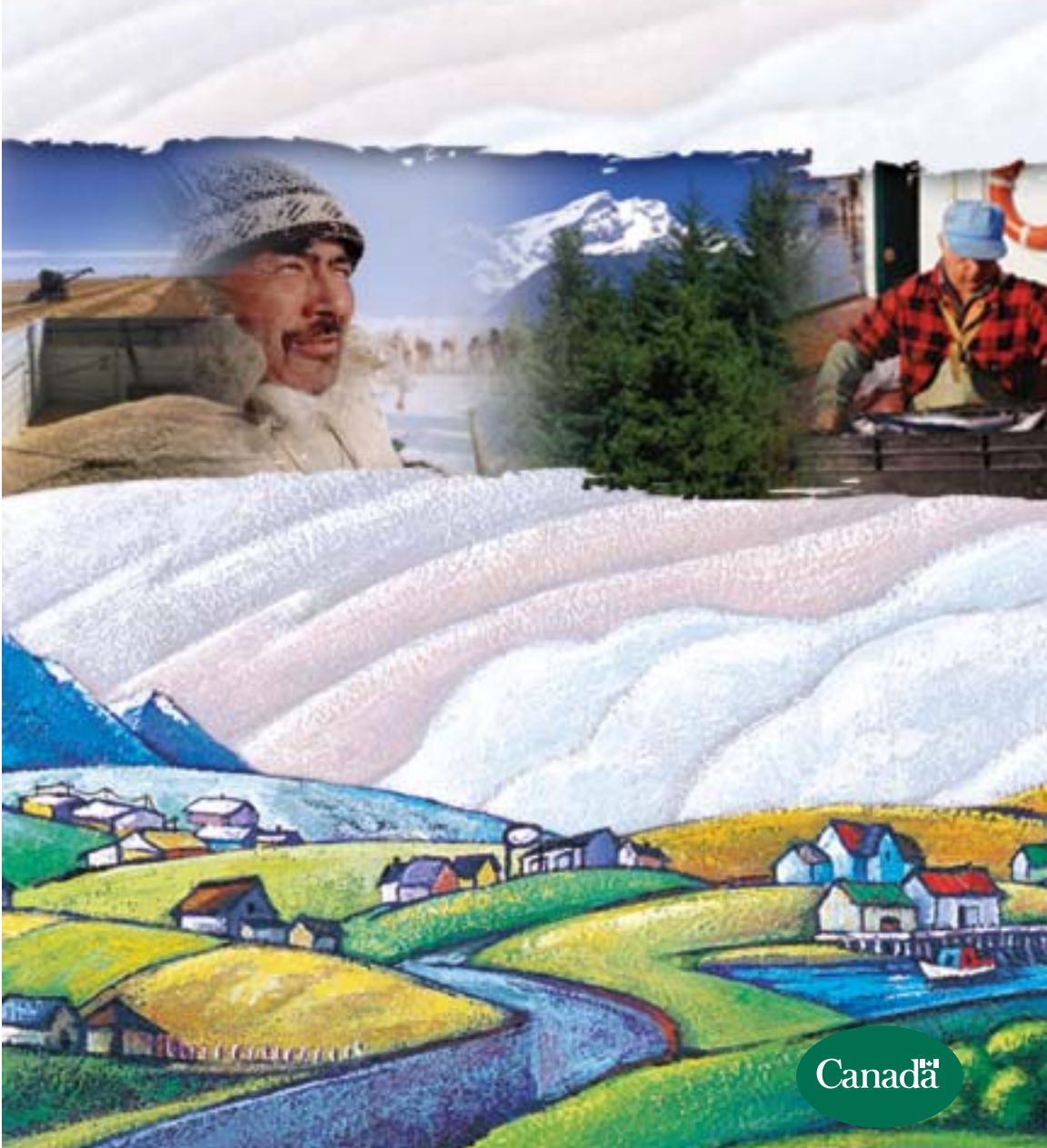


Annual Report 2002–2003

Making a Difference in Rural Canada



Canada

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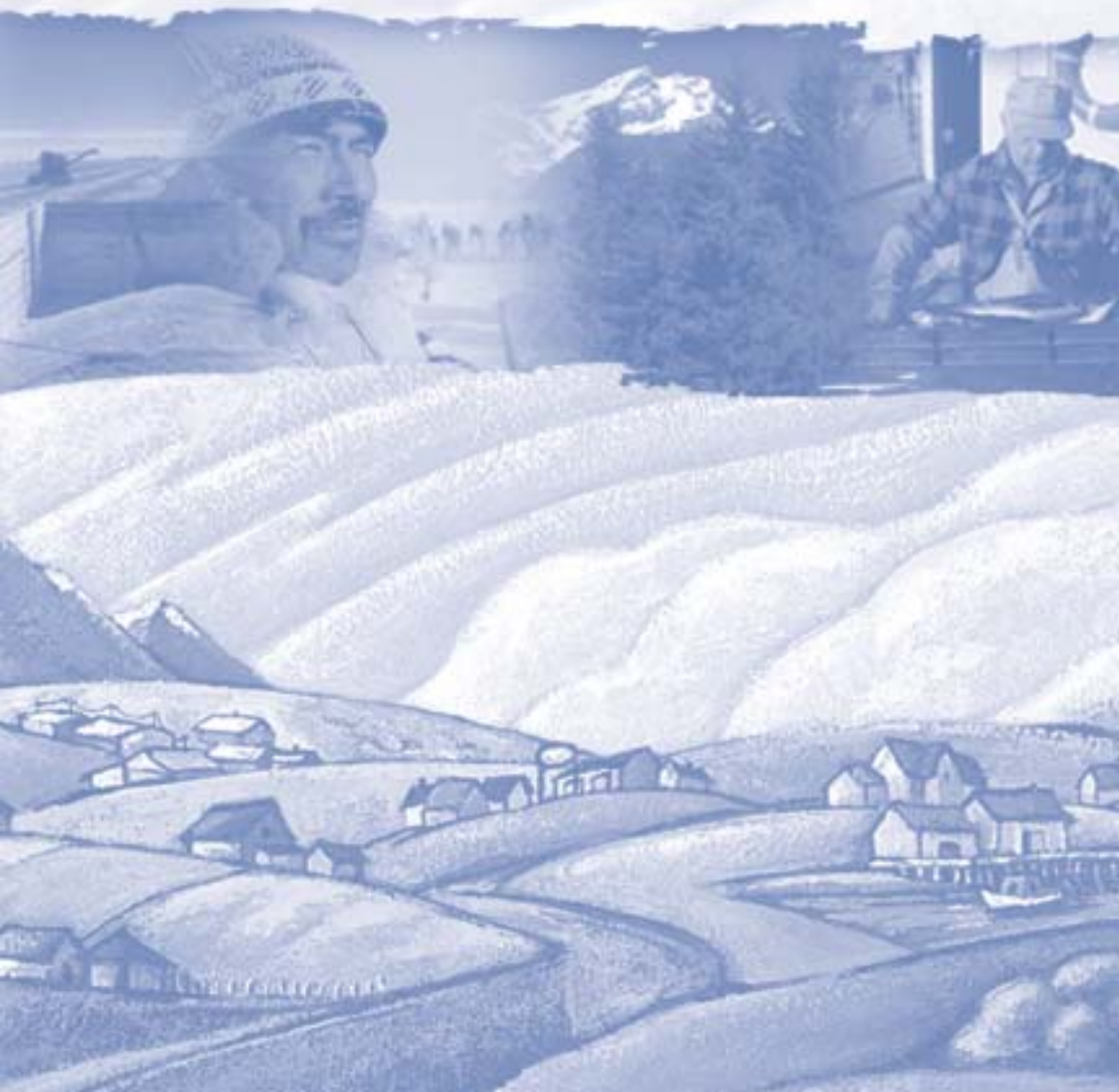
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Making a Difference in Rural Canada



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Overview

Viable and sustainable rural communities are important to the vitality and prosperity of all of Canada and the Government of Canada is committed to the economic and social renewal of rural Canada that will increase its vitality and prosperity. Through citizen engagement, partnerships and horizontal coordination, the Government of Canada has improved access to opportunities for citizens in rural, remote and northern Canada, helping them to benefit from and contribute to the economic and social well-being of all of Canada.

The Government of Canada has mandated the *Rural Secretariat* to develop, coordinate and implement a national, cross-government approach to better understand the issues and concerns of rural Canadians, and to encourage federal departments and agencies to reflect the unique needs of rural communities in their policies, programs and services. Using a horizontal, cross-cutting approach, the Government of Canada integrates the economic, social, cultural and environmental information necessary to design policies, programs and services that will lead to vibrant rural communities.



