

Building our future together



The National  
**Rural**   
conference  
Report





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## MESSAGE FROM THE HONOURABLE ANDY MITCHELL

### Building our Future Together

When nearly 500 participants gathered in Magog, Quebec, for the National Rural Conference in April 2000, I was truly amazed at what took place. Rural citizens from all across Canada talked

about what was going on in their small towns and remote villages and shared their experiences with others. They also had an opportunity to hear about what the federal government has done in the last two years and to tell us what tools rural and remote Canada needs to succeed in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

It is impressive to see everything we have accomplished together in just a short while leading up to the conference.

Minister Vanclief launched the Canadian Rural Partnership in 1998. The dialogue that followed culminated in the National Rural Workshop held near Belleville, Ontario, in October 1998. Rural Canadians identified 11 key priority areas that are reflected in federal policy through the *Framework for Action for Rural Canada*. In August 1999, I had the honour of being appointed the first Secretary of State for Rural Development in Canada by Prime Minister Jean Chrétien to implement this policy. During the past year, I have had the pleasure of travelling across Canada and talking with Canadians in small towns and remote villages about what makes rural Canada so unique.

All the while, the rural dialogue has continued through regional activities. *The Rural Times* newsletter was published, and a discussion group started online. The National Rural Conference marked the end of the second phase of the rural dialogue. This report is a wonderful testimony to the hard work, dedication, discussions and information sharing that took place at the conference.

The conference was important because participants from rural and remote regions shared lessons learned and heard about activities and concerns in other regions. They also told the federal government what still needs to be worked on and which tools are needed to give rural communities access to the same services enjoyed by other Canadians. What a great example of working together to shape federal government policy from the bottom up—with advice and feedback from the people most affected by policy decisions.

The federal government understands the challenges facing rural and remote Canadians. It understands that different approaches

are required, for example, because of distances or dependency on cyclical resource-based industry. Such realities distinguish rural communities from urban centres and need to be reflected in public policies, programs and services. It's important that, as innovative approaches are developed, we address issues like distance from markets and the costs this distance creates. My role as Secretary of State is to understand such issues, to act on them and to support my Cabinet colleagues in doing so as well. This "Rural Lens" is a crucial tool in considering new initiatives. It identifies the effects federal policies, programs and services have on rural Canada.

During the conference, I listened to what you said and understand its importance. This report highlights some of the main issues. It also contains names and contact numbers of the conference presenters. This will allow rural citizens, organizations and government officials to continue networking. This is an excellent opportunity to keep the rural dialogue alive!

Where do we go from here? As promised, I am sharing a proposed rural action plan with participants. Their feedback will go into a final action plan, which will be a foundation for further progress. The final rural action plan will be available in late fall 2000, by calling the toll-free dialogue number, 1-888-781-2222, by clicking on the rural Web site at [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca), or by writing to the Rural Secretariat, Room 4112, Sir John Carling Building, 930 Carling Avenue, Ottawa, Ontario, K1A 0C5.

Continuing dialogue is critical to achieving a better quality of life for rural Canadians. I have committed to active dialogue at the regional level and a national conference in 2002. I want to enhance such tools as *The Rural Times* newsletter and our online discussion group to enrich the dialogue.

The road ahead is important, but we couldn't have gotten this far without your energy, enthusiasm and commitment. I thank you for sharing your thoughts with me, at the National Rural Conference and beyond. Without your collaboration, I can't do my job: representing rural Canadians, their hopes, their successes, their concerns and what they want rural Canada to be.

Sincerely,

Andy Mitchell

Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)

# 1 FOREWORD

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This report is a summary of discussions that took place at the National Rural Conference held in Magog-Orford, Quebec, April 27 – 30, 2000. Many of the discussions took place in brainstorming sessions at which no limits were placed on the participants. Unless the speaker is identified, the statements in this document were made by participants at the conference and do not necessarily represent the views of the Government of Canada.

The federal government will be examining issues and concerns raised at the conference that fall within federal

jurisdiction to determine which ideas are feasible and can be acted on. An action plan, to be released in late fall, will assist the Government of Canada in the development of future policies with regards to rural development.

In order to present a true report of the free-ranging discussions, we have also included recommendations made by participants that fall outside federal jurisdiction.

# 2 FOCUSING ON OUR YOUTH

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Rural youth played a key role in the conference. Approximately 50 participants aged 16 to 29 years attended the conference from various rural and remote areas of the country. They contributed to the “Focusing on our Youth” discussion group. The Honourable Andy Mitchell opened this session by highlighting the opportunities and challenges of rural and remote communities. He described the process that led to the Magog conference and challenged the youth representatives to engage in the process.

Several core themes and suggestions emerged from the youth discussion group and from other sessions held during the conference. Some of the main themes were:

- Youth value many assets in their rural and remote communities. These include a strong sense of place and belonging, natural resources, community members who contribute and make a difference, and vibrant community organizations. These assets need to be affirmed and used to encourage youth to participate in developing sustainable rural communities.
- Youth are proud of their communities and their roots. Yet, economic and social circumstances, such as the lack of employment and education opportunities, often result in youth leaving their communities. In some instances, these same conditions prevent youth from leaving to pursue opportunities and gain experience that can be brought back to the community.
- The youth voice needs to be increased through meaningful representation and participation in community and political decision-making bodies. For example, a youth representative might be invited to serve as youth “mayor.” Communities should acknowledge the energy and ideas of the emerging generation of leaders. This will help to bridge the generation gap and to pass the torch. Youth can be encouraged to get involved when new programs and services are being developed.

“The need to find ways to keep our young people in rural communities—so that even if they do have to travel away for post-secondary education they’ll be returning and seeing an economic future—that’s an important issue for us.”

Honourable Andy Mitchell  
Secretary of State  
Rural Development

The youth delegates explored four questions: the central factors affecting leaving or staying in their communities; community assets for youth; ideas for strengthening these assets; and ways in which the federal government could help youth build on community assets.

- Recognize that not all rural and remote communities are the same, or face the same challenges and opportunities. Solutions will require local innovation and creativity according to the community.
- Economic development and opportunity is only one piece of the puzzle. Social infrastructure, particularly sports, recreation and cultural facilities, are central to youth development and commitment to community. Substance abuse issues have to be addressed.
- Increase support for innovation and entrepreneurs beyond the traditional resource industries, while recognizing that support for traditional industries is also important.
- Education and training is important. Youth emphasize distance education and access to telecommunications, as ways to remain connected with the community, as well as making post-secondary education study options available.
- Strengthening technological and transportation infrastructure is central to the survival and development of youth in rural and remote Canadian communities.

The Honourable Denis Coderre, Secretary of State for Amateur Sport, concluded the session. He left the youth participants with the message, “you are the government.” He challenged and encouraged youth to step forward and make a difference by becoming actively involved in shaping the future of their communities with their local representatives and politicians. Communities are in need of actors, not spectators, to make changes and to create hope.

“The older generations are in good hands with us youth. You should not be afraid of change in any way 'cause change is always good and things will continue to change and they will continue to get better.”

Sarah Schwartz  
Participant  
South Slokan, British Columbia

“If you want to make a difference, stand up. I'll be on your side.”

Honourable Denis Coderre  
Secretary of State  
Amateur Sport



### 3 PROVINCIAL AND TERRITORIAL UPDATES

Conference participants learned about government programs at the federal and provincial levels, and about local community development initiatives. Members of the federal government rural teams as well as provincial and territorial government representatives provided updates during 13 concurrent breakout sessions. Participants held a discussion period following these presentations. Youth delegates also reported on highlights from the “Focusing on our Youth” session.

