

Yukon Rural Review

Rural Secretariat | Rural Team Yukon

Winter 2008

Growing co-operation among six remote Yukon communities

It started with a dream created while driving along Yukon's remote Alaska Highway past pristine lakes and towering snow-peaked mountains and asking the question "How do individuals and families in our remote low-population communities sustain themselves?"

The combined population of the six communities in this remote region is less than 3,000. It includes thousands of hectares, more than five hundred kilometers of linking roads and highways, and limited affordable services and supplies compared to higher density communities.

1 How does 'community' work in a region steeped in majestic natural beauty, abounding in wildlife, and rich in traditional aboriginal lifestyle and an influx of non-aboriginals from northern communities around the world? The factors to consider are immense. How do remote residents with distinct culturally diverse backgrounds interact for the benefit of sustainable community development? What is the common denominator amongst our people that will bring us together in positive and mutually beneficial interaction?

More than 70 years after the Alaska Highway development I ask, "What does this region need to bring it together?" This was the question that I needed the answer for. Maybe everyone is satisfied and I, as an outsider, do not understand or perhaps there are needs and, with my background, I could help.

Since it took me twenty years to know this larger area to a small degree, I seriously questioned if individual and community needs were being met. How do small, remote businesses find their clientele? Is there sufficient product base to generate revenue and sustain the community?

A year of intimate dialogues with the locals at highway restaurants and community centers yielded a group of individuals willing to take action. To improve regional communication we established a database of human and business resources within the region and identified tourism as our largest common sector.

The Southern Lakes region boasts a substantial group of entrepreneurs with expertise at 'living' and sustaining a lifestyle only known to remote northerners. The art of hard work, independence and living off of the land are the common elements.



In this day and age in a developed country of convenience, consumption, dependence and intricate demographics, this northern region has a unique expertise in 'survival' known by few worldwide. We have something to offer in experience, adventure, and education one-on-one with our guests. We are small in number and we cater to small numbers for the ultimate sustainability of our region. We invite people to look and learn and take home memories and experiences that will enhance their own lifestyle.

My marketing background was instrumental in the development of a regional map. Having every operator located on the map with detail and contact information immediately created a community partnership. Interactivity began as emails circulated, followed by the development of a website and brochures, marking the beginning of an interconnected six-community regional partnership.

No longer are the Southern Lakes six fragmented and isolated spots on the map separated by political jurisdictions. Now they are six vibrant communities connected by people. Finally, a community reborn to its original historic region and a current common need to address together.

The interactivity of local people and small, remote incorporated and unincorporated communities spawned a local telephone service versus long distance, again linking people to community. These and other tools for participation were put in place and 3000 people were empowered to address issues as a community on the whole.

Growing co-operation within six remote Yukon communities is an ongoing investment. It's up to all of us interacting to make today the best we can for all of our tomorrows.



For more information:

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www.southernlakesyukon.com
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Wood, Not Waste: Fraser River Log Salvage Project

The Western Log Sort and Salvage Co-operative (WLSSC) was founded by a small group of environmentalists and log salvors (beachcombers) in 2004. With the support of the Labour Environmental Alliance Society, this unusual partnership was joining forces to address their common interest in the Fraser River.

The Fraser River has the largest and most biologically productive estuary on the Pacific Coast of North America. This important area provides a critical habitat for millions of waterfowl and shorebirds, and over 20 species of birds of prey, which all congregate at the mouth of this river at various times of the year. Every year up to 800 million juvenile salmon migrate down the Fraser and the salt marshes in the estuary provide a vital habitat as they acclimatize to salt water. Accumulation of wood debris has been identified as a significant threat to these Fraser ecosystems.

WLSSC is seeking to improve the severely degraded marsh habitat by entering the log salvage industry to help make it profitable for beachcombers to pick up logs that they have been leaving to drift due to the very low prices they were being paid for them. The members have chosen a co-operative for this business because it enables them to meet their needs collectively while providing a transparent and democratic organizational structure in a sector they feel is lacking accountability since there has been no competition for many years.

The Co-operative took an essential step forward in May 2006 when the BC Minister of Forests approved its application to operate a Marine Log Salvage Receiving Station in the Vancouver Log Salvage District. The new license was only the second issued in BC history, bringing competition to the marketing of marine salvaged wood and enabling the Co-operative to proceed with further development of an innovative operation where salvaged logs would be pre-sorted according to end-use before being marketed through open auction.

