

Yukon Rural Review

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Who we are

The Canadian Rural Partnership is the Government of Canada's strategy for supporting development in rural, remote and northern communities. In the Yukon, the Canadian Rural Partnership is delivered through **Rural Team Yukon**, a collaborative working group made up of federal, territorial and community-based organizations searching out solutions to address challenges identified by rural residents within the Yukon.

Over the last several years, the Team has helped implement a large number of projects across the Yukon. With a focus on youth, economic development, entrepreneurship and intergovernmental cooperation, these projects respond directly to priority areas identified through the Rural Dialogue. The projects demonstrate how innovative approaches can help to strengthen rural communities by drawing on funding from the Canadian Rural Partnership and Rural Team members.

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Teslin Tlingit Council Daycare: A leader in community-wide literacy

Patty Wiseman is making the Teslin Tlingit Council Daycare a hotspot for literacy thanks to funding from the Yukon Territorial Government's Literacy Action Committee.

Wiseman takes a community-wide approach with her unique literacy initiatives, which makes the daycare the centre for a lot of activity. Because Teslin is such a small, close-knit community, this approach has enabled the daycare to surpass its programming expectations and reach a very wide audience of learners.

The After School Reading Program is a child-delivered program. Children in grades 3-9, come to the daycare after school to read to the preschoolers. The volunteer readers receive a small honorarium at the end of the school year if they fulfill their responsibilities to the After School Reading Program.

"This program is so popular that we have waiting lists of school children wanting to read to the kids at the daycare. The older kids will come in for an hour and a half and do a variety of activities with the younger ones: reading, literacy games, looking at pictures and encouraging conversation. It's all about building vocabulary," said Wiseman.



Every day, four to six elementary students come to the Teslin Tlingit Council Daycare to read to young children

While the program benefits the preschoolers immensely, its benefits extend to the older children as well. "There's a process involved in signing up the older kids for the program. They sign a contract that says they have to come when they say they will, and they have to call us if they can't make it. I think it develops accountability," said Wiseman, "They

get practice reading too, and they see how the younger kids look up to them."

Wiseman and her enthusiastic staff also operate a library for parents out of the Teslin Tlingit Council Daycare. "Parents really appreciate it because they don't have time to go to libraries, especially if they are single parents," said Wiseman, "One parent told me

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Francophone youth in the North: A world to discover!

The Fédération franco-ténoise and the Comité de coordination jeunesse hosted the second annual Franco-Nord Canada Youth Conference in Yellowknife from April 16-19, 2004. The event brought together 30 Francophone youth from the three territories: five from Whitehorse in the Yukon, five from Iqaluit in Nunavut, two from Hay River and 18 from Yellowknife in the Northwest Territories.

The inter-territory event gave Francophone youth from the three territories an opportunity to get to know one another better, share their similarities and differences, and have fun in French through a program of



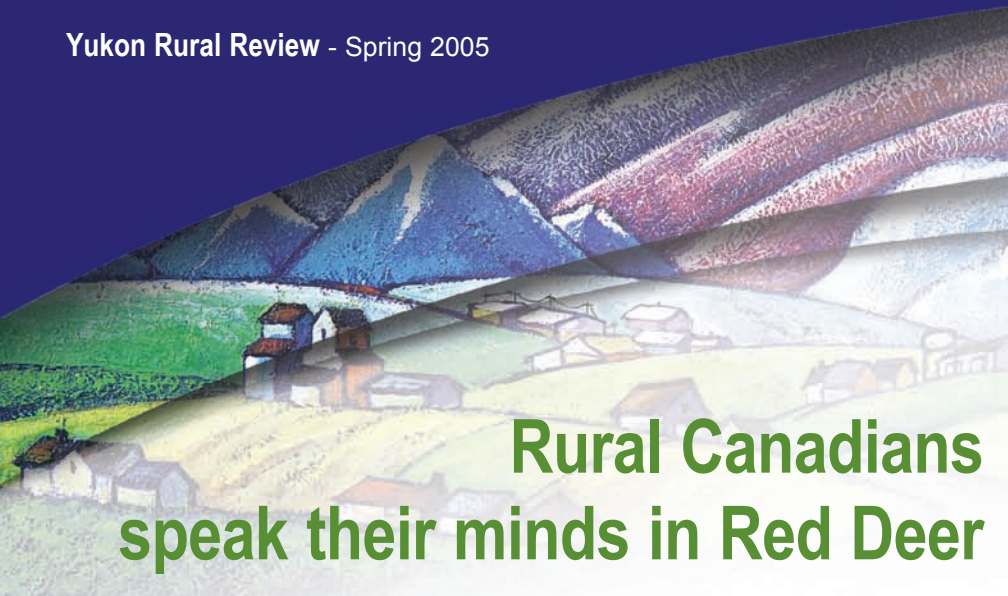
Building a web of support and confidence - this activity was a part of the leadership workshop to help youth build confidence in themselves and in others

cultural, sports and leadership training events. The Franco-Nord Canada conference is an initiative of the Comité Espoir Jeunesse du Yukon, which organized the first conference in

Whitehorse, in April 2003. The third conference is expected to be held in Iqaluit, Nunavut in April 2005.

