion, leadership and communication skills. The process was initiated by the Youth Engagement Coordinator employed by HBDC.

Huron Manufacturing Awards

The annual Huron Manufacturing Awards dinner and tradeshow attracts 30 businesses and 300 people each year, representing manufacturing, municipalities and other local businesses. A number of award categories are presented, including junior manufacturer, product innovation, corporate citizenship, green leadership, and health, safety, and technical teaching. Companies can compete in categories under and over 20 employees. A number of scholarships are supported by the United Communities Credit Union and the Huron Manufacturing Association, giving \$1000 to six apprentices in Huron County. These awards have in turn profiled Huron County and contribute to its numerous awards at the Ontario Economic Development Council.

HealthKick local staff training and recruitment

HealthKick uses a multi-pronged approach to encourage healthcare professional to live and work in rural Ontario. Based in Seaforth, Huron County, and co-located with the Huron community Family Health Team and the Gateway Rural Research Institute, the project has five strategies which include Rural Healthcare Exploration, Rural Healthcare Work Placements, Rural Healthcare Training Programs, Rural Healthcare Experience, and Community Engagement.

The basic premise is to train people locally for the jobs you use. The model is widely applicable, and is now being geared towards a green jobs strategy in partnership with Huron's Centre for Applied Renewable Energy.

Key Best Practices

After reviewing the story of Huron County CED, and analyzing key elements of its success, two foundational best practices are clear:

- 1) **Focus on county-wide programs.** This has allowed the collaboration of lower-tier municipalities, while also bundling federal, provincial and municipal programs, into one easy-to-use and coordinated service.
- 2) **Think in terms of Community Development.** By retaining managers in both economic development and loans, the HBDC has succeeded in creating a more business-friendly county while ensuring that clients gain the marketing and business planning tools needed to succeed. It has also led to increased public engagement, resulting in higher awareness and ownership of CED programs. The HBDC has achieved roughly 40-50% market penetration, which is likely much higher than other CFDCs, which do not measure community awareness of services.

Building on this foundation, there are a number of best practices that emerged from interviews with Huron County CED staff:

- 1) **Take risks.** A CFDC is a lender of last resort, and should not require a large proportion of collateral. Indeed, the HBDC ends up writing off 12-15% of loans

each year. In fact, the Huron CFDC is so aggressive that it often borrows from banks and other CFDCs that have unspent funds. If a CFDC doesn't take risks, it will end up competing with banks, and will not serve those most in need, essentially missing the main objective, which would be to create jobs for those who are struggling. Still, only 50% of applications are accepted. This speaks to the willingness of the HBDC to take measured risks and learn from losses, which has been an essential part of its success.

- 2) **Build on local leadership and volunteers.** Allowing a grassroots board to make decisions will encourage unique, adaptive solutions that reflect the broader needs of the community without pressure of politics. Local leadership is very important in the form of long-time volunteers and staff. This allows institutional knowledge and experience to inform future decisions.
- 3) **Don't grow without capacity.** Buy local campaigns won't work unless local businesses are set up to satisfy customer needs better than external sources. New opportunities for partnerships and grants must be tempered by a realistic sense of what organizational capacity exists. As another example, the farm community is affected by global market fluctuations that the CFDC is not equipped to deal with.
- 4) **Use evaluation and strategic planning.** Comparable, multi-scale (1 yr and 5yr), client focused evaluation and reporting is very important. The HBDC is the only CFDC that evaluates performance in terms of cost per job created. Not only that, but the HBDC also focuses on creating specific kinds of jobs, such as green energy and health care, according to the assessed needs within the labour market. This kind of strategic planning allows for clear statements of community aspirations and accountability as goals are met.
- 5) **Support a wide base of small businesses.** Far more projects are approved in the under \$15,000 range in order to strengthen the diversity and resilience of the local economy. This steers the county away from mega-projects which tend to fluctuate unpredictably and leave the county's interests too concentrated.

- 6) **Create a culture of success.** Sometimes attaining goals is not enough; creating awards events, applying for awards, and celebrating successes all help to create an enjoyable working climate and attract more enthusiasm and ideas. Be open to the new partnerships that this success will bring in.

It is rare in Canada for a formal integration of municipal, provincial and federal economic developments to have succeeded. This is the most obvious expression of Huron County's success. But it is also remarkable that Huron County economic development initiatives have built so much capacity without population growth. By focusing on supporting good business and development ideas, and collaborating across jurisdictions, Huron has built a model of economic prosperity while maintaining a stable population.

When this kind of capacity is built, local community leaders are able to more fully engage in the autonomy they seek. They succeed based on the demands of the community, rather than the demands of Ottawa or Toronto. This case study shows how CED leaders can work together to allow communities like Huron County to take more control of their future.

References

Boothroyd, P. and Craig Davis, H. 1993. Community Economic Development: Three Approaches. *Journal of Planning Education and Research* 12:230-240.

Caldwell, W. 2009. The Huron Georegion: Rurality in an Urbanizing Province.

Caldwell, W. 2009. Planning and management for rural development: the role of local government. Chapter 4 in *Rural Planning and Development in Canada*. Ed. D. Douglas. Nelson Education Ltd.

Douglas, D. 2005. The restructuring of local government in rural regions: A rural development perspective. *Journal of Rural Studies*. 21 p231-246.

Hundey, R. 2004. Best Practices in Rural and Small Town Economic Development. Prepared for the Huron Business Development Corporation.

Huron Business Development Corporation. 2008. Annual report: Helping entrepreneurs make good things happen in Ontario's West Coast. Accessed 10/15/09. Available: <http://www.smallbusinesshuron.ca/publications.htm>

Huron Business Development Corporation. 2005. The state of the Huron County economy. Seaforth, ON: Huron Business Development Corporation.

Huron Stewardship Council. 2008. <http://www.ontariostewardship.org/councils/huron/>

Isserman, A.M., Feser, E., Warren, D.E. 2009. Why Some Rural Places Prosper and Others Do Not. *International Regional Science Review*. 32:3, p300-342.

Nichol, P. 2009. Huron Business Development Corporation – Business Plan 2009.

Ontario Ministry of Finance. (2009), Ontario Population Projections 2008 – 2036,
Ontario Ministry of Finance. Retrieved on January 29, 2010 from
<http://www.fin.gov.on.ca/en/economy/demographics/projections/#s4>>

Pell, D. 1994. The third sector, sustainable development and community empowerment.
Chapter 4. Ed. Douglas, D. Economic development in Canada. Volume One.
McGraw-Hill Ryerson.

Reimer, B. and Lyons, T. 2008. A literature review of capacity frameworks: Six features
of comparison. In Remote Control: Lessons in Governance for/from Small and
Remote Regions, edited by Godfrey Baldacchino, Rob Greenwood and Lawrence
Felt. St. John's, Nfld: ISER Press.

Scott, J. The settlement of Huron County. Toronto, Ryerson, 1966.
<http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~onhuron/history.htm>

Statistics Canada. 2006. Community Information Database auto-generated reports.
<http://www.cid-bdc.ca/>

Temple, K., Albarrack, S., Sullivan, N., and Toman, C. 2009. An administrative review of
the Huron Business Development Corporation. Issued to the Huron Business
Centre.

Appendices

Appendix A: Case Study Research Methods

Sources of information

- Business and Work newsletter (now HEDM newsletter)
- State of the Huron Economy reports; HBDC Business Plans
- Number of job adds in local paper
- Minutes of the HEDM and HBDC Board
- Rural and Small Town Canada Bulletin – Employment stats
- Research and consultant reports

Contacts

Scott Tousaw, Planning Director

Paul Nichol, HBDC Programs Manager

Jim Niesen – HBDC Loans Manager

Kerri Herrfort, Economic Development with Planning Department

Rob Bundy, Youth Coordinator –Ropes course and Youth Council

Pauli Sommer – Community member seeking revitalization through food; farmer's market

Carol Leeming – Planning and Development Department

Cindy Fisher, Jenna Ujiye – Planning and Development Department

Mike Pullen and Claire Dodds Weir - contacted

CASE STUDY THREE – Prince Edward County: “Prospering in a Creative Economy”

Table of Contents

Introduction.....	93
Community Profile.....	94
Demographics	94
Geography	95
Climate	96
Political Context.....	96
Economic Development Structure	96
Primary Industries.....	98
Community Economic Development.....	100
Defining the Creative Economy:	102
The 'Creative Rural Economy'	103
Embracing the 10 Principles of the Memphis Manifesto:	106
Best Practices in Action in Prince Edward County.....	107
1. Innovation.....	107
2. Partnerships (or 'coordination of efforts').....	109
3. Networking:	109
4. Focus:	109
5. Tolerance:	110
6. Financial and Human Capital Resources:.....	110
7. Youth Retention	110
8. Marketing	112
Summary.....	112
References	113

Introduction

In terms of communities with stable or declining populations, Prince Edward County appears as a unique and interesting success story when it comes to Community Economic Development. Prince Edward County is a rural municipality located in Eastern Ontario. Prince Edward County is distinctive in that it is located on a 250,000 acre headland that protrudes 40 kilometres south into Lake Ontario. This geographical situation has shaped the history of Prince Edward County ('The County'), primarily through a rich marine history as well as a strong agricultural heritage. Currently, the County is experiencing a new wave of economic development through a 'creative rural economy' initiative.

This case study will describe the community profile of Prince Edward County and explore the history and organization of community economic development within the County. Successful innovations related to current economic development initiatives will be discussed as well as the 'best management practices' that are being employed within the County.

This case study builds upon a report prepared by Queen's University entitled 'Growing the Creative-Rural Economy in Prince Edward County: Strategies for Innovative, Creative and Sustainable Development' that was prepared for the Prince Edward/Lennox and Addington Community Futures Development Corporation. Betsy Donald and her 3rd year Geography class completed an analysis of economic development in Prince Edward County in 2008 and several excerpts from this report are included in this case study.

Community Profile

Prince Edward County is located on a 250,000 acre headland on Lake Ontario which creates quite a unique geographical context for this rural municipality in that it is home to approximately 800 kilometres of shore line on Lake Ontario and the Bay of Quinte. Prince Edward County is also well situated in terms of distances to larger centres. It is a two hour drive east of Toronto, two and a half hours south west of Ottawa, and three and a half west of Montreal. The Upper New York State is only a one and a half hour drive away at the eastern edge of Lake Ontario at Gananoque. According to the 'creative economy' theory proposed by Richard Florida, this location puts Prince Edward County in the middle of "The Mega Region" encompassing the Windsor to Quebec City corridor. This Mega Region's economy is worth roughly 50% of Canada's GDP. Therefore, the basic premise of the creative rural economy model in Prince Edward County is to explore the potential to tap into a portion of the economy of the Mega Region (Taylor and Baeker, 2008).

Demographics

Prince Edward County's current economic development issues are directly related to demographic trends. A notable in-migration of retirement-aged professionals, and a simultaneous out-migration of educated youth, has affected the productivity of PEC's economy. It is important to understand the demographic trends of the County in order to effectively situate the findings and recommendations that follow in this report. In 2006, PEC had a permanent population of 25 496 people. From 2001 to 2006, PEC's population grew by 2.4%. Although the growth rate is limited and below the provincial average of 6.6%, this minor increase is noteworthy given that the population shrank by 0.6% between 1996 and 2001. In addition, a growth rate of 2.4% is comparable to growth rates of other Southeastern Ontario jurisdictions (Donald et al, 2008). Migration to and from PEC has been a major contributor to demographic change. Between 2000 and 2005 the trend has been a net in-migration of older persons to the region, particularly in the 45 to 64 year old age group. "The population of adults aged 65 and over is projected to almost double from

21.7% of the population in 2008 to 35.6 % in 2031” (Class Consultants, 2009, 12). The net in-migration of older people is complicated by the net out-migration of people in the 18 to 24 year old age group (Queens, 2008).

Geography

Prince Edward County is located within the ‘Mixedwood Plains’ of Canada’s biomes and is unique in the fact that it is officially a ‘headland’ (surrounded by water on 3 sides), however, since the only connection to the mainland is by a narrow canal, the Murray Canal, the County is really more like an island. Being an island community creates its own set of advantages and disadvantages. For one, the island geography creates barriers in terms of transportation which can dissuade larger manufacturing industries from selecting Prince Edward County as a place to do business. However, the island geography has also resulted in a unique ‘sense of place’ in terms of rural landscapes and heritage.



Figure 18: Prince Edward County (Google Earth, 2010)

Climate

This region of Canada is characterized by fairly mild winters (average of -5°C) and warm summers (average 17°C), however, the weather can be extremely variable due to frequent storm activity. The climate of Prince Edward County is affected by its position on Lake Ontario which results in milder temperatures throughout the year and increased snowfall in the winter than neighbouring counties. This lake effect moderates the harsh Ontario winters providing for an ideal climate for growing cold-climate grape varieties for wine production. This milder climate combined with the limestone-based soil conditions in the county has facilitated the development of a thriving wine industry in Prince Edward County.

Political Context

Prince Edward County is a single-tier municipality with 'city' status, and despite its name, it is not technically a county by the provincial definition. However, the municipality handles all municipal services and is currently the smallest single-tier municipality in Ontario. Prince Edward County consists of the merged governments of the former county and ten former towns, villages and townships that existed before amalgamation in 1997. The County is divided into 10 wards with one to three councillors representing each ward. The current council hall is located in the town of Picton which is the largest town in the County.

Economic Development Structure

As a single-tier municipality, Prince Edward County has its own Economic Development Officer, Dan Taylor, leading economic development for the County. Dan Taylor has been actively working on articulating the 'creative rural economy' strategy for Prince Edward County for the past five years. Prince Edward County also benefits from the support and expertise provided by the Prince Edward/Lennox and Addington Community Futures Development Corporation (PELA CFDC). The PELA CFDC is a community based non-profit corporation aimed at encouraging local entrepreneurship and economic development. PELA CFDC provides entrepreneurs and businesses with

advice and business planning free of charge. They also provide grants and loans to local businesses (PELA CFDC, 2010).

Prince Edward County is also served by the Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism whose main goal is to “Promote and increase tourism, business and civic pride in the County of Prince Edward”

(<http://www.pecchamber.com/about.htm>, 2010). The Prince Edward County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism provides benefits to its members such as group insurance rates, newsletters with business trends and information, networking opportunities, and a web presence on their site to name just a few.

Historical Waves of Economic Prosperity

The first economic activity was ship building, lumber and milling. The timbers came from agricultural land clearing and the shipping and lumber industry developed there due its proximity to the St. Lawrence River and the Great Lakes, a major transportation route at the time. The county has since experienced four waves of economic prosperity.