This approach began with identifying the needs of rural Canada. The Government of Canada actively engaged citizens in rural, remote and northern communities, giving them a *rural voice*. By listening to, and providing an opportunity for citizens from rural, remote and northern communities to talk to each other and to present their concerns and priorities, the Government of Canada has strengthened Canada's rural voice. Through numerous *Rural Dialogue* events, more than 16,000 rural citizens have voiced their concerns and priorities, providing focus and direction for governments working toward the goal of viable and sustainable rural communities.

But it can't be done alone. Through collaborative partnerships between government departments, other levels of government and citizens, we are achieving more. Thirty-two federal departments and agencies form the *Canadian Rural Partnership* providing wide-ranging tools for rural development. From infrastructure to broadband, from Community Futures Development Corporations to SchoolNet, the Canadian Rural Partnership works to make a difference in rural, remote and northern communities. The Rural Secretariat facilitates partnerships by sharing knowledge and information, and providing tools and advice.

The Government of Canada is building on proven success. Over the last five years, coordinating horizontally, engaging and "listening" to rural Canadians, and developing partnerships has led to actions that are making a difference in rural, remote and northern Canada. The road ahead is equally challenging and rewarding. The Government of Canada is working collaboratively with provincial and territorial governments in development of the *National Rural Policy Framework* as a more coherent approach for rural development. Whether in rural, remote, northern or urban Canada, all Canadians should benefit from the success and prosperity that makes Canada a great nation.



The Canadian Rural Partnership— A Successful Foundation

The Government of Canada is Committed

Starting in 1996 and continuing in subsequent Speeches from the Throne, the Government of Canada has made a clear commitment to rural Canada, through such initiatives as:

- Announcing a 10-year infrastructure program for long-term growth;
- Targeting regional development for rural and northern communities;
- Fostering social and economic development for Aboriginal people;
- Implementing the *Agricultural Policy Framework* for the agriculture and agri-food sector; and
- Working for the protection and sustainable use of Canada's marine environment through a new Oceans Action Plan.

Historic milestones

1997 – House of Commons Standing Committee on Natural Resources report—Think Rural—is released, and is significant in the development of the Government of Canada's policy regarding rural Canada.

1997 – Lyle Vanclief is appointed as Minister Coordinating Rural Affairs, in addition to his role as Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food.

1998 – The Canadian Rural Partnership is launched to coordinate the Government of Canada's actions for rural Canada; the Rural Lens is announced as a way of analysing federal policy and programs through 'rural eyes' to ensure rural Canada is taken into consideration; and the Rural Dialogue is initiated to provide rural, remote and northern citizens with an opportunity to influence government policies, programs and services that affect them.

1999 – Federal Framework for Action in Rural Canada, based on 11 priorities identified by rural citizens, becomes the driving force behind many federal initiatives.

1999 – Andy Mitchell, Member of Parliament for Parry Sound–Muskoka, is appointed Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario).

2000 – The first National Rural Conference is held April, in Magog, Quebec—a Rural Action Plan is developed.

2002 – The second National Rural Conference is held in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island, followed by the first National Rural Youth Conference in 2003.

2003 – The inaugural meeting of federal–provincial–territorial ministers responsible for rural development takes place in Alberta, working toward common objectives for rural, remote and northern Canada.

2003 – Georges Farrab, Member of Parliament for Bonaventure–Gaspé–Îles-de-la-Madeleine–Pabok, is appointed Parliamentary Secretary to the Minister of Agriculture and Agri-Food with special emphasis on Rural Development.

In undertaking this commitment, the Government of Canada has used an integrated, coordinated partnership approach to address the issues and concerns of Canadians in rural, remote and northern communities. Through this coordinated partnership—the *Canadian Rural Partnership*—all the programs and services of the Government of Canada become the tools used to help provide Canadians in rural, remote and northern communities with access to opportunities to contribute to and benefit from Canada’s prosperity and success.

This commitment has been reinforced with funding to the Canadian Rural Partnership of \$55 million through to 2008 and an additional \$5 million directed to support rural community capacity building.

“Rural, remote and northern communities have specific challenges that often require innovative solutions. The Government of Canada will continue to support the development of these solutions.”

