

Rural Action Plan Report Card

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Message from the Secretary of State

The first ever National Rural Conference was a significant achievement. It brought together rural and remote Canadians to look at the progress the federal government had made on its rural initiative. It was a forum to share lessons learned from the Canadian Rural Partnership. The discussions were very productive and in my closing remarks at the conference, I made a commitment to put your priorities into action through a plan of action.

The proposed *Rural Action Plan* was distributed to all the participants of the Magog-Orford Conference for their concurrence. Their comments were integrated and put into the *Rural Action Plan* which contains more than 50 items for the Government of Canada to follow and act on.

This report is designed to document the progress of federal departments and agencies in their response to these action items since the plan was unveiled in Brandon, Manitoba last year. It also updates rural and remote Canadians on items that are still in progress. Some require new policy directions or increases in funding, others need a co-ordinated response from all levels of government. I will continue to press these issues with my colleagues in the days and weeks ahead.

The *Rural Action Plan Report Card* documents many of our success stories including the expanded network of Community Development Corporations in many parts of Canada, new flexibility in the programs Farm Credit Canada can offer, and an equitable share of Infrastructure dollars finding their way to rural and remote communities. One of the highest priority priorities was to involve our youth in shaping the future of rural Canada. Over the past year, I was pleased to be involved in Rural Dialogue sessions with a youth focus.

When we think of money, we think of the budget. I think this passage from the December 2001 federal budget shows that we are headed in the right direction and that rural and remote Canadians are being heard: *“Canada’s rural communities, along with their urban counterparts, contribute significantly to the wealth and prosperity of our nation. But they also face unique challenges: geography, distance from markets, a small population base and reliance on primary sector industries vulnerable to sharp cyclical downturns. The Government intends to work with rural communities, their citizens, and stakeholders to develop local solutions to these challenges.”*

This Report Card on the *Rural Action Plan* demonstrates the practical ways that commitment has been and is being carried out. It reaffirms that we as a federal government in partnership with Canadians are committed to shaping a successful future for rural Canada . . . together.

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

Rural Action Plan Report Card

<p align="center">Priority Area #1 Improve access to federal government programs and services for rural Canadians</p>				
<p>Issue: Provide government services on-line</p>				
Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>1. Assess Service Canada pilot projects. Share and apply the lessons learned.</p>	<p>Service Canada provides Canadians with one-stop access to government services—in-person, by phone and on the Internet. These three means of providing services were assessed, with the following results:</p> <p>The rural Access Centres are well used and users are highly satisfied with the service. Service Canada has been so successful that it was upgraded from a pilot project to a full program and the number of Access Centres was increased from 122 to 227. At least thirty per cent of Service Canada Access Centres in each province and territory are located in rural and remote areas. Plans are being developed to further increase the number of Access Centres in rural Canada.</p> <p>Calls to 1 800 O-Canada increased by 32 per cent in one year. About half were from rural citizens.</p> <p>Information requested from the Canada Web site increased 37 per cent in one year.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>See publiservice.servicecanada.gc.ca or call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232).</p>



Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>2. Roll out the Government On-Line initiative to implement government transactions on-line in a manner that ensures access to rural Canadians.</p>	<p>The Government of Canada is ensuring that rural and urban Canadians have access to government transactions on-line through the Government On-Line initiative.</p> <p>The 2001 Federal Budget invested \$600 million over four years (\$150 million per year starting in fiscal year 2002–2003) to implement the Government On-Line Initiative by 2005.</p>		✓	<p>See www.gol-ged.gc.ca or call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232).</p>
<p>3. Develop an Internet portal to provide rural and remote Canadians with one-stop access to federal programs and services. Include an on-line directory of key programs and services geared to rural and remote citizens.</p>	<p>The Rural and Remote Services portal, offering single-window access to services and resources available to rural and remote Canadians, is being developed. It will be launched later in 2002.</p> <p>The Canada Web site was redesigned to make it easier to navigate and to access information.</p> <p>The <i>Pocket Directory of Rural Programs and Services</i> is now available on the Web, in print and on CD.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	✓	<p>See www.canada.gc.ca.</p> <p>See www.rural.gc.ca/pocket/index.phtml or call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232).</p>

Priority Area #2

Improve access to financial resources for rural business and community development