“We would like to share the same objectives in order that our rural communities prosper within their own identity and socio-economic characteristics.”

Honourable Jean-Pierre Jolivet  
Minister of Regions  
Government of Quebec

There is a rural team in each province and territory mostly made up of representatives from federal departments and agencies, such as Human Resources Development Canada, Environment Canada, Health Canada, Canadian Heritage, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Industry Canada and regional agencies. The rural teams are evolving to include members of other levels of government as well as community groups. Through the rural teams, all stakeholders are being invited to be part of building partnerships, networks and alliances to address key rural issues at the local level.

#### Highlights from each session are noted below.

##### Prince Edward Island

The role and make-up of the rural team was openly discussed. The rural citizens felt the team should include grassroots members and organizations, especially youth. Ongoing dialogue with rural citizens is an important part of forming community-specific development plans. Participants were interested in hearing the results of the Community/Government Interface Model Pilot Project\* and having it rolled out to other communities as part of the ongoing dialogue. The need to attract new community volunteers, including youth, and support these community leaders of the future, is a significant issue. As leaders in their community, participants shared their experiences in developing local initiatives.

##### New Brunswick

The rural team in New Brunswick is moving forward in developing its action plan. One priority is to improve access of rural communities to government programs and services, including the needed funding. Another is to build leadership and develop skills to strengthen the community's ability to manage projects locally. Discussion is underway

to test a different model of government service delivery on a pilot basis. On the provincial side, the Acadian Peninsula Socio-economic Development Initiative is a new \$25-million program to create a long-term rural community strategy for capacity development and economic renewal.

Some participants noted the importance for governments to deliver programs and services in consultation with communities. Participants suggested that the rural team include more rural interests, such as agriculture.

##### Nova Scotia

Several well-regarded programs in rural community economic development are currently being offered at universities and colleges in Nova Scotia. Provincial departments and agencies participate on the Interdepartmental Committee on Community Economic Development, the Nova Scotian Sustainable Communities Initiative, and the Nova Scotia rural team. In March 2000, the Nova Scotia Citizens for Community Development Society forwarded recommendations to government from the successful East Coast Conference on Community Development held that

\* See Annex 3

month in Sydney. The 35 recommendations were grouped into four themes: building organizations; supporting people and volunteerism; community-based investment and financial institutions and funding; and natural resource management and the environment.

Participants noted the need for communities to move from short-term pilot project funding to self-sustaining approaches. However, governments can collaborate with communities to develop the necessary leadership, and to ensure that information is available on community economic development. They also suggested that the rural team include municipalities, Aboriginal people and other community interests. The youth delegates highlighted the need to involve youth more in the decision-making process, make available more bursaries for higher education and vocational training, and provide greater support for amateur sports.

## Newfoundland

The Newfoundland and Labrador rural team focused on building community capacity. Co-ordinated largely through Human Resources Development Canada, team members have visited a number of communities to assess individual community needs and to encourage communities to adopt a positive attitude in approaching economic development and other challenges. Regional Economic Development Boards are the primary means for economic development initiatives in the province. The province has just completed an extensive round of public consultations and released the *Interim Report on the Renewal Strategy for Jobs and Growth*.

In the discussion, participants raised the need for accountability at the community level, where governments meet regularly with them regarding direction, local decisions and results.

Youth delegates offered suggestions to address the high rate of youth migration out of the province. Youth need to be more aware of local opportunities and need to build an attachment to their community. Some consideration should also be given to incentives for youth to stay in the province, such as forgivable student loans.

## Quebec

Rural regions in Quebec are far from being uniform. Federal and provincial governments are sensitive to this reality and are diligently finding ways to respond to the needs of specific rural areas. The federal government, guided by the rural dialogue, is working to adapt programs and services to the different regions. The provincial government, having heard from rural lobby groups through a consultation conducted by Solidarité rurale,\* is developing a rural policy that can work across all levels of government with leeway for unique regional characteristics. These efforts from both levels of government will encourage communities to participate and contribute toward reaching their development potential.

Youth underscored their desire to be involved more directly in local and regional governing structures and community organizations. This would increase their sense of belonging in their communities.

## Ontario

The Ontario rural team is putting the emphasis on recognizing significant regional differences and diverse community needs. In response, federal and provincial governments are emphasizing flexibility, grassroots approaches, partnerships, and technology to design and deliver programs. Linkages are being strengthened with non-governmental or arms-length organizations such as The Ontario Rural Council\* and Community Futures Development Corporations.\*

Participants felt that rural women's issues should be considered directly and in a more in-depth way when determining policy and programs. Co-operatives should be front and centre in forming rural development policy. Agriculture is still key to life in many rural communities. Consequently, participants urged governments to consult citizens in the agricultural sector when making decisions or representing their viewpoints. Youth delegates saw the Internship for Young Leaders program, funded by Junior Farmers, the University of Guelph and the Canadian Rural Partnership, as an excellent example of a partnership that mentors and develops youth leadership.

\* See Annex 3

## Manitoba

Representatives provided examples of how some communities are working together under the Community Choices Roundtable. These experiences highlighted the importance of building leadership at the community level. Participants gave examples to illustrate how this can make a difference to communities that otherwise might not have found the means to collaborate. Effective federal-provincial co-operation is a key to progress.

Participants defined the need to have information about existing programs and services, especially when they apply to youth. The frequent need to send rural youth to urban areas to study prompted participants to ask whether a “rural living allowance” might be appropriate. Canada Business Service Centres\* were cited as a particularly good model for supporting enterprise development, but one that needs more publicity to increase awareness and use.

## Saskatchewan

The Saskatchewan rural team is expanding to include more representatives from the provincial government. The team has been actively supporting the Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Project Initiative and has developed a brochure to highlight some of the federal activities in rural Saskatchewan. Saskatchewan’s Business Enterprise Centres\* focus on retaining and expanding businesses. The centres are offering entrepreneurial courses for youth together with Human Resources Development Canada. Participants supported improvements in information technology to encourage new businesses in the province. As well, participants cited the importance of ongoing support for primary agricultural production and some basic assistance for community organizations to complement volunteer efforts.

The youth delegates highlighted the challenges facing rural youth. They offered such potential solutions as tax breaks for rural businesses to hire rural youth and encouraging broader youth participation in local issues.

## Alberta

Rural citizens in Alberta noted some of their central issues, including the fact that some people do not know how to apply the requirements imposed on agro-industry by the Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point\* guidelines. Also, some believe that a number of agricultural sectors are receiving preferential treatment. There is a sensitivity to regionalized health care for rural areas, and a need for improved confidence in the school system by youth, particularly Aboriginal youth. Participants also noted the need for governments to focus more on social issues.

## British Columbia

The British Columbia rural team is supporting research, joint initiatives, pilot projects and further dialogue sessions. The province works with rural areas through the Northern Development Commission,\* Community Development Ministry\* and the Rural Development Office.\*

Participants noted a need for greater clarity on government responsibilities and in accessing information from governments. The food and agriculture sector is important, creates many jobs, and should be adequately funded for basic production and value-added processing. The provincial Community Development Ministry has programs that are flexible and fit rural needs. Governments are continuing to put less emphasis on writing proposals and more on developing leadership. Youth proposed developing community leadership, sharing responsibilities through partnerships, and networking among communities. Diversifying the economy, creating jobs by developing tourism, and promoting artisans and entrepreneurship are critical to community health.

