



# Rural Horizon

Canadian Rural Partnership | Rural Team Quebec

Winter 2008



## The New Forest Communities Program

Canada's forest sector is facing unprecedented challenges. It is dealing with rising energy costs, an ever-stronger Canadian dollar, new international competition and reduced timber supplies. All of these issues mean that communities that depend on the forest sector, more than any others, are feeling the impact of these changes.



The forests are the gateways to our communities. Photo J. Robert

The Government of Canada has established the Forest Communities Program (FCP) to help deal with this new economic situation and to reduce its impact. This new \$25 million five-year program will enable 11 Canadian communities, selected by competition, to develop the tools, approaches and strategies they need to

respond to transition in the forest sector. Through this new program, the Government of Canada hopes to provide the affected communities with the means to meet these new challenges and to benefit from emerging forest-based opportunities.

Regional solutions developed in the various communities will be shared with other forest communities across Canada and abroad through the Canadian Model Forest network, the International Model Forest Network and other similar organizations. By promoting knowledge-sharing in this way, the FCP seeks to ensure that expertise developed regionally can be used by and will benefit all Canadians.

### Two Quebec projects

#### The Lac Saint-Jean Model Forest

Together, hand in hand! That is how one would describe the Lac Saint-Jean project. This partnership of three communities brings together the Conseil des Montagnais du Lac-Saint-Jean, the Domaine-du-Roy RCM and the Maria-Chapdelaine RCM. These partners have formed a new corporation with the goal of uniting the territories, forest communities, businesses and institutions interested in forest development and enhancement.



From tree to beam, a chain to value. Photo J. Robert

The Lac Saint-Jean project covers an area of 12,500 square kilometres and could receive annual funding of \$325,000 until 2012 from Natural Resources Canada. The project's main focus is to pool expertise developed in recent years in order to seek new development opportunities related to forest resources.

"Implementation of this project represents a major contribution to the re-engineering of the forest industry in our region. We have the elements needed to provide our region and our community with a promising future in the forest sector," stressed Reeves Bernard G n reux and Gilbert Goulet.

#### Hautes-Laurentides (Mont-Laurier)

The Hautes-Laurentides project is focused on the areas two greatest strengths: the forest sector and recreational tourism. These two sectors are the foundation of the region's economic, cultural and social life.

The Association des intervenants forestiers des Hautes-Laurentides (AHL) is sponsoring this project, which brings together over 15 organizations in the region. Working jointly for the benefit of the community, the project's members are seeking stability in the forest and recreational tourism sectors in order to foster new development and business opportunities. Their project covers an area of 10,680 square kilometres and could receive \$325,000 annually in funding from Natural Resources Canada for five years.

For the partners, the new Forest Communities Program represents a winning strategy that will certainly help identify new opportunities for adjusting to transition in the forest sector. By encouraging the pooling of efforts and collaboration among communities, Natural Resources Canada is contributing to the health and development of the forest sector for current and future generations.

For more information on this program, please contact Jacques Robert of Natural Resources Canada at 418-721-5350 or by email at [robert@cfl.forestry.ca](mailto:robert@cfl.forestry.ca). You may also consult the website at <http://scf.rncan.gc.ca>

### In this issue

The New Forest Communities Program . . . . .	1
New Business Risk Management Programs roll out under Growing Forward . .	2
PM unveils new Community Development Trust . . . . .	2
Succession . . . Getting ready! . . . . .	3
Anti-Drug Program . . . . .	3
Snapshot of the country's population and agriculture . . . . .	4
Simplified Passport Renewal Process . . . . .	4

### Our Web sites addresses in this issue:

- <http://scf.rncan.gc.ca>
- [www.fadq.qc.ca](http://www.fadq.qc.ca)
- [www.lareleve.org/](http://www.lareleve.org/)
- [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca)
- [www.coastersassociation.com](http://www.coastersassociation.com)
- [http://www.statcan.ca/francais/agcensus2006/highlights\\_f.htm](http://www.statcan.ca/francais/agcensus2006/highlights_f.htm)
- [www.passeportcanada.gc.ca](http://www.passeportcanada.gc.ca)
- [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)





## New Business Risk Management Programs roll out under Growing Forward

A new suite of business risk management programs is rolling out under Growing Forward. These programs have been designed based on ideas put forward by producers. They are simple, responsive, predictable, and bankable.

