

**Understanding the New Rural Economy
What Have We Learned?**
November 6, 1998

These comments reflect only a few of the insights which the NRE project has produced since its inception. Action to be taken is identified in terms of the theme or working groups which are primarily responsible. The keywords are:

- C **thspace**: Spatial dynamics of settlements and activities in rural Canada (fuller@uoguelph.ca)
- C **thinex**: Processes of inclusion and exclusion of rural people and communities (reimer@vax2.concordia.ca)
- C **thenter**: The changing structure of rural enterprises and institutions (andre_joyal@uqtr.qc.ca)
- C **thresources**: Processes of change in natural resources and their associated communities (gertler@sask.usask.ca)
- C **wgorg**: Working Group on Organizations and Associations in Rural Canada (halseth@unbc.ca)
- C **wgchanges**: Working Group on Major Changes in Rural Canada (reimer@vax2.concordia.ca)
- C **dcentre**: Rural Canada Data Centre (nre@concordia.ca)

What Have We Done?	What Have We Learned?	What Needs to Be Done?
Created the Rural Database	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C Information useful for our interests is limited: we need more social and institutional information and more longitudinal information C We need more 'ground-truthing' of existing census and survey information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C conduct field work on communities, organizations, households C develop database at CSD level C integrate 1986 and 1996 census data (dcentre) C develop more models and conceptual frameworks (theme teams) C establish procedures to combine CSDs into broader site boundaries (dcentre) C establish instruments to integrate events and characteristics outside CSDs (theme teams, dcentre)
Analysis of Leading and Lagging CSDs in Rural Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C Leading and lagging characteristics are multidimensional and independent with 4 primary dimensions: employment income-related; home ownership & marriage-related; self-employment-related; housing cost-related. C Leading and lagging characteristics shift to some extent when considered on a regional basis. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> C compare analysis over time (wgchanges) C develop regional models of L/L (thinex) C test dimensions (thinex, dcentre) C consider special events which have occurred in communities (thinex)

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Developed a Sampling Frame for Rural Canada	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ The 5 dimensions on which the frame is based are important for understanding several aspects of our NRE research ☐ The available data is inadequate to identify cells in a reliable manner: esp. with respect to trade, economic base, institutional base, and changes in status. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ validate current site selection (dcentre) ☐ integrate more appropriate data (dcentre) ☐ reconsider implications of using CSDs as primary sampling unit (dcentre)
A Preliminary History of Rural Development Policy and Programmes in Canada, 1945-1995	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Rural development requires continuous human capacity building; planned development at the community level rather than top-down; more attention paid to diversification, marketing, and consumption rather than primary production and megaprojects; better integration of programmes; intercommunity co-operation; and more reliance on local community participation rather than 'partnership' among unequals. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Identify how policies and programs emerge, are maintained, and change. ☐ Examine outcomes of policies and programs. ☐ Integrate with other historical events - wars, policies, etc.
Economic Integration and Isolation of First Nations Communities: An Exploratory Review	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Domestic production is important to understanding First Nation economies ☐ FN economies are not isolated from their neighbours. ☐ FN economies have lower rates of labour force participation, a narrower range of industries, and a higher rate of government transfers than their neighbouring communities. ☐ FN economies are similar to their neighbours with respect to levels of self-provisioning, consumption, and unemployment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Conduct more detailed field studies with respect to trade, local commerce, local governance, and organizational networks. (thinex) ☐ Make comparisons on relevant dimensions: adjacency, leading/lagging (thinex) ☐ literature review on international aboriginals ☐ examine prejudice issues
Established access with most rural sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Volunteer 'burnout' is a significant problem which affects even our collaboration with rural communities. ☐ Considerable flexibility is required to establish relationships with the local communities. ☐ We need to establish a joint purpose with local sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Identify community processes and characteristics associated with volunteer activities. (wgorg) ☐ Identify third sector demands and networks. (wgorg) ☐ Document our experiences as we establish relationships with sites. ☐ Get funding for site research.
Examined human capital contributions to leading and lagging status of rural communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Community leadership is now more important and requires greater knowledge of the community economy. ☐ Services requiring skills and business networking are growing in importance in rural areas. ☐ Rural Canada has a high labour market demographic pressure index. ☐ The rural/urban gap in share of individuals with higher education is relatively high in Canada. ☐ Human capital development starts in infancy ☐ Most benefits of training go to places outside rural sites. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Develop policy education which shifts from informing communities about policy to empowering communities to develop policy. (thinex, thenter, wgorg, wgchanges) ☐ Distinguish training and education in our analysis. (theme and working groups)
Prepared profiles of field sites	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Local perceptions of site boundaries vary by activity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Expand data from sites. (dcentre)

