

Thinking RURAL & REMOTE

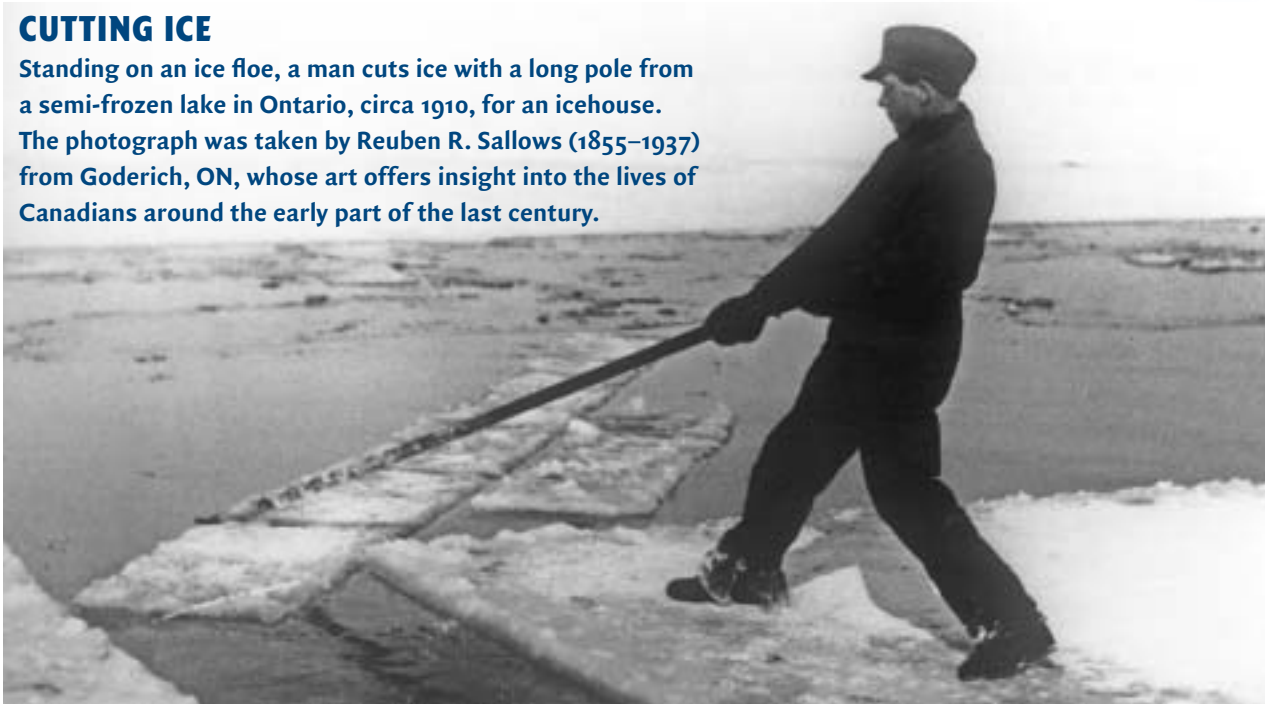
SPRING 2005

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CUTTING ICE

Standing on an ice floe, a man cuts ice with a long pole from a semi-frozen lake in Ontario, circa 1910, for an icehouse. The photograph was taken by Reuben R. Sallows (1855–1937) from Goderich, ON, whose art offers insight into the lives of Canadians around the early part of the last century.



Sallows Collection, Archival & Special Collections, University of Guelph Library

Rural Canadians speak their minds

Rural Canada is where there's heart and where there's hope



A message from the Honourable Wayne Easter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with Special Emphasis on Rural Development

“We were offered jobs all over Canada, but we're not going because we are where there's heart and where there's hope.”

What a great comment this was by a participant at the Third National Rural Conference held in Red Deer, Alberta last fall. It reflects the passion rural Canadians have for those unique places we call “rural Canada.”

We saw a lot of this passion at the Red Deer conference. And we saw a lot of enthusiasm, drive and willingness to find ways to take action and build strategies to strengthen and sustain rural Canada. It is this sort of positive and forward-thinking human effort that will make a difference in rural Canada.

The National Rural Conference focused on five subjects important to rural Canada: entrepreneurship, community capacity building, infrastructure, northern issues and youth. Participants talked about projects going on in their communities, what makes them successful and what could be done to better support them and similar projects.