The first wave 1860 – 1890 was coined Barley Days. “Bay Barley” was some of the best brewing industry barley in North America. The crop was shipped to upper New York State and the U.S. brewing industry and literally resulted in the rich brick building stock and period architecture of the county. The crop was so profitable, it is rumored those brick homes were built and paid for from a single growing season. American tariffs introduced in 1890 ended the Barley Days immediately. One result of this boom time is that Prince Edward County has the second largest building stock of Georgian Architecture in North America after Virginia.

The second wave, following Barley Days, was dairy driven when the county boasted over twenty seven cheese factories, which specialized in classic Canadian cheddars sold to the Canadian and British markets. The third wave occurred when Prince Edward County was known as “The Garden of Canada” canning everything in sight from traditional fruits and vegetables to of all things whole chickens. At the peak of the industry near the end of the Second World War, there were over 40 canning factories and Prince Edward County supplied approximately 43% of all the canned tomatoes to the nation. The industry’s last factory closed in the mid 1980’s.

The fourth wave is the ‘creative rural economy’.
(*excerpt from Taylor and Baeker, 2008*)

Primary Industries

Prince Edward County has a long tradition of agriculture as its primary industry, which continues today. It has a history of producing high quality barley during the late 1800's followed by a thriving dairy industry featuring cheese making and then by a successful canning industry. Farm receipts for Prince Edward County, calculated at 2006 dollar

"Prince Edward County farmland only accounts for 0.9% of all farmland in Ontario but has 8.6% of certified organic farms in Ontario (Statistics Canada 2006). This sector has seen huge amounts of growth between 2001 and 2006 with the number of reported organic farms increasing from 3 in PEC to 51 farms." (Class Consultants, 2009, 17)

values, totalled over \$76 million and increased 12.4% from 1996 to 2006. However, operating expenses have been rising at a higher rate, approximately 19% during the same period. "In 2006, agriculture and other resource-based industries contributed 8.6% of the labour force in PEC, 5% higher than the Ontario average" (Class Consultants, 2009, 16).

Recently there has been a creative renewal of agriculture in Prince Edward County; most notably in terms of organic agriculture, culinary tourism, local cheese-making and an emerging wine and vineyard industry. In fact, since the year 2000 the County has gone from less than 20 acres of high quality European vines planted to over 600 acres under vine, making Prince Edward County the second largest viticultural area in Ontario. In 2000 there was one winery, and today there are almost a dozen with more planned (PEC, 2010). According to Dan Taylor, economic development officer for Prince Edward County, there has been \$100 million in incremental investments in the PEC wine and tourism industries over the past 10 years. The increased number of organic farms may give Prince Edward County farmers an economic advantage because the second fastest growing sector of the food economy in Toronto is the specialty-food sector. This could provide an important market for PEC farmers. This specialty food sector is expected to become the fastest growing by 2011(Donald, 2009).

In addition to the competitive advantage that organic agriculture, local specialty foods, and vineyards bring to PEC farmers, these activities also strengthen Prince Edward County's other important industry – tourism. While Prince Edward County is home to approximately 25,000, a strong tourism sector from May to September draws as many as 440,000 tourists annually (Donald et al, 2008). Tourists are drawn to a variety of attractions such as Sandbanks Provincial Park, the rural countryside, historic inns, culinary experiences, cycling trails, and festivals. These tourists spend approximately \$65.4 million a year and while this level of tourism is a strength for the local economy; the seasonality of the industry can also be a weakness. According to Craig Desjardins of the Prince Edward Lennox Addington Community Futures Development Corporation (PELA), this seasonality of the tourism industry creates employment challenges for local people as well as long term sustainability of businesses.

Emerging Industries

One of the emerging industries that is enhancing community economic development in Prince Edward County is the media arts with high level graphic arts and animation companies being attracted to

the 'quality of place' in PEC. As an example of this emerging industry, Headlands New Media has recently purchased a 6,000 square foot building in downtown Picton that will be used as an incubator for new media enterprises (Desjardins, 2010). In addition to this development, Loyalist College will be opening a satellite campus in Picton that will offer

Headland Media receives grant from PELA CFDC

"Stacey and David Hatch owners of WhistleStop Productions had the dream of developing a state of the art facility anchored by an award winning, internationally recognized, and locally based, television Production Company. The facility would house an advanced media education centre offering hands on training with local experts and industry leaders, providing real life, professional experiences. The fundamental goal was to serve as a model of sustainable career creation and development, employing knowledge workers, in a rural setting." <http://www.pelacfdc.ca>

a 3 year diploma in graphic arts (Desjardins, 2010). It is hoped that these initiatives will serve to create a 'hub' of new media opportunities in Prince Edward County as well as to assist in youth retention by providing a new and innovative educational opportunity within the County.

Community Economic Development

Prince Edward County began an intensive economic development initiative in 2004 with a series of studies on the County. The first of these studies in 2004 was an Investment Market Readiness Study and Strategic Economic Development Plan (Economic Strategy). The primary conclusion of this report was that Prince Edward County was not in a position to be competitive in terms of 'traditional' economic development models such as attracting core industry and manufacturing developments. The consultants who conducted this study did go on to suggest that the County could position itself to be successful in terms of economic development by taking a different approach altogether; an approach based on quality of place or amenity features. The Market Readiness Study (<http://www.buildanewlife.ca>) suggested an economic development strategy that would build on the unique 'quality of place' in Prince Edward County and that would be based upon four distinct 'pillars' of activity; agriculture, tourism, commerce/industry, and arts/culture/history (Taylor and Baeker, 2008). Building on this concept, Taylor (2010) asserts that the natural environment is a key component of the economic development strategy as the economic success is intrinsically linked to the quality of the natural environment within Prince Edward County.

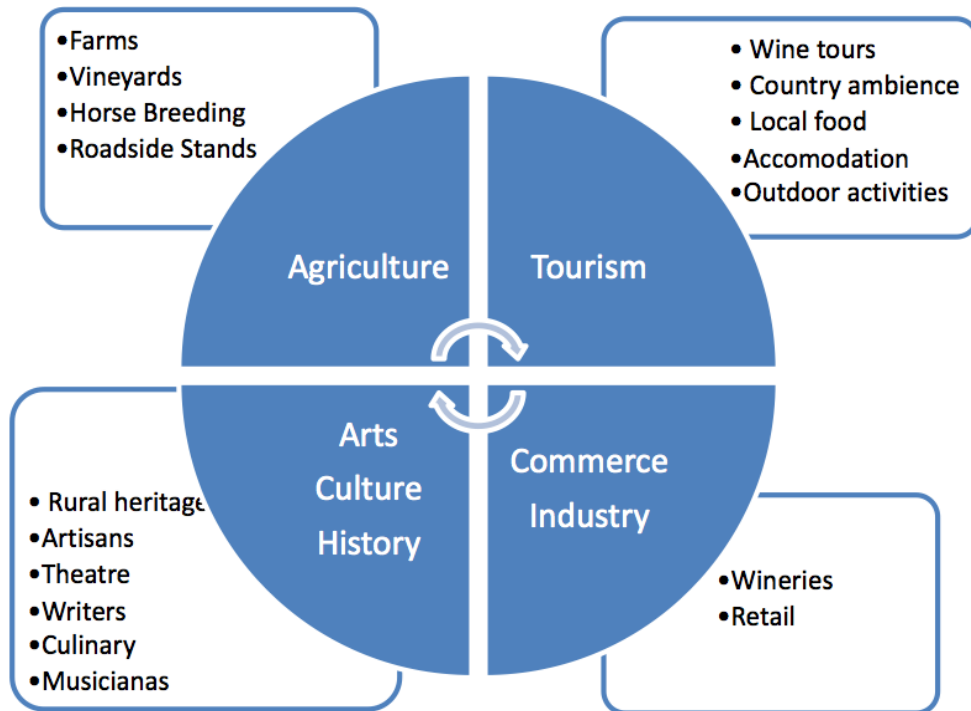


Figure 19: Model for Creative Rural Economy (adapted from Taylor and Baeker, 2008)

Following on the Economic Strategy, the County has completed a series of key plans and research projects. These studies were all commissioned by the Economic Development department and were intended to build on the principal message of the 2004 Market Readiness and Economic Strategy which was to ensure ***integrated thinking, planning and execution.***

Key studies included:

- Leveraging Growth and Managing Change: A Cultural Strategic Plan for Prince Edward County (2005)
- Picton Downtown Revitalization Plan (2005)
- Tourism Destination Development Strategy (2006)
- George Morris Centre Value Added Agriculture Research and Plan (2006)
- Culinary Tourism Survey Ryerson University (2006)

- Agri-Markets Survey Ryerson University (2007)
- Queen's University Geography class on PEC's Creative Economy (2008)
- Creative Rural Economy Strategy for Ontario (in development).

Defining the Creative Economy:

To understand the approach that is being taken in Prince Edward County, it is important to both define the 'creative economy' as well as to highlight some of the key critiques of this theory. The following is an excerpt from the Queen's University study on Prince

Richard Florida's 'creative class approach' was designed to describe variations in the growth of urban regions based on the presence of 'creative classes'. The 'creative class' is defined as a wide range of people whose occupations vary from scientists to musicians, who display the ability to make individual judgments (Florida, 2002). This approach has been widely applied in urban planning and development. Florida's original model was based on what has been called '**The Three T's' – technology, talent, and tolerance**. He saw human creativity, diversity, regional openness, and the presence of a university as natural magnets for attracting 'creative classes', which lead to the development of human capital (Florida, 2002).

Florida is clear that there is no way of predicting what factors might trigger an upsurge in the development of the 'creative classes'. Critics have pointed out that his theory does not explain development processes and contains no discussion of mechanisms for applying the model. His work is essentially descriptive and retrospective; presenting correlations and associations, but no causal model that can be used in planning. Jeanne Wolfe takes exception to the lack of focus on income disparity and argues that Florida's strategies to cater to the creative class come at the expense of the working and service classes (Peck, 2005). Peck also argues that Florida's model depends on an army of service workers trapped in 'low-end' and poorly paid noncreative jobs. Peck's work centres on what Florida describes as the non-creative class. While Florida's theory ignores this supportive class, Peck has attempted to gain a better understanding of the relationship between the creative and non-creative classes. Applying the model to specific communities also poses challenges—specifically, how to measure the Three T's. One of the main tenets of Florida's regional economic development theory is the need for universities, and concentrations of gay households. These are gaps that Prince Edward County needs to examine strategically and practically, to determine what short and longer term policies and tactics can be developed to attract new populations and develop institutions of higher learning. It is not clear that the 'Bohemian factor' is applicable to rural regions or if there may be other factors that drive rural economic development. It is important here to trouble the term 'creative class' and to realize that **creativity means forward thinking, idea generation, and sustainable innovation. Creativity can and must be embraced by all sectors of the economy and across all socio-economic levels.**

(Queen's, 2008)

Edward County.

The 'Creative Rural Economy'

The creative economy theory has been applied mainly to urban regions as opposed to rural communities. However, in recent years, research indicates that rural areas can attract the creative class, or in other words, people who are seeking a different lifestyle based on amenity features of a community (i.e. open space, shore frontage, natural areas, peace and quiet, etc.). McGranahan (2007) shows that non-metropolitan areas with higher proportions of people in creative occupations tend to have higher rates of patent formation, manufacturing technology adoption, and rates of job growth. In many regions, 'artistic havens' have become mechanisms to attract other creative people and generate economic expansion. It is common for rural areas to have youth retention problems, as high school graduates leave for urban centres in search of higher education and employment. This loss in human capital can be reversed by attracting population groups

which map well onto rural lifestyles. McGranahan suggests these families, midlife career changers, and retirees can maintain the rural talent base. Prince Edward County is one rural community among several rural communities who acknowledge this out-migration, and market to pre-retirement and retired people in an attempt to reverse negative population trends and revitalize the pool of human capital. Craig Desjardins of the PELA Community Futures

Development Fund confirms this trend by stating that the 'newcomers' to PEC, primarily

The Creative Economy is driven by ideas, innovation, knowledge, collaboration and creativity. The creative economy generally employs people who are paid to think or create as opposed to the traditional manufacturing sector.

The creative economy is about a major shift in the structure of the global economy - from one based on the production of goods to a more knowledge based economy driven by ideas and innovation.

These are jobs where people are paid to think and they exist across all sectors -- including agriculture and manufacturing. In 2006, the creative economy comprised 34.7% of Eastern Ontario's labour force. (Excerpt from Canada's Creative Corridor by the Martin Prosperity Institute).

in the 40+ demographics bring with them ideas, experience, and capital. These newcomers, along with a significant portion of PEC's tourists, are predominantly cosmopolitans who enjoy fine food, the arts, and wine. While this is beneficial to the success of the creative rural economy strategy, it is suggested that the "County's innovative inspiration must begin locally. For example, the culinary industry of PEC must find both a local base and an expansive appeal" (Queen's, 2008, 10). Inserting local talents and interests into the culinary sector provides "an opportunity for social inclusion in everyday cultural production, distribution and consumption" (Donald and Blay-Palmer, 2006, p.1914). The entire community must embrace forward thinking and the generation of new, sustainable ideas across all sectors, regardless of socio-economic status. The creative renaissance can then be manipulated to enhance the lifestyle and cultural experiences of PEC residents and tourists alike (Queen's, 2008).