The youth conference, which is both a cultural and social event, gives French speakers and youth that are just interested in learning more about French language and culture, a chance to come together to learn and meet their own goals. For Francophones, it is a chance to enrich their cultural identity, to take pride in sharing their language and culture with their neighbours. The purpose of the workshops was to let the youth explore their full potential and abilities, increase their self-confidence,

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Rural Canadians speak their minds in Red Deer

By the Honourable Wayne Easter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with Special Emphasis on Rural



“It was interesting to learn that other parts of Canada face similar issues and challenges that we do here in the Yukon. The conference was a great opportunity to network and learn!” Dawn Charlie, *Little Salmon Carmacks First Nation*.

We saw a lot of this passion at the Red Deer conference. And we saw a lot of enthusiasm, drive and willingness to find ways to take action and build strategies to strengthen and sustain rural Canada. It is this sort of positive and forward-thinking human effort that will make a difference in rural Canada.

The National Rural Conference focused on five subjects important to rural Canada: entrepreneurship, community capacity building, infrastructure, northern issues and youth. Participants talked about projects going on in their communities, what makes them successful and what could be done to better support them and similar projects.

They spoke of the need for collaboration, partnerships and communication within and between communities, and the value of cooperatives in rural communities. They also spoke of the importance of long-term and stable government programs that rural communities could count on, and quality information they could use for planning. Increasing the awareness and understanding of the interdependency between rural and urban Canada was also raised.

Youth from rural communities made their presence felt throughout the conference. This began with a youth forum organized by the National Rural Youth Network, and continued throughout the weekend. Their message was clear and heartfelt: youth don’t just want to be

listened to by government; they want the tools to be active and productive leaders in their communities. They also insisted that youth programs need to be developed *with* youth, not just *for* youth.

“The national rural meeting is a rare opportunity to come together and share ideas. It is in sharing these ideas that we can build a strong rural Canada. Thank you Rural Secretariat, keep up the excellent work.” Donald Inverarity, Rural Team Yukon Co-chair

Northerners too were clear in their message: northern communities faces many challenges, but northerners have the creativity and the initiative to overcome them. They are also great producers of wealth for the rest of Canada. The North needs government to supply the tools and the support they need to bring to life the vision they have for their communities. Northerners spoke of the need for infrastructure programs suited to their needs, streamlined governance, and for all levels of government to work together and to share information. They also spoke of the need for municipal governments to work towards common goals for both their community and their area.

As I said in my closing remarks in Red Deer, the fabric of this country rests in rural Canada. We are going to continue to build our communities in rural Canada because we deserve our share, because we are producers of wealth in this nation. Together we will build on what we have, and we will take action for sustainable rural communities—where there’s heart and where there’s hope.

Online Webcast connects Canada to Yukon youth

By Patch Groenewegen

Connecting Youth in Canada (CYC) was a Web-based pilot project to get Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal youth sharing ideas and talking about issues that matter to them. This cutting-edge initiative, led by Indian and Northern Affairs Canada’s Public Outreach Unit with the support of a grant from the Learning and Innovation Seed Fund and Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), provided some First Nations students in Whitehorse with an opportunity to get their message across. Using new Webcast technology, the CYC team gave Canadian students across the country a chance to see what life is like for their First Nations and Inuit peers, as they visited four communities, including Whitehorse.

Using studio space at Northern Native Broadcasting Yukon (NNBY) on February 5, 2004 the CYC team set up a youth panel with participants from Porter Creek Secondary School (PCSS). During the half-hour Webcast, viewers saw a 4-minute video that the CYC team and the participants put together earlier about life in Whitehorse. Host Buck Smarch then spoke on the theme “Perception as Reality” and

the students, from seven different First Nations, shared their candid views on stereotypes and the media.

Because of the interactive ability of a Webcast, questions came in “live” by e-mail from across Canada, mainly on the themes of racism and reality. The participants agreed that to break away from stereotyping and prejudice, all Canadians need to work on cross-cultural communications in our communities. When asked the question, “How can we make a positive change in society?” one of the students responded, “I think we just need to be accountable and prove that we are willing to make a difference.”

