



Our Communities... Our Successes!

Spring 2011

Canada's Rural Partnership
www.rural.gc.ca



Photo: N.B. Tourism



FROM ACTRESS TO ACTIVIST

After 15 years at the helm of the New Glasgow-based Rural and Coastal Communities Network (RCCN), Ishbel Munro is ready to take on another challenge – this one about an hour down the coast in the small community of Tatamagouche as the new program director of the Tatamagouche Centre. If her name doesn't ring a bell or if you're not all that familiar with RCCN, people in the community development world of Nova Scotia can attest to Munro's passion for the rural and coastal regions of one of Canada's oldest provinces.

RCCN is a not-for-profit organization made up mostly of volunteers whose mission is "to provide a forum to encourage dialogue, share information, create strategies and undertake actions that promote the survival and development of Nova Scotia's coastal and rural communities."

This is something that clearly drives Munro. She is synonymous with regional and community development and truly believes in the resilient spirit of rural and coastal communities. Not just in terms of economics, but more so in

terms of an all-inclusive, holistic idea of what a vibrant community should look like.

"Each person in a community has something to offer, if we listen. The work I loved most in RCCN was watching people grow in skills and



confidence, that often came from just having people listen to their concerns and hopes for the future. We learned from each other", Munro explained.

And she feels one of the greatest strengths of RCCN is its ability to bring people from differing points of view together to work collaboratively and build on their common ground.

Her sense of community comes from her father. Munro says as a little girl, she often visited various homes on any given Saturday afternoon with her dad where they would talk about what could be done to improve their community - whether through starting a community association, the local skating club, organizing an annual picnic or by helping out an elderly neighbour.

"My father was an extremely energetic person and he had a very strong sense of social justice," Munro smiles, adding, "He was doing community development work long before it was ever phrased like that."

And her mother? Well she organized workshops, classes and conferences for

the YWCA and even did work on a national level.

Munro spent some time growing up in Ontario before returning to the family's Maritimes roots with a career path starting on stage, where she developed as an actress, playwright and even ran her own theatre company. Most of her theatrical work developed around community issues ranging from themes like the Mackenzie Valley pipeline, to First Nations. From there she went on to work for non-profit organizations, which included her production of a rather successful awareness campaign.

You may recall a TV commercial created by the Maritime Fishermen's Union (MFU) in the early 90s with a man and his son on a boat with the catch line, "There's no trash can on a boat boy, toss it in the water, the ocean will take it away." Well that was a Munro writing during her stint with the MFU.

"There was something like 800,000 tons of garbage that got diverted from the oceans that year. It was pretty major," she notes.

It was through her creative side working with community organizations that she discovered her true passion for the causes and from there her leadership skills continued to developed.

Looking Ahead

Munro feels conflict and division are major factors standing in the way of community and regional development. In order for rural regions to prosper, she says communities have to drop the "divide and conquer" attitude and work in partnerships to become more competitive regions on the whole, rather than communities competing against each other.

(See "Munro..." p. 2)

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Munro Looking Ahead

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"That's a real shame. We need to be able to rise above all that – be less competitive about what this towns got or that towns got. If I lived in Toronto, I probably would be at least a half-hour away from a service, so if a community here gets a service that's a half-hour away then it's a benefit to an entire region. We have to start looking at life like that."

In some ways, she says, rural

and coastal communities are facing new challenges. Issues like peak oil, climate change and globalization are affecting rural communities almost to the point where it can be overwhelming, but these and other issues can be overcome through good leadership and even better partnerships that include all levels of government, not-for-profit sectors, community organizations, universities and other educational institutions.

She also notes that the role of

the provincial school system needs to be stronger in providing opportunities for younger students to connect with their communities, and create that sense of belonging while reducing the number of youth leaving rural Atlantic.

"I think there's quite a piece of work to be done," she pauses. "At the same time, I do feel hope because I think I can see a movement of people being able to work more collaboratively than they have in the past, and

people being more willing to learn from each other and that is really critically important."

Related to avoiding and resolving community conflicts, Munro will be co-leading a dynamic program at the Tatamagouche Centre called Dialogue for Peaceful Change, April 3 – 8. The sessions will provide hands-on skills building in this area.