– The Honourable Andy Mitchell, former Secretary of State (Rural Development) (Federal Economic Development Initiative for Northern Ontario), 1999–2003

Horizontal Coordination— The Rural Secretariat

Rural issues cut across departments, governments, and all of Canada. The *Rural Secretariat* is mandated to lead a national, cross-government approach to better understand the issues and concerns of rural Canadians, and to encourage consideration of the unique needs of rural communities in development of policies, programs and services. To accomplish this, the Rural Secretariat works collaboratively with 32 federal departments and agencies—the *Canadian Rural Partnership*. The work of the Canadian Rural Partnership is successfully changing the landscape of rural Canada. Some success stories are detailed later in this report.

At the regional level, *Rural Teams* reinforce this collaborative effort in each province and territory. Consisting of federal, provincial and territorial officials and, in some cases, sectoral stakeholders, Rural Teams coordinate government activities, enhance understanding of local challenges, and engage partners to set local priorities for action. The Rural Secretariat

Regional Coordination offices play an integral role in implementing rural policy at the regional level.

The work undertaken by the Rural Secretariat in its coordinating role includes:

- Use of the *Rural Lens* to analyse federal government programs, policies and services to ensure they are appropriate for rural Canada. **Result:** Federal initiatives aimed at helping to mitigate economic crises (BSE, softwood lumber, cod fisheries) also consider the impact this has on rural communities highly dependent on these resource activities.
- Through numerous *Rural Dialogue* events, including national conferences, regional conferences and town hall meetings, more than 16,000 rural citizens raised their priorities and issues, providing direction for government actions. **Result:** Citizens influence policy and program decisions through the *Federal Framework for Action* (1999) and subsequent *Action Plans* to respond to local, regional and national priorities. Government progress is reported in the *Action Plan Report Card* and *Annual Report*.

- Federal, provincial and territorial ministers responsible for rural development are exploring a more coordinated approach to rural policy, focussing on the cultural, social, environmental and economic conditions necessary for vibrant rural communities—the *National Rural Policy Framework*. **Result:** A more cohesive approach to working toward viable and sustainable rural communities.
- *Rural Research and Analysis* provide a foundation of socio-economic data to develop programs, services and policies focussed on rural development needs. **Result:** Better information available to support decision-making by governments and rural communities.

Beyond our borders

Through a fact-finding visit to the United States, France, Belgium, Finland and Norway, the Rural Secretariat also explored new solutions and best practices, such as culturally sensitive economic development in northern communities.

- Rural Secretariat Programs through the *Pilot Projects Initiative*, the *Rural Development Initiative*, the *Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative*, and

the *Agricultural Rural Minority Language Community Planning Initiative* provided direct support to rural, remote and northern communities, helping them respond to individual challenges.

Result: These programs helped rural, remote and northern communities address issues that affect their viability, capacity building, leadership and skills development.

Funding initiatives

The Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative supported 207 projects in 2000–2003, with \$9.3 million in funding. The objective was to enhance the ability of rural agricultural communities to adapt to changes in the agricultural sector.

Between 1998–2002, the Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects Initiative invested \$12 million in supporting 321 projects that tested new ways of promoting sustainable community development.

Announced in April 2002, with one-year funding of \$2.8 million, the Rural Development Initiative supported 127 projects for rural, remote and northern communities to create sustainable community development strategies.

- Communications and outreach tools provide a wealth of information on government programs and services for rural Canada through: regional newsletters; Rural and Remote Canada Online (www.rural-canada.ca), a single window to information and services to share ideas and discuss issues; Rural Exhibits in more than 650 fairs, trade shows, conferences and other events since 1998; and the Canadian Rural Information Service, one-stop access, by phone, email, fax and online. Result: Providing rural, remote and northern citizens with easier access to information about federal programs and services, provides access to opportunities.

Rural Voice

It started by ensuring that the Government of Canada had a clear understanding of the issues, challenges and priorities of rural, remote and northern Canadians. By engaging rural, remote and northern residents through the *Rural Dialogue*, the Government of Canada ensured that the federal rural agenda was citizen-centered. More than 16,000 rural citizens have been consulted since 1998. It is the priorities

Talking together

Rural and urban communities share many common priorities. In many cases they are interdependent, economically, socially and through environmental and cultural expectations. A series of Town Hall meetings were held across Canada that brought together local community members and regional leaders to discuss how rural and urban citizens can work together to ensure all Canadians benefit from Canada's success and prosperity.

Working cooperatively was the primary theme of the Edmonton, Alberta, Town Hall meeting. More than 120 people, including youth, offered input on matters such as infrastructure, transportation, entrepreneurship, Aboriginal issues, and breaking down urban-rural barriers.