Dan Taylor is an enthusiastic supporter and advocate for the creative rural economy approach in Prince Edward County and he has the numbers to back up his enthusiasm. For the 2001-2006 census years, job creation in Prince Edward County was 15% better than the rest of Canada and 35% better than Ontario. This is partly due to the loss of manufacturing jobs in Ontario during this same time period, however, it does indicate that there can be a different approach to job creation in the province. Another indicator of success in the County is the fact that the value of new building permits are up from \$16 million in 1999 to \$70 million in 2009. According to a Ministry of Culture report, the 'Creative Cultural Industry' (CCI) in Prince Edward County performed 95% better than the rest of Canada during the 2001-2006 census time period and 2300% better than the rest of Ontario. Direct spending from tourism is up from \$25 million in 1999 to \$100 million in 2009. Taylor credits these successes to the focused strategy on the creative rural economy that is fostering the entrepreneurial spirit in the County. Taylor is also quick to point out that the 'creative rural economy' is highly diversified and inclusive of anyone with an entrepreneurial spirit and that it is not limited to the arts and culture sector. By his estimation, the creative rural economy accounts for 31% of

the labour force in Prince Edward County and this has grown by 27% over the last decade (Taylor, 2010). Others caution that some citizens feel 'left out' of the creative rural economy and this may be attributed to education levels in the County as typically people who engage in the creative economy are college or university educated (Desjardins, 2010). However, by adding the word 'rural' to the creative economy label, the potential to include agriculture and skilled trades to the concept becomes more tangible to local residents (Taylor, 2010). An on-going dialogue with the community is required to ensure success of the creative rural economy. In fact, the next initiative that the PELA CFDC is planning to undertake is a study on fostering cooperation instead of conflict over new ideas in terms of economic development in Prince Edward County. In addition to this, an important partnership with Queen's University School of Business will be looking at economic development opportunities across Eastern Ontario. Through the Monieson Centre, researchers will also be exploring methods of disseminating knowledge and ideas that will help rural communities. The creative rural economy strategy draws upon concepts presented in the 'Memphis Manifesto' which was developed at a conference hosted by Richard Florida in 2003 in Memphis. The ten principles that came out of this conference became known as the 'Memphis Manifesto' and they are included here as a point of reference for readers. Dan Taylor (2010) echoes one of the principles presented in the Memphis Manifesto when he suggests that the 'creative rural economy' strategy could definitely work in other rural municipalities but every community should adopt this strategy in their own distinctive way that would capitalize on the unique attributes of that community – in other words "dare to be different, not simply the look-alike of another community". This is where rural communities have the opportunity to create their own identity based on quality of place and the unique natural and cultural features found within their region. This concept lends itself well to ecological, social, and cultural sustainability in addition to economic vitality.

Embracing the 10 Principles of the Memphis Manifesto:

1. Cultivate and reward creativity. Everyone is part of the value chain of creativity. Creativity can happen at anytime, anywhere, and it's happening in your community right now. Pay attention.
2. Invest in the creative ecosystem. The creative ecosystem can include arts and culture, nightlife, the music scene, restaurants, artists and designers, innovators, entrepreneurs, affordable spaces, lively neighborhoods, spirituality, education, density, public spaces and third places.
3. Embrace diversity. It gives birth to creativity, innovation and positive economic impact. People of different backgrounds and experiences contribute a diversity of ideas, expressions, talents and perspectives that enrich communities. This is how ideas flourish and build vital communities.
4. Nurture the creatives. Support the connectors. Collaborate to compete in a new way and get everyone in the game.
5. Value risk-taking. Convert a "no" climate into a "yes" climate. Invest in opportunity making, not just problem-solving. Tap into the creative talent, technology and energy for your community. Challenge conventional wisdom.
6. Be authentic. Identify the value you add and focus on those assets where you can be unique. Dare to be different, not simply the look-alike of another community. Resist monoculture and homogeneity. Every community can be the right community.
7. Invest in and build on quality of place. While inherited features such as climate, natural resources and population are important, other critical features such as arts and culture, open and green spaces, vibrant downtowns, and centers of learning can be built and strengthened. This will make communities more competitive than ever because it will create more opportunities than ever for ideas to have an impact.
8. Remove barriers to creativity, such as mediocrity, intolerance, disconnectedness, sprawl, poverty, bad schools, exclusivity, and social and environmental degradation.
9. Take responsibility for change in your community. Improvise. Make things happen. Development is a "do it yourself" enterprise.
10. Ensure that every person, especially children, has the right to creativity. The highest quality lifelong education is critical to developing and retaining creative individuals as a resource for communities.

Memphis Manifesto, 2003

Best Practices in Action in Prince Edward County

1. Innovation

There are three main pillars to developing a successful innovation-based economy, which apply directly to Prince Edward County. These strategies include the process of thinking and acting regionally, promoting competitive advantage within the region, and promoting and nurturing entrepreneurial activity (Queen's, 2008).

Thinking and Acting Regionally

It is important for a region to operate as a cohesive unit with common goals. The impacts of a competitive global economy are felt at the regional level. Thus, economic analysis and strategies must be developed and implemented on the local stage. This strategy applies directly to PEC in that the region breeds on its own success. Firms are able to cooperate with one another, helping each to grow in opportunity and success without the fear of local competition (Queen's, 2008).

BUDDHA DOG Buddha Dog was co-founded in 2005 by Andrew MacKenzie and Andrew Hunter in Picton Ontario, with the intention of developing a creative product that would suit everyone, young and old. What exactly is a Buddha Dog? It's a hot-dog, fully loaded with everything from speciality cheese to unique sauces, all of which are sourced from PEC. Andrew MacKenzie uses a joke to encapsulate the spirit of the firm: "What did the Buddha say to the hot-dog vendor? Make me one with everything!" MacKenzie states that "innovation challenges the status quo, and innovative firms are not afraid to ask why." MacKenzie has a strong belief that Buddha Dog is breaking new ground by taking an interest in the community and promoting each individual supplier through one innovative product. "It is more of a vehicle than a hot-dog business," MacKenzie asserts. "Our modus operandi is about promoting others". The PEC community thrives by functioning as a group and forming linkages between firms to promote innovation.

Queen's 2008

Promote Competitive Advantage

In order to promote healthy competitive advantage within PEC, policy strategies must be tailored to specifically meet the needs and capabilities of the region. In other words, the region must excel in a particular economic niche. By comparing PEC's unique assets with new market opportunities, the region will find its source of competitive advantage. Often this will include finding a key export (as rural areas often do not have the critical mass required to be self contained economies) and niche areas such as tourism, value-added agriculture, and PEC's growing winery operations. It is vital that the County capitalize on its unique assets to maximize competitive advantage (Queen's, 2008).

Promoting and Nurturing Entrepreneurial Activity

Entrepreneurs are important actors in innovative economic development. Entrepreneurial activities are an excellent source of innovative high-growth business (Rosenfeld, 2004). As exemplified within PEC, innovative firms such as Buddha Dog and Scout Design have experienced tremendous success within the relatively limited

FIFTH TOWN ARTISAN CHEESE The Fifth Town Artisan Cheese Company is an environmentally and socially responsible enterprise dedicated to producing handmade cheeses using fresh, locally produced goat and sheep's milk. Fifth Town Cheese has been in development for the past four years and has recently just opened its doors! Located near Waupoos, Fifth Town Cheese compliments PEC's current agricultural activity and allows local farms to flourish. Fifth Town Artisan Cheese will have a production process unlike any other in North America. They believe in traditional processes of cheese production that entail intensive labour and less mechanization. Artisan cheese is made by hand and ages naturally in contrast to modern mass production processes which inject flavour into the cheese in order to replicate the aged taste. Petra Cooper's innovative process is a first in Canada. Cheese production is extremely energy intensive and in response, Cooper has decided that her firm's energy will be generated by a combination of solar and wind power. Fifth Town also boasts a geothermal heating system. This strong environmental consciousness has contributed to Fifth Town Cheese earning the only Platinum LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environment Design) qualification among dairy producers in North America.

Queen's 2008

market niche of the region. These entrepreneurs have significant impacts on the region's economy due to their forward-thinking processes and practices. These businesses have product solutions and aspirations that go beyond the local jurisdictional boundaries (Mikles, 2004).

2. Partnerships (or 'coordination of efforts'):

According to Craig Desjardins of PELA CFDC, coordinating efforts between different levels of government, healthcare, not-for-profit groups and businesses is essential to successful economic development. Dan Taylor states that partnerships are key to successful economic development efforts. There is greater opportunity to share resources and to make 'a dollar go further' through working together on new initiatives. One of the most promising partnerships for Prince Edward County is the partnership with the School of Business at Queen's University which will be helping to research and disseminate information that will be useful to rural communities in Eastern Ontario.

3. Networking:

The 'creative rural economy' is not something that happens overnight in a community. This is a strategy that has taken years to develop and integrate with the economic goals of the County. One of the most important elements in the success of this strategy is the engagement of the community in the goals and outcomes of initiatives undertaken in the community. One of the best ways to accomplish community engagement is through networking with as many sectors of the population as possible (Taylor, 2010).

4. Focus:

It is important to develop a focus that suits your community that will allow you to package the unique attributes that your community possesses. Community economic development should be ***place-based in nature*** so every community will develop their own unique strategy that makes sense for their locale (Taylor, 2010).

5. Tolerance:

The community has to be open to change and to new ways of doing business. In the case of Prince Edward County, and other rural communities, it should be recognized that farmers are the original and true entrepreneurs and that this entrepreneurial spirit should be fostered. Craig Desjardins feels that this is the true key to success for rural communities. In addition, newcomers should be welcome to the community along with the new ideas and innovative spirit they may bring with them.

6. Financial and Human Capital Resources:

Having access to funds for lending to business is crucial, particularly for small enterprises (Desjardins, 2010). The importance of 'people' cannot be underestimated in terms of the capacity necessary to foster local business development.

7. Youth Retention

Due to the trend of youth out-migration from rural communities in Ontario, the concept of 'youth retention' should be a key element of a successful economic development strategy. The Queen's report examined the question of youth retention as a component of community economic development and created the following recommendations:

Involve youth in civic government

Capitalize on the social capital within the school system and encourage youth to become involved in civic operations. This will include creating a forum for youth discussion and participation, or government sponsored internship programs. This allows the youth to realize their role as important actors in the community. Another idea is to offer a "job-shadow" day, where interested students can shadow local government officials for the day. Involvement in local-government might spark young people's interests in participating in municipal politics, and encourage them to consider continued involvement or employment in local-government after graduation.

Promote youth entrepreneurship

Promote government sponsored youth employment strategies that provide funding for student entrepreneurship. The tourism industry provides a great opportunity in this

respect. For example, PEC could hold a “three-minute-pitch” competition, where entrepreneurial youth develop a summer business plan, and have three minutes to pitch their idea to council. The best business plan/pitch wins, and the victorious student will win funding to help establish their summer business.

Integrate youth into creative economy initiatives

Encourage co-op programs that relate to more “creative” industries to diversify the types of training and employment opportunities youth might seek within the County. Also, to promote youth interest in the creative economy, local high school art classes should take a field trip to a local artist’s studio, or the downtown artist co-op gallery. Hands-on experiences will help youth to understand the unique artistic opportunities available in their home community, and may encourage talented youth to stay in PEC.

Create partnerships with nearby post-secondary institutions

Develop a satellite campus of an existing educational institution that specializes in hospitality, viticulture, culinary arts, or healthcare within The County. Nearby colleges that could support this kind of venture include St. Lawrence College (Kingston), Loyalist College (Belleville), and the Liaison College of Culinary Arts (Kingston). Work in partnership with an out-of-County educational institution to create a program tailored to industries in The County (viticulture, culinary arts, homecare or healthcare etc.). With partnership programs in place, PEC youth will return with relevant skills in areas of projected growth. Niagara College has developed a two-year Winery and Viticulture Technician Diploma which should be replicated in conjunction with a nearby institution, such as St. Lawrence College, which has existing hospitality and culinary programs. Brock University has a Cool Climate Oenology and Viticulture Institute, which provides undergraduate and graduate programs in conjunction with a co-op program. PEC wineries should consider hosting University/College co-op students—in the hopes of attracting youth upon graduation. PEC businesses should also consider attending job/employment fairs at local universities and colleges. A presence at recruitment

events might increase an awareness of the unique employment opportunities available in PEC.

8. Marketing:

Package and market your attributes so you 'know who you are and what your message is'. Then start telling the right people your message.

Summary

Prince Edward County, like many other rural economies, is currently in transition in response to changes in the global, national and regional economy. Although much of their economy is still based on traditional sectors such as agriculture, their focus has been changing, and other sectors have also begun to emerge. Much of the current positive economic change in Prince Edward County has not occurred by chance, but by dedicated planning and design. The approach that they have taken is based on the Creative Economy, which encompasses a broad and diverse range of sectors. The common thread is their creative element. This approach has been working well for the county and they have learned many important lessons which may be applicable to other small communities. However, the main message learned from Prince Edward County is that each community and region is unique and must examine their own strengths and weaknesses in order to best decide how to adapt to change.

References

- Class Consultants. 2009. *Cultivating Rural Creativity – Prince Edward County*. Ryerson University Department of Urban and Regional Planning - Senior Studio PLG 720. September 2009-December 2009. Contributors: Angela Beppele, Katherine Glowacz, Ellise Goarley, Gregory Kuenzig, Johnson Kwan, Peter Moskalyk, Sana Razvi, Garrett Von Aderkas. Faculty Advisor: Dr. Nina-Marie Lister, MCIP, RPP, Affiliate ASLA
- Desjardins, C. 2010. Executive Director, Prince Edward/Lennox & Addington Community Futures Development Corporation. Personal Communication. Donald, B. (2009). From kraft to craft: Innovation and creativity in Ontario's food economy. Working Paper Series: Ontario in the Creative Age. Martin Prosperity Institute, Rotman School of Management, University of Toronto. Available at: http://martinprosperity.org/media/pdfs/From_Kraft_to_Craft-B_Donald.pdf
- Donald, Betsy. 2010. Personal Communication. Associate Professor, Department of Geography, Queen's University, Kingston, Ontario.
- Martin Prosperity Institute. 2009. Canada's Creative Corridor: Connecting Creative Urban and Rural Economies within Eastern Ontario and the Mega Region. Available at: http://www.buildanewlife.ca/site/images/stories/Canadas_Creative_Corridor.pdf
- Memphis Manifesto. 2003. The Memphis Manifesto was conceived at a conference hosted By Richard Florida and others in Memphis in June 2003. The event was sponsored by a local business development group called "Memphis Tomorrow. http://www.norcrossga.net/user_files/The%20Memphis%20Manifesto.pdf

Mikles, J. "Tapping Innovation Entrepreneurship as a Force to Drive Rural Economic Growth," *Economic Development America* (2004): 14-16.

Prince Edward County (PEC). 2010. The Official Website of Prince Edward County. <http://www.pecounty.on.ca/index.php>. Accessed February 2, 2010.

Queen's University. 2008. *Growing the Creative-Rural Economy in Prince Edward County: Strategies for Innovative, Creative and Sustainable Development*. Geography 337, Department of Geography, Queen's University. Prepared for the P.E.L.A. Institute for Rural Development. April 13, 2008.

Rosenfeld, S. "Crafting a New Rural Development Strategy," *Economic Development America* (2004): 13.

