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Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001

New Liskeard Session
July 6, 2001

CANADIAN RURAL PARTNERSHIP

RURAL DIALOGUE

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Ontario
Rural Dialogue 2001

New Liskeard Session
July 6, 2001

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We wish to acknowledge the contributions made by the rural citizens of New Liskeard and the surrounding area who participated in the Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001. Their thoughtful discussions and insights made it possible to identify the rural assets most valued in that part of Ontario and the strategies that should be adopted to sustain them. Our thanks go to the local coordinators and the local steering committee members for bringing together a diverse group of participants and for planning a successful dialogue session. Thanks are also due to the Ontario Agricultural Training Institute for the overall coordination of the dialogue session, and to PEOPLEnergy and the local facilitators for facilitating the session. The dialogue session would not have been possible without the generous funding provided by Human Resources Development Canada, Health Canada, the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor) and Public Works and Government Services Canada. Our sincere appreciation for their generosity.

The Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 is an initiative of the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Rural Team-Ontario. The partners in the endeavour were the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, The Ontario Rural Council and the University of Guelph. A heartfelt thanks to our partners.

FOREWORD

A total of six Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions were held — in Kemptville (eastern Ontario), Alfred (Francophone), Ridgetown (southwestern Ontario), Guelph (central Ontario), New Liskeard (northeastern Ontario), and Emo (northwestern Ontario) — during June and July 2001.

This document is a record of discussions that took place at the Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions in New Liskeard on July 6, 2001. Many of the discussions took place in brainstorming sessions at which no limits were placed on the participants. Views expressed do not necessarily represent those of the Government of Canada. In order to present a true report of the free-ranging discussions, recommendations made by participants that fall outside federal jurisdiction are also included. Participant recommendations contained in this report are recorded as they were heard. We thank session participants for their comments.

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Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001
New Liskeard Session

Executive Summary

Introduction

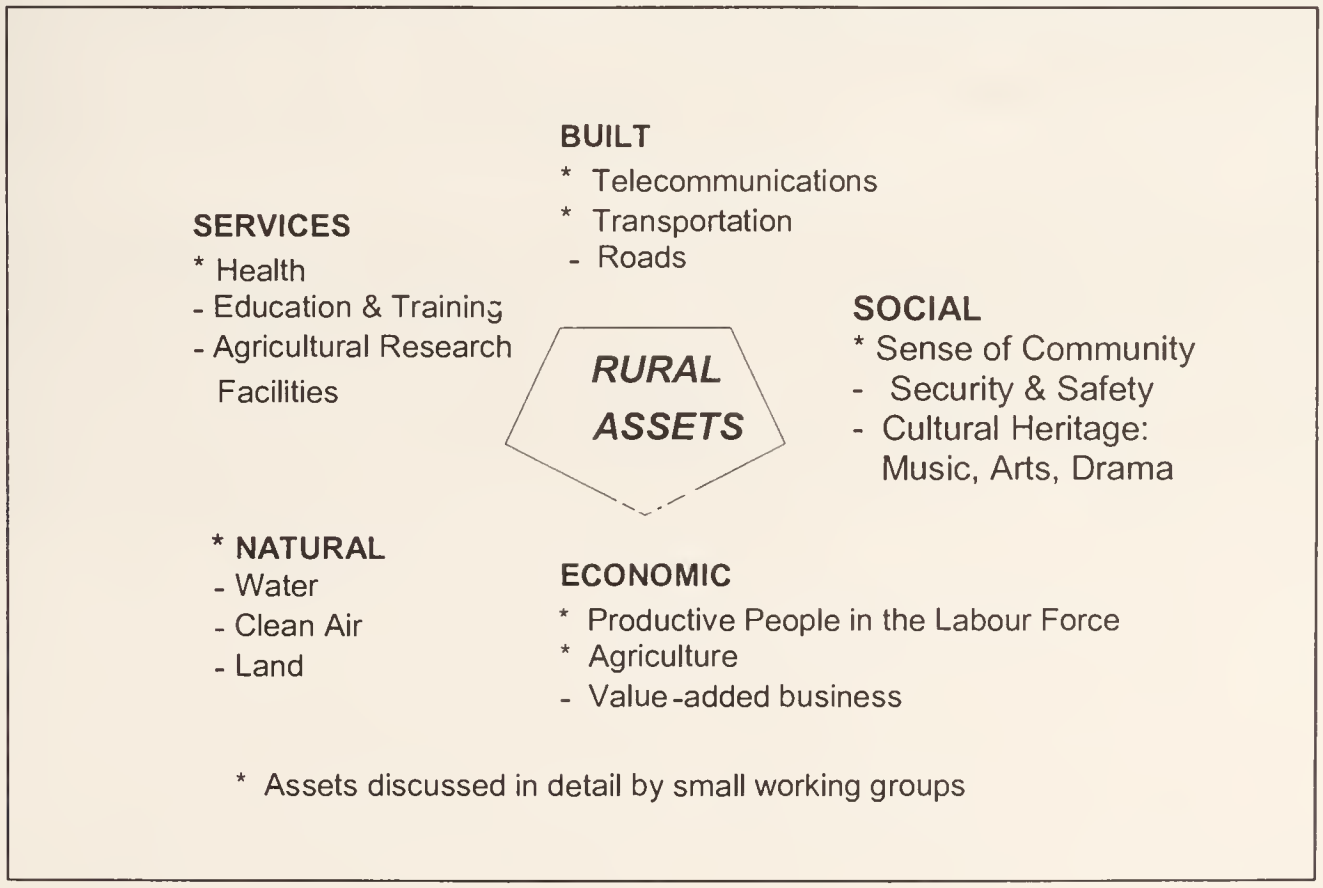
The fifth of six Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions was held in northeastern Ontario. Seventy-two rural residents from a variety of age groups, interests and occupational categories met in New Liskeard on July 6, 2001, to discuss positive perspectives on rural values and priorities as part of the Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 process.