The innovative Webcast series was aimed at increasing awareness of Aboriginal youth culture and issues among their non-Aboriginal peers. Participants in the series represented more than a half dozen First Nations and one Inuit community. During the 2003/2004 winter season, an estimated 40,000 students and teachers watched the live Webcast series across Canada.

The four Webcasts are archived on www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/connex for teachers and students to use during the coming school year.

Yukon Youth Conference meets its 6th year with new energy

The sixth annual Yukon Youth Conference, from January 30–31, 2004, attracted close to 350 youth from around the Yukon to attend workshops, recreational activities, a marketplace, live music, street hockey and much more. Get Up, Stand Up was this year’s theme, encouraging youth to become involved and take action in their communities.

The event was hosted by Bringing Youth Towards Equality (BYTE) and held at the Wood Street School in downtown Whitehorse. With a major focus on activism and edutainment (education + entertainment), BYTE mobilized a core group of volunteers and partner organizations to bring the conference together.

“The success of this year’s conference can be attributed to the massive wealth of community support we received,” said Dave Prodan, Executive Director of BYTE. “Dozens of new partners helped contribute through sponsorships, funding contributions and assisting in the coordination and promotion of the conference activities.”

This year’s conference brought about a radical redefinition of BYTE’s role in the community and helped to solidify the many reasons why BYTE continues to promote a youth conference for the Yukon:

- To provide youth with a solid selection

of workshops and activities that reflect youth opinion and promote community development through activism and social change.

- To reduce isolation in rural communities around Whitehorse by offering Yukon youth a chance to come together for discussion, education and entertainment in a positive and healthy atmosphere.
- To train and mentor youth volunteers to organize and implement a conference. This kind of training and mentorship leads young people to become further involved in a variety of community development initiatives and prepares them to be our current and future leaders.

The dialogues and discussions with youth at the latest conference have helped to shape the direction of BYTE’s 2004 Summer Community Tour. BYTE staff and volunteers spent the summer traveling throughout the Yukon with a condensed and portable version of BYTE’s popular youth conference activities. BYTE’s Community Tour targets Yukon youth living in more remote and isolated communities who may have less opportunity to become involved in community development or activism due to their isolation from readily accessible programs.

For more information on BYTE’s activities or to get involved, visit: www.yukonyouth.com.

Sell Pitch Training helps innovators shine

Yukon innovators are starting to show up in the global spotlight. Erik Blake, Icefield Tools Corporation, recently landed a contract with NASA; Bruce Fast, GenieTek Innovations Inc., provides his software programs to the U.S. Department of Justice; and Albert Rock, ACR Systems, has been exporting a variety of products related to data logger technology.

If you are going to be in the spotlight, you might as well shine. To this end, the National Research Council provided funding for a unique project to help Yukon innovators professionally present themselves, their product and their business strategy to investors and the public.

Through skill building activities, business advise/consultation and the design of professional marketing tools, the “Sell Pitch Training” project helped innovators to develop their own personal “attention grabbing” style and marketing materials, all directed towards creating a strong “sell pitch” that would satisfy the emotional and financial needs of the investor.

The words of the innovators who participated in the Sell Pitch Training provide the best description

as to the benefits received: “The business plan consultation was extremely helpful to me and my business partner. We had been working on getting our business plan completed, but found the task onerous. The help we received was very valuable at getting a clear, concise business plan completed and we are now prepared to present to any potential investors.” – Bruce Fast, GenieTek Innovations Inc.

“The quality of the work, i.e. the composition of the photos and the graphics, including the banner, were very well done. Going through this exercise has helped me to understand and learn some of the necessities required for marketing our company.” – Greg Hakonson, PneuMedex Inc.

The Sell Pitch Training project came to an exciting finale when five of the innovators presented their business plans before an impressed Business Advisory Board from Advanced Systems Institute, located in British Columbia.

You should have seen them shine!

Bruce Fast, (top) sells his innovative software program to the US Dept of Justice

Erik Blake, (middle) will be taking his survey tool innovation to the moon with NASA

Greg Hakonson, (bottom) has positioned his innovation company as a world leader in the lower back pain market

Photos: Cathie Archbould



Peer mentorship helps young entrepreneurs succeed

Youth are using their energy, ideas and passion to turn their business dreams into reality. That’s the good news. The bad news is that youth-owned businesses are failing at an alarming rate. Over 75% fail within the first four years of operation. The reasons for this business failure usually include a lack of start-up capital, overall financial mismanagement, and limited access to information and resources. Of those who survive the first four years, only one in 10 last a decade. The stats can be scary but there are programs to assist young entrepreneurs in building successful and sustainable businesses.

