



Manitoba Rural Adaptation Council
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2010 CRRF/RDI Conference

“On the Bright Side: Rural Canada Works”

Ted Eastley, Executive Director

October 15, 2010



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What is MRAC?

- *We Support Ag Innovation*
- **Not for profit agency (Board of Directors + Liaison Officers + Provincial Ex-Officios)**
- **Administrator of funds provided by the federal government under Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada**
- **Objective is to advance the Manitoba agriculture sector**
- **Single portfolio agency with an expanded mandate of multiple portfolio funding**



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Funding Available

- Maximum for a project: \$300,000 (\$500,000 for Collective Outcome projects)
- 50/50 cash; 85% with broad industry participation - no confidentiality or IPR; 70% with limited industry participation
- Maximum 3 year project
- Matching cash can come from other federal government departments or municipal governments (It cannot come from other AAFC funds)
- APF programming ineligible (including ARDI)
- Funding is not to be considered ongoing, but should be provided for a limited period to help the sector resolve an issue or capture opportunities



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Task Force Committees/ Council Led Initiatives

- Human Resource/Infrastructure
 - » Vibrant Rural Communities project;
 - » Agriculture as a Solution Provider
- Consumer Confidence
 - » Agri-Systems Innovation Interface (ASII)
- Leadership/Mentorship



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Vibrant Rural Communities Project

Objective

“...to address the current trend of rural community depopulation and identify a model that could be developed into a **monitor community** initiative to reverse that trend. The outcome of this project could form a template for other rural leaders to catalyze their communities to reinvent themselves”

Colin Hudon, Chair, Human Resources/Infrastructure Task Force Committee



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Vibrant Rural Communities Project

Phase I

- An analysis of trends that are affecting our rural communities.
- Identification of successful programs that exist in Canada and other countries.

Phase II

- Development of an initial framework for an initiative to achieve the vision created by the HR Committee and stakeholders.

Phase III

- Identification of potential funding partners and strong collaborative resources to jointly conduct a follow-up project to design a program based on successful programs identified by the environmental scan.



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Vibrant Rural Communities – Phase I

“Environmental Scan”



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Executive Summary

Indicators

1. Population and demographics characteristics
2. Trends in agriculture and related industries
3. Form and function of the network of rural communities (service infrastructure)
4. Socio-economic linkages



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Current Trends

- Best practices of rural development
- Value chain concept
- Scan of successful program examples



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1. Population

- Most is occurring near large centres
- Rural society is aging
- Urban component (“rurbanization”)
- Immigration expanding



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2. Farm trends

- Continued decline in numbers → accelerating average size of farms
- Reduction in coarse grain production → increase in oilseeds and specialty crops
- Livestock sector volatile
- Poultry – ↑ numbers ↓ operations



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3. Service Infrastructure

- 1 example: Railway and elevator abandonment (90% elevators lost; 29% of grain handling capacity displaced to on-farm)



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4. Rural Community Network

- Functional categories
 - » Main – major retail/wholesale centres (Winnipeg & Brandon)
 - » Complete shopping centres – (Portage, Dauphin, Selkirk, Winkler)
 - » Partial shopping centres ~ 20 communities
 - » Convenience centres
 - » Trend towards regionalization of public and private services



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*Worth noting

- Big Cities are the engines of growth – occurring in rural areas located within “commuting distance”
- Inter-relationship among rural communities – communications, labour force and value-added industries driving options
- Farm families have diversified labour as a means to make agriculture viable
- Relationship between agricultural operations and needs and rural quality of life



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Successful Programs and Actions

- Shift from top-down needs-based models to locally driven assets based models (financial, political, human, cultural, social, natural, built capital)
- Evolution of “clusters” of similar or related/complimentary industries
- Immigration – challenge is to attract and **RETAIN** immigrants to rural areas



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Options

- Value Chains
- Community Supported Agriculture (CSA)
- Cooperatives in Viable Communities
- Rural Manufacturing



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Key Ideas

- Bring 2 things to the process – 1. understanding of structure and function of both the physical and human dimensions of the target community/region; 2. suitcase of ideas for community decision/ownership/buy-in
- Linking past, present and future to promote growth for that community/region
- Regional approach allows greater flexibility of options and synergy



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Final Thoughts/Committee Tasks

- Choice of model community/region
- Trends and attributes of the selected area
- Development of options
- Community/region buy-in/ownership
- Champion(s)/mentorship
- Identify indicators of progress
- Impact measurement (leadership development, capacity development, ability to engage community, exit plan and hand off to the community)



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Committee recommendations:

- Phase I is completed
- There is justification for Phase II – needs – credibility and access to support/resources; ability to inspire “champions” i.e. Funders and Leaders
- Phase III is the “Community Handoff”



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Question: What is a “Vibrant Rural Community”?

Answer: A Sense of Self – it is a continuum!



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Questions/Comments?