The Assets Approach to Valuing Rural Ontario

An **assets-based approach** was used to enable participants to focus on the strengths and resources of rural and remote communities and to identify threats to these assets. Participants then discussed positive strategies for citizen and government action to sustain key assets.

Participants identified and defined the key rural assets within **five asset bundles — built (infrastructure), social, economic, natural, and services**. The following diagram identifies the key rural assets in each asset bundle.

Assets Wheel
Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001: New Liskeard Session



Through a voting and discussion process, the New Liskeard participants identified the rural assets they value most: **sense of community, agricultural research facilities, wildlife, land, air, telecommunications, agriculture, water, productive people and health care**.

Participant Recommendations

After meeting in focus groups, participants came together to present strategies that could utilize resources and mitigate threats to sustain the identified assets. By vote, the group identified the following strategies as most significant:

Citizen Strategies

- "Promote, promote, and promote" assets in the area (e.g., in high schools)
- Encourage continued farmer participation in local and federal government, and consumer education
- Establish more local administration of resources
- Maximize cooperation and coordination
- Have local businesses work together to create critical mass

Government Strategies

- Offer tax relief to encourage economic growth
- Provide monetary and tax incentives for agricultural investment (e.g., value-added products and flow-through shares)
- Develop longer term strategies
- Give more attention to northerners and other isolated communities
- Foster cooperation between all three levels of government (federal, provincial, municipal)

Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001
New Liskeard Session

Date: July 6, 2001 **Location: Quality Inn Hotel**

Introduction

The fifth of six Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 Sessions was held in northeastern Ontario. Seventy-two rural residents from a variety of age groups, interests and occupational categories met in New Liskeard on July 6, 2001, to discuss positive perspectives on rural values and priorities as part of the Rural Dialogue process. A demographic profile of participants is presented in Appendix A. After identifying the key rural assets (strengths) of the region, participants discussed the resources that sustain the assets and threats that may affect them. They then identified citizen and government strategies to sustain the assets for the future.

The Rural Dialogue Process

In 1998, the federal government launched the Canadian Rural Partnership (CRP) to support community development by adopting new approaches and practices to respond to rural and remote development issues.

The Rural Dialogue, a key citizen-engagement component of CRP, is an ongoing two-way discussion between the federal government and Canadians from rural and remote regions. The Dialogue helps the federal government to understand local and regional challenges and opportunities, and it gives rural and remote citizens an opportunity to influence federal government decision making on policies and programs.

The Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 process was designed to continue this dialogue. It was led by the Rural Secretariat of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, and Rural Team-Ontario (RT-O), representing many federal departments and provincial ministries. Other partners in the process were the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA); The Ontario Rural Council (TORC); and the University of Guelph (UoG). Funding for the dialogue was provided by Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC), Health Canada (HC), the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor), and Public Works and Government Services Canada (PWGSC).

Overview of the Assets Approach

Assets are what we want to keep, build upon and sustain for future generations.

Assessing and measuring rural assets is a **positive way** of valuing what we have and want to keep in rural Canada. Using an assets approach allows us to generate a total picture of the features and characteristics of rural life which are most valued by rural citizens. The information acquired in this data-gathering approach identifies and affirms what we **all** think is important about rural life. It becomes vital information for political and strategic representation of the "rural." Assets-building connects people to a common cause. It brings us together, focuses our attention, and points us in the same direction.

The assets approach is both positive and inclusive:

- Rural assets sustain livelihoods in both rural **and** urban areas.
- Assets include both **public and private** goods.