"Canadians expect their leaders at all three levels of government to work together in a cohesive manner that will enhance the economic, social, cultural and environmental climate of rural communities," said Shirley McClellan, Alberta Deputy Premier and Minister of Agriculture.

“The Government of Canada is committed to continuing an ongoing dialogue with rural, remote and northern Canadians. It is critical that we hear first-hand the issues that are important to them, and to their communities. Rural Canadians know best how to approach the specific challenges they face in their communities.”

– The Honourable Andy Mitchell,
former Secretary of State
(Rural Development) (Federal
Economic Development Initiative
for Northern Ontario), 1999–2003



established by rural citizens in the *Federal Framework for Action* that have provided the focus and direction for the work of the Canadian Rural Partnership. In listening to this *rural voice*, the work of the Canadian Rural Partnership has made a difference in rural, remote and northern Canada.

The Work of the Canadian Rural Partnership— Success is Changing our Landscape

Working together in partnership we can achieve so much more. This is the basis of the Government of Canada's rural development initiatives. By working in partnership with rural, remote and northern Canadians, the Government of Canada can address rural priorities and ensure the rural voice continues to be heard and shape policy and programs for sustainable rural development. Thirty-two federal departments and agencies form the Canadian Rural Partnership with policies, programs and services for citizens in rural, remote and northern Canada. The membership

“Rural communities need the proper tools to take full advantage of their assets and turn the challenges of today into the success stories of tomorrow.”

– The Honourable Andy Mitchell,
former Secretary of State (Rural
Development) (Federal Economic
Development Initiative for Northern
Ontario), 1999–2003

of the *Canadian Rural Partnership* is provided at the end of this publication. Through social, educational, health, economic and infrastructure programs, sustainable local initiatives are building stronger communities.



Focus on Success— *A clean solution for water*

Residents of Northern Sunrise County in the Peace River region of Alberta were facing serious health and safety issues from contaminated groundwater supplies until the *Infrastructure Canada–Alberta Program* provided a connection to reliable drinking water. The East Peace Water Co-op has completed a \$3.9-million project to pipe water to 282 rural residences.

“It’s a quality of life issue,” says water co-op Chairman, Wilf Petluck. “Over the years we’ve had problems with contamination. Now a lot of older people in the rural areas will be able to continue living in their own homes.”



Infrastructure Canada Program / Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund / Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund

As part of its commitment to Canada’s sustainable growth and improving the quality of life for all citizens, Infrastructure Canada unveiled a six-year physical infrastructure program in 2000. The \$2.05-billion *Infrastructure Canada Program*, in partnership with provincial, municipal, territorial and local governments, First Nations and the private sector, is helping to renew and build infrastructure in rural and urban municipalities across Canada. The \$2-billion *Canada Strategic Infrastructure Fund* (CSIF), announced in Budget 2001, responds to the many large-scale infrastructure projects across the country that were beyond the scope and capacity of existing programs at that time. In Budget 2003, the Government of Canada strengthened its commitment with an additional \$3 billion for infrastructure—\$2 billion for CSIF of which 20 percent goes to communities with a population of less than 250,000, and \$1 billion toward a new *Municipal Rural Infrastructure Fund*. This fund has been structured to respond to the specific needs of Canada’s smaller municipalities, investing in local infrastructure to benefit Canadians in small and remote communities. In total, 80 percent of this fund focuses on communities of less

than 250,000 people. More details about all the infrastructure programs are available at http://www.infrastructure.gc.ca/index_e.shtml

Canada's Innovation Strategy

Launched by the federal government in February 2002, this 10-year strategy aims to move Canada to the front ranks of the world's most innovative countries. Consultations on the Innovation Strategy took place throughout 2002 in regional summits, meetings with industry representatives, youth summits, culminating in a National Summit on Innovation and Learning. A Rural Innovation Summit gave Canadians from rural, remote and northern communities an opportunity to provide their perspective on the Innovation Strategy. More information is available at <http://www.innovationstrategy.gc.ca>.

Focus on Success— *Rural Innovation Summit*

Organized in partnership between the Rural Secretariat, Industry Canada and Human Resources Development Canada, the Rural Innovation Summit involved more than 100 participants from throughout Canada, including community leaders, representatives from rural organizations and enterprises, academic institutions and officials from all levels of government. Participants discussed opportunities and challenges for promoting learning and innovation in rural communities in Canada in order to contribute to “making Canada one of the most innovative countries in the world.”