They spoke of the need for collaboration, partnerships and communication within and between communities, and the value of cooperatives in rural communities. They also spoke of the importance of long-term and stable government programs that rural communities could count on, and quality information they could use for

planning. Increasing the awareness and understanding of the interdependency between rural and urban Canada was also raised.

Youth from rural communities made their presence felt throughout the conference. This began with a youth forum organized by the National Rural Youth Network, and continued throughout the weekend. Their message was clear and heartfelt: youth don't just want to be listened to by government; they want the tools to be active and productive leaders in their communities. They also insisted that youth programs need to be developed with youth, not just for youth.

Northerners too were clear in their message: northern communities face many challenges, but northerners have the creativity and the initiative to overcome them. They are also great producers of wealth for the rest of Canada. The North needs government to supply the tools and the support they need to bring to life the vision they have for their communities. Northerners spoke of the need for infrastructure programs suited to their needs, streamlined governance, and for all levels of government to work together and to share information. They also spoke of the need for municipal governments to work towards common goals.

As I said in my closing remarks in Red Deer, the fabric of this country rests in rural Canada. We are going to continue to build our communities in rural Canada because we deserve our share, because we are producers of wealth in this nation. Together we will build on what we have, and we will take action for sustainable rural communities – where there's heart and where there's hope.

Canadian Rural Partnership in Ontario

The Canadian Rural Partnership is working to connect government with rural communities in Ontario so that their issues are better understood and addressed.

To make this happen, representatives from federal departments, provincial ministries and rural organizations have been pulled together to form Rural Team–Ontario.

Rural Team–Ontario is a network of federal and provincial departments/agencies committed to working together with rural organizations to build partnerships, networks and alliances.

In recognition of the sheer size, geography and diversity of the province, regional rural networks have been created throughout Ontario. These networks bring government representatives, and rural organizations and stakeholders together on a regular basis to share information and views on community development at the regional level.

For more information about the Canadian Rural Partnership or Rural Team–Ontario, please contact: Nadine Goman, Senior Policy Advisor, Rural Secretariat Phone: 705-831-0013 E-mail: gomann@agr.gc.ca

A word from the editor

Thinking Rural and Remote is a forum for communication between the Rural Secretariat, Ontario region, and people living in Ontario's rural and remote communities. The newsletter helps keep citizens up-to-date on the activities of the Government of Canada in rural and remote regions, as well as to connect them to new and innovative developments and approaches to rural community development.

Do you have an idea or story you would like to see in *Thinking Rural and Remote*? Please contact: Margaret Boyd, Editor Phone: 519-837-5865 E-mail: boydm@agr.gc.ca



POWERED BY WIND

Pictured here is the Ferndale Wind Turbine, owned by Sky Generation. Interest in wind energy is growing in Ontario, which has abundant wind resources.

Melinda Zytaruk · Courtesy of the Ontario Sustainable Energy Association

Wind energy co

Wind is the fastest growing source of electricity in the world and represents a multi-million dollar industry internationally. Increasing by approximately 32 percent a year globally over the last five years, wind energy has proven to be a clean, reliable, abundant and completely renewable source of power, which is economical to produce.

Even though Ontario and other provinces have an abundant wind resource, less than one-tenth of one percent of Canada's energy is currently generated from wind. The Greater Kingston Trade Winds Project will see the creation of a partially cooperatively owned wind farm on Wolfe Island near Kingston. The wind farm will not only develop a sustainable energy resource for Canada, but will also benefit rural citizens.

"Leaders in rural communities would be well served by seeking funding and development in the public and private sectors to pursue wind energy projects," says Samit Sharma, project director for Gaia Power and project manager for the Greater Kingston Trade Winds Project.

National Rural Youth Network receives support

The National Rural Youth Network will receive up to \$40,000 in funding from the Canadian Rural Partnership this year, bringing the total funding for the Network to \$90,000. With this boost, the Network will continue to represent the views of young people from rural, remote and northern communities across Canada.

"The National Rural Youth Network is an important forum for young Canadians to learn from one another and share information on key issues for their rural communities," said Wayne Easter, Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with special emphasis on Rural Development.