Important areas for action have traditionally been identified through a needs-assessment process. This approach identifies "problems" – areas that need attention because something is wrong or missing. In contrast, the assets approach emphasizes positives to identify resources on which to build.

A commonly voiced concern about the assets approach is that it does not sufficiently acknowledge legitimate rural needs. This, however, is not the case. What appear as "needs" in the needs-assessment approach appear as "assets that are threatened" in the assets approach, or as resources that are not being utilized. (As an example, consider low levels of employment, which, in the assets approach, are considered to be an asset of a population available to work). Thus, the assets approach does identify "needs," but it examines them in the context of the larger resource pool. This enables participants to recognize the value of all of the assets in rural areas and to identify strategies to sustain the most important assets, rather than to focus solely on the assets that appear to be most threatened at the time.

Assets are often measured by calculating the total value of goods and services produced in rural areas. Such assets are mathematical and can be expressed as gross domestic product (GDP). The assets approach adds the view of what is important about rural Canada from the perspective of the rural population, the people who live and work amid the rural assets themselves.

In summary, rural assets are those popularly recognized attributes of rural areas that are considered essential for the maintenance of livelihoods, both rural and urban, and vital to sustainability of the economy, society, and the environment of rural Canada.

Rural Assets Ranking

The process of identifying assets is new to most people. Over the past 30 years, processes for determining priorities for action have emphasized identifying needs. The needs-assessment approach focuses on problems and negatives. The assets approach helps people focus on positives while including the total picture of both positives and negatives.

It takes time to adjust to this new way of thinking. To enable participants to work with this new method and to focus on positives, the valuing of identified assets occurred in several stages. For details of the process, see "**The Process of Valuing Rural Assets in Rural Ontario**" (Appendix B).

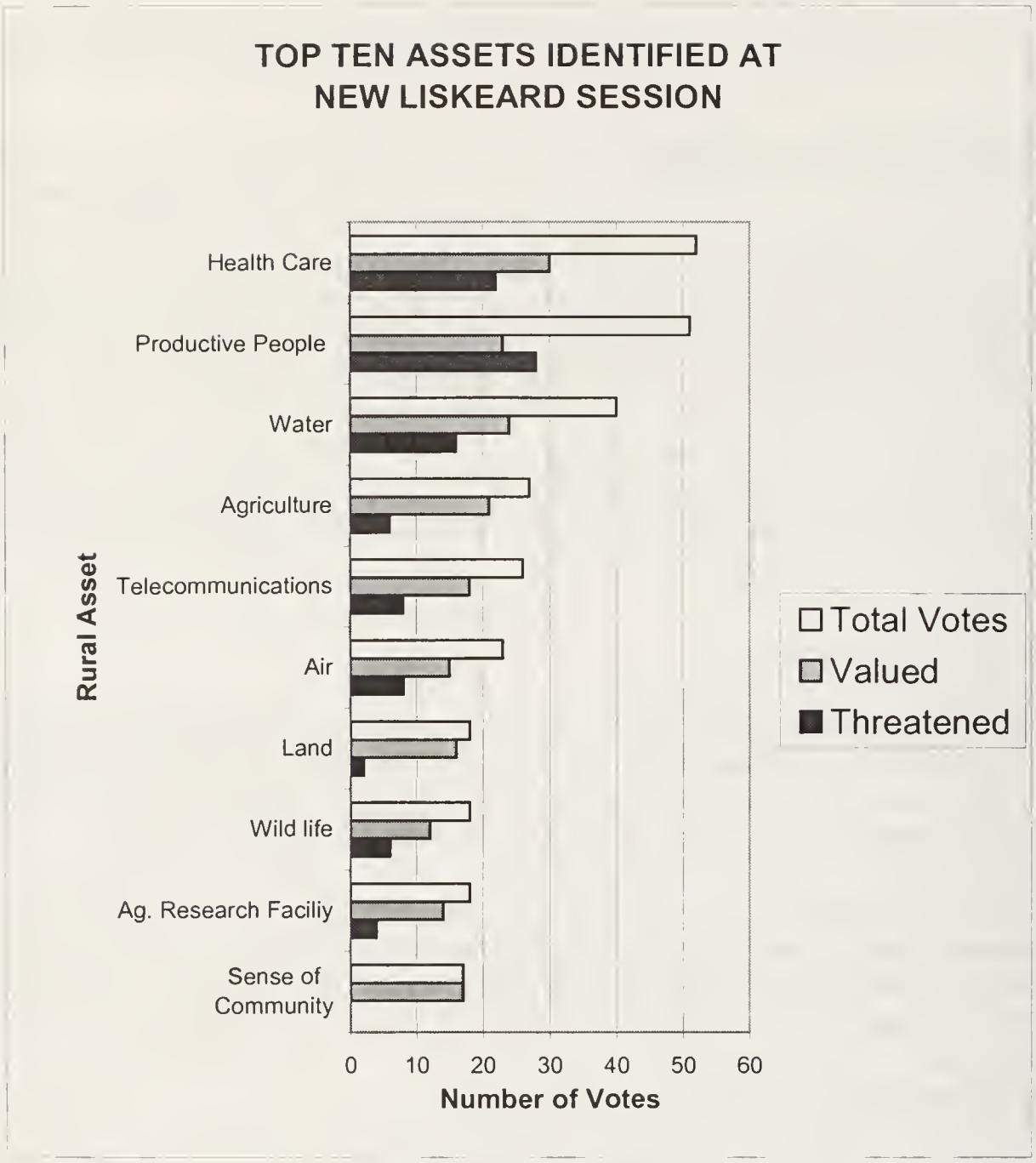
Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Over the course of the day, participants established in many ways the relative value of the assets they had identified. After the initial morning discussions, participants were asked to individually rank the assets on separate forms. **Individual asset ranking percentages are reported under each key rural asset discussed by small working groups.**