Issue: Provide funding for rural enterprises

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>4. Improve Community Futures Development Corporations' services to provide universal coverage throughout Quebec and Ontario, as it does in other provinces.</p>	<p>Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) services are now generally available to rural and northern communities in all provinces. Additional work is required in the territories, under the leadership of the Department of Indian and Northern Development.</p> <p>In Ontario, FedNor established two new Community Futures Development Corporations and expanded two others. Four new CFDCs are planned. FedNor is working towards universal coverage; there are still some designated areas that have not yet been approved for CFDC funding.</p> <p>In Quebec, 35 additional municipalities now have access to all CFDC services and two new CFDCs were created in regions particularly in need of them. Communities not presently serviced by CFDCs can now obtain at least basic information on Government of Canada services and programs through a local partner funded by Economic Development Canada.</p>		<p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p>	<p>See www.ontcfdc.com for program information and geographic coverage areas.</p> <p>See www.dec-ced.gc.ca/.</p>
<p>5. Strengthen existing Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) and improve services by increasing operating funds.</p>	<p>In Ontario, the Community Futures Program received an additional \$7.25 million to expand geographic service and increase the level of funding for existing CFDCs.</p> <p>The Pan Canadian Community Futures Network was established to raise the profile of CFDCs, share best practices and build networking opportunities.</p>	<p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p>		<p>See www.communityfutures.ca</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
6. Require rural banks to give a six-month notice before closing.	<p>The Branch Closure Regulations for banks, trust and loan companies, and cooperative credit associations came into effect in March 2002. They require rural banks to give a six-month notice before closing.</p> <p>These regulations were published in Part II of the Canada Gazette in March 2002.</p>	✓		<p>See www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/ or call 1 866 461-3222 (toll-free, English) or 1 866 461 2232 (toll-free, French).</p> <p>See canada.gc.ca/gazette.</p>
7. Strengthen the credit union movement so that it can better compete with large institutions.	<p>The <i>Co-operative Credit Associations Act</i> was amended to allow credit unions and caisses populaires to form national retail associations, putting them in a better position to compete with larger financial institutions. The Act came into full force in October 2001.</p>	✓		<p>See www.fcac-acfc.gc.ca/ or call 1 866 461-3222 (toll-free, English) or 1 866 461-2232 (toll-free, French).</p>
8. Provide over-the-counter financial services through Canada Post outlets in communities where there are no financial institutions.	<p>Canada Post and four chartered banks have launched pilot projects to offer financial services through postal outlets in rural and remote communities in Newfoundland and Labrador, Quebec, Ontario and the Northwest Territories.</p>		✓	<p>If these projects are successful, Canada Post will expand the program to other communities.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>9. Promote and use institutions like Farm Credit Canada (FCC), regional development agencies and Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDC) to help deliver services.</p>	<p>The following are examples of how the Government of Canada is promoting and using these institutions to help deliver services:</p> <p>In April 2001, the <i>Farm Credit Canada Act</i> was amended to give FCC greater flexibility in the programs it can offer, and allows the corporation to provide equity financing and business planning advisory services.</p> <p>FCC and the Business Development Bank of Canada can now better combine expertise and products to improve service delivery to agricultural businesses. A revised Memorandum of Understanding has been signed between these two organizations which will lead to better coordinated service delivery.</p> <p>FedNor signed agreements with northern Ontario credit unions and caisses populaires which make it easier for small business to access capital.</p> <p>FedNor developed a common identifier for all Ontario CFDCs to make them clearly identifiable as a Government of Canada service.</p> <p>Regional development agencies are being used to help deliver services. For instance, the Infrastructure Canada Program is being implemented by Western Economic Diversification in the western provinces and by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency in Atlantic Canada. This includes funding specifically dedicated to rural Canada.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		<p>See www.fcc-sca.ca/english/our_company/media/news_releases/2001_04_05.shtml.</p>

Priority Area #3

Provide more targeted opportunities, programs and services for rural youth, including Aboriginal youth

Issue: Increase rural youth participation in community development

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
10. Encourage youth leadership skills development.	<p>AAFC's Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) program provides financial assistance to the Canadian 4-H Council to further develop leadership skills in rural youth.</p> <p>A specific youth component has been incorporated into the 2002 National Rural Conference. Youth initiatives will be developed for 2002–2003.</p> <p>The Rural Secretariat, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (AAFC), Canadian Heritage and Farm Credit Canada, in partnership with the Inter-American Institute for Cooperation in Agriculture, helped sponsor the First International Workshop on Rural Youth Leadership Development in October 2001.</p> <p>\$3.6 million from FedNor's Youth Internship Initiative helped nearly 150 recent post-secondary school graduates gain education-related work experience. By working with business and community organizations, participants gained experience and leadership skills.</p> <p>\$1.1 million from AAFC's Science Horizons Program helped nearly 200 recent graduates find employment in agri-food science and veterinary medicine research projects. Through their involvement in planning, implementing, reporting and evaluating scientific projects, participants gained leadership skills and work experience.</p>	<p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p>		<p>See www.agr.gc.ca/policy/adapt/adaptation_programs/4h.html.</p> <p>See www.lavoieagricole.ca.</p> <p>See www.fednor.ic.gc.ca or call 1 877 333-6733.</p> <p>See res2.agr.gc.ca/research-recherche/youth/shorizons/kit.html</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>10. Encourage youth leadership skills development.</p> <p>(...continued)</p>	<p>The Canadian Rural Partnership's Pilot Projects Initiative provided \$1.7 million to fund 48 projects aimed at developing youth leadership skills. For instance, the University of Guelph is helping young "go-getters" in rural Ontario nail down some boardroom experience and learn about leadership from mentors within the agriculture and agri-food industry.</p> <p>The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency helped nearly 500 young people develop entrepreneurial skills.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		<p>See www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/.</p>
<p>11. Include youth in future regional and national Rural Dialogue activities.</p>	<p>Rural youth participated in various Rural Dialogue events across the country. They were active participants at, and helped plan components of, the four regional Rural Dialogue conferences in 2001 (BC, Nova Scotia, Yukon and Ontario).</p> <p>Three youth councils were established as a result of rural youth dialogues held in B.C.</p> <p>The Ontario Youth Forum 2001 focused on the contributions and roles youth have to play in their communities.</p> <p>Three youth Rural Dialogue sessions were held in New Brunswick in February 2002. These sessions led up to a provincial youth Rural Dialogue conference in March 2002.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>11. Include youth in future regional and national Rural Dialogue activities.</p> <p>(...continued)</p>	<p>The Secretary of State held an on-line Rural Dialogue chat session with youth in March 2002. Future opportunities for similar interaction are being examined.</p> <p>18–29 year-old rural Canadians participated in a day-long Rural Youth Forum at the April 2002 National Rural Conference.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		
<p>12. Involve youth in Rural Team activities.</p>	<p>Rural Teams have been involving youth in their activities through the following initiatives:</p> <p>The Yukon and Alberta Rural Teams established Youth Working Groups.</p> <p>The Newfoundland and Labrador Team has been working with Community Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador to promote youth entrepreneurship.</p> <p>Rural Team Manitoba partnered with the Province of Manitoba on a rural youth forum that was held in conjunction with Rural Forum 2002 in Brandon.</p> <p>The Northwest Territories Team held a youth workshop in partnership with the Territorial Youth Association. The New Brunswick Rural Team invited the New Brunswick Youth Council executive director to join their team, and the Rural Youth Enterprise made a presentation to the Ontario Rural Team.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		<p>To contact the Rural Team closest to you, see www.rural.gc.ca/contact_e.phtml#advisors or call 1 888 781-2222 (toll-free).</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>13. With partners, develop and implement a comprehensive strategy focussing on preventing youth crime and victimization in rural and remote Canada.</p>	<p>The RCMP's National Youth Strategy was launched in 2000. It aims to reduce crime and victimization and includes initiatives for rural and urban youth.</p> <p>In July 2001, the Government of Canada committed an additional \$145 million over four years to the National Strategy on Community Safety and Crime Prevention. The National Strategy focuses on addressing the root causes of crime and victimization. Since its launch in June 1998, it has contributed to more than 2200 crime prevention projects in over 600 communities across Canada. These include rural, remote and Aboriginal communities, in which, 189 projects have received funding for over \$4.8 million to address their unique issues of crime and victimization.</p> <p>The Department of Justice, through the Youth Justice Renewal Initiative, provides communities with funds to improve their ability to develop community-based youth justice programs. One such program is the Restoring Justice in Rural Communities project in Chipman, New Brunswick, which recognizes that rural areas are different from urban ones and often require different solutions to youth crime. The program, through meaningful alternatives to the formal justice system, targets the root causes of youth crime while restoring harmony to the community.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>The National Youth Web site (www.deal.org) was created for youth, by youth.</p> <p>See www.crime-prevention.org or call 1 877 302-6272 (toll-free).</p> <p>E-mail: youth-jeunes@justice.gc.ca, or fax (613) 954-3275.</p>

