



# Rural Horizon



Canada's Rural Partnership | Rural Team Quebec

Spring 2010



## The CONTACT co-op: facing the future

**Coopérative Nature Tourisme Aventure Connecté à la Terre (CONTACT)**  
The CONTACT co-op is the story of Gaspé Peninsula youth who rolled up their sleeves and got to work to set things in motion in their region. In the beginning, the co-operative was established to offer people employment in the municipality of Bonaventure. Due to the closures of several businesses in the Gaspé Peninsula, members were seeking ways to battle the resulting economic crisis. They founded CONTACT as a solidarity co-operative with a goal of reviving the local economy and to turn the tide of residents leaving in search of work. These promoters had a true passion for their community – a passion that led them to find solutions to prevent their community from further decline.

The solidarity co-operative led to a more ambitious dream. Why not make CONTACT a social project that will ensure the future of the region in the long-term? The five founding members worked relentlessly, evenings and weekends, to make their dream come true by transforming CONTACT into a sustainable development laboratory.

Since March 2008, the cooperative has had new goals – defining 'sustainable development laboratory'. A committee of researchers is working to find ways to make rural communities viable in the long term. Another group is looking into implementing a rural village of the future! This is a tourism site where a modern, quality of life and ecology merge to show visitors the possibilities of the rural world.

The final goal is to showcase the region's natural resources. Currently, one group offers and develops ecological construction products such as rustic ramps, wooden gutters and larch roofing, to name a few.

CONTACT is a perfect regional example of an area that has taken control

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to ensure its future. Upward of 40 communities on the Gaspé Peninsula benefit from this innovative initiative, proof that you have to believe in your dreams to change the world!

For more information, visit [www.contactfutur.com](http://www.contactfutur.com).

## 2012: International Year of Co-operatives



From left to right: Ms. Carol Hunter, Executive Director of the Canadian Co-operative Association, Ms. Marthe Hamelin, President of the *Conseil canadien de la coopération et de la mutualité*, and the Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture).

The United Nations General Assembly recently adopted a resolution on the role of co-operatives in social development. The Honourable Jean-Pierre Blackburn, Minister of Veterans Affairs and Minister of State (Agriculture) already expressed Canada's support for this resolution which proclaims 2012 the International Year of Co-operatives. As Minister responsible of rural and co-operative development, Minister Blackburn hopes this initiative will foster greater recognition of the co-operative movement.

For more information on the International Year of Co-operatives in Canada, visit [www.coop.gc.ca](http://www.coop.gc.ca).





## Interactive mapping of community services: two success stories

Although they are hundreds of kilometres away from each other, Cree communities in northern Quebec and a watershed management organization in the Estrie region have similar needs: to enhance their knowledge of available resources on their lands in order to manage them better. To do this, they developed an interactive mapping tool that is accessible from their respective websites.

### Tourisme Eeyou Istchee Tourism

The nine Cree communities on Eeyou Itschee land needed to find solutions to problems regarding land usage, particular in the areas of forestry, mining and hydroelectric development.

It became important to collect all available information and make it accessible to community members. To do this, the Cree Nations implemented a user-friendly Web GeoPortal ([creetourism.ca](http://creetourism.ca)) offering geospatial information to Cree communities. They use it in their planning activities, decision-making process, discussions, and research on resource management and tourism development. The portal uses digital mapping data from the GeoBase, a federal-provincial initiative that provides up-to-date mapping data, available at no cost and without user restrictions.

### Conseil de gouvernance de l'eau des bassins versants de la rivière Saint-François (COGESAF)

The "Portail de l'eau du bassin versant de la rivière Saint-François : à la confluence de l'information et de l'action" project is one that COGESAF has long dreamt about.