Because there is significant overlap in the definition of rural assets, they cannot be ranked precisely. For example, water and health, two commonly identified rural assets, are frequently cited in reference to the same issues. Therefore, it is a matter of judgment whether they should be considered one asset or two.

Large-group Rural Asset Ranking

Before the individual assets were ranked, participants undertook a large-group "asset voting" process, using blue and red dots (see Appendix C for results). This enabled them to consider the relative value of the assets they had identified and the extent to which they were valued (blue dots) or threatened (red dots). The following graph represents the top ten assets that were identified by the large-group asset voting process. It shows the total number of votes, as well as the breakdown of assets that are valued and threatened.



Strategies for Sustaining Key Rural Assets

Citizen and government strategies developed by the Rural Dialogue participants for the key rural assets discussed in detail by small working groups are listed in the following pages. Individual and large-group asset ranking, definitions for assets, resources sustaining the assets and threats to the assets identified by participants are found in Appendix D.

Health

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for community action:

1) Increase awareness of and access to information and services
2) Maximize cooperation and coordination

Other citizen strategies:

- Create a centralized facility for health agencies
- Give Northerners employment issues higher priority
- Maximize cooperation between local organizations
- Increase awareness and support for community programs
- Implement 911
- Realize the necessity for all of these services
- Increase lobbying for government attention and support
- Share professional services within communities

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

- Foster cooperation between all three levels of government (federal, provincial, municipal)
- Give more attention to northerners and other isolated communities

Other government strategies:

- Recognize part-time doctors as such when counting statistics (doctor shortage)
- Loosen up regulations for funding – make it more accessible
- Give more funding
- Recognize in-kind contributions
- Promote medical training
- Recognize distance/isolation compared to job standards
- Lighten up demand on staff
- More community recognition

Agriculture

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

1) Assure education and training in anticipation of farm takeover (i.e., succession planning, business and technical training of future farmers)

2) Continue farmer participation in local and federal government, and consumer education

Other citizen strategies:
- Educate consumers (attitude change)
- Make sure that local investment contributes to local industry ($ stays in area)
- Nutrient management practices
- Support local businesses

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

1) Provide financial and tax incentives for agricultural investment (i.e., value-added products and flow-through shares)
2) Identify markets and attract people into those commodities

Other government strategies:
- Offer technical support and training
- Give market support

Productive Skilled Labour Force

Citizen Strategies
Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:
1) "Promote, promote, and promote assets" within and outside the area (e.g., in high schools)
2) Local businesses should work together and create critical mass in the region

Other citizen strategies:
- Cooperative model
- Support local businesses
- Connect with trainers so that training is relevant
- Each employer should hire one person
- Agricultural strategy – sell farming in the north
- Add value to products
- Citizens and industry should work together to show government that programs should be targeted to rural requirements
- Find a niche for economy
- Use existing skill base to train new skills
- Promote and showcase Northern Ontario assets to attract businesses/people

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

1) Target tax relief to encourage economic growth (tax-free zone)
2) Educate consumers to support Northern Ontario producers and offer training geared to business requirements

Other government strategies:

- Suit programs to owners and operators rather than larger businesses
- Promote Northern Ontario as a place to live and work
- Focus on building social services (doctors, hospitals) that will draw or maintain the people here
- Educate consumers to support local producers

Natural/Wilderness

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

1) Be proactive: show leadership, participation, focus
2) Recognize positive action

Other citizen strategies:

- Rural and urban citizens should interact
- Promote the fact that urban Canadians benefit from rural natural assets

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

1) Develop longer term strategies
2) Provide education and incentives

Other government strategies:

- Carefully monitor control and monitoring systems (e.g., water testing)
- Offer leadership
- Enforce legislations and regulations
- Develop technology for waste management
- Give feedback to people