Some of the Network's key accomplishments include: publishing a brochure to attract new members; creating their own Web site (www.ruralityouth.ca); producing the Rural Youth Organizations Guide; establishing contacts for potential partnerships; and giving their input on various government initiatives, including the National Rural Youth Conference and the National Rural Conference.

The Network's Council, made up of youth representing all provinces and territories who work to strengthen the Network and build partnerships, played a key part in the 2004 National Rural Conference.

The work continues in Ontario, where members are working on initiatives that will strengthen the voice of rural youth in the province.

"We are currently working on trying to establish a provincial network and set up a conference for Ontario rural youth," said Network representative Melanie Gorka of Port Hope.

Four new CFDCs created in Ontario

Four new Community Futures Development Corporations (CFDCs) have been created in Ontario to help strengthen and diversify the economy of rural and northern communities.

This brings the total number of CFDCs in the province to 61, as part of the final stage in a \$37-million Government of Canada expansion of the Community Futures Program in Ontario.

With this expansion, all geographic regions of rural Ontario have access to the investment, planning and business counselling services provided by CFDCs, says Elaine McGregor-Morris, President of the Ontario Association of Community Futures Development Corporations.

The four new CFDCs have opened in Nottawasaga (serving the area of South Simcoe); Frontenac (serving the County of Frontenac); South Lake (serving York and Durham regions); and Wellington-Waterloo (serving Wellington County and the regional municipality of Kitchener/Waterloo).

Eastern Ontario CFDCs get \$10-million boost

Announced in May 2004, 15 CFDCs in eastern Ontario (including 13 counties from the Region of Durham in the west, to the Quebec border) will receive \$10 million in new funding. These funds will be used for the growth and expansion of small businesses, and to develop community innovation strategies and support local economic development efforts. FedNor will manage the funds.

CFDCs are funded by the Government of Canada through Industry Canada and the Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario (FedNor). CFDCs are designed to develop and implement long-term community-based economic development initiatives.

This approach is based on community decision making, employing

local staff and run by a board of local volunteers. CFDCs could not exist without the help of these volunteers who last year contributed more than 51,000 hours of work as board and committee members.

In the last six years, through their investment and business counselling activities, Ontario CFDCs have invested more than \$271 million to help the small-business sector create or maintain 46,500 jobs. In 2003, CFDC loans totalled \$47.2 million, which leveraged funds of \$87.2 million and created or maintained more than 6,000 jobs. CFDCs also provided business counselling to more than 1,000 clients.

Repayable financing of up to \$125,000 on commercial terms through loans, loan guarantees or equity investments is available from CFDCs when financing from other sources is insufficient.

To contact your local CFDC office, call 1-866-ONT-CFDC (866-668-2332). To find out more about Ontario CFDCs, visit www.ontcfdc.com.

Diversity and trust – Keys to rural development

Rural communities need to understand the importance of cultural diversity and trust as keys to their future, former Red Deer Mayor Gail Surkan told delegates at the third National Rural Conference in Red Deer in October.

Surkan noted that rural communities have always been inclusive, but they've also been largely homogeneous.

"They (rural communities) have not really dealt with true diversity, and yet, the future of our rural communities will depend on being inclusive of many cultures, languages and values that may not be as familiar as those that we've historically had inside our communities," she said.

The real challenge, said Surkan, is to be inclusive after being homogeneous for so long.

To do this, she said, a community needs to understand itself at a much deeper level than just its physical form. It also has to understand its importance and to design and plan for its survival.

Surkan also pointed to the need to understand rural communities "as essential living environments where people feel they have a sense of a shared future, where they have influence, where they work together to build common value systems."

This, she said, would provide more effective ways to support the process of community development and sustainability.

an benefit rural communities

According to Sharma, wind farms provide three potential benefits to rural citizens, landowners and communities: an annual payment per turbine per year to the landowner; community-based taxes and other payments; and opportunities for employment and tourism.

If given the green light, the proposed 36 megawatt Greater Kingston Trade Winds Project will provide energy for approximately 13,000 homes. This project will see the erection of 24 1.5-megawatt turbines on Wolfe Island. The project partners – Gaia Power Inc. and Hearthmakers Energy Co-operative of Kingston, Sky-Power Generation of Toronto, and Citizens Energy, a U.S. firm – are hopeful of implementing this sustainable energy project in 2005.