Priority Area #4				
Strengthen rural community capacity building, leadership and skills development				
Issue: Empower community leaders and organizations to pursue economic and community development initiatives				
Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
14. Roll out the Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI) to support projects such as conferences on rural issues organized by non-governmental organizations.	<p>CARCI was launched in 2000 with \$9.3 million funding over three years. Funding is from the Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund.</p> <p>CARCI has already committed \$2.1 million to support 67 pilot projects, including workshops, conferences and seminars organized by non-governmental organizations.</p> <p>The Government of Canada's \$2.4-million Agricultural Rural Minority Language Community Planning Initiative was launched in 2001. This CARCI-funded initiative aims at helping official language communities living in a minority situation overcome any language-related barriers they encounter in their search for sustainable development.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		See www.agr.gc.ca/carci/ for application guidelines, or call 1 877 295-7160 (toll-free)
15. Create electronic tools to allow communities to interact with each other regionally and nationally.	<p>Industry Canada's Community Access Program (CAP) partners with provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, libraries, schools and the private sector to provide public access to the Internet in 5,500 rural communities.</p> <p>Additional work is required to use existing electronic tools to link communities electronically so they are in a better position to pursue economic and community development initiatives.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	See cap.ic.gc.ca/english/4000.shtml to find the CAP site nearest you. Or call 1 800 575-9200 (TTY: 1 800 465-7735).

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>16. Find new ways to support organizations committed to rural development and capacity building.</p>	<p>The Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Project Initiative supports projects that contribute to rural development and capacity building. For example, one project involved creating and implementing a 12-month program giving skilled First Nation staff the opportunity to work with several Yukon Government agencies. The goal was to learn about available information that will support planning and decision-making in the rural Aboriginal communities throughout the Yukon.</p> <p>FedNor builds rural community capacity through partnerships with municipalities, First Nations and local economic development organizations including Community Futures Development Corporations. For instance, FedNor contributed \$55,300 towards developing a community-driven strategic plan for the Lacroche/Manitoulin area. The resultant plan will provide a basis for community economic development activities in the area for the next several years.</p> <p>Western Economic Diversification's \$2.7-million Community Economic Development Opportunity Initiative supports organizations in community capacity building.</p> <p>Natural Resources Canada's Resource Opportunities for Northern Saskatchewan Communities is a pilot program supporting communities seeking to improve their capacity to plan and train for opportunities related to sustainable development and use of natural resources.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>See www.rural.gc.ca/pilot/pilot_e.phtml or call (613) 759-7112.</p> <p>See www.fednor.ic.gc.ca or call 1 877 333-6733 (toll-free).</p> <p>See www.wd.gc.ca/eng/ced/.</p> <p>Call 1 306 953-8546.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>16. Find new ways to support organizations committed to rural development and capacity building.</p> <p>(...continued)</p>	<p>Human Resources Development Canada developed the <i>Community Development Handbook</i>, the <i>Community Capacity Building Facilitator's Guide</i> and the <i>Community Capacity Building Internet Site</i> to help communities build capacity.</p>	<p>✓</p>		<p>See www.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/hrib/hrif/community-communautaire/menu/page4.shtml or call 819 953-1920.</p>
<p>17. Find new ways to support community leadership development.</p>	<p>FedNor's Community Futures Program supports community capacity and leadership skills development through training and by implementing best practices within Community Futures Development Corporations.</p> <p>A federal partnering initiative is being developed which will help community organizations working on development activities, including community capacity building.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.ontcfdc.com.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
18. Conduct partnership projects with the co-operative sector.	<p>In June 2000, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) Fund contributed \$500,000 towards a project examining the barriers to the growth of agriculture co-operatives, with the aim of helping the sector better compete. Recommendations from this project, which was completed in September 2001, led to the following Phase II project:</p> <p>In February 2002, AAFC announced that it was providing \$968,000 in CARD funding towards a project aimed at helping ensure the long-term competitiveness and vitality of Canada's agriculture co-operative sector.</p> <p>Human Resources Development Canada contributed \$1.9 million towards a worker co-op development pilot project.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>See aceis1.ncr.agr.ca/policy/adapt/index_e.html.</p>
19. Continue sustainable community initiatives under the Northern Sustainable Development Strategy.	<p>The Department of Indian and Northern Development's 2001–2003 Sustainable Development Strategy continues to identify actions that involve partnership with First Nations, Inuit and Canadians living in the North. Actions include involving Aboriginal organizations in projects of the Arctic Council (e.g., the Health, Networking and Internships Programs of the initiative on the Future of Children and Youth in the Arctic, Capacity Building Policy, the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment).</p>		<p>✓</p>	<p>See www.ainc-inac.gc.ca/pr/sus/index_e.html.</p>