Transportation

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategy as most significant for community action:

1) Develop a business case to demonstrate that transportation cost is not a barrier

Other citizen strategies:

- Use services to the fullest
- Identify and evaluate required services
- Learn from those who are doing successfully
- Promote the north and its advantages

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

1) Implement value-added incentives to support Northern Ontario development and use of transportation services and systems
2) Negotiate fair and open trade within Canada and with foreign countries

Other government strategies:

- Promote use of transportation services
- Implement royalty system on resources that stays in the north for transportation services (to develop secondary voice … increased voice)
- Promote industries and usage of material to support the north (increase supply time for part delivery…create awareness, develop solution)
- Secondary processing of raw product within specified geographic distance
- Promote the north and its advantages
- Provide subsidies for northern transportation to enhance northern purchases
- Implement program like Quebec – value-added (agriculture) initiative (10 years tax free)
- Deregulate interprovincial trade policies

Sense of Community

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

1) Utilize the media
2) Organize local citizens to oversee and administer government-funded programs

Other citizen strategies:

- Develop a network of people within specific interests

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

1) Provide a political climate for healthy rural communities
2) Give local communities more control over administration of resources

Other government strategies:

- Cut the red tape
- Equal rights for rural/urban/north/south

Telecommunications

Citizen Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for local citizens:

1) Encourage expanded and improved infrastructure
2) Encourage expanded local calling areas

Other citizen strategies:
- Offer training
- Inform local citizens
- Encourage competition
- Inform government of our shortcomings

Government Strategies

Participants identified the following strategies as most significant for government action:

1) Make Canadian Radio and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC) more user-friendly
2) Encourage expanded and improved infrastructure and encourage expanded local calling areas

Other government strategies:
- Reporting (international, national, regional)

Recommendations

As the day was ending, participants gathered to present the strategies recommended by the five focus groups. Participants then voted individually on what they believed to be the best three citizen and government strategies overall.

Citizen Strategies

- "Promote, promote, and promote assets" and area (e.g. in high schools)
- Continue farmer participation in local and federal government and consumer education
- Give local communities more control over administration of resources
- Maximize cooperation and coordination
- Local businesses should work together to create critical mass

Government Strategies

- Provide Tax relief to encourage economic growth
- Give monetary and tax incentives for agricultural investment (e.g., value-added products and flow-through shares)
- Develop longer term strategies
- Give more attention to northerners and other isolated communities
- Foster cooperation between all three levels of government (federal, provincial, municipal)

Common Themes

- Economics – funding for programs, international competition
- Government programs and downsizing
- Government regulations/legislation
- Access to resources, services, and new technology
- Education/awareness of community resources and issues

Next Steps

The Ontario Rural Dialogue 2001 sessions took place in six regions across Ontario. Information from all sessions will be amalgamated and analysed in a comprehensive picture of the assets valued by citizens in rural Ontario. Results of this larger analysis and the information from the Ontario Regional Rural Conference 2001 held in North Bay, Ontario, August 26-28, 2001, will be incorporated into a final report.

The final report will reflect a comprehensive portrait of key rural assets in Ontario along with the strategies recommended by conference participants.

Appendix A:
Demographic Profile of Participants

The Rural Dialogue process is designed to represent all citizens living in rural Ontario. Enough demographic information was collected from participants to identify the diversity of participants and to pinpoint which ideas were expressed by specific groups, such as farmers and youth. The following numbers are based on the 56 completed profile forms returned by participants.

Demographic features of the New Liskeard session include:

⇒ 29% of participants (16 of 56) were female, 71% were male

⇒ 66% were 45 years or older

⇒ 45% of participants live on farms, 36% live in towns under 25, 000 population and 14% live in rural non-farm residences

⇒ 85% of participants have lived in their local area for at least 10 years

⇒ 47% of participants listed **farming** as their primary or secondary occupation

⇒ 45% of participants listed themselves as **self-employed**

⇒ 20% of participants listed **social services** as their primary or secondary occupation

⇒ 18% of participants listed **government** as their primary or secondary occupation

⇒ 13% of participants listed **unpaid work within the home** as their primary or secondary occupation

⇒ 12% of participants listed **health** as their primary or secondary occupation

⇒ 7% of participants listed **voluntary/non-profit** as their primary or secondary occupation

⇒ 65% of participants reported total **household incomes** of over $40 000

Overall, a diverse group of rural citizens participated in the Rural Dialogue at New Liskeard.

Appendix B:
The Process of Valuing Assets in Rural Ontario

All the information presented by participants was gathered into a "data set," which includes information both from and about the participants. Information from all six dialogues will be amalgamated and analysed in a comprehensive picture of the assets valued by citizens of rural Ontario.