The new programs work together by providing protection for different types of losses:

- **AgriInvest** producer accounts help cover small margin declines or can be used for investments. AgriInvest replaces coverage for margin declines of 15% or less, previously covered by the Canadian Agricultural Income Stabilization (CAIS) program.
- **AgriStability** covers larger margin declines caused by circumstances such as low prices, production losses, and rising input costs. It replaces the coverage previously available under CAIS, for margin declines of more than 15%.
- **AgriInsurance** offers protection for production losses in specific crops caused by uncontrollable weather-related perils. It includes existing production insurance and is being expanded to include other commodities.
- **AgriRecovery** is intended to help producers hit by natural disasters at a regional level.
- **Advance Payments Program** provides cash advances to help producers with cash flow.



The Government of Canada is providing \$600 million to kickstart AgriInvest accounts. Most producers will have already received a letter which tells them the amount of their AgriInvest Kickstart benefit and outlines their options. Those who did not automatically receive a letter need to apply before March 31, 2008. For more information on AgriInvest Kickstart, call 1-866-367-8506, or visit [www.agr.gc.ca/agriinvest](http://www.agr.gc.ca/agriinvest). In Quebec, call La Financière agricole toll free at 1-800-749-3646 or visit [www.fadq.qc.ca](http://www.fadq.qc.ca).



On May 17 2007, the Government of Canada assigned The Honourable Christian Paradis, Secretary of State (Agriculture) responsibility for the Rural and Co-operatives Secretariats. As pictured here during his nomination announcement at the office of the Regional Municipal County of Nicolet-Yamaska.

## PM unveils new Community Development Trust

### A major new national initiative that will support provincial and territorial efforts to help communities and workers buffeted by international economic turbulence

Prime Minister Stephen Harper announced that the Government of Canada will provide \$1 billion in new funding, allocated to the provinces and territories, to assist communities and workers suffering economic hardship caused by volatility in global financial and commodities markets. The initiative is known as the national Community Development Trust.

“The Government of Canada will assist vulnerable communities and laid-off workers by investing \$1 billion in the Community Development Trust,” Prime Minister Harper said. “This is a major new national initiative under which our Government will support provincial and territorial efforts to build a stronger, better future for communities and workers who have been hurt by international economic volatility.”

Canada’s economic fundamentals are strong and the national economy is well-positioned for long-term growth and prosperity. But, as an open-trading country in a world that is faced with increasing economic uncertainty, there will be difficult challenges ahead. Some Canadian communities are more vulnerable to this uncertainty due to a dependence on a single industry or employer, pressure because of exchange rate fluctuations or declining demands, most notably in the United States.

“The program is aimed at one-industry towns facing major downturns, communities plagued by chronic high unemployment or regions suffering from layoffs across a range of sectors,” said Prime Minister Harper. “Among other things, the funds will support job training to create opportunities for workers in sectors facing labour shortages and community transition plans that foster economic development and job creation in addition to infrastructure development that stimulates economic diversification.”

To that end, some of the investments from the Community Development Trust include:

- Job training and skills development to meet local or regional gaps;
- Measures to assist workers who are faced with adjustment challenges;
- Funds to develop community transition plans;
- Infrastructure projects to support diversification; and
- Other economic development and diversification initiatives that will help communities manage a transition/adjustment such as public utilities projects, industrial park development, science and technology development, access to broadband technology, downtown revitalization and communication and transportation service.

“Working together, Ottawa and all the provinces and territories can turn the economic challenges we face today into economic opportunities for all Canadians tomorrow,” said the Prime Minister.

The Community Development Trust will run for three years, funded out of the 2007-2008 budget surplus. A base amount of \$10 million will be allocated to each province and \$3 million to each territory with the balance being allocated on a per capita basis.