The Greater Kingston Trade Winds Project is one of many wind energy projects being pursued by municipalities and private developers across Ontario. The province has potentially huge wind resources, especially along the shorelines of the Great Lakes and inland where winds are strong. In Bruce County, three companies have proposals for a total of 202 turbines on “wind farms.”

Recently completed feasibility studies for the project, conducted by Gaia Power Inc. for Hearthmakers Energy Cooperative, were funded in part by the Government of Canada through the former Canadian Agricultural and Rural Communities Initiative. The funding was used for a series of public discussions, workshops and forums where residents explored the challenges and opportunities of using wind energy, as well as the creation of co-operatively owned wind farms.

In 2002, the Government of Canada introduced the Wind Power Production Incentive (WPPI) – a \$260-million initiative to develop wind energy across the country. Through WPPI, the Government of Canada will provide a financial incentive for the installation of 1,000 megawatts of new wind energy capacity in Canada over the next five years.

For more information about wind energy, visit Natural Resources Canada’s Web site at www.canren.gc.ca/ programs or Greater Kingston Trade Winds Project at www.hearthmakers.org/tradewinds.



Photo courtesy of Bracebridge Photo & Graphics

ROSSEAU RIVER, MUSKOKA
The majesty of nature’s tall towering trees and swiftly flowing rivers is captured by Ontario photographer Paul Bennett.

Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund

Laying the foundation for stronger communities through partnership

The Canada-Ontario Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (COMRIF), launched on November 15, 2004, is a partnership between the Government of Canada, the Government of Ontario and the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) that will have a positive impact on infrastructure throughout Ontario.

As part of the Government of Canada’s New Deal for Cities and Communities, this program responds to local infrastructure needs by targeting municipal projects which provide cleaner water, better sewage systems, upgraded

waste management processes, and safer local roads and bridges.

The governments of Canada and Ontario are each contributing up to \$298 million to COMRIF. With municipal investments, this program is expected to inject close to \$900 million in infrastructure projects in municipalities with a population of less than 250,000 residents.

Two significant hallmarks of COMRIF are the partnership with AMO, which ensures the municipal voice is heard and the local perspective is considered in all decisions, and the establishment of the

COMRIF Joint Secretariat, which will improve service delivery and streamline the application process. The deadline for the first intake of applications was January 10, 2005, with additional intakes planned for Spring 2005 and Spring 2006.

COMRIF is part of the Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund (MRIF), which was announced in Budget 2003, and accelerated in Budget 2004 from a 10-year to a five-year program.

For more information on COMRIF, please visit www.comrif.ca.

Are you prepared for an emergency?

It’s been over a year since Ontario experienced a power blackout, but the reality is that emergencies can happen at any time.

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada (www.psepc.gc.ca) recommends that all Canadians have a basic emergency kit and a three-day supply of food and water available at all times.

Checklist for a basic emergency kit

- ⊙ Flashlight and batteries (in case the lights go out)
- ⊙ Radio and batteries or crank radio (for news bulletins)
- ⊙ First aid kit
- ⊙ Candles and matches/lighter
- ⊙ Extra car keys and cash (including coins/cards for pay phones)
- ⊙ Important papers (identification for everyone, personal documents, credit/debit cards)
- ⊙ Food and bottled water (see checklist below)
- ⊙ Clothing and footwear (one change of clothes per person)
- ⊙ Blankets or sleeping bags (one blanket or sleeping bag per person)
- ⊙ Toilet paper and other personal supplies
- ⊙ Medication, extra eyeglasses, copies of prescriptions
- ⊙ Backpack or duffel bag (to carry the emergency kit in if you have to evacuate)
- ⊙ Whistle (for attracting someone’s attention)
- ⊙ Playing cards, games

Checklist for emergency food and water supplies

- ⊙ Choose ready-to-eat foods that your family likes and that don’t need refrigeration. Replace your emergency food and water supplies once a year. Don’t use a barbecue indoors.
- ⊙ At least four litres of water per person per day: two for drinking and two for food preparation, hygiene and dish washing
- ⊙ Canned food: soups, stews, baked beans, pasta, meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, fruits
- ⊙ Crackers and biscuits
- ⊙ Honey, peanut butter, jam, salt and pepper, sugar, instant coffee, tea
- ⊙ Knives, forks, spoons
- ⊙ Disposable cups and plates
- ⊙ Manual can opener, bottle opener
- ⊙ Small fuel-driven stove and fuel (follow the manufacturer’s instructions)
- ⊙ Waterproof matches and plastic garbage bags
- ⊙ Food and water for pets/livestock

Public Safety and Emergency Preparedness Canada coordinates the national Emergency Preparedness Week (www.epweek.ca) campaign, which is held every year in May and jointly delivered with provincial and territorial governments, municipalities, non-governmental organizations, volunteers, teachers and others.