⇒ **Participant Profile:** As part of the registration process, participants were asked to complete a two-page Participant Profile, which included demographic information. This information will be used to characterize the diversity of participants and to identify which ideas were expressed by specific groups, such as farmers and youth.

⇒ **Assets Wheel:** Participants created a comprehensive list of the key rural assets under five asset bundles: built (infrastructure), social, economic, natural, and services.

⇒ **Assets Voting:** Participants were given seven blue dots to indicate the assets they valued most, and three red dots to indicate the assets which they believed to be most threatened at this time. Asset Voting Results can be found In Appendix C.

⇒ **Comprehensive Overview of Key Assets:** The three assets with the most votes in each of the asset bundles were posted at the front of the room and discussed. This enabled participants to think about what other rural residents valued as rural assets.

⇒ **Assets Ranking:** Following the group discussion, participants were given a second opportunity to rank rural assets. Participants were asked to identify the five assets that they, as individuals, valued the most. These asset rankings were collected on individual sheets.

⇒ **Asset Working Groups:** Participants then broke into working groups to discuss the characteristics and issues surrounding a particular asset. Working group discussions were organized around the following:

- ⇒ **Asset Definition**
- ⇒ **Resources Sustaining the Asset**
- ⇒ **Threats to the Asset**
- ⇒ **Recommended Citizen Strategies for Sustaining the Asset**
- ⇒ **Recommended Government Strategies for Sustaining the Asset**

⇒ **Large-group Recommendations:** As the day ended, each focus group presented its recommendations for government and citizens. All the participants voted on their top three citizen strategies and top three government strategies.

Appendix C:
"Asset Voting" Results

During the morning session, participants were asked to identify, and then vote on, the rural assets they as individuals believed to be most important to rural lives. Participants were given seven blue dots to indicate the assets which they valued most, and an additional three red dots to indicate the assets they believed to be most threatened. The totals for all of the assets identified are listed below. The blue dot totals are listed first, separated by a comma from the red dot totals.

Built

Roads – 12, 1
Telecommunications – 18,8
Schools and hospital buildings – 7,1
Energy sources hydro – 3,2
Accessibility – 4,1
Parks and community space – 3,1
Recreation facilities – 1,0
Weather forecasting – 0,0
Drainage systems – 3,1
Railroad – 3,0
Housing – 0,0
Sewage and water – 3,0
Garbage disposal/water – 0, 0
Airport – 4,3

Services

Policing – 1,0
Recreation – 2,1
Social support for people who are vulnerable – 3,1
Education and training 22,5
Volunteerism – 2,1
Bilingual services – 4,0
Municipal – 1,0
Resort – 0,0
Agriculture research facilities – 14,4
Air service – 5,4
Rail service – 2,1
Self help support groups – 1,1
Health services – 30,22

Natural

Water – 24, 16
Wildlife – flora and fauna – 12,6
Air – 15,8
Land – 16, 2
Trees – 5,5
Wilderness – 3,2
Safe – 1,1
Rivers – 2,1
Quiet – 2,0
Minerals – 1,0
Location to urban centre – 0,0
Social – 0,0
Weather and seasons – 0,0

Social

Sense of Community – 17,0
Security and Safety – 12, 1
Inclusion – 3,1
Bilingualism – 1,0
Watching out for neighbors – 0,0
Cultural Heritage, Music, Arts – 8,0
Fall fairs community events – 4,0
Relaxed lifestyle – 1,0
Senior Assistance Program – 2,0
Freedom – 5,1
Well-defined community boundaries – 2,0
Family and Friends – 5,0
History and Connections – 3,0
Peaceful – 3,0
Good for kids – 1,0

Economic

Productive people in labour force – 23,28
Transportation – 3,3
Agriculture – 21,6
Diversified jobs – 0,2
Programs for economic development – 4,1
Job training opportunities – 4,2
Prime land/resources – 4,2
Tourism – 7,0
Progress update, innovate, thinker – 0,0
Bingo hall – 0,0
Industry – L,M,A,F,T. – 0,0
Lower Cost of living – 3,0
Great natural resources – 8,0
Resource personal – 0,0
Value added business – 8,4

Appendix D:
Key Rural Assets Discussed in Small Working Groups: Definitions/Resources/Threats

Through a voting process, participants were asked to identify five key rural assets that they, as individuals, valued most from the list of key rural assets identified by the large-group asset voting process.

Telecommunications

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Telecommunications appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 16% of the participants.

Large-group Asset Valuing

In the initial large-group session, **Telecommunications** was identified as the most significant asset in the "built" asset bundle.