## Succession . . . Getting ready!

Did you know that according to a recent study by the Canadian Federation of Independent Businesses almost 50 per cent of business owners in Quebec plan to retire in the next five years? This figure climbs to 70 per cent if the timeframe is extended to ten years. Clearly, if they have not already done so, Quebec business owners need to develop a succession plan to ensure the future of their businesses.

Rural communities also face this challenge. They not only have to deal with the aging of their population but also with the exodus of their young people to urban centres, two key factors making the situation even more difficult.

### La Relève Cooperative

In the Les Sources RCM, the community hopes to anticipate and indeed prevent this lack of succession. The strategy is to show youth that there are jobs and a future for them in the Asbestos region of Eastern Townships.

La Relève, a solidarity co-operative in the Les Sources RCM, was created in 2004 with the goal of attracting and retaining young people aged 18 to 35 years in the region and of making every effort to ensure that they play an active role in the RCM. The co-operative offers young business owners coaching in accounting and marketing and a referral/advice service.

The co-operative launched a new project in 2006 to build an intergenerational bridge between young entrepreneurs in the Eastern Townships who are interested in providing succession for Les Sources RCM businesses and entrepreneurs preparing for retirement. A regional action plan, personal succession plan, communication tools, and skills enhancement are some of the tools that the co-operative has developed to prepare for succession and to facilitate the transfer of businesses in the region. It is often said that youth represent the future and in the Les Sources RCM, we believe it.

This project received funding from the Rural Secretariat, a body that enables the Government of Canada to work in partnership with Canadians in rural and remote areas to build strong, dynamic communities.

For more information on this initiative, please contact Véronique Normandin, Project Manager, at 819-879-0511, or visit the website at <http://www.lareleve.org/>.

For more information on the Rural Secretariat, please visit the website at [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca)



Véronique Normandin, the succession commissioner and Pierre Bilodeau, the co-operative coordinator

## Anti-Drug Program

### A mobilization project is launched on the Lower North Shore

The Lower North Shore region is one of the least known regions of Quebec. It stretches 375 kilometres along the north shore of the Gulf of St. Lawrence. It has a total population of 5,722 inhabitants located in 15 villages with fewer than 1,000 residents each. Two of these 15 communities are Francophone and 13 are Anglophone, including two Aboriginal communities.

The region faces numerous challenges. The communities are far apart and often isolated. Several villages have no road access and transportation means are therefore limited, especially in winter. This lack of transportation creates a number of difficulties, notably at the social level. Social workers in the region, for example, who have responsibility for several communities, have difficulty providing continuous, quality care to the region's residents.

Another challenge is the lack of work. Many fishers must leave the region for three to six months a year. Youth, left with their grandparents, sometimes have less supervision. In addition, there are few recreational activities available to them in the evenings and on weekends and during summer when school is out. The lack of a police presence and of infrastructures also contributes to the youth drug and alcohol abuse problem in the region.