Priority Area #5				
Create opportunities for rural communities to maintain and develop infrastructure for community development				
Issue: Provide support for municipal and transportation infrastructure				
Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
20. Design the infrastructure program so that it meets the priorities of rural and remote Canadians.	<p>The Infrastructure Canada Program will invest \$420 million in rural and remote Canada between 2000/2001 and 2005/2006.</p> <p>Federal–provincial/ territorial agreements have been signed with all provinces and territories. Each agreement includes a minimum rural investment target (ranging from 15 to 56 per cent) that must be met for that jurisdiction.</p> <p>Rural and remote Canada will benefit from the Government of Canada’s commitment to contribute, through the Strategic Infrastructure Foundation, \$2-billion cost-shared assistance to large infrastructure projects and to encourage public–private partnerships.</p>		<p style="text-align: center;">✓</p> <p style="text-align: center;">✓</p>	See www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/ino-bni/main/main_e.asp .

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>21. Complete federal-provincial/territorial negotiations on the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program. Sign and implement agreements.</p>	<p>Agreements have been signed with Nova Scotia, Alberta, Manitoba and Saskatchewan. Negotiations with the remaining provinces and territories are expected to be completed by the end of 2002.</p> <p>\$600 million will go to the Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program: \$500 million towards improving the national highway system and \$100 million for national system integration initiatives.</p> <p>The 2001 Federal Budget committed \$600 million over five years towards a new border infrastructure program. Projects supported could include new or improved highway access for border crossings, processing centres for commercial vehicles, and "soft infrastructure" such as intelligent transportation systems.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.tc.gc.ca/programs_and_divestiture/highways/en/ship_en.stm.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>22. Hire an independent third party to monitor the impact of changes to grain handling and the grain transportation system on farmers, the Canadian Wheat Board, railways, grain companies, shippers and ports.</p>	<p>Quorum Corporation was hired in June 2001 to monitor and evaluate the overall efficiency of Canada's grain handling and transportation system. Their contract expires December 2003.</p>		✓	
<p>23. Compile a list of possible service changes to VIA Rail's national network that would restore previously abandoned services or that would enhance the performance of the corporation.</p>	<p>VIA Rail is assessing a business case for restoring some passenger services. Services being assessed include Vancouver–Calgary, Montreal–Sherbrooke–Saint John, Halifax–Sydney, Toronto–Peterborough and Toronto–Barrie–Collingwood.</p> <p>Restoring these services would benefit rural communities where VIA stops would be added.</p>		✓	<p>VIA's service restoration can only be considered if a business case has been demonstrated that will not require an increase in VIA's current funding level.</p>

<p>24. Work cooperatively to ensure that the Independent Transition Observer on Airline Restructuring is informed of rural issues related to air transportation in rural and remote regions.</p>	<p>The Rural Secretariat continues to consult with the Independent Transition Observer on Airline Restructuring and to work with Transport Canada officials on the air transportation needs of rural and remote Canadians. Since April 2000, the Secretariat has participated in three bilateral meetings with the Independent Transition Observer.</p> <p>The Independent Transition Observer's (Debra Ward) Second Interim Report is available on Transport Canada's Web site. In it, Ms. Ward notes that carriers which fly in remote and mostly northern destinations will be discussed in greater detail in the third interim report.</p> <p>Airline service to rural and remote communities remains a priority for the Rural Secretariat, which continues to work within the Government on this issue.</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>Bill C-26 incorporates into law Air Canada's commitment to maintain its previous level of services to rural and remote parts of Canada for a three-year period. The Observer will continue to monitor these air services.</p> <p>For information on airline restructuring and the Independent Transition Observer, see www.tc.gc.ca/pol/en/air/airline_restructuring_menu_page.htm.</p>
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Issue: Provide affordable housing in rural areas, particularly in the North				
Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
25. Continue and expand the current partnership for affordable housing.	<p>At the November 2001 meeting of federal, provincial and territorial ministers of housing, the Government of Canada reaffirmed its \$680 million commitment to affordable housing. In February 2002, the Northwest Territories was the most recent territory/province to sign an Affordable Housing Agreement with the Government of Canada. British Columbia and Quebec signed agreements in 2001.</p> <p>Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation encourages the supply of affordable housing through several initiatives. For instance, the Canadian Centre for Public-Private Partnerships in Housing works with non-profit community groups and municipal, provincial and federal governments to develop affordable housing.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/News/news/index.cfm for a list of news releases.</p> <p>See www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/imquaf/afho/.</p>
26. Consider using some of the new federal infrastructure funds to develop affordable housing.	<p>Affordable housing is one of the six categories for which provinces and territories can use federal infrastructure funding.</p> <p>The 2001 Budget confirmed the Government of Canada's commitment of \$680 million over five years for affordable housing, which will also benefit rural and remote areas.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/imquaf/afho/index.cfm or call 1 800 668-2642.</p>