With the license in hand, the Co-operative has gone ahead to find a site for its receiving station, to confirm its potential market and viability, to build its operational plan and to secure start-up financing. It has also taken on the important role of building relationships between the log salvor community, the independent milling industry and those concerned about the health of the Fraser River Estuary.

Co-operative members have clearly understood the challenges they face in developing their business at a time when the market for logs has been severely depressed. They have also faced opposition from some powerful sectors of the forest industry that wished to protect the existing monopoly. But the Co-operative has recognized exciting opportunities too. “We are working with SmartWood to ensure that our wood can and will qualify for eco-certification and the 2010 Olympics provide an excellent chance to access markets for eco-certified building,” said Mitch Anderson, General Manager of WLSSC, “We also plan to tap into significantly different markets other than major companies, such as the log home building industry, which has annual sales in BC of over \$150 million.”

The development of WLSSC and the Wood, not Waste project has been financed in part by the Co-operative Development Initiative, a Government of Canada program to help people develop co-operatives, and to research and test innovative ways of using the co operative model.

For more information:

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Co-operatives Secretariat
www.coop.gc.ca

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Bringing the HIV and Hepatitis C Risk Assessment Guidelines to Remote Rural Northern Communities Project

“My name is Emily Quinn. I am the Community Outreach Worker for Blood Ties Four Directions Centre. We offer HIV and Hepatitis C education and support for the entire Yukon. I am here to work with your community in whatever capacity your health and social workers deem necessary.”

This is the spiel that Emily offers to people who approach her when she is visiting a community. She is currently working on an 18-month joint project of Blood Ties Four Direction Centre and Council of Yukon First Nations. The project involves spending two to three weeks in various Yukon rural communities in order to raise awareness about HIV and Hepatitis C (Hep C) transmission. In addition, she offers support to those that might be affected or at risk for transmission. Part of her work includes reducing the stigma and fear that is associated with these two illnesses.

This work is of particular importance in the rural north due to the isolation, both geographical and social, that is experienced within the majority of these communities. Many rural residents falsely believe that their isolation offers them a natural defence against HIV and Hep C. But, the Yukon is a place that is dominated by a transient and migrant worker population, which, in combination with high risk behaviours, put rural communities at particular risk for high rates of transmission. These are similar to some of the reasons for the epidemic rates of HIV transmission experienced in Africa.

First Nations people in general have been shown to be at particular risk for HIV and Hep C. They are seven-times more likely to contract Hep C than the average Canadian and First Nations women are one of the fastest growing populations for HIV transmission.

Fortunately, avoiding HIV and Hep C transmission can be easier. It involves being aware of the risky behaviours and making informed decisions based on this knowledge. Emily goes to each community with the aim of taking the mystery out of HIV and Hep C transmission. She hopes that through this process, some of the fear that surrounds these illnesses will dissipate and reduce the stigma. She is attempting to accomplish this goal by working with the Health and Social Departments of the various First Nations Governments to increase their knowledge and understanding of HIV and Hep C, hosting community workshops, and offering free, one-on-one and confidential counselling sessions.



Also, she always makes time to sit down with anyone that approaches her on the street, in the restaurant or wherever because sometimes the most meaningful and effective conversations are those that are spontaneous and shared over coffee.

Bringing the HIV and Hepatitis C Risk Assessment Guidelines to Remote Rural Northern Communities Project will be on-going until March 2008.

Should you have any questions concerning the project, would like to know when Emily will be in your community or want to become involved, please feel free to contact her at (867) 633-2437, ext. 23 or communityoutreach@klondiker.com.



BYTE is a youth-initiated and youth-directed organization that embraces youth culture to raise the youth voice. Through the arts, creative public actions, performances, forums and camps, we bring youth towards equality by allowing youth to be themselves. BYTE's job is to strengthen the youth voice so they can build the lives they envision.

This is what BYTE is up to...

2008 Yukon Youth Conference

The Youth Conference was born in 1997 when Yukon youth decided they needed a place to get together and share ideas. Since then, it has evolved to include workshops and cross country exchanges. Over 120 youth from 17 communities across the territories join together to connect with each other, debate current issues, and have fun! Now more popular than ever, the Youth Conference is on every community's calendar.

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2008 Youth Week

BYTE loves to celebrate youth and what better opportunity to do this than during the international youth week May 5-9. BYTE has contributed to the festivities since it began, and plans on coming to a local high school near you throughout the week.