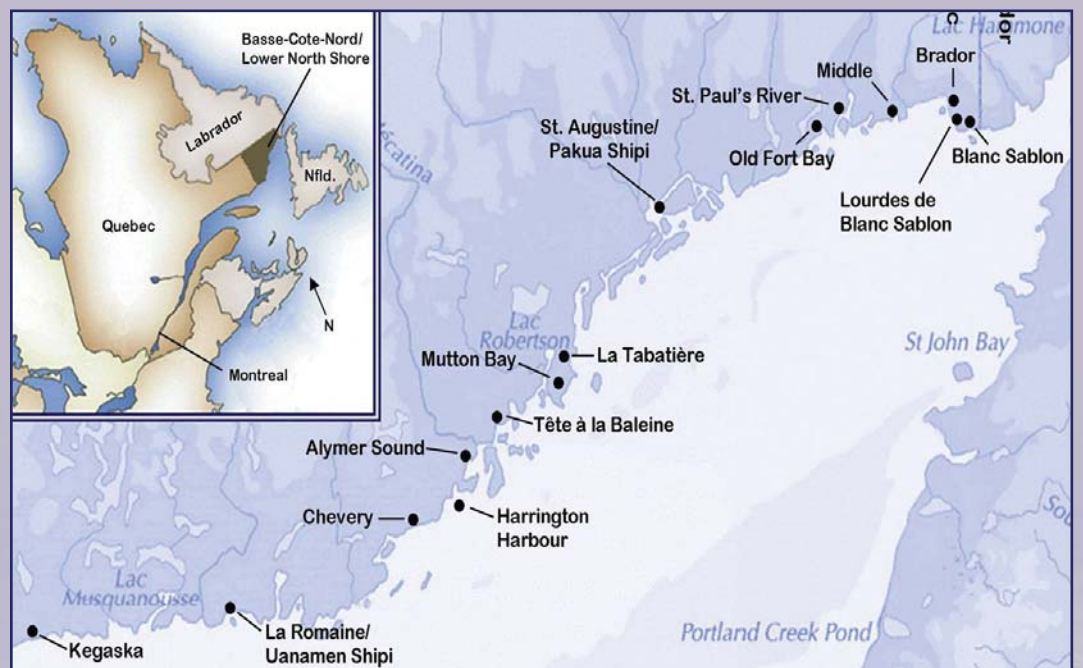
In light of this situation, the Bonne Esperance community on the Lower North Shore developed a community mobilization project under Health Canada's Anti-Drug Program (ADP). The project calls for local and regional partners to work together and to train volunteer leaders in the community.

The Coasters Association, a non-profit organization dedicated to creating, supporting and promoting the ideas and efforts of businesses to contribute to the vitality of the Lower North Shore region, is taking the lead in this initiative. A number of measures to prevent drug abuse in the municipality have been launched. Community groups and community leaders and partners, have mobilized behind prevention activities and the development and implementation of a drug abuse prevention program and the reduction of drug use in the municipality. They have also agreed to bring the ADP model to other Lower North Shore communities.

The results and best practices of the initiative will also be shared with the municipality's agencies and all Lower North Shore partners and local action groups in the Bonne Esperance community. The network of four local radio stations and local newspaper will be disseminating information to the small isolated communities of the Lower North Shore.

This is an excellent example of mobilization and initiative that will certainly inspire other rural communities.

For more information on this project, please contact Mrs. Cornella Maurice of the Coasters Association at 418-379-2006 or you may also consult their website at: [www.coastersassociation.com](http://www.coastersassociation.com).





## Did you know?

### Snapshot of the country's population and agriculture

The Census of Population and Census of Agriculture are conducted simultaneously every five years by Statistics Canada. The snapshots of the population and of agriculture that they provide enable governments, private business and non-profit organizations to make decisions based on reliable data. Here are some of the findings drawn from the Census of Agriculture.

#### Quebec: provincial leader in blueberry production

For the first time, Quebec has taken the lead from Nova Scotia as the main blueberry-producing province. Total acreage devoted to this crop increased by almost 25 per cent in Quebec between 2001 and 2006, reaching 41,757 acres. Production of this antioxidant-rich fruit is also experiencing strong growth in other provinces, especially British Columbia, where blueberry acreage grew 61.5 per cent.



#### Maple syrup: Quebec remains the largest producer

Do Quebecers have a sweet tooth? Quebec remains the lead province in the production of maple syrup accounting for 91.9 per cent of the taps in the country in 2006.

#### Organic production in Quebec: Hay and field crops

The percentage of farms that reported organic production in Quebec was slightly higher (7.6 per cent of all farms) than the percentage in Canada as a whole (6.8 per cent of all farms). Almost one-third of Quebec farms with organic production are certified (32.9 per cent), 5.4 per cent are in transition to be certified, while the rest are not certified. *It should be noted that farms may declare more than one organic status.* More than a third (36.4 per cent) of Quebec's organic farms produce hay and field crops.