Participants gave "telecommunications" a total of 26 votes:

- 18 blue (valued)
- 8 red (threatened)

Definition of "Telecommunications"

Participants identified the following meanings associated with "telecommunications":

- Link to the world (knowledge, retain workforce, marketing)
- Sense of security
- Supports retaining all of our infrastructure
- Opportunities for business
- Maintains competitive edge – "level playing field"
- Research tool
- Tourism attraction (value added)

Resources Sustaining "Telecommunications"

- Fibre optics
- Cell towers
- Workforce
- Wilderness (if infrastructure in place)
- Internet access

Threats to "Telecommunications"

- Party lines
- Limited calling areas
- Slow progress of upgrading
- Youth and seniors leaving area
- Lack of competition (costs)
- Old equipment – infrastructure
- Limited internet access
- Government regulatory bodies

Transportation

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Transportation appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 38% of participants.

Large-group Asset Valuing

In the initial large-group session, **Transportation** was identified as the second most significant asset in the "built" asset bundle.

Participants gave "transportation" 17 votes:

- 10 blue (valued)
- 7 red (threatened)

Definition of "Transportation"

Participants identified the following meanings associated with "transportation":

- Airports, roads, water, rail
- Access within area
- Existing infrastructure for service provision
- Support for economic development (a prerequisite for business relocation)
- Distance from/to major industries
- Population density
- Infrastructure

Resources Sustaining "Transportation"

- Human: Ministry of Transportation, engineers, maintenance crews
- Money
- Government
- Regulation/legislation
- Responsibility of government – roads (municipal/provincial), air (federal/municipal), water (federal/provincial/municipal)
- Natural resource company partnership to maintain and develop transportation

- Existing industry: higher demand = stronger system (basic infrastructure exists for development)
- Available land
- Available labour force

Threats to "Transportation"

- Decreased financial resources
- Downloading
- Decrease in safety
- Decrease in maintenance
- Erosion in some areas
- Monitoring focus, rather than solving/addressing
- Decreasing population
- Loss of youth – knowledge and skill
- Aging population
- Loss of voice (political lobby)
- (Fear of) innovation
- Weather

Natural/Wilderness

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Natural appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 18% of participants.

Wilderness appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 11% of participants.

Wildlife appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 9% of participants.

Large-group Asset Valuing

In the initial large-group session, **Natural/Wilderness** was identified as the third most significant asset in the "natural" asset bundle.

Participants gave "natural/wilderness" 23 votes:
- 15 blue (valued)
- 8 red (threatened)

Definition of "Natural/Wilderness"

Participants identified the following meanings associated with "natural/wilderness":

- Natural: water, air, land, wildlife, trees
- Community forests
- Balance of nature, renewable
- Tile drainage
- Environmental farm plan
- Tourism use

Resources Sustaining "Natural Wilderness"

- Tourism
- Community forests
- Isolation (low population density)
- Balance of nature
- Control runoff
- Research
- Technology advances
- Education programs
- Recycling

Threats to "Natural/Wilderness"

- Development
- Dumps
- Adams mines, water
- Waste management (within community/external–from Toronto)
- Population – density
- Good intentions versus economics
- Plastics

Health

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Health appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 64% of participants.

Large-group Asset Valuing

In the initial large-group session, **Health** was identified as the most significant asset in the "services" asset bundle.

Participants gave "health" 52 votes:

- 30 blue (valued)
- 22 red (threatened)

Definition of "Health"

Participants identified the following meanings associated with "health":

- Hospitals
- Access to health services and information
- Access to outreach programs, e.g., Community Care Access Centres (CCAC), Northern Travel Grant
- Remote access through telecommunications "tele-health"
- Rehabilitation
- Long-term care

- Alternative medicine
- Preventative, research medicine
- Doctors, family physicians
- Availability of doctors, clinics, etc.
- Special needs resources, access to specialists and clinics (e.g., visual, speech)
- Social health, support groups
- Mental health
- Physical health
- Empowerment of healthy individuals

Resources Sustaining "Health"

- Ontario Health Insurance Plan (OHIP)
- Boards of Education (special needs)
- Long-term care facilities
- Hospitals
- National organizations (Canadian National Institute for the Blind (CNIB), Heart and Stroke, Cancer Society, etc.)
- Outreach programs
- Visiting specialists
- Various community agencies (Temiskaming Health Unit-French/English, medical clinics, Community Care Access Centres (CCAC), etc.)
- Volunteers
- Victorian Order of Nurses (VON)
- Government grants
- Medical education
- Personal research
- "Tele-health"
- Self-help groups and word-of-mouth
- Doctors and specialists, nurses, technicians, therapists, etc.
- Private donations
- Local fundraising
- Community groups (e.g., service clubs) that help in general

Threats to "Health"

- Funding cuts (to hospitals, community organizations, CCAC)/out of area
- Salary negotiations
- Turf protection between agencies fighting for the same money
- Overworked staff (cut back quality of service)
- Overloaded healthcare system
- Unbalanced population (increasing number of seniors but not an Increase in services
- Hard time accessing services
- Doctor shortage (recruitment and retention)
- Lack of public education/awareness
- Overall smaller population is lessening chance of program start-up
- Split location services
- Isolation and distance
- Discrepancy in northern/southern travel grants

- Government red tape
- Self-serving agencies and programs
- Hours of operation

Agriculture

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Agriculture appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 43% of participants.