### For more information:

GeoBase: [www.geobase.ca](http://www.geobase.ca)

GeoConnections: [www.geoconnections.org/](http://www.geoconnections.org/)

COGESAF: <http://www.cogesaf.qc.ca/>

Eeyou Istchee Tourism: [Creetourism.ca](http://Creetourism.ca)

Natural Resources Canada  
(Centre for Topographic Information,  
Sherbrooke): [www.cits.rncan.gc.ca](http://www.cits.rncan.gc.ca)

To accomplish it, COGESAF used data from the GeoBase National Hydro Network to develop interactive watershed mapping. This visual tool can be used to illustrate the water system, water quality data, watershed boundaries and administrative boundaries.

A project such as this brings people together as it enables elected municipal officials, farmers, foresters, researchers, business people and the public to tap into an up-to-date picture of their watersheds. Additional Quebec watershed organizations can also benefit

from the COGESAF team's expertise regarding their regional needs.

### GeoBase

GeoBase is a federal, provincial and territorial government initiative sponsored by the Canadian Council on Geomatics (CCOG). To complete their project, the Cree communities and COGESAF received funding from GeoConnections, a national partnership program managed by Natural Resources Canada.

## Your Community, Your Information

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

Every five years, the census enables Statistics Canada to collect a variety of information on Canadian society. The Community Information Database (CID) is a free Internet-based tool that can be used to synthesize information from the 1996, 2001 and 2006 censuses. It also have the potential to bring together other sources of data, including a community's own data. With the aid of tables, it enables users to paint a picture of our communities' regional assets and learn more about their social, economic and cultural diversity.

This simplified access is offered to everyone – from researchers looking for demographic statistics to farmers searching for reliable markets and economic development officers working on strategic planning in communities whose economies depend on natural resources.

One non-profit organization supporting community economic development and employability in Quebec's English-speaking communities is also using this tool to paint a picture of the province's regions.

"The Community Information Database enables us to paint a socio-economic picture of a region in the blink of an eye and to familiarize ourselves with the main characteristics of an English-speaking community while also providing ourselves with a broader perspective," said Grant Myers, Provincial Development Officer with the Community Table.

"This tool enables us to create easy-to-understand graphics and maps and share them with the organizations with which we work," he added.

Community Table has multiple points of contact throughout Quebec known as CEDECs (Community Economic Development and Employability Committees). CEDECs encourage communities to develop their economic potential but that requires knowledge of statistics such as education levels, employment rate, average income, and the identification of major industrialized regions.

Whether for contributing to the Îles-de-la-Madeleine tourism industry or organizing a motorcycle festival in a community in the Outaouais region, the Community Table and its CEDECs need every resource available.

"We do not have the human resources nor the money required for conducting detailed statistical studies; we therefore prefer to use already-existing tools such as the CID," Myers said. "When we provide citizens with statistics and the necessary tools for understanding them, we are giving them the power to take charge."

The CID was developed by Canada's Rural Partnership in partnership with provincial, territorial and community partners. This tool is accessible free of charge at [www.cid-bdc.ca](http://www.cid-bdc.ca).

For more information about Community Table and its Community Economic Development and Employability Committees, visit [www.cedec.ca](http://www.cedec.ca).

## Rural Public Transit: Hop On!

Rural public transit continues to grow in popularity. Growth in this area means citizens stand to benefit as they can take advantage of services in their regions and neighbouring districts. In Quebec alone, there are 66 rural public transit organizations in as many communities.

Proponents of rural public transit organizations have established partnerships with existing transportation services as it enables them to negotiate lower fares. Originally created to meet the critical needs of seniors who needed to get to health care facilities, today's public transit also caters to students who have to travel to sporting activities; others to work.

The *Association des transports collectifs ruraux du Québec* was created in 2003 to organize public transit services across the province and to support regional organizations.

Association President Micheline Verreault founded the first public transit organization when she created Transport ajusté 2000 in the community of Matane.

"Many people have taken our model and given it their regional flavour to meet the specific needs of their municipality's population," she says.

That is also the case with the *Corporation de transports collectifs* of Maskinongé, which just celebrated its fifth anniversary.

"This type of project has to come from the community," says General Manager Valérie Bellerose, "It took about three years of preparation to get Maskinongé's public transit corporation started."

Since its inception, the Maskinongé corporation has welcomed more than 350 members, 170 of whom are still active.