Taylor, D. And Baeker, G. 2008. *Economic Restructuring through Culture in Small Towns and Rural Areas: Building Creative Rural Economies - A Case Study of Prince Edward County, Ontario*. Presented at the International Forum on the Creative Economy. Available at: http://www.pecounty.on.ca/government/corporate_services/economic_development/index.php

Taylor, D. 2010. Economic Development Officer, Prince Edward County. Personal Communication.

IMMIGRATION ATTRACTION STRATEGIES

Introduction

Immigrants comprise 18% of Canada's population, which represents the world's second highest in-migration rate (Walsh, 2008). Furthermore, Statistics Canada projects that by 2011 all labor force growth will come from immigration. By 2026 all population growth will also come from immigration (Rural Economic Development Data & Intelligence, 2009).

Capitalizing on this trend is an increasingly important aspect of community economic development strategies, particularly in rural and northern areas. The attraction of immigrants can stabilize and grow community populations as well as provide a rich source of high-demand professionals, investors and entrepreneurs to stimulate economic development and diversification (Wong, 2009; Walsh, 2008).

Several communities have been successful in attracting immigration to meet their specific needs. In particular the communities of Winkler and Steinbech, Manitoba and North Bay, Ontario have been identified, amongst others, as highly successful by completed and ongoing studies by Brandon University and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs respectively. Lessons from immigration literature was used in partnership with these case studies to compile the following (7) Best Practices for attracting immigration to your community.

The primary sources used in the compilation of the following included '*Attracting and retaining immigrants: A guide for smaller centers*' produced by the National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies and funded through Citizenship and Immigration Canada, '*Putting out the welcoming mat: Why immigration matters to Ontario's municipalities*' produced by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario and '*Knowledge synthesis: Attracting immigrants to rural communities*' written by Ian Wong for the Monieson Centre.

Best Practices

Build a Community Immigration Attraction Profile

- **WHAT:** The research phase should:
 - Identify community and municipal expectations of and attitudes towards immigration attraction
 - Build a comprehensive community profile including current community demographic realities and trends
 - Recognize current duplications and gaps in immigrant settlement services/ organizations
 - Assess community strengths and weaknesses regarding immigration attraction

- **WHY:** An immigration attraction strategy based on a comprehensive understanding of the community context will:
 - Ensure initiatives developed reflect the community's desires
 - Direct efforts and resources appropriately, ensuring that initiatives complement the community's current situation
 - Facilitate more efficient and effective use of resources

EXAMPLE: Recognizing that North Bay had insufficient information about their immigrant community, the North Bay Newcomer Network commissioned a study entitled "The Experience of Immigrating to North Bay: Newcomer Settlement and Support Research Study". The objectives of the study were to provide the necessary information regarding the immigrant community's demographics and needs, as well as determine the strengths and weaknesses of North Bay as an immigration destination. The study was completed in February 2007 and information gathered was used to guide those involved in developing local immigration-related initiatives (Welsh, 2007).

Form an Immigration Attraction Committee

- **WHAT:** A centralized body which:
 - Develops, directs, coordinates, and implements immigration attraction strategies
 - Could be 'spearheaded' by various organizations including local governments, economic development associations or immigrant settlement organizations

- **WHO:** An attraction committee should include representatives from the following:
 - The immigrant community
 - Religious and cultural networks
 - Settlement/ immigrant serving agencies
 - Public sectors including education, health, housing, and recreation
 - Employers and economic development groups
 - Local government(s)
 - Provincial and federal government departments

- **WHY:** An attraction committee complements efforts by:
 - Providing the expertise needed to address this multifaceted issue
 - Coordinating efforts to maximize the efficiency and effectiveness of human and financial resources
 - Facilitating future partnerships and resource sources by involving key stakeholders
 - Fostering a sense of community which is vital to attracting immigration

- **OPPORTUNITY:** The Local Immigration Partnerships Program is a two phase project offered through the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement. The first phase provides funding to support the formation of an Immigration Attraction

Committee, which is then charged with the development of an immigration attraction plan. Priority initiatives identified by the plan are eligible for funding under the second phase of the project (Citizenship and Immigration Canada, 2008).

Build a Community Immigration Website

- **WHAT:** A Community Immigration Website:
 - Provides an accurate and complete picture of the community while highlighting its advantages as a place to settle
 - Offers information regarding settlement programs, services and other tools to assist immigrants in integrating into the community
 - Is accessible which entails being easy to navigate and available in several languages
 - Is linked to larger resources, including provincial, territorial and federal sites promoting immigration or tourism to increase exposure

- **WHY:** Community Immigration Websites are beneficial because:
 - The internet is a primary source of information for potential immigrants
 - Websites allow communities to promote themselves over great distances relatively inexpensively

- **OPPORTUNITY:** The Municipal Immigration Information Online Program, offered by the Ontario Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration, provides funding for local governments to develop a website with community specific information for immigrants. Websites are made available from a central portal maintained by the Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration (Ministry of Citizen and Immigration, 2009).

- **EXAMPLES:** Multiple websites for Ontario communities are available at www.ontarioimmigration.ca. These include websites for smaller communities such as North Bay, Smith Falls, and Timmins.

Collaborate with Immigrant Networks

- **WHAT:** Work with cultural, ethnic and religious networks active within your community to personalize attraction strategies.
- **WHY:** Local networks complement immigration attraction strategies as:
 - Family and cultural ties are among the primary motivators for destination choice
 - Positive word-of-mouth from settled immigrants is very effective attraction tactic
 - Networks offer a connection with the immigrant community and an mechanism for continuing communication and consultation to support immigration strategies
 - If strong enough, they can be the basis for target marketing in the source country
- **EXAMPLE:** The Bulgarian Community in Quebec City actively encourages fellow Bulgarians to choose Quebec City as their destination. The Conseil d'Affaires et de Culture Québec – Bulgarie maintains a website in French and Bulgarian which offers essential information regarding Quebec City with commentary directly from the Bulgarian community. The website is available at <http://www.bulgarie.net/Quebec-ma-ville/index.htm>. (National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, 2007; Council of Business and Culture Quebec-Bulgaria, n.d.).

Participate in International Recruitment Events

- **WHAT:** Represent your community at foreign immigration or job fairs to promote local opportunities, most often economic or employment related. Sessions are often conducted in co-operation with the provincial immigration authority.
- **WHY:** While expensive, it can be effective in attracting immigrants from a particular region.
- **EXAMPLE:** The Commissariat aux Relations Internationales (CRI) is an organization created in 2001 specifically to promote Quebec City as an immigration destination. In conjunction with the Quebec Ministère de l'Immigration et des Communautés Culturelles, the CRI organized information sessions for potential immigrants from Romania, Bulgaria and China. In 2004, the international achievement award of the Institut d'Administration Publique du Québec was presented to Québec City in recognition of its immigration program including the efforts of the CRI (Bourget, 2006; Corporation of the City of North Bay, 2007).
- **EXAMPLE (2):** The Economic Development Agency and Aviation Industry of Kelowna, BC participated alongside the Government of British Columbia in job fairs in France targeting skilled workers to immigrate through the BC Provincial Nominee Program (National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, 2007).

Employment Incentives

- **WHAT:** Facilitate the economic integration of immigrants through the creation, promotion and/or connection of potential immigrants with clearly defined employment opportunities.

- **WHY:**
 - Employment opportunities are a primary motivator for destination selection and essential for immigrant retention
 - The strategy allows communities to target and fill particular labour force skill and experience needs
- **HOW:** Use of Provincial Nominee Programs and Immigrant Employer Networks (described below) are the most common approaches.

a. Provincial Nominee Programs

- **WHAT:** Programs allow local employers to nominate qualified foreign nationals to fill positions which they have been unable to fill from the local workforce. While terms and conditions (even existence) of the program vary between provinces, typically the provincial immigration authority presents successful nominees and their family members to the Department of Citizenship and Immigration to have their application for permanent residency expedited. In Ontario the program is called Opportunities Ontario (Wong, 2009).
- **EXAMPLE:** The City of Winkler, Manitoba offers an excellent example of the opportunities for immigration attraction offered through provincial nominee programs. In the mid 1990's, Winkler was suffering from a severe labour force shortage. In response, the city collaborated with the provincial and federal governments to create the 'Winkler Initiative'. The initiative, which was a pilot project for Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program, allowed fifty families selected in accordance with provincial requirements to settle in Winkler. The PNP was launched in 1998 and between 1999 and 2004 Winkler witnessed the arrival of 1832 immigrants, approximately 22% of their population (Silvius, 2005).

b. Immigrant Employer Networks

- **WHAT:** Immigrant Employer Networks are partnerships between multiple local employers with the objective of:
 - Creating employment opportunities for immigrants
 - Creating community conditions favorable for immigrant employment including addressing foreign credential recognition issues
 - Providing immigrants with local work experience through internships, mentorships, and job-shadowing opportunities

- **EXAMPLE:** The Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network (WRIEN) is a cross-sectoral approach to support both immigrants seeking employment and local employers seeking immigrant talent. Program initiatives include mentorship and internships for immigrants, annual best practice forums on immigrant attraction for employers and networking sessions with immigrants and employers. More information on initiatives is available at <http://www.wrien.com/main.cfm> (Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce., n.d.; Association of Municipalities of Ontario [AMO], 2008).

- **OPPORTUNITY:** The Regional Newcomer Employment Networks (RNEN) program, offered under the Canada-Ontario Immigration Agreement, provides funding for initiatives developed by emerging associations (Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration , 2007). RNENS in Kitchener-Waterloo, Ottawa, Niagara and Toronto have received funding for initiatives including internship, mentorship and awareness programs (Andrew, 2008).

Build a Welcoming Community

- **WHAT:** While there is no set definition for a Welcoming Community , it is often associated with the following characteristics:
 - Respect and encouragement of ethnic diversity and multiculturalism
 - Presence of and equal access to public services
 - Availability of settlement services
 - Encouragement of full (economic, political and social) participation by all community members
 - Recognition and celebration of the contributions of the immigrant community

- **WHY:** Welcoming Communities attract immigrants because they convey a message of support and acceptance. As such, the community should be sure to indicate this in its promotions.

- **HOW:** Three common elements shaping a welcoming community are discussed below; encourage positive attitudes towards immigration, provide settlement services and demonstrate pride in the community diverse heritage.

a. Encourage Positive Attitudes towards Immigration

- **WHAT:** Communicating the benefits of immigration to assist in addressing any potential hostilities or misconceptions towards the immigrant community.

- **WHY:** Understanding the benefits of immigration encourages residents and businesses to:
 - Be more receptive and welcoming to the immigrant community
 - Be more cooperative and assist with the attraction strategy

- **HOW:** Social marketing campaigns to improve public awareness of the benefits of immigration could involve:

- Disseminating information through community leaders including Municipal Councillors
- Engaging the media through press conferences, interviews or editorial pieces
- Hosting community events celebrating contributions from the immigrant community

- **EXAMPLE:** The North Bay & District Multicultural Centre implemented and continues to lead a highly effective diversity awareness program. Programming includes (but is not limited to):
 - Running articles in the local paper about newcomers highlighting their qualities and potential contributions to the community,
 - Hosting an international day for the elimination of Racial Discrimination amongst other events
 - Having international students from the local university visit district schools to discuss their culture. (Wong, 2009; North Bay & District Multicultural Center, n.d.)

b. Provide Settlement Services

- **WHAT:** Settlement services should be made accessible to the highest extent possible and should include:
 - A single point of contact for immigrants
 - Language services including ESL classes and translation/interpretation
 - Employment services
 - Orientation services providing information on community life
 - Information services about public services including health care, education, housing and assistance with associated application process

- **WHY:** Settlement services provide the information and knowledge necessary for immigrants to integrate and participate fully in the community
- **EXAMPLES:** Cargill, a meat processing plant in London, Ontario offered their staff an opportunity to take ESL classes in a convenient and supportive environment. Working in partnership with the London School Board, the plant was able to provide a 14 week session on site, after hours to 85 employees (AMO, 2008).

c. Celebrate the Community's Multiculturalism

- **WHAT:** Publicly acknowledge and appreciate community multiculturalism by making it a component, or the focus of local events.
- **WHY:** Integrating multicultural aspects into events demonstrates that the community is not only accepting of but proud of their diversity.
- **EXAMPLE:** In 2008, Steinbach, Manitoba, hosted their first 'Culturama' celebration. The objective of the event was to showcase local culture/diversity while involving the immigrant community in a large event. The event, organized by Eastman Immigrant Services in partnership with the Steinbach Arts Council, featured a wide assortment of cultural food, music and dance. Oral explanations of the history of the dance and music were provided and booths were set up with further information about customs, heritages and traditions. Approximately 550-600 residents of the community of 11,000 participated making the event largely successful (Bucklaschuk, 2009).

Immigration Attraction Driven by a Primary Employer

In specific cases, a single employer's demand for labour may drive the development and implementation of an immigration attraction strategy. Such was the case in both Florenceville, New Brunswick and Brooks, Alberta.

In 2001, Florenceville, a village in New Brunswick, had a population of approximately 800. However, the installment of the McCain Foods Ltd. headquarters created a strong demand for both factory and IT workers driving immigration attraction for the community. The process is assisted by the Multicultural Association of Carleton County which provides settlement services. Currently immigration represents approximately 10% of the village's population, more than three times the provincial average. (Rose & Desmarais, 2007).

The small town of Brooks is known as the multicultural capital of Alberta. It is said that the community has representation from every country in Africa. The ethnic diversity is due mostly to immigration driven by employment opportunities. Tyson Foods, a local meat processing plant has a staff of 2400 employees, 25% of which are immigrants. The town's major stakeholders provide settlement services to the immigrants who represent approximately 16% of the town's population. (National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, 2007)

Building Cultural, Ethnic and Religious Networks to assist in Immigration Attraction

Communities are encouraged to identify and promote their existing cultural, ethnic and religious networks. However, Sainte Claude, Quebec offers an alternative for communities with little or no cultural, ethnic, or immigrant networks. Upon the threat of a community school closure, the village of 6,000 created an immigration attraction strategy targeting families with children. As the community had no pre-existing multicultural networks, they targeted families from the same country to provide a

cultural base that all those targeted could relate to. The village was successful in attracting 12 families which served their purpose of keeping the school open (Rose & Desmarais, 2007).