“Rural Canada is positioned to be a leader in innovation, not that we need to catch up, but in fact in 2002—in a post-industrial society—rural Canada has a leading role to play.”

– Arthur Bull, Director, Northwest Atlantic Communities Network, Western Valley Development Authority and the Digby Neck Community Development Association

Focus on Success— *Recognizing Nunavut transportation needs*

“The Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program will go a long way in helping the Government of Nunavut address its transportation infrastructure needs,” said Ms. Manitok Thompson, the former Nunavut Minister of Community Government and Transportation. “This agreement, which allows us to improve our airports, docks or community access roads, is a fine example of the Government of Canada recognizing the unique needs of Nunavut.”

Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program— Nunavut

Nunavut communities have experienced tremendous growth since the creation of Nunavut and improving the transportation system helps communities handle increased passenger travel and shipments of goods. The funds provided by the Government of Canada and administered by Transport Canada under the *Strategic Highway Infrastructure Program* will be used to improve access to land, sea and air transportation; provide reasonable access to other communities and southern Canada; provide a more efficient and economical movement of goods and services; improve the quality of life of Nunavummiut; and foster a safe and secure transportation system that minimizes the environmental



impact. Using a cost-sharing formula adapted to take into consideration Nunavut's unique circumstances, federal funding provides for major capital projects involving construction, rehabilitation, improvement or the addition of new transportation infrastructure and feasibility studies. For more on this program, see <http://tcinfo/programs/surface/highways/SHIP.htm>.

Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects / Rural Development Initiative

The *Canadian Rural Partnership Pilot Projects Initiative* has fostered innovative spirit in rural communities, helping people pursue creative, community-based responses to promote self-sufficiency and independence. From youth and Aboriginal development, to economic, social and environmental concerns, the four-year Pilot Projects Initiative was a significant federal government commitment in rural, remote and northern Canada. See http://www.rural.gc.ca/pilot/pilot_e.phtml.

The *Rural Development Initiative* carried forward in 2002–2003 the success of the Pilot Projects Initiative. The *Rural Development Initiative* helped rural, remote and northern communities create sustainable community development strategies and development plans. See http://www.rural.gc.ca/rural-dev/index_e.phtml.

Focus on Success— *Rural development*

Francophone Tourism

Partnerships has linked 15 bilingual municipalities in rural Manitoba and another 25 smaller centres, for combined tourism initiatives. Tours, lodgings and Web sites have been developed. Interest in the results of the project has spread as far as Nova Scotia where Francophones are working together to organize the Acadian Festival.



Focus on Success— *Community Futures Program*

With the Searchmont Ski Resort in receivership, the Sault Ste. Marie Community Development Corporation partnered with other city partners to seek a solution for a long-term future for the tourist attraction. The partnership was successful in keeping the resort operating while private-sector buyers were sought. In addition to having provided for the continued employment of the resort staff, as well as direct and indirect benefits to the local hospitality sector, this transitional project resulted in the sale of the ski hill, which would have been difficult had the ski hill remained closed for the season.

Community Futures Development Corporations

Through the *Community Futures Development Corporations*, federal support is provided to not-for-profit community organizations with volunteer boards of directors and professional staff whose purpose is to develop and diversify local economies. They support community economic development and small business growth by developing and implementing strategic community plans, delivering a range of counselling and information services to small business, and operating locally controlled investment funds to provide repayable financing to new and existing businesses. To find out about a Community Futures Development Corporation near you, see <http://www.communityfutures.ca/>.





First Nations SchoolNet

Recognizing the challenges that First Nations schools may face in accessing and applying information and communications technology, Industry Canada created the First Nations SchoolNet program. This national program, delivered by six Aboriginal Regional Management Organizations, provides Internet access, computer equipment and technological support including a regional help desk to First Nations schools under the Government of Canada's jurisdiction. The program offers Aboriginal students the opportunity to develop skills that contribute to the social, cultural and economic development of their communities. For more information, see <http://www.schoolnet.ca/aboriginal/>.

Focus on Success— *First Nations classrooms*

“... demonstrates our commitment to ensuring that Aboriginal people and communities have opportunities to use information technology to improve their quality of life,” said Rick Laliberte, Member of Parliament for Churchill River. “By putting information and communications technologies into First Nations classrooms, we are giving Aboriginal students the opportunity to gain the skills they will need to participate in the growing knowledge-based economy.”