Priority Area #6

Connect rural Canadians to the knowledge-based economy and society, and help them acquire the skills to use the technology

Issue: Provide rural and remote communities with telecommunication infrastructure

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>27. Encourage partnerships between the public, private and cooperative sectors to increase the understanding of telecommunications and expand telecommunications infrastructure in rural and remote communities.</p>	<p>Industry Canada's Smart Communities Program is helping seven rural and remote communities implement information and communications technologies. These communities illustrate how using these technologies can create a level playing field for any community, no matter how remote.</p> <p>In September 2001, Canada Economic Development helped fund a national meeting in the Matawinie region, on the role of new information technologies in rural development.</p> <p>Natural Resources Canada's (GeoConnections) Sustainable Communities Initiative provides remote, rural, northern and Aboriginal communities with Internet access to data and analytical tools for decision making.</p> <p>In its 2001 budget, the Government of Canada committed \$600 million over four years to implement the Government On-Line strategy. It also provided \$110 million to build a new generation of Internet broadband network architecture, linking all research-intensive institutions, including many community colleges located in rural areas.</p>	<p align="center">✓</p>	<p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p>	<p>See smartcommunities.ic.gc.ca/.</p> <p>See www.sci.gc.ca or call (613) 996-1397.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
28. Expand the network of Community Access Program sites to 5,000 in rural and remote Canada.	<p>Over 5,500 Community Access Program (CAP) sites are now located in rural and remote Canada.</p> <p>With the goal of expanding broadband Internet coverage, the Government of Canada committed to extending CAP and SchoolNet to 2003–2004, at an annual cost of \$40 million dollars, and set aside \$35 million a year for three years thereafter to support broadband expansion.</p>	✓		<p>See cap.ic.gc.ca/english/4000.shtml to find the CAP site nearest you. Or call 1 800 575-9200 (TTY: 1 800 465-7735).</p>
29. Roll out the seven Smart Communities projects located in rural or remote areas.	Projects in the seven rural communities are now underway.		✓	See smartcommunities.ic.gc.ca/ .

Issue: Help rural business develop e-commerce opportunities				
Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
30. Work with business to promote rural applications of new technologies including e-commerce.	<p>The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency held e-commerce awareness seminars in rural Atlantic Canada.</p> <p>Canada Economic Development, Industry Canada and Communication Canada organized conferences to increase e-business development in Quebec.</p> <p>FedNor provided over \$5.8 million to fund 28 projects to develop telecommunications infrastructure and applications in northern Ontario.</p> <p>Western Economic Diversification (WD) established Aboriginal Services Kiosk, an Internet portal for information on Aboriginal programs, services and contacts in Saskatchewan. It includes links to information on business-support organizations and doing business with the Government of Canada.</p> <p>WD provided \$749,000 to 18 projects in rural western Canada, as part of its First Jobs in Science and Technology Program. This program helps businesses use new technologies by providing them with funding to hire recent graduates with the expertise in these technologies.</p> <p>The Canadian E-Business Opportunities Roundtable, with input from Industry Canada, developed the Small and Medium Enterprise Information Toolkit to help rural and urban businesses make sound e-business decisions.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.fednor.ic.gc.ca or call 1 877 333-6733.</p> <p>See www.asksask.sk.ca/.</p> <p>See www.wd.gc.ca/eng/finance/programs/xfirstjb.html or call 1 888 338-9378 (toll-free).</p> <p>See ebusinessroundtable.ca/tools.html.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>30. Work with business to promote rural applications of new technologies including e-commerce.</p> <p>(...continued)</p>	<p>In June 2000, the Government of Canada announced the \$300-million Atlantic Innovation Fund to increase the region's capacity to carry out leading-edge research and development that contributes directly to developing new technology-based economic activity in the region.</p> <p>Approximately \$1.5 billion in total value of projects are seeking \$810 million in Atlantic Innovation Fund contribution, which amounts to 195 project proposals.</p>		✓	<p>See www.acoa-apec.ca/e/financial/aif/index.shtml.</p>