Demographics as an Asset to Immigration Attraction

The importance of having an immigration attraction strategy rooted in a strong understanding of your community was outlined earlier. In certain cases, community demographics can be persuasive assets in immigration attraction. For example, York Region in Ontario has a comparatively high number of two parent families. This trend is often cited as a “drawing point” for recent immigration. (AMO, 2008)

Speaking more generically, international students present an attractive opportunity for communities with post secondary institutions. International students offer many benefits to communities including their relatively advanced language skills and increased ease integrating given prior experience in the country. Further, foreign credential recognition, a barrier to economic integration for many recent immigrants, is not an issue for international students. Atlantic Canada, with its seventeen universities, and approximately 6,300 international students, presents an example of efforts to capitalize on these opportunities (National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies, 2007). The provincial governments of New Brunswick and Nova Scotia have negotiated agreements with the federal government to allow international students to gain more Canadian work experience during and directly following their studies to allow better integration into the Canadian workforce (Akbari & Sun, 2006).

The Department of Citizenship and Immigration Canada also offers opportunities for attracting international students through the Canadian Class Experience Program.

References

- Akbari, A.H. & Sun, C. (2006). Immigration attraction and retention: What can work and what is being done in Atlantic Canada. *Our Diverse Cities (2)*, 129-133.
- Andrew, J. (2008). *International migration to Ontario* [Power Point slides]. Retrieved from http://www.mcgill.ca/files/ihsp/Joan_AndrewEN.pdf.
- Association of Municipalities of Ontario [AMO]. (December 2008). *Putting out the welcoming mat: Why immigration matters to Ontario's municipalities*. Retrieved from <http://www.amo.on.ca/AM/Template.cfm?Section=Home&TEMPLATE=/CM/ContentDisplay.cfm&CONTENTID=152268>.
- Bourget, A. (2006). Immigration to Quebec City: Issues and future perspectives. *Our Diverse Cities (2)*, 99-101.
- Bucklaschuk, J. (2009). Ethnocultural communities and organizations in Steinbach, Manitoba. *Rural Development Institute (Brandon University)*. Retrieved from <http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/rdi/Publications/Immigration/EthnoculturalCommunitiesSteinbachFinalRpt-MAR2009electronic.pdf>.
- Citizenship and Immigration Canada [CIC]. (2008). *Call for proposals: Local immigration partnerships*. Retrieved from http://atwork.settlement.org/downloads/atwork/CIC_MCI_CFP_LIP.pdf
- Corporation of the City of North Bay, Ontario. (2007). *Immigration plan for the city of North Bay*. Retrieved from <http://www.nbdmc.ca/North%20Bay%20Immigration%20Plan%202007.pdf>.

Council of Business and Culture Quebec- Bulgaria. (n.d.) *Business Portal Canada-Bulgaria*. Retrieved from <http://www.bulgarie.net/Quebec-ma-ville/index.htm>.

Greater Kitchener Waterloo Chamber of Commerce. (n.d.). *Waterloo Region Immigrant Employment Network [WRIEN]*. Retrieved from <http://www.wrien.com/main.cfm>.

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration [MCI]. (2007). *Strategic plan for settlement and language training*. Retrieved from <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/publications/strategicplan/>

Ministry of Citizenship and Immigration [MCI]. (2009). *Results-based plan briefing book 2009-10*. Retrieved from <http://www.citizenship.gov.on.ca/english/publications/rbp/>

National Working Group on Small Centre Strategies. (2007). *Attracting and retaining immigrants: A guide for smaller centers, 2nd ed*. Retrieved from http://integration-net.ca/english/ini/wci-idca/tbo/EN_Toolbox.pdf

North Bay & District Multicultural Center. (n.d.). *Anti-Racism*. Retrieved from <http://www.nbdmc.ca/antiracism.htm>.

Rose, M.M. & Desmarais, J. (2007). Directions to consider in favour of the regionalization of immigration. *Our Diverse Cities (3)*, 52-58.

Rural Economic Development Data & Intelligence. (2009). *A focus on rural Ontario communities attracting and retaining immigrants*. Retrieved from <http://www.reddi.gov.on.ca/cirronewsletter.htm>

Silvius, R. (2005) Manitoba rural immigration community case studies: Winkler. *Rural Development Institute (Brandon University), Working Paper #2005-8*. Retrieved from:

<http://www2.brandonu.ca/organizations/RDI/Publications/Immigration/Winkler-Final.pdf>.

Walsh, J. (2008). Navigating globalization: Immigration policy in Canada and Australia, 1945-2007. *Sociological Forum*, 23(4), 786-813.

Welsh, Ann. (2007). The experience of immigrating to North Bay: Newcomer support and research study. *North Bay Newcomer Network*. Retrieved from

<http://www.nbdmc.ca/finalreport.pdf>.

Wong, I. (2009). Knowledge synthesis: Attracting immigrants to rural communities. *The Monieson Centre*. Retrieved from

<http://www.easternontarioknowledge.ca/knowledge%20synthesis%2016%20-%20immigration%20-%20rev%203.pdf>.

VIGNETTES

The following 20 vignettes are success stories in community economic development from across the Province that demonstrate what can be achieved with local concerted action.



Vignette One - CALDECH: Supporting the Franco-Ontarian Community

CALDECH is a not-for-profit organization that is passionately dedicated to furthering community economic development (CED) among the minority francophone population in Simcoe County. They are located in Penetanguishene in Georgian Bay and their name, CALDECH, stands for *Centre d'avancement et de leadership en développement économique communautaire de la Huronie* or the Huronia Centre for Leadership and Community Economic Development.

Begun in the late 1990s through the dedication and volunteer work of a number of community leaders, CALDECH grew to an organization that operated dozens of community-based projects and played a major role in CED in Simcoe County, including \$10 million in direct and indirect economic impacts.

CALDECH works from the perspective that community economic development must begin with community development. They have prioritized capacity building, engagement and consultation, always ensuring that they are bringing community members together to develop projects that are truly needed and desired. In essence they operate as a community economic development corporation, offering support to small communities related to project management, marketing and business development. They also work to ensure that there are adequate government services offered in French for the minority population. Although also successful at job creation, they have gone above and beyond simply counting the numbers of new jobs, to ensuring that their work also takes into account the full spectrum of community life, including economics, environment, health, culture, and social life.

One of their first successful projects was an employment resource centre, an idea that was generated through community consultation. They have also been able to act as a catalyst in the development of numerous community organizations, as they bring

people together around common causes and support them as they expand into more formalized groups. The largest cultural event in the town of Tiny, Le Festival du Loup, was facilitated by CALDECH and today, another of their main projects is a retirement home for seniors, that is both community funded and operated. By organizing consultations and conducting a needs assessment in the small community of Lafontaine, it was ascertained that the aging population would require increased affordable housing. Since then CALDECH accompanied and supported the local organization in creating the home as a social enterprise.

Although CALDECH offers invaluable services, they face tough challenges, mainly through limited opportunities for sustained funding. Currently the organization is primarily supported by community volunteers, but continues to have a strong presence and voice in the small but dynamic francophone communities along Georgian Bay. They recognize that in a rural region, their success depends on their people, and they are fortunate to have many who are committed to the continued vitality of their home area.

Vignette Two - Chatham-Kent: Downtown and Mainstreet Community Improvement Plan

Community Improvement Planning has been a widely used community economic development tool in Ontario for decades. The establishment of a Community Improvement Plan (CIP) is permitted under Part IV of the *Planning Act* and shaped by local needs, priorities and circumstances. These allow municipalities to:

- Focus public attention on local priorities and municipal initiatives
- Target areas in transition or in need of repair, rehabilitation and redevelopment
- Facilitate and encourage community change in a coordinated manner
- Stimulate private sector investment through municipal incentive-based programs (Province of Ontario, 2008)

CIPs are designed to revitalize and beautify downtown and mainstreet areas that have declined, as a result of a shift in shopping and purchasing patterns towards suburban shopping centres, big box retail and electronic shopping. CIPs have been widely implemented by municipalities across Ontario.

Faced with this decline, Chatham-Kent adopted a Downtown and Mainstreet Community Improvement Plan in 2004. Now a single-tier, urban-rural municipality of 110,000, Chatham-Kent was created in 1998 following the amalgamation of 22 municipalities that varied in size from rural townships to the Community of Chatham (pop. 46,000). The amalgamation created a unique situation in Chatham-Kent in that, instead of having to focus its revitalization efforts on one specific area, the Municipality now had nine communities each with a population over 1,000 and each with a declining downtown or mainstreet.

Extensive collaboration and consultation with local residents, community leaders and existing Business Improvement Areas was undertaken in each community, generating new interest and excitement in how their downtown and mainstreet areas could be revitalized and beautified. The CIP that Chatham-Kent adopted provided the tools and incentives that allow individual downtown and mainstreet business owners to reinvest in their properties, revitalizing the community's core one step at a time. The CIP included a wide range of programs (Appendix 1) including matching 50-50 grants and loans for downtown façade improvements, rehabilitation of rental apartment units and the creation of new commercial courtyards and patios. In order to ensure that municipal tax dollars only went towards improvements that would fit with the surrounding streetscape and took into consideration the desire and expectations of individual communities within Chatham-Kent, the Municipality first developed a comprehensive set of Urban Design Guidelines. With the assistance of retained architects, the guidelines were established through considerable public engagement including focus groups that completed a walk-about each downtown and mainstreet area, as well as public design workshops.

From its adoption of the CIP in 2004 through to the end of 2008, the Municipality had invested \$1,050,000 of tax payer money in the CIP, resulting in the approval of 84 applications under the façade improvement, residential rehabilitation and patio program as well as providing \$644,415 in zero interest loans for property improvements (Municipality of Chatham-Kent, 2008).

The amount of private investment stimulated by the CIP program is significant. Chatham-Kent grant contributions have led to actual building improvements valued at \$4,298,831. This means that on average, for every dollar that the Municipality has contributed, the private property owner has invested over three dollars. This private sector investment translates into indirect revenues resulting from more vibrant and attractive downtowns and has been a contributing factor in decreasing the number of

properties applying for a commercial vacancy tax rebate in both downtown Chatham and Wallaceburg. In Chatham, the number has decreased from 24 in 2001 to 15 in 2007, and in Wallaceburg the number has decreased from 10 to six over the same time period (Municipality of Chatham-Kent, 2008).

More importantly, the Chatham-Kent CIP provides vital assistance to downtown property owners who, in a downturned economy, have the desire but lack the resources to make vital repairs to their storefronts and apartments. As more and more downtown businesses participate in the program, community pride in the downtown grows and creates a good first impression for tourists and potential residents.

More information can be found at <http://www.chatham-kent.ca>

Vignette Three - Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs)- Making communities stronger and energized!

Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) are a great source of support for rural and northern communities who are seeking to strengthen and diversify their economies. CFDCs are funded through the Federal government's FedNor program and operate as a community based non-profit organization. Each CFDC has a volunteer Board who make the formal decisions regarding funding and other developmental decisions. Staff members work alongside the board to provide technical expertise and other support. There are 37 corporations in rural southern Ontario and 24 in northern Ontario (CFDC, 2010).

CFDCs were originally created with the idea of continuous, long-lasting support for rural communities. They are a unique approach to community development and are used across Canada, but are not common across the globe. CFDCs do more than just act as a liaison to communities. The following is a list of services they provide:

- They work with communities to provide assistance in stimulating the local economy through various measures;
- They partner with other community groups to develop initiatives in tourism, economic diversification, and community adjustment;
- They provide business advice to small businesses and entrepreneurs and also help to finance new or existing businesses through Government of Canada funding;

Why partner with your local CFDC? Your community might already be on the right track to building a healthy and diverse economy, but by connecting with the CFDC, you will have access to all sorts of specialized knowledge, ideas, and maybe even funding! Often in small municipal offices, there are not always enough human resources to get everything done, but by partnering with your local CFDC, they can help remove some of the burden on staff members. To find your local CFDC, simply visit their website (<http://www.ontcfdc.com>) and check out the map that shows all the locations.

and

- They offer workshops and seminars on areas such as business development and provide assistance in creating business plans and strategies.

Recently, a number of CFDCs in Eastern Ontario have partnered with Queens University to host The Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) project, a three-year, knowledge mobilization initiative. The goal of the KIS project is to increase the economic vitality of rural Eastern Ontario by providing local practitioners with targeted, practical research products. (easternontarioknowledge.ca).

A great example of how CFDCs partner with communities in a funding scenario is the 'Main Street Middlesex' program, which focused on the revitalization of the downtowns of communities in Middlesex county. In 2007-2008, the program created the "Main Street Award of Excellence", which recognized the use of the four pillars of the Main Street Program: organization, promotion, design, and economic restructuring. Since then, Main Street Middlesex has instituted a series of grants provided to communities in the county to continue these projects. It has been really successful at revitalizing downtowns and bringing more tourism and economic stimulus to the community!

Vignette Four - Community Quality Institute

The Community Quality Institute (CQI) of Sault Ste. Marie in northern Ontario is a unique approach to aid communities in making evidence-based decisions that contribute positively to community quality of life. By connecting the dots between seven areas: economy, health, environment, culture/recreation, social well-being, education and governance they provide high quality locally based research to help inform municipal policy, as well as offer unique professional development opportunities to local businesses. CQI is also able to partner with other local organizations to organize community events such as community cafes and conferences, which bring citizens together for learning and discussion around community quality of life. In 2008 they hosted the Quality of Life conference around the theme of positive community action, and in 2009 they hosted a number of speaking events including a focus on water, food safety and invasive species.

Initially started and funded by the municipality, the CQI now operates out of a local college as a non-profit organization, and although it continues to be municipally supported, this ensures that they remain at arms length from the town, in order to provide the independent information that is required. The CQI publishes a comprehensive Community Performance Report every year by bringing together local experts in many different sectors, and examining how the town is functioning based on a variety of indicators contributing to quality of life. Another recent publication measures the external costs of poverty in the community and explores the connection between poverty and the economy.

The professional development sessions offered by the CQI are specifically geared around improving quality of life at the workplace. This means contributing to the wellbeing of employees, which CQI believes are an employers' most valuable asset. By

having satisfied and healthy employees, businesses will have a strong foundation on which they can thrive.

CQI is an invaluable asset to the town and its citizens as it presents timely and local information to decision makers in a community with limited municipal resources. One of their future goals is to expand into the surrounding region, in order to also provide support to smaller communities.

Vignette Five – Delhi: Committed to Rural Health

Delhi is a tiny town of barely 4000 in Norfolk County that has been experiencing economic struggles since the decline of the tobacco industry, but they have recently put a little more health and vitality back into their community, quite literally! With a community operated rural health centre, they now provide high quality health services to 60,000 people in their region, including a Family Health Team and TeleHealth technology. The centre is beneficial not only for the health and wellbeing of the citizens, but also the overall health of the community. The Centre has provided meaningful employment for 30 people in this small town, has attracted newcomers, and has innumerable spin-off benefits, most noticeable by the increase in the numbers of people who now frequent downtown Delhi, both from in and outside of town.