## Northwest Territories

The Canadian Rural Partnership initiative has created economic opportunities by funding pilot projects. The N.W.T. rural team is beginning to see dedicated participation and interest by several representatives of federal and territorial government departments. Monthly meetings include a “training” component, with presentations by departments. The team now wants to build on the dialogue process and respond to community needs by delivering government services. A resource co-funded by Environment Canada and the Canadian Rural Partnership, and a proactive com-

\* See Annex 3

munication strategy will help the team move in the desired direction. Participants felt that wherever possible, funding dollars and responsibility should be devolved to rural teams to make decisions quickly and maintain project momentum.

Youth delegates highlighted the N.W.T. Literacy Council pilot and proposed the concept of a youth mayor—a youth councillor now sits on the Inuvik Council.

## Yukon

In this session, participants discussed the five main issues that affect their communities. Collaborative governance—involving communities in making decisions—was recognized as a sound concept but difficult to implement. They noted that governance structures must change, with new facilitation tools, to include more youth.

Telecommunications infrastructure, such as 1-800 access to government services, must be supported to develop communities. Land claim issues need to be resolved.

Lastly, some positive trends were observed. There have been fewer drinking and driving offences and related criminal cases, greater support for education outside the territory, and more jobs with higher wages for youth.

## Nunavut

Nunavut has some unique needs because of the physical distance separating communities, its four official languages and the slow pace of installing and upgrading telecommunications. Only eight of 27 municipalities have Internet access. In addition, there is a shortage of skilled and experienced employees: approximately 60% of the population is younger than 25. Youth would like to share in making decisions. Government programs are often seen as “top-down” and too short-term to address such fundamental needs as housing, education and health care.

“Over the last few days, I’ve heard some absolutely phenomenal partnership successes... where the normal kind of competition between the private sector and government and different levels of government, have got together... and done something successful. And it doesn’t matter whether I heard examples from the East Coast to the West Coast and all the way in between.

And for those of you who shared those experiences with all of us, and people like myself that were unaware of that, well done. Congratulations.”

Dr. Robert Church  
Keynote Speaker  
Calgary, Alberta

## 4 SHARING LESSONS LEARNED

Learning through the experiences of others is a valuable way for communities to gain information and apply new approaches to the challenges that living in rural and remote Canada can bring. Conference participants met fellow citizens involved in 14 creative, federally funded pilot projects to develop rural and remote communities. The scope of individual projects was diverse, yet many common lessons were shared. These are highlighted below.

“Thank you... for the Rural Partnerships Initiative... it’s allowed me to see projects in different parts of the country, see what other people are doing, and learn from their experiences.”

George Bohlender  
Participant  
Cambridge Bay, Nunavut

### Fundamentals

Create a vision for your community. Do your homework. Set targets that can be implemented. Small successes help create a momentum to build on.

- Initiate a strategic process to review strengths, weaknesses, opportunities and threats
- Develop leadership skills and the capacity to undertake and locally manage new development projects.

Address adult literacy and social development issues before looking at the community benefits of being technologically “connected.”

- Basic education, training, leadership and skills development are key to diversifying employment opportunities
- Address substance abuse by youth and high suicide rates.

### Community-driven programming and management

Community-based program and project management builds ownership and forms the foundation for sustaining the community in the long term. Build a local strategy for survival.

- Involve primary participants or recipients of programs in early design phases to build ownership, responsibility and support
- Draw out the strengths and opportunities residing in diverse cultures and use the resulting synergy to your advantage
- Capitalize on the knowledge base of your own community
- Recognize your workers and volunteers. Don’t take them for granted.

Networking—sharing ideas, information, successes and failures—is important. Use networking to support and encourage other communities.

Recognize the importance of evaluating and monitoring programs; check where you are, where others think you are and where you want to be.

- Learn from history—revisit—evaluate—adapt—go forward.

Share the load. Link with other communities, where feasible, to identify common issues and goals, and to share responsibilities and services.

Develop partnerships among stakeholders with common interests.

Communicate and let people know what you are doing, how to contact you, and how to get involved.

- Create openness and willingness to talk about issues
- Develop positive attitudes. Think can, not can’t; why not, instead of why. Don’t let early setbacks or delays sabotage the project.

“The 21<sup>st</sup> Century is truly for rural communities. As rural citizens, the 21<sup>st</sup> Century will give you the opportunity to position yourselves, only if we take on community development and do not let others do the work for us.”

Aubrey Cormier  
Keynote Speaker  
Wellington, P.E.I.

## Funding

Understand that sources and types of funding will have implications on factors such as cycles, conditions, reporting requirements, and core vs. start-up positions, and build these into your business planning.

- Seek funding from foundations, trusts, associations and other traditional sources.

Optimize government support, but don't rely solely on it. Government funds are not a long-term sustainable source of core funding; rather, they provide seed money. Creatively and proactively, seek out and lever other sources.

- Create new partnerships to optimize access to funding
- Prompt government to provide incentives for businesses, such as tax incentives and business planning. Encourage micro-enterprise development among disadvantaged groups
- Fund co-operative ventures to help with equity investments. Provide venture capital funds
- Encourage national financial institutions to develop rural loans policies responsive to rural realities
- Add processing value to existing primary production.

Co-operate with the funding agencies before submitting a proposal. Make the system work for you by seeking out advice on the best sources of funding to fit your goals.

- If necessary, seek help from a consultant or professional writer to write a credible proposal and develop the skills in the community to write future proposals.

## The power of youth

Communicate and build bridges with youth and recognize the importance of their contributions.

- Establish programs to encourage youth leadership development and mentoring
- Promote youth activities and opportunities in the media
- Give youth a youth centre or a focal point from which to build ownership and responsibility.

## Healthy ecosystems—Healthy communities

Promote an ecosystem approach to resource and community management.

- Strengthen links with the natural world and your own spiritual and community values by working together co-operatively and sharing resources.

Physical and emotional health and quality of life are precursors for a healthy, well-functioning community.

- Support existing health infrastructure while looking at alternative models to deliver health care.

## Technology

Technology requires investing and expanding infrastructure, as well as technical support.

- Capitalize on distance education and telework/call centre opportunities.

## 5 ROUND TABLE DISCUSSIONS ON MOVING FORWARD

Participants gathered in small groups to share what they learned at the conference, discuss ideas about the actions they could take in their communities as a result and suggest how government can help facilitate those actions to continue to address rural and remote challenges and opportunities. The groups were organized according to the following seven groups of priority areas.

- improving access to federal government programs and services;
- new approaches to health care;
- new approaches to delivering continuous learning opportunities (education);
- targeted opportunities, programs and services for youth;
- strengthening community capacity building, leadership and skills development;
- strengthening economic diversification; and
- connecting rural Canadians to the knowledge-based economy through technology and related skills.

Before the Magog conference, these seven groups of priority areas were consolidated from the 1998 rural dialogue consultation process. It had culminated in the National Rural Workshop held near Belleville, Ontario (see *Rural Solutions to Rural Concerns* [www.rural.gc.ca/nrw/final\\_e.html](http://www.rural.gc.ca/nrw/final_e.html)). The 11 priority areas identified during the 1998 dialogue were then included in the *Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada* ([www.rural.gc.ca/framework\\_e.html](http://www.rural.gc.ca/framework_e.html)). The framework articulates a co-ordinated, long-term plan of action to address the needs of Canadians living in rural and remote communities.