The Young Entrepreneurs Association of Canada (YEA) is a national, non-profit organization that provides unique opportunities for entrepreneurs under 35 to connect with peers who understand the challenges and rewards of entrepreneurship. YEA is built on the belief that young entrepreneurs improve their chances of business success by sharing in the knowledge and experiences of their peers.

On Thursday, September 23, 2004, YEA launched its Peer Mentorship Program across Canada. This program is designed to provide young business owners with a group of peer mentors who offer ideas, wisdom, experience and support. The Peer Mentorship Program is the first national program of its kind to be delivered to rural entrepreneurs across Canada.

A Peer Mentorship Group (PMG) places 8–10 YEA members into non-competing groups of business owners who meet monthly to share ideas and experiences in a confidential environment. The structure is based on the core values of confidentiality, commitment and communication and encourages participants to share, learn and teach each other in a casual and safe environment.

“Committing to a PMG can make a big difference in the success of a young entrepreneur,” says Rebecca Myers, YEA’s Director of Operations. “While our family and friends sometimes struggle to understand the nature of the issues we face as young entrepreneurs, PMG members know exactly what we are going through!”

To gain access to a Peer Mentorship Group in your community you must be a member of YEA. Young rural entrepreneurs are encouraged to bring together Peer Mentorship Groups in their own community. YEA provides program training and support to all participants. For more information, visit www.yea.ca, or call 1 (888) 639.3222.

Community-based entrepreneurship in the Yukon

A real opportunity exists in the Yukon for entrepreneurs to strengthen the local community’s social and economic fabric—and community support is the key.

In the past, small communities have not always looked favourably on entrepreneurship. The reality is that many entrepreneurs are unsuccessful in their first attempt to start a business. Eight out of ten new businesses fail in the first five years—this rate is even greater in small communities. This can be related to a lack of start-up capital, resources and community backing. Often, when an entrepreneur starts a new business that is unsuccessful, there is resentment in the community towards the entrepreneur and reluctance to support them in a second attempt. This is where a fundamental shift in attitude towards entrepreneurs needs to take place.

The Yukon Entrepreneurship Society has been working with a new model to encourage community-based economic development. The model is called Entrepreneurs First.

It is based on the idea that the community has a responsibility to help new ventures grow and succeed. To make this happen, the community has to really believe in entrepreneurship and put its support behind the entrepreneur. The entrepreneur has a responsibility to give back to the community by sharing knowledge and lessons learned, to help others who may be interested in starting a new business.

The vision for the Entrepreneurs First model is simple. Support for the entrepreneur comes from a local committee of individuals from various areas of the community who have an interest in strengthening their community through community-based economic development. As the committee is made up of individuals from different backgrounds they may be able to assist the entrepreneur with any obstacles that may arise during the start-up period such as licensing, zoning or assistance in building business partnerships.

Next there is an Enterprise Facilitator hired by the committee to support local entrepreneurs and provide guidance, along with the committee. As the entrepreneurs progress through the lifecycle of their business, other organizations may want to get on board such as venture capitalists or export development agencies.

There are solid opportunities for Yukon communities to participate in the expected economic growth created by many local projects, both large and small. With support from the community, entrepreneurs can take advantage of local opportunities and give back to their community by training and encouraging others to follow their entrepreneurial passion.

Don Inverarity is Co-Chair for Yukon’s Rural Team and can be reached at the Entrepreneurship Centre in Whitehorse, phone: (867) 393-3574 or donald@yecsa.ca.

Rural Team Yukon Members

- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
- Canadian Heritage
- Health Canada
- Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
- Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
- Industry Canada
- Social Development Canada
- Association Franco-Yukonnaise
- Association of Yukon Communities
- Bringing Youth Towards Equality
- Canada/Yukon Business Service Centre
- Champagne and Aishihik First Nation
- Yukon Chamber of Commerce
- Yukon College
- Yukon Entrepreneurship Centre Society
- Yukon Volunteer Bureau
- Yukon Government Department of Advanced Education
- Yukon Government Department of Economic Development



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Do you have an idea or story you would like to see included in the Yukon Rural Review? We welcome your submissions for consideration.

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Supporting the innovative spirit in the Yukon

The Yukon Innovation Action Plan (YIAP) is a guide to creating opportunities that will stimulate a new source of wealth and well-being for Yukoners through invention and innovation.