Large-group Asset Valuing

In the initial large-group session, **Agriculture** was identified as the most significant asset in the "economic" asset bundle.

Participants gave "agriculture" a total of 27 votes:
- 21 blue (valued)
- 6 red (threatened)

Definition of "Agriculture"

Participants identified the following meanings associated with "agriculture":

- Science of production
- Feedstock
- Custodians of land (good stewards)
- Livelihood, way of life
- Infrastructure: dealerships, agribusiness
- Farming
- Industry, economic, small business
- Producing

Resources Sustaining "Agriculture"

- Land and water
- Soil quality
- Prices and accessibility
- Technical support (consultants, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), Internet, veterinary services)
- Dedicated farmers
- Service support (fertilizer, plant, grain storage, dealerships)
- Weather
- Information technology
- Marketing (markets, boards – supply management)
- Infrastructure (roads, communication, etc.)
- Research (new innovations)(bull test station, research station, all scientific support)
- Labour
- Legislation – Drainage Act, land tax reduction

- Support programs: Heritage Fund, Net Income Stabilization Account (NISA), Gross Revenue Insurance Plan (GRIP), crop insurance

Threats to "Agriculture"

- Restrictive imbalance between government and legislation (e.g., Water Act)
- Government policy dictated by urbanites
- Financing, cost of doing business, accessibility to capital
- Careless use of resources (land, water, etc.)
- Loss of agricultural services and agricultural education facilities
- Loss of markets (accessibility, distance)
- Disease threat
- Foreign government policy, global market and price setting
- Attitude – better selling job of "big business"
- Reduced population and increased age of farmers
- Government policy
- Start-up difficult
- Cheap food policies (return for investment low)
- Urbanization

Productive Skilled Labour Force

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Productive skilled labour force appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 39% of participants.

Large-group Asset Valuing

In the initial large-group session, **Productive Skilled Labour Force** was identified as the most significant asset in the "economic" asset bundle.

Participants gave "Productive Skilled Labour Force" 51 votes:
- 23 blue (valued)
- 28 red (threatened)

Definition of "Productive Skilled Labour Force"

Participants identified the following meanings associated with "productive skilled labour force":

- Productive skills/people/labour force/youth and seniors
- Diversified, skilled workforce
- Running out of skilled workers
- Replacement workers
- Multi-skilled workers

Resources Sustaining "Productive Skilled Labour Force"

- Industry itself (agriculture/forestry)
- Training institutions
- Business development organizations
- Cheaper land

Threats to "Productive Skilled Labour Force"

- Economic opportunities
- Government regulations re: hiring
- Lack of cohesive training
- Competitiveness of northern communities versus southern Ontario
- Competitions with larger businesses
- Subsidy programs
- Banks and their lending practices to small businesses
- Globalization and consolidation

Sense of Community

Individual Rural Asset Ranking

Sense of community appeared in the top five individual rural assets ranking for 20% of the participants.

Large-group Asset Valuing

In the initial large-group session, **Sense of Community** was identified as the most significant asset in the "social" asset bundle.

Participants gave "sense of community" 17 votes:

- 17 blue (valued)
- 0 red (threatened).

Definition of "Sense of Community"

Participants identified the following meanings associated with a "sense of community":

- Realizing the values of others (e.g., urban and farm)
- A small voice in a big world
- Communication within the community
- Helping each other (neighbours)
- Interconnectedness
- Includes everyone
- "Camaraderie"

Resources Sustaining "Sense of Community"

- Isolation
- Volunteers
- Government funding
- Grass roots communities
- Small businesses
- Sense of growth
- Productive land base
- People (trained and educated)
- Policing/fire/emergency measures
- Recreation and cultural facilities
- Sense of community history
- Intergenerational caring and concern
- Available activities
- Every age group has an interest
- Full range of educational facilities
- Easy access to self help and groups
- Small town media
- Municipal amenities
- Natural resources
- Mining/prospecting

Threats to "Sense of Community"

- Government cutbacks
- Lack of accessibility for some members of the community
- Health resources (travel)
- Isolation
- Distance to larger centres
- Distance within our district
- Volunteer burn-out
- Lack of jobs (for younger generation)
- Taking things for granted
- Trend away from community policing
- Trend away from community schools
- Not training for small business labour needs
- Dependency on government programs and resources
- Government centralizing makes it increasingly difficult to influence the decision-making process