In the round table discussions, participants were asked to discuss two main action-oriented questions:

1. *Thinking about your own experiences and what you have learned at this conference, if you could take two specific actions in your community to help with the challenge of [each priority area], what would they be?*
2. *How can the government support your community and facilitate its development? Name two specific tools that would support the actions you mentioned above.*

Questions 3 & 4 asked participants to reflect on “how government and citizens should continue working together,” and to articulate “the messages that all Canadians should know about the significance, importance and contribution of our rural communities.”

### Responses to Questions 1 & 2— Proposed actions

The following suggestions for action and specific tools were equally applicable to all priorities:

- Help develop a vision of what communities can become to overcome feelings of helplessness. Provide funding for communities and municipalities to go through a strategic planning and visioning process.
- Encourage flexible eligibility criteria in government programs. Allow the program criteria to adjust to community needs, instead of the other way around.
- Support telecommunications infrastructure, access to the Internet and training in the use of computers and the Internet so that people can access government programs or establish e-commerce businesses online. Move toward the “one stop shop” concept of government programs and services.
- Support programs that enhance rural infrastructure and services. A well-serviced and healthy community attracts economic development.

- Encourage partnerships between communities and government. Governments need to consult with communities about the issues, as well as be part of the solution. Be more entrepreneurial, more inclusive of diverse community elements, and more supportive in the long term.
- Encourage government to truly listen to rural citizens. Change the way some rural teams are comprised, ensuring that members are from the milieu they are to be representing. Ensure that the voices of minority groups are being heard.
- Find ways to share success stories so that the community revitalization wheel is not continually being reinvented. Mentor each other with our lessons learned.

“We don’t only need a rural lens in terms of what we’re doing for our rural communities, but we also need a cultural and a diversity lens so that we’re more inclusive of all people who live in Canada.”

Yvonne Atwell  
Participant  
Dartmouth, Nova Scotia

## Actions and tools for specific priorities

Recommendations for specific actions (in italics) and suggested tools to implement those actions are highlighted below for all seven groups of priority areas.

### Access to Federal Government Services and Programs

- Assist rural residents in accessing the Internet, including the Service Canada Web site.*
  - Promote and market Community Access Program (CAP)\* sites and services more often. Where needed, extend hours to permit user access during evenings
  - Increase the use of mobile libraries in small and remote communities
  - Upgrade and expand telecommunications infrastructure to improve Internet access.
- Optimize the 1 800 O-Canada phone number.*
  - Once residents dial in, transfer them to a real person in the appropriate department
  - Consider linking this federal phone number to provincial and municipal government staff and programs.

- Clarify the role of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) and how its goals and objectives mesh with the needs of rural areas.*
  - Ensure that the business plans of telephone and cable companies demonstrate a commitment to meeting rural service needs. Can the CRTC direct the phone companies to provide a local, high-speed Internet dial-up access in all rural communities?

### Approaches to Health Care

- Promote the benefits of undertaking a community profile where the health condition of the community is inventoried and assessed.*
  - Obtain support for cost analysis studies from clearly identified funding bodies who will ensure that recipients are accountable for funds and services received
  - Ensure access to knowledgeable health or rural development officers who can direct communities to the most appropriate funding source, and assist them in developing proposals.
- Deal with the shortage and turnover of medical doctors (MDs) and the lack of relief for MDs.*
  - Provide tax relief or other incentives for MDs to relocate to rural and remote areas, and support recruitment procedures
  - Support MDs from outside Canada in immigrating to rural areas

\* See Annex 3



- Government must support the existing health infrastructure, including good salaries for nurse practitioners, and facilitate the regulatory environment
- Train more alternative health care providers, and expand obstetrics and reproductive health services. Assist with liability insurance premiums.

- c)** *Address health service centralization issues, which require days of travel for a short appointment in remote areas.*
- Funds are required to support MD travel to remote communities
  - Provide medical hostels for citizens travelling to health care centres
  - Develop “telemedicine” via satellite or video conferencing, diagnostic and treatment services by MDs, nurse practitioners and others in the field office.
- d)** *Ensure that the most vulnerable people have access to health services. Institutionalizing seniors means we lose some valuable community members.*
- Increase access to home care and other in-home support services
  - Maintain universal health care, and limit the privatization of services. Keep the principles of the *Health Act*, and ensure their relevance by, for example, expanding home care services.

## Approaches to Continuous Learning (Education)

- a)** *Expand ways that electronic communications and the power of the Internet can be maximized.*
- Create a master list of community college and university credit courses, degrees and diplomas available online
  - Develop infrastructure by improving telephone and satellite connections, and provide technical support personnel to sustain them
  - Fund northern “store front” offices, such as in Thompson, Manitoba, to facilitate a university education.

“Canadians do things in a different kind of way... and I’ve put the electronic highway at the top... That electronic highway means we are no longer captive to distance... but my guess is that people that are really going to capitalize on the “dot com” revolution are the people in the far-flung regions, and the people that want to start commercial activities, education, telehealth... those types of things.”

Dr. Robert Church  
Keynote Speaker  
Calgary, Alberta

- b)** *Make information technology available in every school classroom.*
- Access available federal programs such as the Community Access Program; seek its extension if required.
- c)** *Re-establish vocational trades education programs to help youth at risk of dropping out.*
- Approach federal government for support when negotiating with the province for financial resources
  - Continue to lobby for training and learning opportunities for individuals not eligible for employment insurance, especially women.
- d)** *Implement a program to increase parents’ involvement when issues arise at school with violence or substance abuse.*
- Develop an action plan specifically for remote and Inuit communities.
- e)** *Develop mentorship programs between schools and the community to encourage lifelong learning.*
- Provide grants to fund initiatives such as co-op programs, internships, apprenticeships and job shadowing
  - Facilitate sharing of ideas between youth and elders in First Nations communities.

## Youth

- a) *Promote local programs in which retailers place underachieving secondary students in their businesses*
- Provide funding for programs that link school with work. Ensure funding is timely for employers. Foster entrepreneurship among youth
  - Establish alternative schools, or at a minimum, alternative programs in schools.
- b) *Assist those who are in trouble with the law with socialization skills and drug addiction for example.*
- Build life and social skills to facilitate transition from school to the work world, with government seed funding
  - Establish permanent, multiple-use youth centres as an alternative to the bar or drug scene. Provide start-up capital, as well as some maintenance funding. Establish a network of youth centres
  - Place teams of professionals in schools
  - Send federal funds directly to Aboriginal communities to establish treatment and wellness centres.
- c) *Develop youth leaders. Involve youth with adults making decisions in designing programs and projects.*
- Invite a youth representative on town councils as a youth “mayor” and include interns in Junior Farmers, and on boards of commodity groups and federations of agriculture
  - Have a communications plan and use it with the media to raise awareness in the community
  - Create youth boards or forums in communities, and provide some funding for program design. Use youth as information agents
  - Implement youth awards to recognize accomplishments in athletics, leadership and entrepreneurship.
- d) *Identify which federal and other programs and services are specifically targeted for youth.*
- Government to catalogue such programs as the Canada Youth Business Foundation,\* Katimavik,\* Canada World Youth,\* Youth Services Canada,\* Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (Youth Seed Connection),\* and Youth Exchange Programs\*
  - Create logo under which youth opportunities will be consolidated
  - Simplify the process to apply for programs, and have flexible eligibility criteria.
- e) *Address the high cost of leaving rural and remote areas for post-secondary education.*
- Develop Internet-based distance education opportunities
  - Put teaching colleges in remote areas for health education, for example, or have colleges contract with rural and remote communities to do training.