"We have a decentralized clientele. People use our services when their car breaks down or when they are stuck," explains Bellerose.



### Getting Off to a Good Start

Although transportation is a provincial jurisdiction, Transport Canada is committed to documenting public transit projects.

Among some of its initiatives, Transport Canada has set up the Moving on Sustainable Transportation program to support projects that contain education, awareness and analytical tools needed to make sustainable transportation a reality.

The ecoMOBILITY program is another initiative that aims to reduce greenhouse gas emissions and air pollution by opting for cleaner and greener transportation. Such environmentally friendly transportation is synonymous with rural public transit. This program

seeks to contribute to local transportation demand management initiatives and to improve the ability of professionals and decision makers to implement these approaches.

Under this program, a best practices guide entitled "*Improving Travel Options in Small and Rural Communities*" was published for practitioners who want to identify, evaluate, develop and implement sustainable transportation options.

For more information on these programs, please consult Transport Canada's website: [www.tc.gc.ca](http://www.tc.gc.ca).

## Improved Access to Health Care

Quebec's minority Anglophone community numbers almost a million people spread over many regions. For example, some 10 per cent of the population of the Gaspésie-Îles-de-la-Madeleine region is Anglophone. Health Canada is working to help this community gain access to English-speaking health services.

Health Canada is funding many projects managed by the *Réseau communautaire de santé et de services sociaux* (RCSSS). The Networking and Partnership Initiative and the Community Public Health Initiative are two examples of what can be accomplished in rural communities.

The Networking and Partnership Initiative was developed to help Quebec's English-language minority communities maintain and improve access to health care and social services. Eighteen community networks are currently receiving funding. Organizations such as the North Shore Community Association, the Neighbours Regional Association of Rouyn-Noranda and the Council for Anglophone Magdalen Islanders are participating in this project.

The groups are helping minority communities to develop partnership within the health and social services system. They are also responsible for creating, managing and implementing health promotion initiatives in their respective regions.

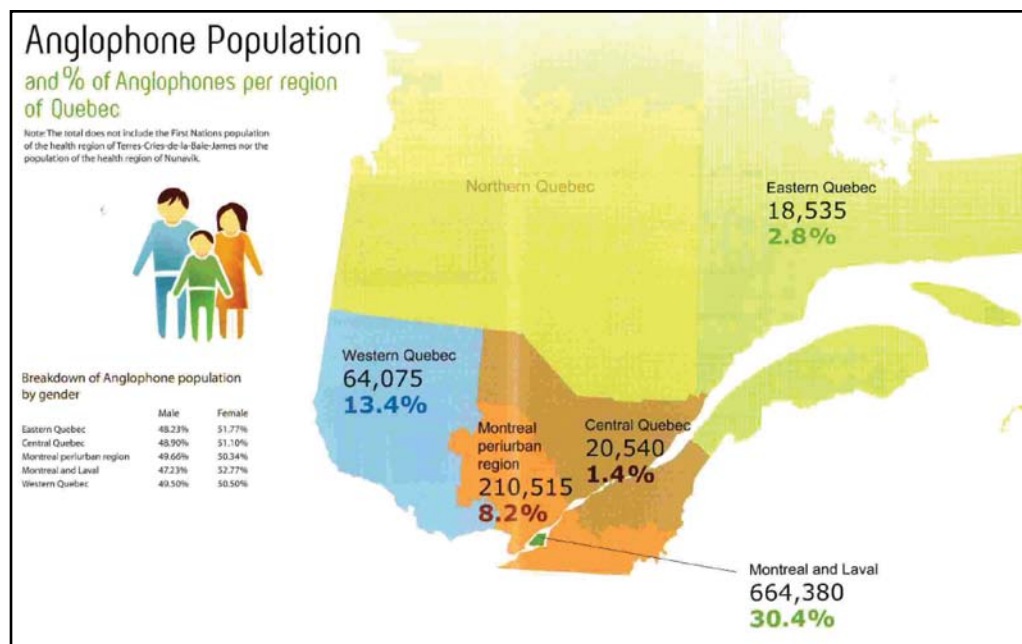
The goal of the Community Public Health Initiative is to have Anglophone communities become more aware of the public health programs offered in their regions and to forge ties between the community and public health professionals. For 2009–2010, 14 initiatives spread out over 11 Quebec regions have been implemented.