Rural and Coastal Communities Network
www.coastalcommunities.ns.ca
 or 902-755-9421
 Tatamagouche Centre
www.tatacentre.ca
 or 1-800-218-2220

REGIONAL PARTNERSHIPS = RURAL DEVELOPMENT

Visit www.rural.gc.ca for more information on the Community Development Program

If two heads are better than one, then four communities together are certain to create a collaborative force strong enough to ensure that a region's rural way of life continues to prosper for generations to come.

That's what Sackville-based EOS Eco-Energy Inc. hopes to build on by bringing together four municipalities, a First Nations community, two planning commissions, a chamber of commerce and other regional organizations in the Tantramar area with a common goal of increasing the region's competitiveness.

The four municipalities, with a combined population of about 12,000 people, are Port Elgin, Dorchester, Memramcook and Sackville, but consultations include unincorporated areas as well.

Katie Friars is the executive director of EOS Eco-Energy Inc. She says that through partnerships, rural regions can develop economic opportunities based on what they have and increase the diversity and vitality of their communities.

"Partnerships are the most crucial part of developing a plan because if we don't have buy-in from the different communities and the different sectors, then

the plan won't necessarily go anywhere," Friars says, adding, "so it's definitely an engagement process of getting the right people around the table and getting involved in the process."

EOS, which is Greek for 'dawn' or 'new beginning', is looking at developing an action plan that will make the region more sustainable 30 years into the future. Friars says the organization has been meeting with a variety of representatives from provincial and municipal departments, as well as community groups and non-governmental groups.

"It turned out that municipalities in this region haven't necessarily collaborated in the past and we've found they have similar issues, so we're looking at how we can move forward together and address some of these common issues," she notes. "Small municipalities in rural areas are aware that they do not necessarily have the individual financial capabilities to invest in certain projects; however, they can pool their resources to develop these projects collaboratively."

Common issues like a transportation system would significantly increase the quality of life for residents. "Healthy

and happy communities are innovative, productive and self-sufficient." Friars says some of the actions they are considering include developing co-operative businesses and bringing the co-operatives model back to the region.



Katie Friars, executive director of EOS Eco-Energy Inc

"When we go through the process, we reflect on the past, we look at where we are today, and where we want to be in 30 years from now and from that, that's how we work towards developing a plan together."

This spring, EOS hopes to have a strategic plan in place and will move forward toward implementing it with the continued help of the region's newly formed partnership.

Part of the funding for this project comes from the Community Development

Program, Building Rural and Northern Partnerships, an initiative of the Government of Canada in support of projects that help stakeholders find solutions that work for them while sharing information and best practices with other communities. It also supports the development of collaborative activities that engage multiple communities and partners.

"By looking towards the future and investing in partnership-building, communities can learn how to work together and address economic and environmental opportunities and challenges from a regional perspective, and help New Brunswick's rural communities achieve their long-term goals," says the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture).

Friars, who comes from a rural town but now lives in Moncton, says she loves rural life so much that she is currently looking to move to the Sackville region.

"It's the rural way of life," she laughs, adding, "Just the connection that people have with each other – it's a lot different than the larger centres. Everyone knows everyone, so it just works!"

THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA INVESTS IN CO-OPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT IN ATLANTIC CANADA

The Government of Canada invested more than \$550,000 last year towards co-operative development in Atlantic Canada under the *Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI)*.

In photo from left are Orlye Dixon, a fisherman, Sadie Beaton, the Community Supported Fisheries Project Co-ordinator for the Ecology Action Centre in Halifax, and the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture), during an announcement in Halifax last fall.

Dixon and Beaton are helping develop a fishery co-operative to encourage consumers to pre-purchase seafood that will be collected each week at a nearby drop-off point.

The consumer becomes the producer's partner and supports the fisherman by purchasing the fresh, less expensive seafood. The CDI is a four-year, \$19.1-million program that helps Canadians develop new co-operatives and experiment with innovative ways of using the co-operative model.

This initiative has been successful in making the co-operative option readily available to Canadians by improving access to advisory services, helping co-operatives raise the funds they need to succeed, and advancing research and knowledge development.

The CDI is managed by the Canadian Co-operative Association and the Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité in partnership with the Government of Canada.



Visit www.coop.gc.ca for more information on the Co-operative Development Initiative

INTERNATIONAL YEAR OF CO-OPERATIVES 2012... THE COUNTDOWN HAS BEGUN!

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

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

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

COMMUNITY INFORMATION DATABASE (CID)

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

The CID, a FREE internet-based mapping and data tool, can help you to compare your community with other similar-sized communities. Find out trends and changes, download maps and data tables, and create your own community and regional profiles.