## Strengthening Community Capacity, Leadership and Skills

- a) *Identify the movers and shakers in the community and develop their leadership skills.*
- Send key individuals on leadership training courses to build skills, confidence and self-esteem
  - Develop a leadership round table: a roster of individuals with sector leadership abilities
  - Promote why-not thinking, instead of why. Be open to innovation.
- b) *Obtain a copy of the government programs that are available to address specific issue areas, including capacity development.*
- Streamline programs to avoid overlap. Ensure that programs such as the Community Asset Enhancement Program are simple to access, that decisions are made quickly, and that funds are available
  - Support local initiatives, as do the Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects. Support the transition of the pilot projects to permanent, self-sustaining development programs over three to five years
  - Extend the Service Canada\* Pilot Projects to the remotest communities. Promote 1 800 O-Canada.
- c) *Find sources of financial assistance to facilitate meetings and cover the costs of developing proposals. Think small but strategic, targeted and effective.*
- Provide access to proposal writing assistance and other expertise such as statistical analysis and fund-raising
  - Expand the Community Futures Development Corporation program for longer term investment in communities
  - Strengthen relationships with local businesses; they may co-fund initiatives.

\* See Annex 3

- d) *Encourage partnerships between First Nations and rural and remote communities.*
- Develop a video of good news success stories on what leaders have accomplished, and circulate among communities; for example, the Northern Lights Centre—a partnership between a municipality and First Nations.

## Strengthening Economic Diversification

- a) *Look for sources of larger amounts of venture capital (multi-million dollar projects, especially in Western Canada).*
- Invite banks, communities, private-sector and other funding bodies to support new generation co-operatives, marketing organizations and community herds (beef). The Farm Credit Corporation is helping in some areas
  - Introduce special tax credits for non-farmers investing in farms or cattle
  - Facilitate capital investment in primary and renewable industries, especially in “have-not” provinces.
- b) *Promote a grassroots approach to community development.*
- Set up leadership or business incubator boards and legal frameworks to support them.
- c) *Undertake a community economic development needs assessment and asset evaluation. Know where the community is positioned for growth.*
- Highlight employment opportunities for youth. Mentor Aboriginal youth to help them understand the benefits of a knowledge-based economy. Encourage local community members to apply for local jobs
  - Take direct action on items that have been identified as constraints. Identify services needed to support both existing and new businesses
  - Expand the role of rural teams to include community representatives such as town council members to initiate new dialogues on economic development and employment opportunities.

- d) *Support programs that enhance rural infrastructure and services. A well-serviced community attracts economic development.*
- Provide incentives for health care professionals to move to rural and remote areas
  - Strengthen Canada Post’s role and services
  - Adjust program criteria to fit rural community realities
  - Federal funding contributions should reach a minimum of 50% of the project value.

“We have infrastructure throughout many of the rural communities and northern communities of Canada which is deteriorating, as it is in the big cities. But the difference is a lot of us don’t have any infrastructure, whether it be water and sewer, roads or telecommunications... and we keep hearing about the importance of it.”

Glen Everitt  
Participant  
Dawson City, Yukon

- e) *Support a variety of employment opportunities.*
- Provide better social safety nets for the self-employed to lower the risk associated with micro-enterprise development
  - Traditional, labour intensive jobs are necessary and people should be proud of them. Work together to overcome the stigma attached to these jobs.

## Knowledge-Based Economy

- a) *Support knowledge-based industries and access to Internet.*
- Facilitate links to high-speed access. Remote communities without rail, road and shipping access require high-speed technology to link with the outside world
  - Provide funding for access in a partnering role. Governments should ensure that costs to rural communities remain affordable
  - Create an envelope of funds so that communities can decide on and fund their own projects
  - Optimize programs such as Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario,\* Western Economic Diversification\* and Canada

\* See Annex 3

Economic Development,\* and allow Community Futures Development Corporations to develop programs together with the community.

- b)** *Analyze what communities have before investing money in technology.*
- Inventory our community assets, independent of those controlling the telecommunications services
  - Local leaders must organize people to propose the direction in which the community wants to go.

“We are committed to improving the quality of life of all Canadians no matter where they live or what they do. One of the important ways we are doing this is to help equip people with the skills, knowledge and tools they need to succeed in the global knowledge-based economy.”

Honourable Alfonso Gagliano  
Minister Public Works and  
Government Services

- c)** *Determine youth needs, relative to new technologies. Strive for balance in the availability of computer and non-computer related jobs.*
- Develop programs that highlight the benefits and uses of computers in the traditional economy; for example, machinists, mechanics and construction trades
  - Technology can have negative effects on social skills of youths, such as a poor work ethic. Explore ways to overcome these issues
  - Employ youth to make the government Web sites attractive to youth.
- d)** *Explore ways to expand the number and use of Community Access Program sites.*
- Promote the use of technology for seniors by demonstrating the benefits.

## **In response to Question 3, participants made many suggestions for how government and communities should continue working together. Some of them follow:**

- Encourage collaborative decision making by locally managed groups to promote healthy communities that have the authority and the resources to implement decisions.
- Strive for better and more open communication between government departments, and with communities, so that common goals can be identified and pursued efficiently.
- Provide more seed money for projects that will be self-sustaining in the short term, to limit the cycle of dependency on government money.
- Continue and expand Community Access Programs where they are functioning well.
- Hold regional conferences to bring communities with similar challenges together, instead of grouping dissimilar communities at national conferences.
- Develop a long-term strategy for rural Canada. Rural leadership by the federal government is important to create a balance across the country, to look at long-term, sustainable solutions, and to measure results.
- Empower regional government offices to work with communities to design or adapt programs.
- Community-based management programs can replace former services like fish wardens or other enforcement services. For example, the Streamkeepers\* program has communities clean up rivers and monitor waterways. Involve First Nations in setting policies and regulations regarding the use of resources.
- Develop a “can do” attitude when communities and government work together.
- Federal government representatives should continue to facilitate, allowing communities to manage their programs.

\* See Annex 3

“Government’s role is changing. It’s a facilitator... it’s there to help. It can’t help well unless community leaders identify their assets and say to governments, given our strengths here is where we want to go, here’s what we need, here’s the tools we need.”

Dr. Janice Stein  
Keynote Speaker  
Toronto, Ontario

## In response to Question 4, participants proposed some messages about rural Canada for all Canadians.

### These include:

- Much wealth is generated from our natural and agricultural resources. If these resources fail, the cities fail. We are stewards of the land.
- One third of Canadians live in rural Canada, and more have their roots in rural Canada. Rural community values—sharing, respecting and helping each other—have built Canada. Rural issues are, and will be, urban issues, so we need to work together.
- Urban rules don’t apply to rural environments, because the challenges are different. Program design and funding must remain flexible to reflect this reality.
- Promote such positives of rural life as quality of life. Communicate that rural Canada subsidizes life in urban Canada: fish, lumber, clean water and agricultural products are underpriced.
- Invite youth to make a commercial that “celebrates rural” in recognition of rural strengths, values and advantages. Provide “heritage moment” TV spots that underscore the significance and importance of rural Canada.
- Ensure that urbanites understand the higher cost of rural living as it relates to transportation costs and access to services.
- Promote the dynamism of rural communities, and the ingenuity of rural citizens’ response to change. Tell our stories about “rural” through video, CD-ROM and print to inspire rural communities and inform urban communities.