The YIAP was developed through consultation with Yukon businesses, government, educators and innovators, and guided by the Innovation Canada–Yukon Committee (ICY), made up of members from Industry Canada, Yukon Finance, National Research Council, Yukon Technology Innovation Centre, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Dana Naye Ventures, Yukon College and the Yukon Entrepreneurship Centre Society.

Yukoners who contributed to the development of the YIAP have some clear guidelines for building an innovative Yukon. They include:

- Creative educational environments for our youth that inspire lifelong learning to develop knowledge and skills for successful employability and self-sufficiency.
- Workplaces that encourage and support us to think together and try new and productive ways of doing things.
- New products, services and ways of “doing business” that contribute to an enriched standard of living and quality of life.
- Government infrastructure and policies that actively support and contribute to a strong and innovative private sector, as well as locally driven community economies.
- Development of an innovative Yukon that respectfully balances economic

- interests with cultural, social and environmental considerations.
- Innovative products, services and social development “solutions” that spark national and international interest and enhance the ability to succeed on the global stage.
- Communities that achieve social and economic advantages through innovative initiatives, while enhancing lifestyle and cultural richness.

The Momentum Has Begun

Over the past two years, the ICY Committee has generated activities that have brought these guidelines to life. To name just a few:

- Training clinics and networking forums have been held to connect innovators with available support and expertise, which helps them as they move through the various steps of the innovation cycle (e.g. licensing agreements, product development, business planning, etc.).
- Networking forums for building new partnerships between economic and social development sectors have been held (e.g. natural health products, northern construction, essential skills in the workplace).
- Innovative minds and their successes were showcased for the public to admire in an event last March, as well as in the newspaper, profiled on the Web site, and in the newsletter, *Inside Innovation*.

Funded by the Department of Indian and Northern Affairs and Northern Development’s Knowledge Innovation Fund, the Yukon Innovation Action Plan is available electronically at www.yukoninnovation.ca.

Yukon Community Profiles gets a facelift

By Ted Lambert, Project Coordinator

After five years of useful service, *Yukon Community Profiles* is being revised. Originally developed in 1999, this document has served as an excellent resource for those looking to relocate to the Yukon or to simply become better informed about any Yukon community.

Yukon Community Profiles features information on every community in the Yukon. Each chapter gives general information about the community, such as its history and people, then goes on to specifics such as population, cost of living, services available, and the area’s economy and work.

The decision to revamp the profiles was made by the book’s main sponsors, including federal and territorial government departments, who use it as a key source of information for recruiting community staff, such as government employees, teachers, nurses or R.C.M.P., and for attracting new citizens and businesses to the Yukon.

While informative and interesting, the community profiles were in need of more current information about population, services and people. Some communities have undergone considerable transformation in the five years since the original publication, with mine closures, new services or population shifts. Important events, such as the settlement of a particular First Nation’s land claim or the opening of a new resource development opportunity, can create significant change within a community. Because *Yukon Community Profiles* is used to provide relevant information about each community, it is important that it be kept up-to-date.

To update the profiles, input was sought from various people within the community, including municipal governments, chambers of commerce, First Nations, and service or arts and crafts groups.

For more information, contact the Yukon Chamber of Commerce at (867) 667-2000

Teslin Tlingit Council Daycare:

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Children who participate in the literacy program at Teslin Tlingit Council Daycare have a great opportunity to have fun, learn new skills and meet some of the older children in the community

she hadn’t opened a book for four years—since her first child was born. The library makes getting books easy for parents. And we lend out books for the kids too.”

The Yukon Territorial Government’s Literacy Action Committee contributed a total of \$5,345 to the Teslin Tlingit Council Daycare literacy programs this year. Funding for the After School Reading Program, the lending libraries for parents and children and other daycare literacy programs is made possible through direction from the government’s Yukon Literacy Strategy which saw the creation of the Literacy Action Committee. For more information, contact Carol Leef at (867) 667-8682 or e-mail: carol.leef@gov.yk.ca.

Francophone youth in the North: continued from page 1

and put the concept of involvement into practice.

Youth events of this kind help to enrich participants and make them aware of the significance and importance of linguistic and cultural diversity. These events provide youth with an understanding of the important roles they can play in their community, and give them a sense of pride in who they are and what they can accomplish.

A project such as this could not have been undertaken without the support of a number of sponsors. Thank you to all the agencies that participated including: le Français pour l’avenir, the Fédération franco-ténoise, the Association des francophones du Nunavut, the Association franco-yukonnaise and the Canadian Rural Partnership for their assistance.

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