One such initiative was carried out in the Estrie and Montérégie regions by the Townshippers' Association. The project's goal was to produce a show in the "We Can Act" trilogy: an amusing show with health care and social services as its theme.

This musical play, produced in consultation with health care and social services providers, provides information

on the contribution of community members to the development of partnerships.

For more information on projects in your region, please contact the Official Language Community Development Bureau at 613-957-8987.





## Nunavik: a region to discover

Located north of the 55th parallel, Nunavik is a region that is largely overlooked by the majority of Quebecers.

The area was transferred to Quebec in 1912. Until then, Nunavik was under the jurisdiction of the federal government as part of the Northwest Territories. By signing this agreement, Quebec promised to acknowledge and negotiate the rights of the Inuit to this land.

Nunavik has a population of more than 11,000 people – 90 per cent of whom are Inuit living in 14 communities along the coasts of Hudson Bay, Hudson Strait and Ungava Bay – where the regional capital of Kuujuaq is located. No roads connect these communities so the only means of transportation are by air and water transport during the summer.

The economy is based on traditional survival activities, government and paragonment services, transportation operations, mining, tourism and Inuit art. Like other Quebecers, the Inuit pay taxes, but it is estimated that the cost of living is 70 per cent higher than in the southern regions.

### A territory marked by its history

In the wake of the Quiet Revolution, Premier Robert Bourassa announced the James Bay hydroelectric project. In addition to creating significant economic spin-offs, namely jobs, this major project put Northern Quebec on the map. It also led to the 1975 signing of the James Bay and Northern Quebec Agreement by the federal and provincial governments, the Inuit and the James Bay Cree.

This Agreement granted Nunavik special legal and political status. The Inuit received compensation for the termination of their rights and for the James

Bay project and established new land, resource and environmental assessments.

The Makivik Corporation was born within this context. Its mandate is to administer compensation funds, further economic development, support the creation and financing of Inuit industries, and promote the well being, progress and education of the Inuit.

The Agreement also established a governance system based on the creation of 14 municipalities and three public institutions. These serve all Inuit and non-Inuit residents. The institutions are the Kativik School Board ([www.kativik.qc.ca](http://www.kativik.qc.ca)), the Nunavik Regional Board of Health and Social Services ([www.rss17.gouv.qc.ca](http://www.rss17.gouv.qc.ca)) and the Kativik Regional Government ([www.krg.ca](http://www.krg.ca)).

In 2007, a new agreement establishing the Nunavik Regional Government was signed by the Premier of Quebec, Quebec's Minister for Aboriginal Affairs, the Minister of Indian Affairs and Northern Development Canada and the President of the Makivik Corporation.

### Innovative people

The Inuit of Nunavik have undergone tremendous upheaval over the past decades, including the militarization of the Arctic during the Second World War and Cold War and the change from a nomadic to a settled lifestyle.



Community of Salluit, Nunavik

Despite this, the Inuit have been able to develop a governance structure and regain some degree of control over their own territory. They will be able to move forward with success but they must deal with many social challenges.

The Inuit have always shown a great capacity to adapt and it is this ability that will enable them to better deal with current challenges. The Nunavik Regional Government will be tailored to the needs of this region while respecting the legal frameworks of the National Assembly of Quebec and the Parliament of Canada.

For more information on the Makivik Corporation and the Nunavik Regional Government, please visit the following websites, respectively: [www.makivik.org](http://www.makivik.org) and [www.nunavikgovernment.ca](http://www.nunavikgovernment.ca).

FOR INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

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

Web: [www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)

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*Rural Horizon* is an annual publication of Rural Team Quebec and is produced for residents living in rural and remote communities.

The team consists of representatives from federal departments and 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.

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