- Canadians need to appreciate rural Canada’s contribution to food security and the intricacies of the agribusiness infrastructure.
- Send urban students out to the hinterlands on exchange programs, so they appreciate the source of much of Canada’s wealth.
- Use the Molson Breweries “I am Canadian” ad as a model that would focus on a “strength in diversity” theme for Canadians.
- Get urban people involved with activities in rural communities. For example, invite urban school field trips to agricultural areas during harvest time. Promote “experiential tourism,” inviting tourists to be involved in rural activities like aquaculture, commercial fishing, and activities related to mining.
- Rural industries that are doing well need to be identified and published. Develop a TV series on community economic development and air it on public TV as they are doing in British Columbia.
- Focus on the interdependency of rural and urban communities, not what separates the two. Support exchanges and dialogue between rural and urban citizens.

“In today’s rural communities, we live together, we share the same living space... it is a real and symbolic place which is necessary to my life, and I want to express my status as a citizen in choosing to live there... We seem to all have one ideal—a rural ideal. When I talk about my community, I talk about what I love, and what is important to me.

I have become conscious of the importance of this in my life, and I realize I have to defend it; and this has led me to travel across Canada, from one ocean to another... I have friends with whom I share the same vision: to allow my community to become a place which is prosperous, where its people can lead a beautiful life.”

Jacques Proulx  
Keynote Speaker  
Nicolet, Quebec

## 6 SUMMARY OF KEYNOTES AND PLENARY SESSIONS

Keynote and plenary speakers were interspersed throughout the conference. Summaries of the main presentations follow.

### Opening Welcome to Participants

**The Honourable Jean-Pierre Jolivet, Minister**  
*Ministry of Regions of Quebec*

Minister Jolivet stated that rural Canadians and Quebecers share the same vision of ensuring the prosperity of their communities. Quebec's cultural, social and economic affirmation is intimately linked with the vitality of its rural areas. He spoke about the ambitious collaboration among the Ministry of Regions and a vast array of partners including regional development councils, local development centres, Solidarité rurale and others.

Mr. Jolivet also spoke of the provincial government's role in rural development in Quebec. He underlined the importance of government cohesion with regards to government policy in rural areas.

**The Honourable Andy Mitchell, Secretary of State**  
*(Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)*

In welcoming conference participants, Secretary of State Andy Mitchell affirmed the unique contributions of all rural Canadians in initiating constructive change in their communities. He emphasized the importance of listening to each other and learning from the past in order to creatively move the rural agenda forward. After all, he said, "it is the people at the grassroots who set the priorities." It is then up to all levels of government to co-ordinate their efforts to provide the tools to facilitate sustainable rural development. Mr. Mitchell invited the conference participants to share lessons learned and to help develop strategies to sustain the valued legacy of rural Canada.

### Opening Plenary: Rural Life at the Dawn of the Millennium

Rural and Remote Communities in a Wired World  
**Dr. Janice Gross Stein, Director**  
*Munk Centre for International Development,  
University of Toronto*

The revolution in information technology and the "new knowledge" economy are creating new opportunities for rural and remote communities globally. Technology is only a tool, so it requires wise people to use it in ways that make sense for their communities. With wise use of technology, rural communities are better positioned to grow, perhaps more so than their urban counterparts.

Communities should embrace this new technology and use it to form partnerships to facilitate healthy community growth. Communities are not sustainable because they are wealthy or well-educated. They are well-off and well-educated because the community works well collectively to promote improved quality of life. No one solution will fit all communities. Communities need to inventory their existing strengths and assets to establish their collective goals. They should work with the public, private and not-for-profit sectors to realize those goals. Community leadership and partnerships have never been more important.

### Smart Communities: A 21<sup>st</sup> Century Model of Rural Community Development

**Mr. Aubrey Cormier, Executive Director**  
*La Société éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard*

Mr. Cormier provided an example of how the francophone community in Prince Edward Island has embraced the concept of Smart Communities. The mandate of La Société éducative, which was created in 1992, was to integrate smart technologies into ongoing adult education programs in the interests of job creation. Subsequently, the Island Advanced Training & Technology Centre\* was formed. Using the information highway as a tool, its mission is to provide community-based business incubation services, specialized training, and digital production services. It effectively integrates multi-sectoral information technology into its programming. It has become an applied knowledge

\* See Annex 3

economy centre and has given birth to the Atlantic Smart Communities Commission, the Canadian Business Intelligence Network, and Uniglobal,\* a consortium exporting technology to Europe and Africa.

## Keynote Luncheon Address

**The Honourable Andy Mitchell, Secretary of State**  
*(Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)*

Mr. Mitchell began his address by describing the mandate given to him by the Prime Minister—to improve the quality of life for rural Canadians. His fundamental approach to the task is to undertake his responsibilities like a broker across departmental lines. He acknowledged the value of the traditional resource sectors (agriculture, forestry, mining, etc.) as foundational for a sound economy, and for helping sustain a unique rural way and quality of life. Mr. Mitchell also identified the challenges that need to be overcome so that rural Canada can achieve a high quality of life. These challenges include geography/distance (leading to a higher cost of community servicing), low population density (affecting the rate of return on infrastructure investment, size of market), distance from markets and the cyclical nature of resource-dependent industries.

Meeting these challenges can only be accomplished through the collective efforts of governments, communities and rural institutions. Recently, the federal government committed funds to ensuring that information services reach rural areas. The Community Futures program also received additional funding to encourage private/public-sector partnerships to strengthen community development. More dollars have been injected into a federal/provincial infrastructure program and also to an expanded agricultural safety net. With these and other measures in place, a set of economic and social tools is available for rural communities to use in ways that best suit their needs. It is essential that communities drive the process and that the government facilitate these efforts. Mr. Mitchell encouraged rural Canadians not to fear change, but to shape it to address their needs.

## Dinner Address

**The Honourable Alfonso Gagliano, Minister**  
*Public Works and Government Services Canada*

The technological revolution associated with the Internet and the knowledge-based economy is fundamentally and rapidly changing the way people live and work. The Government of Canada is committed to being a leader in this technology and has pledged to be the “government most connected to its citizens” by 2004. Key initiatives include Service Canada, 1 800 O-Canada and the Community Access Program. The move to e-government is a fundamental shift in delivering programs and services.

The government sees affordable access to the Internet as a real opportunity for rural Canadians to access the knowledge-based economy. The removal of traditional barriers and limitations through electronic communication has changed the old motto of “location, location, location” to “innovation, innovation, innovation.” Rural Canadians excel at innovation. Connectivity is still a challenge in many parts of the country. The government is working to overcome this and is committed to providing the knowledge, skills and tools to use this technology successfully and to create sustainable opportunities.

## Breakfast Panel: Single Window Access to Government Programs and Services

A key message arising from the 1998 National Rural Workshop was a call from rural Canadians to have greater access to and knowledge about various federal government programs and services. The focus of this panel was to highlight some of the programs and services that are directly affecting rural communities.

Canada Post is using its outlets to test new projects and implement new services in support of rural communities and small business including Service Canada and Community Access Program test sites, financial services and bank machines. Canada Post is committed to maintaining and augmenting its presence in rural Canada.

The goal of the Service Canada Pilot Projects is to provide Canadians with one-stop access to a range of government services in a fast, reliable, convenient and cost-effective manner. This vision is being implemented in collaboration with provincial governments, territorial governments, municipalities and non-governmental organizations.

HRDC initiated the InfoCentre Pilot Projects\* to increase rural and remote community access to information on government programs and services. InfoCentre kiosk machines were installed in communities in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and the Maritimes on a trial basis.