Rural Philanthropy Resource Network

Helping those who help others

The Foundation for Rural Living’s Rural Philanthropy Resource Network wants to help improve the quality of life in rural communities by helping to build a stronger non-profit and voluntary sector across Canada.

Research has shown that the small scale of rural non-profits and low population base of rural areas, combined with geographic concerns, is resulting in a sector that isn’t realizing its full potential.

However, researchers say investment can be increased if certain conditions are improved.

The Rural Philanthropy Resource Network is a model, whose key element is the development of a shared resource – one that recognizes that small rural non-profit organizations may have difficulty with fundraising.

The model will develop a central, virtually accessible support system and a team of rural development officers to assist with planning and execution of strategies. A management team will also provide professional assistance.

The Network is already achieving impressive results in its two pilot regions – the Nipissing/North Bay region in northern Ontario and Elgin/Oxford in southwestern Ontario.

The next step is to expand the Network into more regions in Ontario and other provinces over the next three years. As many as 100 agencies will be clients of the Network each year, making it feasible to aid up to 300 non-profits in that time.

The Network is an initiative of Foundation for Rural Living, which is dedicated to stimulating investment for revitalizing rural communities. The project is being funded primarily by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada.

For more information, visit www.frl.on.ca/frl/home_RPRN.htm.



Photo: eyewire

TRILLIUM

Since 1937, the flower known botanically as the *trillium grandiflorum* and popularly known as the white trillium, has been the floral emblem of Ontario. The white trillium can be found in deciduous forests and woodlands of the province in late April and early May.

NORTH Network improves healthcare across Ontario

It's just past midnight as the jangling phone rouses a Toronto neurologist, alerting him to a crisis 300 kilometres away. An elderly woman has passed out in North Bay, a possible victim of stroke. Within minutes, the neurologist can see the patient on his home computer screen, examine digital images of her brain, and advise the local emergency physician on the best course of action.

"The neurologist can look at this information and use it to see whether the patient would be a candidate for clot-busting drugs," explains Dr. Ed Brown, an emergency doctor overseeing this futuristic new application called Tele-stroke. "The objective is to ensure that potential stroke patients, even in faraway parts of the province, can be seen by specialists within three hours."

Tele-stroke is the first emergency tele-health service and part of a family of telehealth applications that form the Northern Ontario Remote Telecommunications Health (NORTH) Network, an ambitious project that uses technology to bring medical services to First Nations communities, small villages, and rural and remote areas.

Administered from Sunnybrook and Women's College Health Sciences Centre in Toronto, the NORTHNetwork now treats more than 1,000 patients a month and is growing quickly. It offers medical services in about 80 specialties, such as eye and skin care, orthopaedic surgery and psychiatry.

The program's goal is to eliminate distance as a barrier to care for people outside major urban centres.

Linking more than 100 sites in central and northern Ontario, the network links together dozens of institutions and partners such as the Northern Academic Health Science Network and Keewaytinook Okimakanak Tribal Council. Its funding sources include an \$8.5-million investment under the Canada Health Infostructure Partnerships Program in 2001, and \$5.75 million in ongoing funding from the Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-term Care to sustain operations of the network.

For more information, visit www.northnetwork.com.

Innovative Rural Communities project finds innovation thriving in rural Ontario

Innovation is alive and well in rural and remote Ontario, according to early findings of the Innovative Rural Communities (IRC) project. The findings, in this first-year report of a multi-year project, have rural researchers excited.

"We want to know where innovation is happening and what's enabling it to happen in rural areas," explains Mary Robertson Lacroix, project manager. "The good news is that rurality is not a barrier to innovation."