Priority Area #7				
Strengthen economic diversification in rural Canada through more targeted assistance				
Issue: Develop value-added industries and tourism in regions dependent upon primary production				
Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
31. Develop and promote programs that encourage diversification into value-added sectors.	<p>Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's (AAFC) Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development Fund is a \$60-million-a-year program that supports initiatives encouraging innovation and value-added in the agriculture sector.</p> <p>AAFC's Matching Investment Initiative offered matching funds totalling \$26.9 million for 777 private-sector research projects in 2001–2002. Most were strongly oriented to value-added and were primarily in rural communities. For instance, the Initiative funded research into increasing the value of apples by giving them a more desirable texture and colour.</p> <p>Natural Resources Canada's (NRCan) Model Forest Program helps to identify forest-based sustainable economic opportunities and to broaden and diversify local community economies through broad stakeholder partnerships.</p> <p>NRCan's First Nations Forestry Program aims to improve economic conditions by increasing the number of long-term jobs, developing partnerships and enhancing capacity to participate in forest-based businesses and manage reserve forest sustainably.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.agr.ca/policy/adapt/index_e.html or call (613) 759-1348.</p> <p>See res2.agr.gc.ca/research-recherche/industry/mii/match.html or call (613) 759-7852.</p> <p>See www.modelforest.net or call (613) 992-5799.</p> <p>See www.fnfp.gc.ca or call (613) 947-7380.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>31. Develop and promote programs that encourage diversification into value-added sectors.</p> <p>(...continued)</p>	<p>Regional Development Agencies' Community Futures Program provides ongoing support of diversification initiatives. Initiatives have ranged from white pine veneer production to birch syrup and candy making to crafts made from forest materials.</p>		✓	<p>See Western Canada - www.communityfutures.ca Ontario - www.ontcfdc.com Quebec - www.dec-ced.gc.ca Atlantic - www.acoa-apeco.gc.ca. Or call 1 800 O-Canada (1 800 622-6232).</p>
<p>32. Work with the provinces and territories to ensure that the appropriate agricultural safety nets are in place.</p>	<p>At their 2001 meeting in Whitehorse, Yukon, federal, provincial and territorial ministers of agriculture agreed in principle on an action plan for Canadian agriculture in the 21st century.</p> <p>Federal, provincial and territorial governments continue to work toward an agreement on this agricultural policy framework which includes exploring new, future-oriented directions in risk management. Consultations in 2002 with the agriculture industry, the agri-food chain and broader Canadian society will feed into the development of a new risk management approach.</p>		✓	<p>See www.agr.gc.ca/puttingcanadafirst.</p>
<p>33. Implement the new Agricultural Environmental Stewardship Initiative.</p>	<p>This initiative is being implemented with the help of three-year, \$10-million Canadian Adaptation and Rural Development (CARD) funding. Projects address the impacts of agricultural practices on water, soil and air quality, biodiversity and greenhouse gas emissions. Projects are approved by industry-led Adaptation Councils.</p>		✓	<p>See www.agr.ca/policy/environment/eb/public_html/ebe/aei.html.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
34. Establish new partnerships for community economic development in rural Atlantic Canada.	<p>ACOA's Business Development Program loaned almost \$80 million to enterprises in rural Atlantic Canada. This program helps small- and medium-sized business to set up, expand or modernize.</p> <p>The Strategic Community Investment Fund, under the Atlantic Investment Partnership, is a \$135-million program designed to support strategic initiatives that respond to the economic development needs of Atlantic Canada and help primarily rural communities strengthen their economic base.</p>	✓		See www.acoa-apeco.gc.ca/e/financial/business.shtml .
35. Develop sustainable and viable fishing opportunities that reduce dependence on existing fisheries, increasing their value.	Fisheries and Oceans Canada launched the Fisheries Development Program to help First Nations, fishermen and communities in the Pacific region reduce their dependency on salmon. This is done by developing sustainable and viable new fishing opportunities for under-utilized species, increasing the value of these fisheries, and developing new non-salmon, aquaculture opportunities.	✓		See www.pac.dfo-mpo.gc.ca/ops/fm/toppages/developfisheries.htm .
36. Roll out the Sustainable Aquaculture Development Program.	Fisheries and Oceans Canada launched the Program for Sustainable Aquaculture in the fall of 2000. It is funded at \$15 million per year.	✓		For information, call (613) 990-1459.

Priority Area #8

Work with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with access to health care at reasonable cost

Issues: Improve access to health services by supporting the development of innovative models that respond to the health concerns of rural Canadians
 Promote health status improvement through health promotion and disease prevention in collaboration with the provinces and territories
 Support provincial and territorial efforts to encourage the recruitment and retention of healthcare professionals in rural areas.

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
37. Work with provincial and territorial governments to fund pilot projects that develop new ways of delivering health care in rural and remote Canada.	<p>Health Canada's Rural and Remote Health Innovations Initiative is funding over 75 national and regional rural health projects valued at \$11 million. One example is a project managed by the NWT Registered Nurses Association which is exploring the potential of using a telephone service to help provide health and social services in remote communities.</p> <p>The Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects Initiative supported 27 community-health-related projects over four years. For instance, the West Prince Telehospice project will demonstrate how home-based tele-technology can help provide palliative care to residents of the West Prince region in Prince Edward Island.</p>	<p align="center">✓</p>	<p align="center">✓</p>	<p>See www.hc-sc.gc.ca/english/ruralhealth/funding.html or call (613) 946-5100.</p> <p>See www.rural.gc.ca/pilot/pilot_e.phtml or call (613) 759-7112.</p>

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
38. Support initiatives that develop ways of using information technology to improve health care in rural and remote areas.	<p>The Canada Health Infostructure Partnerships Program is providing roughly \$49 million to projects aimed at improving access to medical care in rural and remote areas. For example, the Memorial University of Newfoundland telemedicine sector is managing a project to implement video-conferencing telehealth facilities in the communities of Bonavista and Clarenville. These facilities will be used to provide health-care services.</p> <p>The Health Infostructure Support Program provided \$1.3 million to six pilot projects assessing new information technologies and directly impacting rural health care.</p> <p>The Smart Community Initiative supports telehealth services in northern Ontario. The Kuh-ke-nah Network of Smart First Nations has a broadband network in place, call K-NET. K-NET provides telehealth workstations in five communities, where people can use video-conferencing equipment to consult with a doctor and other health professionals in a distant location.</p> <p>The Canada Health Infoway Corporation was established with a \$500-million investment. The Corporation will focus initially on developing electronic patient records.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	<p>See www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ohih-bis/whatfund/index_e.html or call (613) 952-4526.</p> <p>See www.hc-sc.gc.ca/ohih-bis/whatfund/index_e.html or call (613) 952-4526.</p> <p>For more information visit their web site at http://smart.knet.on.ca.</p>
39. Encourage national research efforts to include a rural perspective (e.g., Canadian Institutes of Health Research).	A strategic plan for rural health research is being developed by the Canadian Institutes of Health Research.		<p>✓</p>	