Focus on Success— *Improved municipal governance*

What municipality has not wondered about how it might cut costs while continuing to deliver the services expected by its resident ratepayers? With the presence of broadband access and the commitment of its citizens and leadership, Tillsonburg, a town of 15,000 in southwestern Ontario, implemented information technology to improve operations and the delivery of services.

At a cost of \$84 per citizen, the town has seen a benefit of \$142 per citizen and a 58 percent increase in available service hours. Satisfaction with the quality of municipal service provided by the town is high—89 percent of citizens and 80 percent of businesses. Two-thirds of the citizens and business surveyed thought that the information technology investment was worthwhile and that Tillsonburg is a better place to do business because of the changes.

BRAND Pilot Program

Industry Canada programs such as the Broadband for Rural and Northern Development (BRAND) pilot program and the National Satellite Initiative support the private sector in leading the development of advanced information and communications infrastructure in Canadian communities, especially those affected by the digital divide such as First Nations, rural, remote and northern communities. Broadband infrastructure and access are the foundation on which Canadian communities can build and deliver new applications and services in areas such as health, education and commerce. Through this program and complimentary investments by Infrastructure Canada, the Canadian Space Agency, Regional Development Agencies, provinces and territories, and the private sector, significant progress is being made toward bridging the high-speed access divide. See <http://broadband.gc.ca/index.htm>.

Smart Communities

Through its *Smart Communities* initiative, Industry Canada is helping to demonstrate how the innovative and widespread use of information and communications technologies can transform the way people live, work and do business.

In all, 12 Smart Communities demonstration projects were chosen—one in each province, one in the North and one in an Aboriginal community. The 12 communities are rapidly becoming centers of expertise in the integration of information and communications technologies into virtually every area of service delivery, including health care, education, tourism and business. For more on Smart Communities, see <http://smartcommunities.ic.gc.ca>.



Focus on Success— *SmartLabrador ... the value of partnerships*

SmartLabrador is a telecommunications network that includes 41 videoconferencing sites in 23 communities. Many of the project partners, with specialized technology capabilities, play an important role as mentors.

“We felt it was important to develop local skills ... we’ll have a group of highly skilled workers that had not been available in Labrador prior to the project,” says Sheila Downer, Executive Director.

Waylon Williams is responsible for three Inuit communities—Rigolet, Postville and Makkovik, where his regional office is located. “It’s hard to speak to someone about broadband because you can’t actually see it,” Waylon says. “But when people see what a wireless connection can do, then they realize this gives them greater access to outside resources. At the same time, the Inuit culture will have more exposure.”

Focus on Success— *Tracking land use*

Kivalliq, Nunavut takes managing its 83,000 square kilometres of land and sea resources seriously. Several areas had been contaminated by commercial mining, and oil and gas exploration. The Kivalliq Inuit Association had no effective method to track land use or rectify pollution.

Using a geographic information system, the Association is now able to store all the information—traditional and scientific knowledge, wildlife populations, water resources, tourist activities, and oil, gas and mineral deposits—required to make sound land use decisions.

Luis Gerardo Manzo, KIA's Director of Lands, says "the database now tracks all of the land use applications, and we charge companies a security deposit for using equipment or damage to the land."

Sustainable Communities Initiative

The *Sustainable Communities Initiative* has proven to be a resounding success for Natural Resources Canada's efforts to help build community capacity in support of sustainable development. The Initiative is helping communities use modern mapping technologies to better plan and manage their assets. Rural, coastal, Aboriginal and northern communities are able to take control of their future with modern mapping technologies to make decisions about their economic, environmental and social development. To find out more, see http://www.nrcan-rncan.gc.ca/sd-dd/sc-cd/prog_e.html.



Aboriginal Business Canada

Some 30,000 Aboriginal businesses are contributing to Canada's economy, many of them in rural, remote and northern communities. As an indication of this activity, Census data has shown that Aboriginal self-employment in rural Canada has grown over 30 percent since 1996.

To encourage this growth, *Aboriginal Business Canada* continues to provide financial assistance and information to Aboriginal small- and medium-sized firms, and many regionally based Aboriginal business development and financial organizations. Studies have demonstrated that Aboriginal firms provide needed services, and generate employment for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people, particularly in rural, remote and northern areas where opportunities may be limited.