Although the Centre is now an obvious community asset, it went through some challenges before it became a reality, but persistence proved successful. A few years ago, Delhi was threatened by the impending retirement of their two remaining physicians. There was little likelihood of recruiting new doctors with no related facilities or services, and the community decided to rally together in a major effort to establish their own Health Centre. A volunteer committee was struck and numerous fundraising strategies began. Dozens of events were held, including rubber duck races and wrestling matches, and through such efforts including some generous donations, the community was able to pull together more than \$1 million dollars for the initial financing of the Centre. They were then able to leverage their own considerable funds to secure a number of government grants from the county and province.

The Centre today is going strong and has become a source of local pride. Many citizens continue to make donations in support of the Centre and it has been growing since it first opened in 2003. It has been able to establish a Family Health Team, to provide additional complimentary health services, and is now also a host of TeleHealth services,

an asset to small communities. Patients can now be treated by specialists through videoconferencing without having to travel a significant distance to larger cities. A satellite site has also opened in a nearby rural community, Port Rowan, thereby spreading the benefits even further.

According to the organizers, it was truly a grassroots effort, which could not have been done without the dedication of the citizens of the small town. They were well aware that such a Health Centre could become a social and economic foundation for their community, and they are now proud to say that they are the only such community operated Health Centre in Ontario. By understanding the many interlinked facets of community economic development, and refusing to give up despite the obstacles they faced, they have made a significant step towards the social and economic vitality of their community.

Vignette Six - Economic Diversification

In today's context of rural economic development, communities must be innovative in developing new opportunities to strengthen their economies. They must take into account the creation and retention of jobs, training and development and of course ensuring there is a wide variety of jobs available. For communities that have seen some form of decline, whether in population or jobs, community revitalization strategies are being created to help stimulate and reverse this decline.

Communities are not on their own to do this type of work; there are great resources available through various organizations. In Ontario, the Rural Economic Development Program, administered by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Affairs assists communities financially with developing the above mentioned opportunities and being an overall support system in creating strong rural communities. Other organizations working to support rural economic diversification include the Ontario Rural Council and the Federal Economic Development Agency for Southern Ontario.

Below are success stories of two regions who have greatly benefited financially from diversifying their economies. The Niagara Region of Ontario has been able to capitalize on all-year round tourism, while catering to different types of visitors. Craik, Saskatchewan has been able to curb the decline of their small community by creating a market for green business opportunities and encouraging new residents who want to live in sustainable community.

Off-Season Tourism in the Niagara Region

When one thinks of tourism in the Niagara Region, our heads fill with images of touring wineries with sun-ripened grapes hanging off the vines, getting sprayed with water from the Niagara River as we ride the Maid of the Mist, and spending quality summer

vacation time exploring the stores, monuments and all that the Niagara Region has to offer. However, through the support of Tourism Niagara, the area is successfully marketed as a year-round tourism destination. In fact, there's practically a festival or event for every month of the year! Tourism Niagara acts as an umbrella organization to help with the promotion of the region as well as liaising between the smaller community-based tourism groups. Below is a list of some great examples of events for both Niagara on the Lake and Niagara Falls.

Niagara on the Lake:

- Wineries of the Niagara on the Lake are a group of 22 wineries that have collaborated together to create a marketing strategy for year-round tourism. Partnerships have been formed with local community partners such as transportation companies, restaurants, accommodations, and retailers in order to encourage visitors to stay longer and maximize their visit. Wineries of the Niagara on the Lake have been provided additional resources by Tourism Niagara to facilitate their marketing strategy.
- Niagara on the Lake has three off-season wine festivals that are bringing winelovers to the area even when the weather is not balmy: the Niagara Grape and Wine Festival in September, Niagara Icewine Festival in January, and the Niagara New Vintage Wine Festival in June. Along with promoting the wine industry, the main benefit of the three festivals is bringing tourists to the area and maintaining a year round tourism industry.

Niagara Falls Off Season Events:

- The Winter Festival of Lights has been ongoing for more than 25 years and occurs annually for the months of November and December. Visitors can take in many activities, such as Christmas concerts, a fireworks and light show over the

Falls, and the newly added ice skating facility. The hope is that with the addition of the skating rink and related activities, families will be encouraged to stay for a longer period of time.

- The Spring Festival at the Falls is hosted annually in May and kicks off the start of the tourist season with the Maid of the Mist parade and gardening seminars conducted by Niagara Parks horticultural experts among others.

Success is generally monitored by three main forums:

- Hits on the Tourism Niagara website
- Amount and type of visitors to the Gateway Niagara Information Centre
- Statistics from the Ontario Tourism official website with statistics regarding room occupancy rates etc.
- Tourism Niagara would like to broaden their measurement of success to include surveys with visitors.

Creating various off-season tourism initiatives is not without its fair share of challenges. It can be challenging to maintain a common vision for tourism strategies between the smaller tourism groups in the region. They all have limited resources and specific target audiences and goals to reach. Additionally, each community has different types of attractions and is invested in marketing their own community foremost before partnering with the others. There is an opportunity to increase collaboration between groups, as they don't need to compete for visitors but can share them and encourage people to stay longer and visit more places. It's the job of Tourism Niagara to facilitate these partnerships, and they feel they are up to the challenge!

Branding as a Green Community

The Town and Regional Municipality of Craik Saskatchewan, located halfway between Saskatoon and Regina was primarily a farming community that relied heavily on the business brought in by a highway running through town. When the highway was detoured, businesses shut down, forcing people to move away. The town of 450 was shrinking rapidly.

Luckily, a group of dedicated community members saw the need for a community revitalization strategy, and fast! They engaged the help and expertise of Dr. Lynn Oliphant of the Prairie Institute for Human Ecology and, together with a supportive council, developed a long-term Sustainability Plan for the community. A Five-year Plan (2003-2008) was created, which outlined clear and tangible objectives that were to be met annually. This was the conception of the Craik Sustainable Living Project (CSLP)!

The CSLP saw the creation of some exciting new initiatives. An eco-centre that includes sustainable design features such as geothermal heating, recycled materials, and straw-bale was built and serves as a conference centre for the town and out-of-towners as well as the club-house for the adjacent Craik Golf Course (which is one of the only golf courses in Canada to be eco-friendly!)

An eco-village consisting of 14 units of unserviced lots was created to encourage families to build their own environmentally friendly homes. There are currently 9 homes being constructed out of a variety of materials such as flax, straw, and shipping containers.

Funding for the project came from a variety of sources. The Town and Municipality received a Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) grant and loan through the Green Municipal Funds Program. Additionally, there were fund-raising campaigns, such

as the highly successful 'Buy a Bale' campaign. Lastly, and most importantly, the CSLP really came to fruition through the many volunteers that worked tirelessly to realize their goals.

The outreach to the community has been tremendous. Since the establishment of the CSLP, the volunteers have been instrumental in the creation of the following programs: the Solar Fair, Anti-idling Campaigns, workshops on green building, local food events, and the Craik 4-H Sustainability Club among others. The town is starting to catch on as well: they are retrofitting some of their older municipal buildings and they are developing a community-wide composting program. People living outside the eco-village are even introducing green design into their new and renovated houses!

As one of the features of branding themselves a sustainable community, Craik is opening their doors to green businesses! These range from a chemical-free, environmentally friendly bio-filtration water plant, an off the grid family farms growing such novelties as flax, and an international school that will be teaching innovative business design. One of the most exciting enterprises is the creation of Titan Clean Energy Projects Corporation, from which a bio-mass energy production project has stemmed. The creation of Titan Clean Energy will bring much needed jobs to Craik, revenue, and is a great fit for Craik as it continues to encourage environmentally friendly business growth.

The CSLP is still in early stages, but will be providing not only the much needed economic benefits, but the social community health benefits as well for generations to come

Vignette Seven – Ingersoll: Fusion Youth Centre

The Fusion Youth Centre in Ingersoll is attracting a lot of attention in rural Ontario. By combining a desire to both empower youth and fuel community economic development, this small town of 12,000, has developed a highly successful youth centre that many others across the province are learning from and hoping to emulate in their own communities. By partnering with numerous external and internal organizations, businesses and governments, the Fusion Youth Centre has financial stability and a continuous influx of new ideas and programs.

The Fusion Youth Centre began as part of a strategic plan laid out by the small town in 2004. One of their main priorities at the time was to invest in the young people in their community. With a very high rate of school drop out, as well as a low percentage of youth continuing on to post-secondary education, the town felt a need to explore ways to improve opportunities for their young people.

In 2005, they partnered with the CAW (Canadian Autoworkers Union) to fund the re-development of an unused elementary school in downtown Ingersoll, and in February 2006 the Fusion Youth Centre opened as a multi-purpose and youth activity centre. As a multi-purpose centre, space has been rented to tenants such as Conestoga College, which provides not only a source of revenue, but also enhanced local educational opportunities.

The project has since grown in leaps and bounds, with the Centre now offering over 18 – 20 programs for youth weekly, partnering with over 50 other organizations, and welcoming over 80 young people from a wide variety of backgrounds through their doors every day. Youth aged 12 – 18 pay an initial \$5 membership fee, and then have access to a vast number of learning and recreational activities offered by well-trained professionals, in programs such as cooking and nutrition, computer skills, graphic

design, outdoor recreation, fitness and sports, gaming, art, digital recording, etc. The Centre even runs four social enterprises, with youth learning skills in entrepreneurship and business planning. Future plans include radio programming complete with an in-house broadcast. Programs are offered in a non-classroom atmosphere, and allow youth to explore various interests in many different areas.

The incredible rewards offered by the Centre do not stop at the youth, as the wider community has also benefited enormously. Because the Centre works closely with the economic development office, efforts are well-coordinated to ensure community-wide benefit.

Businesses have employed youth who have been involved with the Centre and have benefited from their skills and commitment; the town now has improved recycling facilities due to a Youth Action Committee; the partnership with Conestoga College has resulted in an expansion from a small number of programs to the development of a whole new campus in the town; youth volunteers from Fusion have become highly involved in volunteering at local festivals and events; and the Centre has even helped to revitalize the downtown core.

Although the Fusion Youth Centre was not initially planned as a direct economic development initiative, the town has come to realize just how important such a project truly is to the economic and social health of their town. They even have plans to create a best practices guide, to offer lessons learned and challenges overcome for other interested rural communities.

With actively engaged and skilled young people in their community, they see a bright future ahead of them!

Vignette Eight - Innovative Community Improvement Plans

Community Improvement Plans (CIPs) are frequently used by municipalities to encourage private sector investment and the development of municipal leadership policies that address a wide range of community economic development issues related to revitalization, intensification and adaptation through financial incentives. For decades, community improvement planning has primarily been used by municipalities in Ontario to achieve locally driven planning objectives within defined areas (e.g. Downtown and Mainstreets) and for properties in transition (e.g. Brownfield Remediation and redevelopment). In 2007, changes to the Part IV of the *Planning Act* provided municipalities with new tools and greater flexibility in developing and implementing CIPs. Most notably, these changes include:

- Clarifying that the definition of 'community improvement' includes "construction"
- Expanding the definition of 'community improvement' to include improvement of energy efficiency
- Clarifying that the definition of 'community improvement' includes the provision of "affordable housing"
- Community Improvement Plans no longer require formal approval of the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing. The Ministry must be consulted in preparation of the plan in advance of the public hearing.
- Allowing prescribed upper-tier municipalities to prepare community improvement plans to include infrastructure that is within the upper-tier's jurisdiction, improvements to existing or planned transportation corridors and affordable housing

Rural, single-tier municipalities have been slower to incorporate CIPs than larger urban centers (Redden 2007); however, with these changes, there are even more

opportunities to develop and implement creative plans that proactively respond to economic, environmental and demographic issues. The potential exists and below are a few examples of how to creatively utilize CIPs in order to achieve long term community economic development goals.

Tax Increment Equivalent Grants

Tax Increment Equivalent Grants (TIEG) allow a property owner who invests in a property within a Community Improvement Plan Area to recoup their improvement/rehabilitation/development expenses through future tax grants based on the increase in municipal taxes resulting from the improvement over a predetermined amount of time. TIEGs are intended to even the playing field for underutilized and dilapidated properties while not requiring that the municipality loan money to or invest in the property at a considerable risk.

Municipalities also have the ability to directly tie the percentage of the TIEG provided based on the application meeting specific criteria (e.g. handicapped accessibility or energy efficiency), placing greater incentive on the private sector to reach a higher standard. For example, a TIEG amount could be based on the projects Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certification as follows:

- No certification, Grant = 60% of municipal tax increment
- Certified, Grant = 85% of municipal tax increment
- Silver, Grant = 90% of municipal tax increment
- Gold, Grant = 95% of municipal tax increment
- Platinum, Grant = 100% of municipal tax increment

Leveraging

There are significant costs involved with both the development and implementation of CIPs for Municipalities. For rural municipalities that have limited staff resources and

severe budget constraints, the financial investment required to develop a new CIP may simply be unrealistic when compared to its immediate servicing commitments (e.g. police services, snow removal, bridge repairs, etc.) Fortunately, there are opportunities for municipalities to leverage these costs with additional funding sources.

The Federation of Canadian Municipalities' (FCM) Green Municipal Fund has provided matching 50-50 grants for the creation of Brownfield and Sustainability CIPs to a number of rural municipalities including Fort Erie, Chatham-Kent and the Town of Blue Mountains.

Provincial and federal funds **may** also be available for rural municipalities to implement the financial incentive programs within their CIP. The City of Sault Ste. Marie has contributed \$285,000 to its Downtown CIP (completed in 2007) and used this amount to leverage \$500,000 from FedNor's Northern Ontario Program and \$570,000 from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA).

These examples illustrate the benefits for municipalities that take the lead in community improvement planning and that utilize potential partnerships and funding sources, significantly increasing their community economic development capacity. The Downtown CIP has been successful in attracting new downtown development, leveraging approximately \$9.8 million in private sector investment. This represents a Private/Provincial/Federal to Municipal ratio of approximately 34 to 1.

Bluefields

In rural areas, population decline and the centralization of services has led to a growing number of institutional and community facilities becoming surplus to their organization's needs and therefore being put up for sale. These are referred to as 'Bluefields' and may include schools, churches, hospitals, long-term care facilities or courthouses. Bluefield properties often act as the foundation of the community and

have immense historical, contextual and architectural significance to local residents. These structures define the community.