Since December 2003, a team of IRC researchers have been reaching out to rural and northern champions, provincial rural associations, and rural innovators to find whether, where and how innovation is happening. The key goals are to increase the understanding of rural innovation and contribute to the development of an overall and co-ordinated innovation framework for rural Ontario.

Innovation involves creating new ideas or using existing ideas. It's about developing new products, processes, or services that provide greater output, improved quality and efficiency, or new markets.

The IRC has identified over 160 innovations in rural regions, conducted a survey on innovation, interviewed rural innovators, and developed six pilot studies of innovative rural areas. These pilot study areas include northern and southern communities, First Nations and Francophone communities. Four "hotspots" for rural

innovation were the subject of in-depth study. These areas included the Greater City of Sudbury, Municipality of Chatham-Kent, Sioux Lookout, and Huron County.

The project results show that innovators are people with vision, drive and determination. They are action-oriented, able to build partnerships and cross boundaries, and are good at recognizing talent in their communities. Innovators are attracted to rural regions because of personal connections to the area, job opportunities and resources. Innovative communities are action-oriented and regional in perspective, with strong local leadership, good connections and networks, and cooperation.

Next, the project team plans to revisit some of the rural communities as well as some new study areas to look at how communities use innovation.

The IRC project team consists of representatives from the University of Guelph, ME Robertson and Associates, Alpha Projects, and C. Lang Consulting. Funding is being provided by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, FedNor/Industry Canada, the Rural Secretariat, the Ontario Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing, and the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture and Food through the University of Guelph, Bell Canada and The Ontario Rural Council. The IRC year-one report is available at www.innovativecommunities.ca.

Promoting skilled trades in the North

Dez Collins used to beg industries in the North Bay region to take apprentices. Now he gets phone calls from industries looking for apprentices.

"I'd like to get more of those phone calls," admits Collins, who is the Ontario Youth Apprenticeship Program coordinator with the Near North District School Board in its North Bay head office. "It's an ongoing effort to change perceptions about skilled trades and apprenticeships."

For the past few years, Collins has been involved in a project to promote skilled trades and apprenticeships in northern Ontario. His ultimate goal is to develop a facility in North Bay dedicated to helping northern youth get involved in skilled trades.

To promote the trades and apprenticeships, Collins and his colleagues at three other regional school boards regularly hold forums for parents and students. At the forums, they present up-to-date facts about the job opportunities that exist in the skilled trades. Because there is a

negative bias against skilled trades and apprenticeships, it is important to involve parents as well as students, he adds. He also promotes the trades and apprenticeships through newspaper articles, and meetings with employers and teachers.

"Since there are some negative views on these occupations, students don't look very hard for the information, like they would for university or college programs," he notes. "However, I have been able to get the word out through this project, and it has proven beneficial and will continue to do so."

Another message he tries to get across to students is that they don't have to leave the North to find jobs. "There is a perception there are no jobs for them here," he says. "In reality, there is a big need in automotive services, manufacturing and construction. With the support of industry providing opportunities for employment and training, we have what we need right here in the North."

The training facility he'd like to develop would provide specialized training in various trades in partnership with colleges, industries and government. A similar facility, the Centre for Skills, Training and Development, exists in southern Ontario in Burlington.

"We need a facility to train people specifically for occupations in demand in the North," Collins said. "The only people who can tell us what is needed are the businesses themselves. We want to work with industry to help them meet their employment needs for the future. Partnership is the key to success in northern Ontario."

Collins' project is one of several Ontario youth projects on key community issues. The projects were launched at the 2003 National Rural Youth Conference in Orillia. For more information, visit www.rural.gc.ca/dialogue/youth/03/index_e.phtml.



Rural and Remote Canada Online

The Information Superhighway is a great resource tool. Just pop a word or two into a search engine, and up come thousands of potential sources of information on any subject. Rural Canada is no exception, with a special dedicated Web site designed to transfer information to individuals and communities interested in rural development.

Rural and Remote Canada Online (www.rural-canada.ca) is a single window to information, programs and services for and about rural and remote Canada.

This newsletter was produced by the Rural Secretariat-Ontario Region, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada. For more information on this and other rural initiatives, contact: Rural Communications, Rural Secretariat · 174 Stone Rd. West, Guelph, ON N1G 4S9 · 519-837-5865

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