The CID incorporates facts and figures from Statistics Canada's 1996, 2001 and 2006 Censuses of Population, with more than 900 indicators, such as education, income, population, families, employment, Aboriginal peoples, language, health, agriculture, co-operatives and much more!

COMMUNITY AND REGIONAL INFORMATION AT YOUR FINGERTIPS

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

NEW IN 2011

Community Profile Feature

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

Each community profile will have its own unique URL link that the user can copy. The user can send the link by email or place the link into a web page for a direct link to data on a community.

A visitor to the web site could view all of the data on that community and utilize the mapping features.

The CID was developed by the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat in collaboration with provincial, territorial and community partners.

Visit **www.cid-bdc.ca** or call toll-free, **1-888-757-8725**.

HONEY RUNS THROUGH HIS VEINS

And the Oscar goes to... Honibe Honey Drops!! Ok, maybe it's not an Academy Award, but Honibe Honey Drops from Island Abbey Foods recently took the equivalent top prize in the food world.

In case you haven't heard the buzz around this sweet Island treat, Honibe is one of the most innovative products of late to come out of the agricultural-rich province of Prince Edward Island. After all, where you find healthy food crops, you're sure to find plenty of bees!

The SIAL D'Or awards in Paris last fall were the icing on the cake for the Island-based company and the icing in this case was most likely made with honey.

"I've always loved honey. You know, growing up surrounded by farmers, most of them used bees to pollinate and a lot of them kept their own. We used it in our tea, for baking and cooking - it was always in our cupboard that's for sure," John Rowe says.

Rowe is the founder and president of Island Abbey Foods, the maker of the Honibe Honey Drop and a variety of speciality honey products. What started 10 years ago in the basement of his home in the small community of Montague, has grown into a prime made-in-PEI product.

Last June, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada announced an investment of \$473,000 to help Island Abbey Foods Ltd. expand operations and manufacture

their fully dehydrated honey-based products. The investment was made through Agri-Opportunities, a program created to support new innovative agri-products, processes or services and help introduce them into the marketplace.



Agriculture Minister Gerry Ritz and John Rowe with some Honibe products

What makes Honibe so unique is the fact honey is packaged as a solid in its purest form.

Rowe says it is the world's first pure-dried honey product and although it may sound simple, it took a long time to develop the science and technology behind the one-of-a-kind secret formula, which essentially allows moisture to be extracted while maintaining the natural properties of the honey and without additives of any kind.

"If you look at an ingredient list on a pack of honey-flavoured lozenges that are currently on the market, honey is probably the last ingredient. If not, it's close to the end and that's because it's only a very small percentage of honey - it's

actually just a boiled sugar candy and I didn't want that. I was looking for a pure honey product and I had to invent it," Rowe explains.

His passion for hiking brought him to what he calls his "eureka moment." After a few failed attempts to pack honey for energy during treks in the mountains of B.C., where he spent a few years, Rowe says the sticky messes that followed are what led him to develop "a better way" to make pure honey solid and more portable.

Rowe uses almost exclusively Island-made honey and he's all for more people getting into the beekeeping business, not only to fill his production needs, but for the overall health of the province.

"The crop here is pretty modest in comparison to other places, so we have made some friends in the rest of the Maritimes and we're starting to buy from some of the bigger guys out in the western part of Canada," he says, adding, "There's absolutely nothing better, and I am not exaggerating, there's nothing better for a local environment than to increase the population of bees. It has so many positive effects, so anything I can do to further that mission, I am all for it!"

Rowe now produces his honey treats from a food production plant just outside of Charlottetown to accommodate growing demand and although he's moved production away from the small community on the east-end of the Island, he remains true to his rural

roots. His family is going on six generations of farmers and he understands the importance of family and friends in growing a business.

"Surrounding yourself with the right people is key, and fortunately growing up in a small town, you develop those relationships and that trust with people who pursue your endeavours with you with the same enthusiasm as if it was their own. That, I think, is a very, very important competitive advantage that a lot of people in small communities don't realize they have."

Rowe notes Island Abbey Foods has grown from just he and his wife Sue, to between 20-30 employees. He also adds the support he has received from federal and provincial partners has helped him build a strong foundation on the Island.