#### Land management practices: Increased use of environment-friendly methods

In Quebec, no-till methods were used on about one-tenth (9.6 per cent) of the land prepared for planting in 2006, up from 4.8 per cent in 2001. The proportion of land prepared for planting using conventional tillage was down from 76.7 per cent in 2001 to 62.0 per cent five years later. Conservation tillage was the preferred method for about 28.5 per cent of the fields, compared to 18.5 per cent in 2001.

#### Women and agriculture

Women represent about one-quarter of the farm operators in Quebec. This number remained relatively stable between the two census periods.

#### Farm work

More than half of the farmers (57 per cent) in Quebec devoted more than 40 hours per week to operating their farms. This number is 10 percentage points higher than the national figure. However, the proportion of farm operators with off-farm work or businesses is higher in Canada, where it is close to half of all farm operators (48.4 per cent), compared to 30.4 per cent of Quebec operators.

#### Computer use

Slightly more than half of Quebec farm operators reported using a computer for farm business in 2006, compared to 47.7 per cent in 2001. This represents higher use than that reported nationally (46.4 per cent).

#### Average age of operators is younger in Quebec than elsewhere in Canada

Despite the steady increase in the average age of agricultural producers in all provinces, Quebec has the lowest average age in Canada at 49.3 years. British Columbia, however, has the highest average age at 53.6 years.

#### Check the Census results

You can access the results of the Census of Agriculture on line at <http://www.statcan.ca/english/agcensus2006/highlights.htm>

Statistics Canada has released the portraits of farming communities at the city, municipality and village levels in fall 2007.

Statistics Canada would like to thank the farming community for its participation in the 2006 Census of Agriculture and looks forward to 2011 for the next census data collection!

## Simplified Passport Renewal Process



Since August 15, 2007, it is easier to renew your Canadian passport. Through the Simplified Passport Renewal Process, qualified applicants no longer have to submit documentary evidence of citizenship, supplementary identification or a guarantor declaration.

The Simplified Passport Renewal Process is open to Canadians 16 years of age or over who:

- currently hold a Canadian passport issued after January 31, 2002,
- reside in Canada, and,
- were residing in Canada when they applied for their previous passport.

Simplified renewal applications may be submitted at all Passport Canada offices, participating Service Canada and Canada Post outlets, and by mail.

Other conditions apply. Please consult [www.passportcanada.gc.ca](http://www.passportcanada.gc.ca) or call 1-800-567-6868 or 1 800 O-Canada for more information.

Passport Canada wishes to remind Canadians that they are **not** required to carry a valid passport to travel to the United States by **land or sea** until the summer of 2008 at the earliest.

Since January 23, 2007, Canadians travelling to the United States by **air** must carry a valid passport or a NEXUS membership card when used at a NEXUS kiosk.

#### FOR INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Phone: 1-800-0-CANADA  
(1-800-622-6232)  
TTY/TDD: 1-800-465-7735

Web: [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)  
Service Canada Access Centres

Dominique Richer  
Managing Editor  
Phone: (418) 648-3754  
Fax: (418) 648-7342  
E-mail: [richerdo@agr.gc.ca](mailto:richerdo@agr.gc.ca)

If you have a story idea, comment, Letter to the Editor, or would like to receive a copy of this newsletter, contact the Rural Horizon at:

Rural Secretariat  
Room 350-4, 901 Cap-Diamant Street  
Quebec, (Quebec)  
G1K 4K1  
Web site: [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca)

This publication is also available electronically on the Web at the following address: [www.rural.gc.ca/team/qc/quebec\\_e.phtml](http://www.rural.gc.ca/team/qc/quebec_e.phtml)

ISSN No. 1710-2596  
AAFC no. 10594B  
©Her Majesty the Queen in Right of Canada, 2008

The Rural Horizon is a semi-annual publication of the Rural Team Quebec for the residents of rural and remote communities of Quebec.

The Team consists of representatives from federal departments and representatives of key organizations working on rural issues in Quebec. The Rural Team works to create partnerships to mobilize stakeholders in Quebec's various regions around issues affecting their rural communities.