Finding an appropriate re-use for Bluefields and saving them from the wrecking ball is immensely difficult in rural communities where, unlike major urban centres, there is little development pressure and low property values. In addition, these structures often require immediate and considerable repairs, have accessibility issues, may contain asbestos or other hazardous building materials, and therefore make any redevelopment to a private residential or commercial use exceptionally challenging.

Through engaging community stakeholders and developing a CIP, rural municipalities can identify and assess their Bluefield properties, establish the policies, and develop incentives (including TIEG's) and strategies to protect them.

Bluefield CIPs are a relatively new concept in Ontario with Chatham-Kent being the first municipality to adopt one in 2005. However, as struggling municipalities are faced with a growing number of bluefields, CIPs can provide the tools and incentives necessary to turn this challenge into a new development opportunity.

Employment Lands

The decline of the manufacturing sector in Ontario has had a devastating impact on municipalities that relied heavily on these industries to provide employment and support the assessment base. Such is the case of Sault Ste. Marie where between 1981 and 2006, the Municipality's manufacturing employment decreased from 12,895 to 4,565 jobs; a loss of nearly 65% (Municipality of Sault Ste. Marie, 2008).

In order to address its growing unemployment issue, the Municipality, in partnership with the Sault Ste. Marie Economic Development Corporation, established an Industrial CIP as part of a larger strategy to diversify the economy. Taking advantage of the

expanded definition of 'Community Improvement' in the *Planning Act* to include 'construction', the CIP is designed to attract new investment and employment to the municipality by providing a three year TIEG for up to 100 percent of the incremental increase in municipal property taxes. The CIP is available for manufacturing and Information Technology businesses that expand or locate to the municipality provided that they meet a number of conditions and there is a significant total project investment and job creation.

Since adoption of its Industrial CIP in June 2008, the municipality has approved one application through the program for a 7,200 square foot, \$1.2 million expansion of an existing foundry that is expected to create six new full-time employees.

Agriculture

Despite the wide range of issues (i.e. peak-oil, food security, urban expansion and source-water protection) affecting the viability of agriculture and its implications for Community Economic Development, to date no Municipality has adopted a CIP directly targeting agriculture or specific agri-businesses. This however does not mean that CIPs cannot be utilized to assist and incent agricultural practices that achieve a greater community economic development objective. For example, a rural or urban-rural municipality could partner with existing agricultural organizations to develop a community improvement plan that provides feasibility study grants and TIEGs to farm owners who develop new agri-tourism business on their property.

References

Municipality of Sault. Ste Marie (2008). *Industrial Community Improvement Plan (CIP)*.

Report of the Engineering & Planning Department. October 20, 2008

Redden, A (2008). *The Untapped Potential of Rural CIPs*. Ontario Planning Journal.

Volume 22, Issue 2

Vignette Nine - Norfolk County: Eating at Home

Feeling hungry? Like some other rural regions in Ontario, Norfolk County has discovered the value in supporting local agriculture in their region and has initiated some unique and innovative projects to link local food with economic development. In 2007, the County began its first strategic planning process, and identified economic development as one of their six strategic issues. Support for the local agricultural industry was a major element of this plan, and focused on diversifying the sector.

Local food and agriculture projects have therefore become a top priority, which is reflected in how resources are allocated. Projects are developed and implemented by Tourism & Economic Development and approximately 40% of staff time within the division is dedicated to local food and culinary tourism. A number of advisory committees, which incorporate community members, also help guide the work of the division, including the Culinary Tourism Committee and the Agricultural Advisory Board.

The Tourism & Economic Development division has an interesting partnership approach to local agriculture support. They work with 60 growers and processors, who comprise approximately 1/3 of the local food business community. Although funding is partially from the County itself, the businesses that the division works with also pay 'user fees' for the services they receive. Because user fees are collected from the farmers and processors they support, it means there is a built-in requirement for stakeholder feedback and engagement. This type of involvement also keeps the division on its toes, as it continuously changes and adjusts to meet the needs of the community.

One example of their many successes is their two Official Food Ambassadors, called Two Fairly Fat Guys, who are local volunteers that travel around the province promoting the local food of Norfolk County. They attend fairs, festivals and other events doing cooking demonstrations, and they even have their own Facebook page.

Other important elements of their local food support include a Norfolk Farms website, farmer workshops and a number of events celebrating local food such as the Flavour Fest, which happens yearly at the County Fair and Horse Show.

As many farmers feel the squeeze through ever shrinking profit margins, the support of their community is critical. By recognizing local food as a key piece of economic development and tourism planning, Norfolk County will help ensure that their farmers can continue to put food on our tables for years to come.

Vignette Ten - Norfolk County: Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Pilot Project

The Norfolk Federation of Agriculture (NFA) is leading the development of the Alternative Land Use Services (ALUS) Pilot Project in Norfolk County. Under ALUS, farmers receive financial incentives for the provision of environmental services, such as clean air, fresh water, wildlife habitat, Oak Savannah, Tallgrass Prairie, riparian buffers, carbon sequestration (through the creation of wetlands), and other habitat creation projects. The principle behind ALUS is that the costs of stewarding public resources should not be borne only by farmers who own these lands, but rather the public at large who should contribute to the conservation and maintenance of important environmental assets on ranches and farms.

After years of planning and collaboration involving a diverse range of organizations and government agencies, a three year Pilot Project was officially launched in September 2007 and is scheduled to end on March 31, 2011. Funding to implement the pilot project came from a variety of sources including significant contributions made by the Metcalf Foundation, Ontario Trillium Foundation, the Province of Ontario and most importantly the many farmers of Norfolk County who contributed their money, land and time towards the pilot project's start-up. Participating farmers are eligible to enroll up to 20% of their farmed land (excluding existing forested land) at a rate of \$150.00 per acre.

The pilot project has a refreshing farmer-led approach, ALUS is administered and delivered through rural communities, farm organizations and institutions used by the farming industry, resulting in a truly grassroots conservation program. In order to alleviate skepticism about any perceived restraints of ALUS, the pilot project hired local Norfolk farmers to serve as an initial contact to other farmers who may want to participate.

To better demonstrate the benefits of the ALUS Pilot Project and increase take-up of the incentives available, mid-September 'Twilight Tours' have been organized on participating farms in order to accommodate busy farmer's schedules. In addition, the ALUS Team has taken its pilot project on the road, participating in workshops across rural Ontario, informing others as to the benefits of the program and building new connections with communities across the Province.

Over the first two years of the pilot project, approximately 450 acres of land was converted back into a native forest, prairie, wetland, riparian, and pollinator habitat. More importantly, ALUS shows farmers that local stewardship and environmental protection are good for the economy as they learn to farm in concert with the natural environment, a benefit to us all. With this in mind municipalities can support programs such as ALUS knowing that it will benefit the community in diverse ways.

More information on the Norfolk ALUS Pilot Project can be found at <http://www.norfolkalus.com/>

Vignette Eleven - Owen Sound: Heritage Preservation

Significant built heritage resources and cultural landscapes are irreplaceable assets to a community's identity, quality of life, economic development and tourism. It is the responsibility of each municipality to identify and conserve its heritage resources. For rural communities where populations are declining and regulations perceived to restrict property rights are often unpopular, municipalities must be both creative and resourceful with heritage preservation.

The City of Owen Sound (pop. 21,743), a community that is renowned for its rich Underground Railroad, military, agricultural, marine and aviation history has made significant strides to ensure that its heritage assets are preserved and promoted. Through the establishment of strong policies in its Official Plan and the creation of a number of incentive programs that encourage both preservation and rehabilitation, Owen Sound is a small urban municipality where heritage works for both heritage property owners and the community as a whole. Among the City's many heritage initiatives, its heritage property tax relief program, user-friendly heritage register and downtown community improvement plan stand out for the effectiveness in making heritage work.

Heritage Property Tax Relief

The City of Owen Sound has implemented a Heritage Property Tax Relief program. Permitted under the *Ontario Heritage Act* and *Ontario Municipal Act*, the program provides property tax relief for owners of designated properties. By providing tax relief, the City of Owen Sound offers real financial assistance to owners of heritage properties whose responsibility it is to maintain these assets as well as provide a "carrot" for those who may hesitate to purchase a designated property due to perceived financial or bureaucratic restraints.

Heritage Register

Municipalities are required to maintain a register of heritage properties and, prior to 2005, only designated heritage buildings were recorded on the Register. In 2005, the *Ontario Heritage Act* was amended by the Province of Ontario to enable the listing of properties on the Register that have not been designated but that a Municipal Council believes to have a heritage value. For those properties listed, the amount of time municipalities have to process demolitions applications made under the Ontario Building Code is up to 60 days to provide sufficient time to evaluate whether the property merits some form of protection.

City staff and the Community Planning & Heritage Advisory Committee (CPHAC) saw this as an opportunity to not only provide interim protection to significant heritage properties but to use the Register as a way to educate, promote and showcase these properties to local residents and tourists. While the *Ontario Heritage Act* only requires a basic description of the location for each property listed on the Register, the City of Owen Sound's Register includes an array of information for each of the 126 properties listed, including current and historic photographs, initial owner(s), verified erection date, historical significance, and architectural style. This information is clearly presented on the City's website and allows visitors to take a virtual walking tour around the properties.

Downtown Community Improvement Plan

When the City of Owen Sound created its Downtown Community Improvement Plan, providing grants for façade and structural improvements in the city's core, properties with heritage value were given the highest priority. These grants make it easier for property owners to restore their heritage buildings to their former glory. By incenting timely improvements to existing brickwork, the grants help ensure that these buildings will be standing for future generations, while making for an attractive, vibrant

downtown that attracts business back from big-box development and larger urban centres.

More information can be found at www.city.owen-sound.on.ca

Vignette Twelve - Marathon: Progressive Vision for the Future

Much can be learned from the Town of Marathon, a small town of 4000 in northwestern Ontario. Their approach to economic development in this northern resource-dependent town is splendidly simple, yet reaps many rewards. Their current goal is to try and achieve as much local control as possible over their abundant natural resources. They aim for community economic development that links economic, environmental and social goals and they maintain an open and transparent process to ensure the whole community can have input into the future direction of the town. They even go so far as keeping an open invitation to all businesses to have a one-on-one chat at any time. In recent years they have put a high priority on planning for community economic development, with a year and a half long series of interviews with the local business community. One of their big successes in recent years has been establishing a municipally-funded economic development corporation.

Their focus on planning and local control has led to numerous opportunities, some of them even emerging from economic loss. Marathon has historically been dependent on its natural resources, both gold and wood for its economic stability. However, in 2009 they were dealt a difficult blow because of the permanent closure of their pulp mill, which put close to 250 people out of work.

The town is now taking the lead in seeking out new options for the mill including development of biofuels, and they are also working towards a model of sustainable community-governance for their local forest. In partnership with a neighbouring municipality and a local First Nations group, they aim to ensure that their forest is managed sustainably, with local residents receiving the benefits. With this community model, the forest would be governed by a local non-partisan multi-stakeholder Board of Directors. Funding for sustainable forestry management would be self-sustaining through a Forest Renewal Fund, that would require a deposit from each company

receiving a licence for use. By promoting a model of local control and sustainable use, there is the potential to benefit from the forest far into the future.

With strong community input, strategic planning and a progressive vision for the future, Marathon certainly seems ready to tackle any new challenges that come their way!

Vignette Thirteen - Oxford Fresh

Something good is cooking in Oxford! The Oxford County Tourism Office has recently joined the blossoming local food movement. By creating Oxford Fresh, a local food initiative, they are promoting the economic, social and environmental benefits of buying and eating locally produced foods. It all began in early 2007 when local chefs, restaurant managers and farm representatives came together around the table to start talking about how to raise the profile of the great food produced in Oxford County. Their goal was to become a catalyst for increased support for local food in the region.

One of the success stories of this group is Oxfordilicious, an annual dining event where restaurants and hotels in the county serve special local food menus for a fixed time period. In September 2009, customers had a full month in which they could pick up a 'passport' and have it stamped when they dined at participating restaurants. For every stamp they had their name entered into a draw for great prizes, such as ViaRail tickets.

Funding for the first Oxfordilicious event came from the local Community Futures Development Corporation, and is now paid for by the Tourism Office itself. Despite limited funding and resources, Oxford Fresh has already seen many direct economic and spin-off benefits from just a little effort.

By bringing producers, chefs and customers a little closer together, many connections are made. Chefs learn about and buy from local farmers, and citizens are introduced to both locally owned restaurants and local foods. More money circulates within the region as more local purchases are made.

Oxford Fresh has also inspired other local food projects. Recently, a local church contacted them to find out where they could find local suppliers for their 100-Mile Potluck, and another organization is beginning to work on an Oxford County Buy Local,

Buy Fresh map, which is an idea that began in Waterloo but has now exploded to dozens of counties all over Ontario. It will be publicly available so that finding local foods becomes that much easier. As a result of Oxford Fresh, a number of farmers have joined Tourism Oxford and are subsequently listed in their database of tourism destinations, creating further economic opportunities. And last but not least, Oxford Fresh has helped to inspire the opening of new farmers' markets. Local food can now be purchased from Thursday to Saturday at five separate markets in the county.

Even with all the successes, there is much to do, and Tourism Oxford is now planning a local summer Grill-Off, that will feature not only local food, but also local musicians and artists. Tantalizing aromas and a fun atmosphere will accompany visitors as they browse around and taste all the local flavors of the season.

By keeping local dollars in the County and creating personal and business connections between buyers and producers, Oxford Fresh continues to contribute to positive community economic development at home.

Vignette Fourteen - Pelee Island: Small Town, Big Plans

The tiny island of Pelee has much to teach us about planning for sustainable community economic development. Situated in Lake Erie, it is the most southerly point in Canada and is well known for its distinct natural heritage. Because of its location, its climate enables habitat for species that do not exist anywhere else in Canada, including 4 species of reptiles and amphibians such as the Blue Racer Snake, and 16 plant species. Pelee Islanders recognize the amazing value of these natural assets, both ecological and economic, and are working to ensure that economic development can occur hand in hand with preservation of the natural environment.