Priority Area #9

Work with provincial and territorial governments to examine and pilot test new ways to provide rural Canadians with access to education at reasonable cost

Issue: Provide access to adult literacy and distance learning

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
40. Promote using new technologies for distance learning.	<p>Human Resources Development Canada's Community Learning Networks Initiative partners with community organizations to provide access to learning resources through information communication technologies.</p> <p>FedNor supports new and innovative ways to improve access to education services throughout northern Ontario. FedNor contributed \$500,000 towards upgrades of the video-conferencing and wide-area network infrastructure at College Boreal in order to improve access to the College's distance education services by northern Ontario students. This system will also be used to disseminate information to small business operators across the north.</p>		<p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p>	<p>See olt-bta.hrdc-drhc.gc.ca/contribu/index.html#cln or call (819) 997-6777.</p> <p>See www.fednor.ic.gc.ca or call 1 877 333-6673 (toll-free).</p>

<p align="center">Priority Area #10 Foster strategic partnerships, within communities, between communities and among governments to facilitate rural community development</p>				
<p>Issues: Strengthen the Rural Lens and broaden the Rural Dialogue</p>				
Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
41. Consider creating an advisory committee of rural citizens to advise the Secretary of State.	Work is well advanced in developing a rural advisory committee with a mandate to provide advice to the Secretary of State for Rural Development.		✓	
42. Get rural organizations and individuals from different groups (e.g., First Nations, Métis, Inuit, visible minorities, youth, women and volunteers) more involved in Rural Team activities.	<p>Rural Teams in all regions strive to involve citizens and organizations in their activities:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rural citizens and community organization members helped Rural Teams in the Yukon, BC, Ontario and Nova Scotia organize regional conferences; • Rural Team Ontario organized a Dialogue session for Francophones from across the province; • as a result of the on-going dialogue between the Prince Edward Island Rural Team and rural citizens, the Team received the necessary direction to set its priorities; • a member of the Nunavut Social Development Council is a member of Rural Team Nunavut; and • the British Columbia Rural Team hosted a Dialogue session for citizens with physical challenges in February 2002. 		✓	To contact the Rural Team in your region, see www.rural.gc.ca/contact_e.phtml#advisors or call 1 888 781-2222.

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
43. Enhance the Rural Dialogue On-line Discussion Group by conducting electronic town halls, such as interactive sessions with the Secretary of State.	The Rural Secretariat received funding in 2001–2002 to enhance the Rural On-Line Discussion Group. A pilot on-line chat session was held between the Secretary of State and rural youth in March 2002 to allow young Canadians living in rural and remote areas to share their perspective on rural issues. Additional work will be done in the weeks ahead.		✓	This session will be evaluated and the results will be used to help the Rural Secretariat make strategic use of the Discussion Group to engage, consult and talk with rural Canadians.
44. Conduct regional Dialogue activities with partners through 2001.	<p>Rural Teams hosted 11 regional Dialogue sessions in Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan and Manitoba.</p> <p>The Secretary of State hosted regional rural conferences in Vernon, British Columbia; Haines Junction, Yukon; North Bay, Ontario and Cornwallis, Nova Scotia.</p> <p>Rural Teams in Alberta, British Columbia and the Yukon conducted telephone surveys of rural and urban citizens.</p> <p>The Community Dialogue Toolkit was developed to help rural and remote communities conduct their own dialogues. It will help citizens work as a group to develop a shared vision for their community, build partnerships and decide how they will achieve their vision.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>		<p>See www.rural.gc.ca/dialogue/tool/index_e.phtml or call 1 888 781-2222.</p>
45. Host another national rural conference in 2002.	The second National Rural Conference was held in Charlottetown in April 2002.	✓		See www.rural.gc.ca/conference/index_e.phtml .

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
46. Include more grassroots material, particularly from youth, in The <i>Rural Times</i> quarterly newsletter.	<p><i>Rural Times</i> staff attempt to provide more grassroots material by including more human interest stories, increasing the number of stories where rural and remote citizens constitute the main source and by concentrating on how events and decisions affect communities, rather than focussing on government process. When possible, writers live in the community written about, or close to them.</p> <p>The <i>Rural Times</i> had a two-page youth feature in the fall/winter 2001 issue and added a youth contributor. The spring 2002 issue will also include stories on rural youth.</p> <p>Increased efforts will be undertaken to ensure the <i>Rural Times</i> is published four times per year.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p>	See www.rural.gc.ca/newsletter/index_e.phtml .
Issue: Improve the delivery of the Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects Initiative				
47. Process Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects applications in a timely manner.	The approval stage of the fourth and final year of the Pilot Project Initiative is complete. Efforts to reduce the approval time within the program structure were unsuccessful. However, recommendations made by rural citizens and government departments and agencies to streamline application processing are being taken into consideration in developing a new Rural Development Initiative. Significant changes will be put in place for this new initiative.		✓	See www.rural.gc.ca or call 1 877 295-7160 (toll-free).
48. Target pilot projects to address clearly defined problems, and to meet specific objectives.	The new Rural Development Initiative being planned will specifically target community development activities with the objective of maximizing potential through community planning, leadership development, and promoting sustainable development that balances economic, social, cultural and environmental issues.		✓	See www.rural.gc.ca or call 1 877 295-7160 (toll-free).