Community Events Calendar

BYTE is happy to host the Youth Community Events Calendar on the BYTE website www.yukonyouth.com/community-events. All youth organizations across the Yukon are invited to submit their own information on events in their area by contacting BYTE: bytenow@yukonyouth.com or by phone (867) 667-7975.

Green Your Space

This campaign began on Earth Day April 22, 2007, and involves the conversion of BYTE's office space into a more environmentally friendly office. BYTE is one more office in the global arena that is aware of the need to change its existing ways in order to lessen the impact on the earth. We have started many initiatives and tasks established by leading environmentalists in Whitehorse, and around the country to green the office.

Canada Day Skateboarding Competition

It has become a BYTE tradition to hold the annual skateboarding competition at the Second Haven Skate Park in Whitehorse each year – and this year is no exception. We are looking forward to showcasing some of the top boarders in town!

BYTE Publications

The Toxic Blend Youth 'Zine

This do-it-yourself magazine is a venue for young people to express themselves, uncensored and bursting with style. By encouraging youth to be the media rather than fall prey to it, the Toxic Blend is a refreshing document of young writers and artists that dare to speak their minds. If you are a youth who would like to contribute or help with layout and design, contact BYTE (867) 667-7975, or e-mail toxic@yukonyouth.com. Enter the world of our Fresh Brain Collective!

Youth It Up – Escape Boredom

Motivate, inspire and encourage others around you by picking up the Youth It Up – Escape Boredom publication produced by BYTE. Email bytenow@yukonyouth.com to receive a copy, or view select pages of Youth It Up on BYTE's website www.yukonyouth.com

For more information about these and other projects please contact:

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Email- bytenow@yukonyouth.com

Safer Homes and Streets—Time to Work Together

Maybe there has always been crime—and maybe there always will be. But if you have concerns, Crime Prevention Yukon is ready to show you that much can be done to shrink the presence of crime in your life and in your community. Crime Prevention Yukon (CPY) is a Whitehorse non-profit organization which makes safer homes and streets their business. They are active in every community in Yukon and ready to hear about what your community needs to be a safer place.

At CPY, they know it's easier to prevent crime than to cure it. If you peel a crime down to its basics, you've got a person (potential offender), a place, and a target (something wanted). Safety strategies can be tailor-made to address any or all three areas.

First: the person. What can we do to have a community full of people who would never choose to commit a crime? People are born with certain personality traits (and some people are likelier than others to get caught up in bad things) but people repeatedly involved in crimes likely didn't have enough of the good things they needed as they grew up.

Children need to be protected from harm and to know that they are wanted and loved. They need to spend time with good role models for knowing who to be as adults. Their parents need good social supports and economic opportunities.

Second: the place. What kind of environment invites a crime? One where someone thinks they won't be seen, won't be caught and will get what they want with the least amount of effort.

Third: the target. Something wanted by a potential offender. If we make hard targets of ourselves and our possessions, the likelihood of crime happening to us is much smaller.

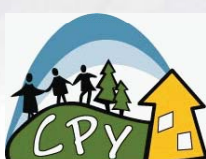
The good news: crime can be addressed by community members themselves. Preventing crime is about building healthy communities.

If you have concerns about the safety of your community and ideas about how to make things better, you can make a difference.

Here's how CPY can help:

- Knowing who to talk to about your specific community well-being or safety concerns
- Info about how to run a good community project and where to get resources
- Info about good safety strategies
- Resources for summertime neighborhood get-togethers
- Help to start up Neighbourhood Watch or Block Parent programs
- Home base for ongoing community safety or community-strengthening initiatives
- Specially-tailored workshops and presentations to address your specific safety concerns

All citizens can start a change in their community. And by working together, we can solve problems and make a healthy, safe place for all people to live good lives. Visit the resource page of the Social Change section of CPY's Web site for a listing of community resources.



For more information:

Visit <http://www.crimeprevention.yk.ca> or contact Cathrine Morginn at (867) 668-4420 or cathrine@crimeprevention.yk.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:

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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. In Quebec, call La Financière agricole toll free at 1-800-749-3646 or visit www.fadq.qc.ca.**

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.

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
Service Canada Access Centres

For more information, contact Rural Team Yukon/Yukon Federal Council at (867) 667-3813 or e-mail: albissers@inac-ainc.gc.ca

Yukon Rural Review is a publication of the Rural Secretariat for residents of rural, remote and northern communities throughout the Yukon.

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