Island Abbey Foods continues its beeline into the food industry. Recently added to his Honibe trophy case, John Rowe was awarded the Island's Premier's Medal for Innovation, and his recent appearance on CBC's Dragon's Den netted him a deal worth \$1 million with four of the show's Dragons, including the opinionated and ruthless Canadian entrepreneur Kevin O'Leary, who told Rowe, "You have a great product. It's all in the taste!"

For more information;
Honibe: www.honibe.com
Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada: www.agr.gc.ca

RURAL CANADIANS' GUIDE TO PROGRAMS AND SERVICES

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

In addition to a short description of each program and service, there is also a point of contact where Canadians can go for information by telephone, Internet or both. To obtain a copy, contact the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat toll-free at **1-888-757-8725** or by email at rccs-src@agr.gc.ca

VIBRANT COMMUNITIES...DYNAMIC VOLUNTEERS

Behind every healthy community you're sure to find some great volunteers. Despite the perception that there are fewer people willing to give up their free time for causes, one Newfoundland and Labrador organization is finding out that it's not so much a matter of numbers, but more a matter of making the right connection between those who want to volunteer and the organizations that need them.

In fact, the volunteer pool may not be declining; it's the way volunteers want to volunteer that's changing.

As community development relies more and more on volunteers, the Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador (CSC), which works with many voluntary organizations and volunteers, is well aware of the challenges non-profit organizations are facing. Volunteerism needs a facelift if the movement is to help smaller communities continue to prosper.

According to a 2005 survey¹, 91 per cent of Atlantic Canadians rate the contribution of volunteer groups as 'the most important factor' when it comes to quality of life in their communities. And while Statistics Canada reports about 50 per cent of Atlantic Canadians 15 years of age and older say they do volunteering, CSC Chief Executive Officer Penelope Rowe said volunteering in the traditional sense is quickly changing. Organizations need to adapt and adjust to the new ways people want to spend their volunteer hours.

"One of the things we've learned from those who run organizations is that people may be willing to sign on as volunteers, but they may not be

¹ Source: National Survey on the Quality of Life in Canadian Communities, Strategic Counsel 2005

able to volunteer in the same way they used to. Many may not be able to make a long-term commitment and many people stretch themselves out over several groups and serve on different types of boards or committees," Rowe explained, adding, "With changing demographics, volunteers need short-term goals to accommodate their lifestyles."

"In order to keep the volunteer sector vibrant and work through the changes it's facing, organizations and volunteers are going to have to find new ways to work together."

- Penelope Rowe, Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador

Now in its third year, the CSC's *Voluntary Sector Clusters Development* pilot project is taking a closer look at the world of volunteers and voluntary organizations. The project aims to build a series of strong networks among voluntary and community-based organizations in different areas of the province.

The project had its beginnings in the Cabot Loop area, involving a cluster of about 30 small communities on the Bonavista Peninsula. The CSC has identified some 150 non-profit community sector organizations in that area alone – organizations ranging from seniors clubs and youth groups, hospital auxiliaries to tourism economic groups, everything from the arts to varied cultural activities. There is now a second pilot underway on the Burin Peninsula.

"No matter what their mission is, these organizations all have certain commonalities, and it's pretty evident when you look at the number of

organizations in very small communities that many of them may benefit from learning more about each other, and working collaboratively around certain types of issues," she said. "There may be excellent opportunities for groups to learn together to address their individual and collective responsibilities."

This is particularly true around volunteer recruitment and improving governance capacity, said Rowe.

Many small community groups tend to work in isolation, and the CSC has been helping organizations learn more about each other so that they can better share information, expertise and even services.

Rowe said of all the trends emerging from the community, non-profit sector, the organizations showing a readiness to work more closely together is impressive. Many groups are willing to explore partnerships differently in order to make sure communities and residents are taking full advantage of the strengths that exist in the regions.

In partnership with the Province of Newfoundland and Labrador, the Clusters project helped make it clear it was about connecting people, organizations and communities. The best way to achieve that connectivity, she noted, may be through a physical presence – which translates into time and resources – but it also means a willingness to do things differently and in a more collaborative fashion.

She noted that quite often the major challenge in rural community development is not just the importance of having the right voluntary organizations in place, but also making sure the people who are willing to invest their time as volunteers derive satisfaction from the experience.

They don't want to feel their time is being wasted.

With changing demographics it's also becoming harder to get younger volunteers (ages 25-40) involved, which further emphasizes the importance of connecting volunteers with the organizations/issues they support. No one wants to get caught up in something that is of no interest to them.