The Canada Business Services Centres (CBSC) program is a co-operative arrangement among 36 federal business departments, provincial governments and, in some cases, the private sector, associations, academic and research communities. The goal of the CBSC program is to ensure that businesses and entrepreneurs in every part of Canada have access to government information through a single window.

Initiated by PWGSC, direct telephone service via 1 800 O-Canada and Internet access to the Canada Site ([www.canada.gc.ca](http://www.canada.gc.ca)) are the two primary windows for Canadians to gain access to information on federal government programs and services.

During the question period, participants raised several cautions such as the need to avoid improperly applying these technologies by relying on the Internet to the exclusion of phone contact. This problem is especially serious for those with no access to the Internet, new Canadians and people with disabilities. Other cautions were to avoid duplicating government electronic services and to ensure that new services are complementary to those currently available.

\* See Annex 3

## Luncheon Plenary: The Future of Rural Communities

As fares the village, so fares the country  
(Tant vaut le village, tant vaut le pays)

**Jacques Proulx, President,**  
*Solidarité rurale du Québec*

The fabric and balance of rural life, expectations, and reality is complex. Rural areas are more than producers of natural resources and agricultural activity for urban centres. They provide a way of life and a romanticism, vibrant local economies, community spirit and cultural heritage. In the face of a globalizing economy the fabric of rural life is changing. Expectations of those who live in rural areas are changing, as is their prosperity. Many see the rural environs in crisis, yet many rural residents are achieving the goal of living happily in the country.

There are many steps that can be taken to improve the situation. There needs to be a collective and decentralized reinvestment in rural areas and villages. People need to embrace the diversity of rural areas, take responsibility over truly rural issues, build on the benefits and go forward. The survival and renewal of rural communities depend on appropriate solutions developed for unique rural conditions, not on those modified from urban experiences.

## Is There a Future for Rural Communities?

**Dr. Robert Church, President,**  
*Lochend Luig Ranch/Church Livestock Consultants Ltd.*

Rural and remote areas of Canada have seen drastic changes over the last 50 years. Paved roads and the abandonment of rail lines have resulted in disappearing communities, and the ones that remain are larger and further apart. The electronic highway offers unprecedented opportunity for rural communities to reinvent themselves to benefit from e-commerce realities. The knowledge-based economy means that the workplace no longer dictates the living place.



Communities need to develop a “can do” attitude to meet the many challenges of embracing and making new technology work for them. Some attributes of this attitude include using technology, strong community leadership, greater community awareness, recognition of youth power and thinking co-operatively. There are many examples of successfully adaptive communities, and the list is getting longer. Their success is frequently linked with effective rural partnerships which, together, are facing the challenge imposed by today’s society where “perceptions are real, and facts are negotiable.”

## Closing Remarks

**The Honourable Andy Mitchell, Secretary of State**  
*(Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario)*

Mr. Mitchell identified several recurring rural development themes that he heard during individual and group meetings throughout the conference. The voice of youth must be heard more clearly in communities, and youth must be empowered to take on leadership roles. Community leaders must be trained and nurtured so they can facilitate effective change from the grassroots up.

Connecting communities through new and improved telecommunications infrastructure is important for networking and sharing experiences. Access to government services can still be improved—he was reminded that speaking face to face with someone should always remain an option in an age of electronic communication. Mr. Mitchell frequently heard the need to recognize the difference between rural and remote communities, which face additional challenges. He repeatedly heard that the primary industries of agriculture, forestry, mining and fishing are the mainstay of much of the rural economy and culture, and the issues associated with the cyclical nature of those industries must be addressed.

In response to these themes, Mr. Mitchell concluded by articulating some action items that will become part of a rural action plan that he will validate with conference participants and which will guide the Government of Canada’s actions over the next 12 to 24 months. He also emphasized that he and his staff could not do their job without the continued dialogue with rural and remote Canadians. It is this contact that energizes everyone to work hard on sustaining a rural Canada and a quality of life into the future. Finally, he emphasized that he is their servant, they set his action plan.

## 7 EXHIBIT SHOWCASE

The conference hosted an exhibit showcase that featured displays, case studies and information about innovative rural and remote community development initiatives. The exhibits included several community-led rural pilot projects in the seven groups of priority areas that framed

the conference. It also included sponsor projects such as Telesat’s live satellite link to Newfoundland and Canada Post’s rural post office featuring a Service Canada terminal, and some products and services from the Magog-Orford area.

## 8 COMMITTED TO ACTION

The conference carried the rural dialogue to the next level. The National Rural Workshop held near Belleville, Ontario, in 1998, confirmed and laid the groundwork for the 11 priority action areas articulated in the *Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada* which was announced in May 1999. A great deal has happened since then in implementing the framework.

Much of the progress that the federal government has made, in partnership with communities, to address these priority action areas in the last year is described in *Working Together in Rural Canada: Annual Report to Parliament* (May 2000). This report also reiterates the Government of Canada's commitment to improving the quality of life of Canadians in rural and remote areas on an ongoing basis and in a co-ordinated horizontal fashion. This dynamic approach to fostering community development will evolve over time. As outlined in the Annual Report, the government is already addressing the needs of rural and remote communities. A great deal, however, remains to be done, both nationally and regionally. This work will build on the partnerships that have been established within the federal government, with the private sector, with other levels of government and with local communities.

The Magog-Orford Conference was about learning from others' experiences and about the federal government's achievements in facilitating rural development. Conference participants also spent time enunciating actions and tools still needed to meet existing challenges in rural and remote communities. Some of the issues identified at the conference will require new policy directions or funding. Secretary of State Andy Mitchell committed to raising these broader issues directly with his colleagues. The government will also continue to apply the "Rural Lens" rigorously so that federal departments and agencies are aware of these issues, and of the effects of federal policies, programs and services on rural Canada when considering future initiatives.

Many other issues that emerged during the conference can be acted upon right away. The rural action plan that Secretary of State Mitchell committed to developing, validating and sharing with Canadians at the close of the conference does just that. It involves not only developing new tools, but also improving existing ones. For example, the delivery of the Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects Initiative will be improved by targeting pilot projects to address clearly defined problems and to meet specific objectives and by sharing project results with rural citizens through various avenues. As well, more regional rural dialogue activities will be conducted through 2001.

The rural dialogue has influenced the government's rural initiative since 1998 and will continue to do so. Communities and stakeholders will be increasingly involved in the dialogue as well as rural team activities that will help apply the "Rural Lens" more consistently. This will also provide a springboard to the next national rural conference in 2002 where grassroots input will be sought in planning and organizing this event. Together, government, citizens and stakeholders will again have the opportunity to meet and renew the commitment made in Magog to improving the quality of life of Canadians in rural and remote areas.

"This has been a very stimulating and growing experience. I've been hearing a lot of terrific ideas. Also I'm impressed with the attitude that the federal government is taking and the sense of direction it is going in.

It's a very refreshing feeling to know that we're sort of all working in one single direction, we're all on the same footpath."