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>49. Share pilot project results with rural citizens through various venues, including the rural Web site, the <i>Rural Times</i> newsletter and rural newspapers.</p>	<p>Pilot project articles are written for and published by rural media, Rural Team regional newsletters and the national <i>Rural Times</i> newsletter. They are also posted on the rural Web site.</p> <p>Successful pilot projects are showcased at rural conferences where the lessons learned from these projects, and opportunities to replicate them in other communities, are shared.</p> <p>The publication <i>Pilot Projects, Success Stories and Lessons Learned</i> is available in print format and on the rural Web site.</p> <p>Pilot project descriptions are on the rural Web site.</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.rural.gc.ca.</p> <p>Call 1 888 781-2222 (toll-free).</p> <p>See www.rural.gc.ca/pilot/pilot_e.phtml</p>

Priority Area #11

Promote rural Canada as a place to live, work and raise a family recognizing the value of rural Canada to the identity and well-being of the nation

Issue: Recognize and acknowledge rural Canada

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
<p>50. Use parliamentary structures to publicly promote the importance of rural Canada to all Canadians. Highlight the concerns of rural Canadians, for example by tabling the Rural Annual Report to Parliament.</p>	<p>The Secretary of State has spoken before the Standing Committee on Agriculture and Agri-Food, on the subject of the Canadian Rural Partnership and rural Canada.</p> <p>The second Annual Report to Parliament was tabled in December 2001.</p> <p>Members of Parliament are frequently mailed information to keep them informed of rural issues and initiatives. For instance, they are sent information on new funding programs, annual reports, action plans and reports on Rural Dialogue activities.</p> <p>The Secretary of State participated in a Take Note Debate on Canada's Resource Industries on April 24, 2001.</p> <p>Local Members of Parliament are invited to attend Rural Dialogue events.</p>	<p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p>	<p align="center">✓</p> <p align="center">✓</p>	<p>See www.rural.gc.ca/annualreport/2001/index.phtml.</p> <p>See www.parl.gc.ca/.</p>
<p>51. Continue the Rural Exhibits Program.</p>	<p>The Rural Exhibits Program continues to visit fairs, conferences, trade shows, malls and other locations throughout the year. In 2001–2002, it visited 111 rural and remote communities.</p>		<p align="center">✓</p>	

Next Step	Key Initiatives / Key Results	Achieved	On-going	Comments
54. Continue working with non-governmental organizations to promote rural Canada.	<p>Rural Team Alberta and the Alberta Rural Newspapers Association launched an annual award program to promote excellence in rural journalism.</p> <p>The Canadian Rural Partnership supports rural organizations in their initiatives to promote rural Canada. For instance, they provide funding through the Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative (CARCI).</p> <p>In March 2002, the Secretary of State launched the Urban Dialogue and announced that he would be visiting several Canadian cities this year to discuss, in an urban setting, the important role rural and remote communities play. To date, he has delivered speeches or met with organizations in Edmonton, Calgary, Regina, Toronto, Montreal and St. John.</p>		<p>✓</p> <p>✓</p> <p>✓</p>	<p>See www.agr.gc.ca/carci/.</p>

Message from the Secretary of State

The first ever National Rural Conference was a significant achievement. It brought together rural and remote Canadians to look at the progress the federal government had made on its rural initiative. It was a forum to share lessons learned from the Canadian Rural Partnership. The discussions were very productive and in my closing remarks at the conference, I made a commitment to put your priorities into action through a plan of action.

The proposed *Rural Action Plan* was distributed to all the participants of the Magog-Orford Conference for their concurrence. Their comments were integrated and put into the *Rural Action Plan* which contains more than 50 items for the Government of Canada to follow and act on.

This report is designed to document the progress of federal departments and agencies in their response to these action items since the plan was unveiled in Brandon, Manitoba last year. It also updates rural and remote Canadians on items that are still in progress. Some require new policy directions or increases in funding, others need a co-ordinated response from all levels of government. I will continue to press these issues with my colleagues in the days and weeks ahead.

The *Rural Action Plan Report Card* documents many of our success stories including the expanded network of Community Development Corporations in many parts of Canada, new flexibility in the programs Farm Credit Canada can offer, and an equitable share of Infrastructure dollars finding their way to rural and remote communities. One of the highest priority priorities was to involve our youth in shaping the future of rural Canada. Over the past year, I was pleased to be involved in Rural

Dialogue sessions with a youth focus.

When we think of money, we think of the budget. I think this passage from the December 2001 federal budget shows that we are headed in the right direction and that rural and remote Canadians are being heard: "*Canada's rural communities, along with their urban counterparts, contribute significantly to the wealth and prosperity of our nation. But they also face unique challenges: geography, distance from markets, a small population base and reliance on primary sector industries vulnerable to sharp cyclical downturns. The Government intends to work with rural communities, their citizens, and stakeholders to develop local solutions to these challenges.*"

This Report Card on the *Rural Action Plan* demonstrates the practical ways that commitment has been and is being carried out. It reaffirms that we as a federal government in partnership with Canadians are committed to shaping a successful future for rural Canada . . . together.



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