"People want to get involved. They simply may not know how to get connected to a group that interests them."

The CSC hopes to have an on-line inventory of organizations in place soon to help volunteers get connected and to help organizations connect with one another.

The Government of Canada recognizes the important role volunteers play in creating and maintaining healthy communities and recently launched the Prime Minister's Volunteer Awards. A total of 17 awards will be presented annually. Nomination guidelines and forms will be available during National Volunteer Week, April 10, 2011.

Did you know?

On average, Atlantic Canadians invest 180 hours per year of their free time volunteering. That's equal to five weeks of an average worker's time.

(Source: Statistics Canada)

For more information:

Community Sector Council Newfoundland and Labrador:
www.envision.ca

Government of Canada rural initiatives and programs:
www.rural.gc.ca



RURAL ACTION CENTRES - RURAL DEVELOPMENT UNDER ONE ROOF

One-stop shopping isn't just for the retail world anymore, the all-under-one-roof notion has now moved into the realm of rural development.

Last fall, Prince Edward Island opened its first Rural Action Centre (RAC) in Montague. The centre is one of five to house a variety of federal, provincial and non-governmental organizations. It aims to help business members, community groups or entrepreneurial spirits achieve their goals.

Martina MacDonald is the general manager of the Active Communities building on Main Street in Montague where the first Rural Action Centre opened. She says the RAC is complimentary to the work that was already being done in the building, which offered mostly federal support.

"We found that often we had a client come in with a business plan or project that needed some provincial input as well as federal, and we would end up sending the client up the street to make another appointment, and then they would meet with yet another person from the province. Having both federal and provincial business and community programs under one roof simplifies the process and allows for marrying two or three programs in order to make one project happen," she says.

Using a co-operative model, the centre now provides one-stop services, such

as: Tourism Product Development and Marketing; Business loans and counselling for small to medium size businesses; Government services for community economic development and entrepreneurs; Community and Project Development; Business guidance; Entrepreneur education and management development to assist businesses with start up; and Expansion and diversification.

The Government of Canada sees the RACs as an integral part in furthering its commitment to rural Canadians. Through *Canada's Rural Partnership*, the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat works within rural regions to help increase their economic and community development opportunities.

Robert Maddix is the Regional Advisor for the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat in Prince Edward Island. He says the RACs are a great tool and could be key to the success in improving overall capacity in rural communities in being innovative and taking advantage of their natural assets.

Maddix says there are many components to community development and while infrastructure and advisory services are very important in creating and sustaining economic endeavours, he says there's also a lack of basic decision-making services and training available to non-governmental organizations.

"Resources like leadership development, how to run a board of directors, or even how to recruit volunteers are not always easy to access," Maddix says, adding, "The Rural Secretariat believes the Rural Action Centres will be a valuable link in connecting groups or individuals with those types of decision-making services."

Each action centre will have a "navigator," a front-line person who will be able to help guide individuals or groups through the maze of federal and provincial programs that may be available to them, as well as provide a connection to other possible sources of support in non-governmental organizations.

And even if all you have is an idea, MacDonald encourages people to come in and chat with an economic officer, and you just might leave with a plan to help make your dreams come true.

Rural Action Centres in P.E.I.

- Montague
- Souris
- Alberton
- Wellington
- Central Bedeque

Rural Action Centres:
www.ruralactioncentres.ca

Canada's Rural Partnership: www.rural.gc.ca

RURAL AND CO-OPERATIVES SECRETARIAT AT YOUR SERVICE!

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

That's where *Canada's Rural*

Government of Canada
Phone: 1-800-O-CANADA
(1-800-622-6232)
TTY/TDD: 1-800-465-7735
www.canada.gc.ca

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

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

The Co-operatives Secretariat was established to help the federal government respond

more effectively to the concerns and needs of co-operatives in Canada.

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

The Co-operative Development Initiative (CDI), a program under the leadership of the Co-operatives Secretariat, is

delivered in partnership with the co-operative sector. CDI is designed to help people develop co-ops and to research and test innovative ways of using the co-operative model. CDI makes the co-op option more readily available to Canadians and helps to respond to present-day challenges.

Rural Secretariat:
www.rural.gc.ca

Co-operatives Secretariat:
www.coop.gc.ca

The Rural and Co-operatives Secretariat:

Toll-free 1-888-757-8725

Canada