Frank Pearce  
Participant  
Iqaluit, Nunavut

# ANNEX 1

## CONTACT INFORMATION FOR CONFERENCE PRESENTERS

### Provincial and Territorial Updates (Section 3)

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## Sharing Lessons Learned (Section 4)

### “Improving access to federal government programs and services for rural Canadians”

#### **Ann Whalley, Vice-Principal, Whycomagh Consolidated School**

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#### **Ross Risvold, Mayor, Hinton Alberta**

The Community Capacity Building Initiative—Model Forest Program (Alberta)

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### “Working with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new approaches to rural health care”

#### **Darren Ottaway, Co-Chair, South Indian Leaf Rapids Lynn Lake**

Regional Round-table Community Partnerships in Northern and Rural Manitoba (Manitoba)

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(Tant vaut le village, tant vaut le pays)

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**“Working with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new approaches to provide rural Canadians with continuous learning opportunities”**

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**“Providing more targeted opportunities, programs and services for rural youth (including Aboriginal youth)”**

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**“Strengthening rural community capacity building, leadership and skills development”**

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### **Development of Alternative Silviculture Practices Adapted to Mixed Forests (Que.)**

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### **Development and Promotion of Tourism on the Lower North Shore (Que.)**

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**“Strengthening economic diversification in rural Canada through more targeted assistance”**

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**“Connecting Rural Canadians to the knowledge-based economy and society and helping them acquire the skills to use the technology”**

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## ANNEX 2

### THE CANADIAN RURAL PARTNERSHIP'S RURAL TEAMS

Every province and territory has a rural team made up of representatives from federal departments and agencies. Many of these teams also include representatives from provincial and territorial governments. Through this approach, all interested parties have the chance to build partnerships, networks and alliances. The Rural Secretariat's Regional Advisors co-ordinate the work of these teams.

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# ANNEX 3

## GLOSSARY OF TERMS

### Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA)

- The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) works to enhance employment opportunities for Atlantic Canadians through development of small and medium-sized businesses, trade and foreign investment, innovation and technology. It covers Newfoundland, Nova Scotia, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick.

### Canada Business Service Centres

- The Canada Business Service Centres (CBSCs) are the gateway to government information for business. The CBSCs provide a wide range of information on government services, programs and regulations and are there to answer questions about starting a new business or improving an existing one.

### Canada Economic Development (Développement économique Canada)

- The Canada Economic Development (CED) works to make a more significant contribution to economic development in the regions of Quebec, while continuing its mission to assist small and medium-sized businesses. With its 13 business offices in the regions of Quebec, CED is able to work throughout the province.

### Canada World Youth

- This program provides young people with an opportunity to learn about other cultures and ways of life, to explore community and international development issues first hand and to acquire practical work experience. More than 1,000 young people from some 20 countries take part in the program every year.

### Canada Youth Business Foundation

- A private-sector funded non-profit organization, which was formed to address youth unemployment and under-employment by providing programs that support young people who are creating their own employment through entrepreneurship.

### Coastal Communities Network

- It is the “big voice for small communities.” Its role is to link Canadian communities on both the Atlantic and Pacific coasts to develop common ground on resource and marine policy and to articulate the needs of coastal communities to senior governments, industry, media and the general public.

### Community Access Program

- The Community Access Program (CAP) is a Government of Canada initiative, administered by Industry Canada, that aims to provide Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills they need to use it effectively.

### Community Development Ministry

- This Province of British Columbia ministry assists in the development of co-operatives, recognizes and supports the role of the voluntary sector, and ensures that government policies, legislation, and regulations support community, social and economic development.

### Community/Government Interface Model Pilot Project

- The P.E.I. Rural Team has engaged in a dialogue with the community of Kensington for the purpose of developing an interaction model between communities and government departments. The exercise will demonstrate the value of managing horizontally within government departments while encouraging communities to broaden their approach to community planning and development by incorporating the economic, social and environmental aspects of the community.

## Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs)

- Non-profit organizations guided by a volunteer board of directors and staffed with business professionals, who together are actively engaged in helping to develop and implement community-based economic development strategies.

## Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario (FedNor)

- FedNor is the Federal Economic Development Initiative in Northern Ontario. Their mission is to promote economic growth, diversification, job creation and sustainable, self-reliant communities in Northern Ontario by working co-operatively with community partners and other organizations to improve small business access to capital, information and markets.

## Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point (HACCP)

- HACCP based inspection systems comprise a systematic approach to identification, assessment, and prevention of food safety hazards. Their focus is on preventing product and process defects from occurring (as both could result in the production and marketing of unsafe foods) rather than spending time attempting to “inspect defects out” of finished products.

## Infocentre

- Infocentre is a Human Resources Development Canada pilot project to increase rural and remote community access to information on government programs and services.

## Island Advanced Training & Technology Centre (IATTC)

- Part of the Government of Canada's Community Access Program (CAP) that will help connect Prince Edward Island communities to the information highway. A joint initiative of the Société éducative de l'Île-du-Prince-Édouard and the region's Acadian economic development organization, the IATTC serves as an incubator for fledgling information technology businesses.

## Katimavik

- Former national youth work program that allowed participants to become involved in community projects in the areas of construction, literacy, senior care, and communications.

## Northern Development Commission

- A Government of British Columbia program, this falls under the provincial Northern Development Act. A Northern Development Commissioner, headquartered in Prince George, advises the provincial government on, among other things, job creation and economic development strategies in the north.

## Rural Development Office

- One part of the Province of British Columbia's Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Fisheries, works with the agriculture, food and fisheries sectors to help build strong rural communities.

## Saskatchewan's Business Enterprise Centres

- Brings together local, regional, provincial and federal organizations under one roof to provide a wide range of economic development services to businesses and co-operatives.

## Service Canada

- One-stop access to federal government services—helping Canadians get to the services they need quickly, easily and conveniently, whether in person, by telephone or electronically.

## Solidarité rurale

- *Solidarité rurale du Québec* was created in 1991 as a follow-up to the *États généraux du monde rural*, a rural symposium attended by 1,200 delegates. Since then *Solidarité rurale du Québec* has remained a coalition of about 20 organizations present throughout Québec. These organizations were actively involved in the *États généraux du monde rural*, and others have joined over the years. The mission of *Solidarité rurale du Québec* is to promote the revitalization and development of rural regions and localities in Québec, in order to reverse their decay and decline.

## Streamkeepers

- Development of the Streamkeepers Program began in October 1993 as an initiative of Fisheries and Oceans Canada in British Columbia. The objectives of the program are to provide volunteers with the training and support required to protect and restore local aquatic habitat; educate the public about the importance of watershed resources, and encourage communication and co-operation in watershed management. The program is only run in British Columbia, not nationally.

## The Ontario Rural Council (TORC)

- Acts as a neutral convener on rural development issues, bringing together multi-sector stakeholders to identify, collaborate and develop innovative solutions to rural issues. Its membership consists of 36 rural sector organizations, corporations and representatives from all three levels of government.

## Uniglobal

- Uniglobal integrated with APG Solutions & Technologies on March 20, 2000, to form one of Canada's 10 largest private IT consulting firms. Together they are an information technology consulting firm whose proven business solutions cover four key IT domains: enterprise package implementation, applications evolution, electronic service delivery and knowledge management.

## Western Economic Diversification Canada (WD)

- Since its establishment in 1987, the WD's mandate has been to promote the development and diversification of the economy of Western Canada and to advance the interests of the West in national economic policy.

## Youth Exchange Programs

- The Department of Foreign Affairs and International Trade encourages the introduction of new, reciprocal exchange activities to its international cultural relations programs; it also promotes these programs in order to enable young Canadians to obtain new skills and exposure to the cultures of host countries.

## Youth Services Canada

- Youth Service Canada is a workshop for life, providing unemployed and out-of-school youth with marketable job and life skills through community service. Projects run from six to nine months and recruit youth between the ages of 18 and 24.