Pelee Island has struggled with a declining population for many years, and is now working to develop sustainable economic opportunities that ensure that a thriving community remains on the island. They have already succeeded in a number of significant projects that display the value they place on respecting their natural assets. They have included organic farming in their Official Plan and a municipally supported demonstration organic farm, called Meadowlark Organic Farm, has begun on the island. The farm is used as a tool for educating Islanders about organic production and its ability to preserve wildlife habitat and diversity, as well as providing them with local, fresh produce and potential new employment opportunities. The farm also teaches others who are interested in organic farming, and now the local winery has even converted a portion of their grapes to organic production, appealing to the growing demand across North America for local, organic products. A tiny farmers' market even operates on Saturdays during the summer.

Another of their recent endeavours was a partnership with the University of Guelph, which resulted in the completion of preliminary work towards a sustainable economic development plan. By accessing outside resources and external partnerships, Pelee Island was able to begin an important strategic planning process using minimal financial

resources of their own. It is expected that this mutually beneficial relationship will continue into the future, and will incorporate a strong participatory approach to ensure the inclusion of critical community input.

Pelee Island is proof that bigger is not always better! Despite their size, they have achieved much and have more ambitious plans up their sleeve, including an environmentally-focussed international secondary school. By building on their strengths, they have been able to find a voice and identity that continues to make a lasting contribution to community economic development.

Vignette Fifteen - Pukwis Community Wind: Leading the Way in Renewable Energy

Community wind power is an innovative new way to not only take advantage of the emerging opportunities in renewable energy, but also to ensure that more of the economic, social and environmental benefits stay within the local community. The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation, in partnership with the Windfall Ecology Centre, an environmental non-profit, are leading the way in community wind in the hopes of becoming a model for other communities. As they are witnessing, wind power can work well in rural Ontario, as many of these communities often have the space required for wind turbines, and are also interested in innovative ways to develop their economies.

The Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation has 681 band members approximately two hundred currently living on Georgina Island, which lies off the southern shore of Lake Simcoe. Although they are still within the boundaries of the GTA, they are relatively isolated because they are on an island, and many band members must leave in order to find work elsewhere. The Town of Georgina has one of the lowest average family incomes within the GTA and this project is a way to create employment and a sustainable source of revenue directly in the community. The wind park will create jobs not only in construction and operating phases, but also potentially in the spin offs related to education and tourism.

This joint initiative is called the Pukwis Community Wind Park, which will eventually generate 54 MW (phase I is 20 MW) of wind energy that will be sold back into the Ontario grid. The wind park will be 51% owned by the Chippewas and 49% owned by the Pukwis Energy Co-operative, a community renewable energy cooperative, whose members will receive financial benefits from their initial investment into the project. Anyone in Ontario above the age of 16 may become a member in the cooperative. This

means that the wind project will be locally owned and governed, but will also benefit others who would like to support this innovative project.

The project all began in 2003 when the former chief and then economic development officer for the Chippewas Hugh (Buzzy) Big Canoe discussed the idea of a community wind project with Windfall Ecology Centre Executive Director Brent Kopperson. With the goal of the project being to generate revenue for the community and diversify their economy in a sustainable manner. Because wind parks have created some controversy in rural Ontario, the partners on the project made sure to build community forums and consultations into the whole process to ensure meaningful public input. One of the great advantages of the wind park is that benefits accrue not only to those who own the property, but also to any others in the area who would like to become a member of the cooperative. They then have a financial stake in the project and a say in how it is managed.

The project is now expected to go into its construction phase with power to be generated starting in the fall of 2011. As the project moves forward, partners are hoping it will inspire other communities to do the same, especially as the new Green Energy Act opens the doors for many new and exciting possibilities in community economic development in rural Ontario.

Vignette Sixteen - Social Enterprise: A New Force in Community Economic Development

Although social enterprise has existed for years, it has only recently emerged as an important concept in community economic development, as communities begin to realize the significant impact it can have to their economic and social well-being. A social enterprise is a business that's purpose is not solely to make a profit, but also to meet the social and/or environmental goals of the community. There are hundreds of examples of successful social enterprises all over Ontario, including four that have been set up by the Community Opportunity and Innovation Network (COIN), a not-for-profit organization which operates in Central Ontario, in both rural and urban areas.

The benefits of these particular enterprises do not stop at economic development, as many of them provide countless other valuable services to the community, such as:

- job opportunities for those who have barriers to employment;
- filling a need that is not currently being met in the community;
- long-term solutions to economic development such as skills building and learning opportunities;
- citizen education and awareness on important social and environmental issues;
- helping to make a community more environmentally sustainable and,
- last but not least, providing meaningful employment.

One of the social enterprises run by COIN is The Learning Source, which offers a variety of courses for affordable, lifelong learning in the counties of Peterborough, Northumberland and Haliburton in Central Ontario. Courses are offered both in-person and online to meet different accessibility needs.

The vision of The Learning Source is for a community that is highly skilled, healthy, active and close-knit and to this end they have assessed the needs of the community and designed a series of courses to fill the gaps. COIN currently runs courses in topics

such as workplace health and safety, finance, nutrition, empowerment, communication & presentations, and first aid. This enterprise is not only useful to customers who can use new skills for personal and/or professional development, but also for the instructors who can partner with COIN in a mutually beneficial relationship. In the past year, they have succeeded in delivering 71 courses to over 580 participants and have provided part-time employment for 40 instructors.

Other enterprises run by COIN include COIN Food Services (a catering service – World 2 Go and Natural Blends Café); ReBoot Peterborough, a computer re-use and recycling company, which takes donated computers and refurbishes them for people in need; and TEKDesk, which offers online technical assistance, training and e-learning.

They have also recently hired a Triple Bottom Line coordinator who will create a framework for a triple bottom line accounting system. This means that they will then be better able to measure and report on the economic, social and environmental benefits that COIN has offered the community.

By combining social and environmental goals with the desire for economic sustainability, COIN has achieved remarkable results, and can serve as a model for many communities.

Vignette Seventeen - Stone Fence Theatre: Culture meets Economy

Stone Fence Theatre has become an enduring fixture on the cultural landscape of the Ottawa Valley. Although it is now a lasting cultural institution that instills local pride, contributes to economic development and provides a great source of entertainment, it began, like many successful projects, from humble beginnings.

In 2002, a group of citizens decided to come together to begin a project that would combine cultural and economic development in a rural region that was facing increasing economic and social pressures. They had a vision of the Valley as a tourism destination that would provide a unique, cultural experience that reflected the real roots of the land and people. And so the Stone Fence Theatre was born as a non-profit charity, which has subsequently expanded within the past eight years to now run upwards of 20 shows per season in the Ottawa Valley, offering theatre, music, dance, storytelling and comedy to thousands of locals and visitors.

In the past 15 years, the Ottawa Valley has blossomed with a number of hospitality and tourism services, and the Stone Fence Theatre has partnered both with others in the tourism sector, as well as with other community organizations such as churches, farmers and artists. Working together has helped build the community and provides opportunities for cultural participation and new learning about local heritage.

The Theatre has had its struggles of course, particularly in securing reliable operational funds from provincial and federal arts councils. However, through community support, revenue from ticket sales and sponsorships, and year-to-year project funding, the theatre is able to continue to offer a high quality tourism product.

As a driver for community economic development, the theatre is now a regular source of seasonal employment for local performers, and also offers plenty of volunteer

opportunities for students and budding performers. Despite doing very little advertising, they are now a signature feature of the cultural background, attracting visitors mainly through word of mouth.

We can perhaps look to the name of the theatre to find the best reflection of the spirit of those who now run it – it is named after the stone fences built by the hard work and determination of the first settlers in the area and that are now a constant reminder of its history. Like these stone fences, the Stone Fence Theatre will hopefully continue to impact the cultural scenery and the livelihoods of the local people for years to come.

Vignette Eighteen - Transition Towns: Planning for the Future

Transition Towns are looking to the future, but acting today. They are part of a community resilience movement that started in the United Kingdom, but has made its way across the ocean, inspiring new Transition Towns across North America. Transition Towns recognize two global problems: 1) the end of the era of cheap, easily accessible oil; and 2) climate disruption due to climate change.

The main goal of the Transition organizers is to move away from an economy and society that are completely dependent on the burning of fossil fuels, while at the same time bringing communities closer together to develop equitable and innovative solutions. Although the connection to community economic development may not seem explicit at first glance, the concept of Transition Towns offer an interesting perspective to keep in mind when contemplating future economic drivers.

As small communities grapple with how to develop their economies in an age of unpredictable and rising oil prices it may well be useful to learn from some of the work of Transition Towns. Their solutions lie with localization and sustainability with plans to become increasingly self-supporting.

There are now a number of active Transition Towns in rural and urban Ontario, including Dundas, Barrie, Guelph, and Poplar Hill/Coldstream, near London, among others. Many organizers make a strong effort to work with or attain support from their municipalities, as well as other community organizations, institutions and businesses. Some of the projects that Transition Towns undertake include education about climate change and peak oil, localizing the food supply, creating regional and renewable energy systems, experimenting with local currencies, and skills building in areas such as sustainable house construction, food preservation, and organic farming.

For example, in Poplar Hill/Coldstream, organizers have partnered with another community organization to set up a successful farmers' market, and have plans to run workshops on edible plants, alternative heating solutions and permaculture.

Much of the value of the Transition Town movement lies in its focus on opening a discussion about our changing world and how we can adapt and prepare for change. Globally and locally there will be economic and environmental shifts. The Transition movement says that if we take the time right now to begin thinking about what those shifts might mean to us at the individual and community scale, we may be able to ensure a more secure, sustainable and equitable local economy and society.

Vignette Nineteen - Y-NOT!: Engaging Youth for the Future

The youth of South Simcoe are helping build their community, and having lots of fun while they're doing it! Many communities recognize that keeping an active youth population can be fundamental to a thriving community but struggle with problems of youth retention. In South Simcoe, they have tackled this head on. They have realized that a critical component of community economic development is improving the capacity of community members to become more engaged and active in decision-making. The Y-NOT Youth Councils are an excellent example of rural youth engagement and capacity building. It is unique in that it is run by youth, for youth and this is the driver of its success.

This youth program engages young people in their late teens through the formation of formally structured youth councils. An executive committee is elected from the membership, meetings are run according to an agenda and minutes are taken. The councils make decisions on issues they would like to address in the community, such as daycare and public transit, and also plan events, often social gatherings or fundraisers for other community organizations.

The councils have numerous benefits, not only for the youth themselves, but for the wider community. They are creating a positive image for youth, who are often branded with a negative stereotype. They often host community-wide events, such as music and film festivals, which are open to people of all ages. At the political level, town councils have also found it useful to consult with the youth on certain policies.

For the young people it is a fantastic opportunity to come together socially, but also learn critical skills that can help them far into the future. They learn from their own mistakes, and must work together, often overcoming obstacles such as very different backgrounds and income levels. A partnership with the John Howard Society also brings

in a number of disadvantaged youth, who may not normally have the opportunity to learn such organizational and leadership skills. They are also able to connect to their communities by partnering on events, and are ensuring their voices are being heard by meeting the community's economic and political leaders. They've even hosted debates for both municipal and federal candidates.

A more involved and aware youth population can provide valuable input and a volunteer-base for many communities that are operating on limited resources. Through youth councils the youth of South Simcoe are learning critical skills which can help them become future leaders, and continue building the community, one young person at a time.

Vignette Twenty - Wallaceburg Community Task Force

Wallaceburg (pop. 11,114) is a community located in south-western Ontario approximately half-way between Chatham and Sarnia, adjacent to the Michigan boarder. Beginning in the late 1800s, Wallaceburg's glass, brass and sugar industries began to flourish, resulting in significant wealth and population growth over the next one hundred years.

The 1990s were the beginning of a steep decline for manufacturers in Wallaceburg as many prominent industries either went bankrupt or left the community, resulting in approximately 3,500 lost jobs and devastating the local economy.

On January 1, 1998 the Town of Wallaceburg was one of 22 incorporated communities within the County of Kent that were amalgamated into the single-tier Municipality of Chatham-Kent as part of the Government of Ontario's mandate to cut costs and streamline procedures. The amalgamation was widely opposed in Chatham-Kent (Kushner, J., & Siegel, D, 2003) and significantly altered local governance as it dissolved the Wallaceburg Council, which had authority over local decisions. In its place, the residents of Wallaceburg now elect two council representatives who sit on the Chatham-Kent Council, comprised of a Mayor and 17 Councilors and which meets in the Community of Chatham, located 30 kilometers away.

Recognizing Wallaceburg's economic and social challenges, community leaders and residents engaged the Municipality of Chatham-Kent's Strategic Planning group in the creation of a bottom-up community development plan for Wallaceburg. This planning process quickly lead to the establishment of the Wallaceburg Community Task Force (WCTF), a three year pilot project which, thanks to a 50-50 funding contribution by the Municipality of Chatham-Kent and Ontario Ministry of Economic Development Trade, was launched.

The Taskforce consists of nine community members representing a variety of community groups, service clubs, the Chamber of Commerce, the Business Improvement Area, education and labour as well as Chatham-Kent Economic Development Services, and a member of Chatham-Kent Municipal Council. The pilot project has a full-time project manager from the community who is dedicated to implementing the Task Force's mandate.

The WCTF was established with a defined mandate designated to promote community economic development through public engagement and visioning. The mandate included:

- Conducting a community SWOT Analysis
- Establishing an "Enterprise Facilitator" in the community to help existing and new entrepreneurs
- Establishing a Capitol Pool Corporation to leverage the TSX for Capitol to invest in existing and new business opportunities.
- Conducting a Labour Market and Skills Development Analysis to recognize gaps in the community with regards to education and to seek solutions
- Developing a Wallaceburg Community Strategic Plan: Wallaceburg Vision 2020

Stuart McFadden, Project Manager for the Task Force emphasizes the importance of identifying and understanding your community's assets "Many in Wallaceburg couldn't figure out why companies would leave a community that had such a "skilled workforce". Our Labour Market Analysis proved that we had a very "experienced workforce". There is a huge difference. Companies looking to relocate want to know what your current workforce inventory is and having valid and up to date labour information is absolutely imperative. While some view a Consultants Analysis as wasted money, it gave me confidence when I was standing in front of the Board of Directors pitching my

community that the information I was giving was accurate." (S, McFadden, personal communication, February 22, 2010).

References

Kushner, J., & Siegel, D. (2003). Citizen's Attitudes Towards Municipal Amalgamation in Three Ontario Municipalities. *Canadian Journal of Regional Science*, Spring 2003, 49-59

A GUIDE TO RURAL COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT: BEST PRACTICES FOR YOUR COMMUNITY

Available as a separate report, the Guide represents the findings and best advice that we have been able to discern from practitioners and community members who provide leadership in their own communities.