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<p>Access to Federal Government Services in Rural Canada: An Exploratory Review</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ Average times to emergency services in our field sites compares favourable with urban centres. ∩ Only education services showed a decrease in distance between 1981 and 1998 in our field sites. ∩ Economic stability, metro-adjacency, and institutional capacity of the field sites are most likely to affect proximity to services. ∩ Local administrators view access to services on different terms than local citizens. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ Identify the processes which have contributed to changes in proximity. (wgorg) ∩ Identify the consequences of various levels of access for the local population. (wgorg) ∩ Investigate the different perceptions of access in local populations. (wgorg) ∩ Examine alternate models of access. (wgorg) ∩ Share solutions and results among the sites. (wgorg) ∩ Distinguish service economies: consumer, business, or investment. (wgorg) ∩ Identify costs of provisioning and financing. (wgorg) ∩ Identify jurisdictional standards. (wgorg)
<p>Developed dynamic model of local economies</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ The timing of policy changes matter. ∩ Rural income problems persist. ∩ Rural areas are absolutely disadvantaged except for natural resource sectors. ∩ Positively selective out-migration continues. ∩ The economic function of a place does not determine income performance. ∩ Social cohesiveness is important. ∩ Economic structure does not explain income levels. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ Compare model results to field data. ∩ Refine and elaborate the models.
<p>Established Rural Data Centre and Web Site (http://nre.concordia.ca)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ To establish a useful infrastructure, all participants need education. ∩ Identifying academic and local interests is difficult. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ Develop web pages. (dcentre) ∩ Educate network in its use. (dcentre) ∩ Provide information for sites and network. (dcentre)
<p>Established Theme Team: Spatial dynamics of settlements and activities in rural Canada (fuller@uoguelph.ca)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ Outmigration of youth likely contributes to low level of unemployment. ∩ Automotive transport is important for job and service accessibility. ∩ There are few activity differences among residents in southern Ontario. ∩ Multiple job holding is common in southern Ontario. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ Examine push and pull factors for youth migration ∩ Examine the role of transportation in accessibility. ∩ Examine how conditions and strategies affect activity patterns. ∩ Consider changes in multiple job holding.
<p>Established Theme Team: Processes of inclusion and exclusion of rural people and communities (reimer@vax2.concordia.ca)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ processes of inclusion/exclusion linked to changing relationships between economic institutions, state institutions, and civil society. ∩ These institutions are not complementary in their distribution of material resources and services. ∩ 4 vulnerable types of rural people are elderly, single mothers, working poor, and Aboriginal peoples. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ∩ Examine the interdependencies between private, state, and civil institutions. (thinex) ∩ Examine the use of these institutions by vulnerable groups. (thinex) ∩ Identify strategies to minimize economic, social, and political exclusion. (thinex)

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Established Theme Team: Processes of change in natural resources and their associated communities (gertler@sask.usask.ca)		
Established Working Group on Organizations and Associations in Rural Canada (halseth@unbc.ca)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Local organizations and associations provide considerable support for economic, social, political, and personal sustainability. ☐ The extent of connectedness between organizations and communities plays an important role (positive and negative) in the options available for community sustenance. ☐ Voluntary associations provide some support for vulnerable people where the private, state, and family sectors do not. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Complete profile workbook in all sites ☐ Develop framework ☐ Develop data collection instrument ☐ Conduct field research ☐ Develop education strategy ☐ Update "Access to Services" report
Established Working Group on Major Changes in Rural Canada (reimer@vax2.concordia.ca)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ List of processes and structures to consider: development of new technologies; economic globalization; corporate reorganization; reorganization of local power structures; labour and work structure; environmental pressures; availability of natural resources; shift from welfare state; population growth; legitimacy crisis of the state; changing patterns of mobility. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ☐ Refine the list of changes ☐ Elaborate the processes and structures involved ☐ Develop indicators of the processes and structures ☐ Examine relevant data (wgchanges)