In late 2002, Aboriginal Business Canada enhanced its programming to allow support for even more types of projects from which rural, remote and northern entrepreneurs can benefit. Projects in the tourism sector, or for businesses that can take advantage of large regional initiatives (nickel mining, hydro expansion, diamond mining, oilsands development, etc.) are examples. The February 2003 Budget added

Focus On Success— *Unique Aboriginal tourism experience*

Labrador's Adlavik Inn is a hotel and restaurant operation that offers unique cultural experiences to guests, with activities ranging from interpretive tours to visits by boat to historical sites, and 'Iceberg Alley'. In addition to boosting the local economy and providing employment, Adlavik Inn provides a recreational centre and weather observation services for the community of Makkovik.

another \$20 million to this program and enabled funding to greater numbers of Aboriginal youth entrepreneurs. For more information on Aboriginal Business Canada, see http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/inabc-eac.nsf/vwGeneratedInterE/h_ab00073e.html.

Focus on Success— *Telehealth cares*

Telehealth is one way to improve health and quality of life for residents of rural, remote and northern Canada. It uses communications and information technologies to overcome geographic distances to deliver a wide variety of health care services. This is a vital tool for enhancing health care in rural, remote and northern regions.

One *Telehealth* project offered specialized services to people living in remote regions in the Magdalen Islands of Quebec. The hospital there was linked by video conferencing to specialists at hospitals in Quebec City and Gaspé. Video-based consultations helped patients receive improved care and allowed local health care professionals an opportunity to continue their education. Transporting patients was also avoided in a number of cases which reduced costs to the health care system and improved patient care.

Partnerships for Rural Health

With more than nine million Canadians living in predominantly rural areas or communities, access to health benefits has a huge impact in rural, remote and northern Canada. The Government of Canada recognizes the need for long-range health security for all Canadians and Health Canada has responded with support for health care resources, local initiatives and outreach programs. The three-year, \$50-million *Innovations in Rural and Community Health Initiative* promoted availability and integration of health services, addressing key issues around home and community care, as well as ensuring programs address real needs for rural residents. For more information about Health Canada initiatives, see <http://www.hc-sc.gc.ca>.





Community Access Program

The *Community Access Program*, an Industry Canada initiative, has provided Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills they need to use it effectively. By building partnerships with governments, community groups, libraries, schools, volunteer groups and the business community, the program has helped many Canadians take advantage of emerging opportunities in the new global knowledge-based economy. In rural Canada, the Community Access Program has demonstrated the benefits of affordable public Internet access and opened doors to a multitude of new possibilities for rural communities. For more information, see <http://cap.ic.gc.ca>.

Focus on Success— *Access equals success*

Lumby, British Columbia is employing new solutions to diversify its economy from its natural resource base. The *Community Access Program* Web site is helping the community effectively use the tools of our knowledge-based economy. Located at Lumby's J.W. Inglis Elementary School, the site serves about 6,800 people in the Trinity–Creighton–Monashee area. Students account for 75 percent of users, while seniors make up another 18 percent.

Harry Adam, site founder and J.W. Inglis School principal, quickly recognized how the program would help his community by providing computer and Internet access. "It has had an incredible impact. Almost 85 percent of area residents don't have Internet access at home," explains Harry. "The site is really serving the community. It's an excellent outreach and resource tool."

In one project, Harry and his students are working with the Royal Canadian Legion. Every Remembrance Day since 1997, they have been accessing the Books of Remembrance on Parliament Hill in Ottawa—live!

Positioning Rural Canada for a Positive Future

The Government of Canada is building on proven success. Over the last five years, building partnerships, coordinating horizontally, and engaging and “listening” to rural Canadians has led to actions that are making a difference in rural, remote and northern Canada. The road ahead is equally challenging and rewarding. In moving forward, the Government of Canada’s leadership continues to evolve. With enhanced partnerships and horizontal coordination with governments and citizens, the Government of Canada is working toward a more coherent approach to rural development. In combination with a stronger rural voice, including development opportunities for the future leaders in rural Canada, the Government of Canada is well positioned for a positive future for rural Canada.

Partnerships and Horizontal Coordination into the Future

The well-being of rural, remote and northern Canadians is a fundamental concern of all governments. Federal–provincial–territorial partners have agreed to work together to advance the vitality of rural communities. Delegates to the inaugural rural ministers meeting—held in Kananaskis, Alberta, April 2003—

agreed to apply collaborative guiding principles to build a national framework of rural policies. This was just the first step.

A more coherent approach— The National Rural Policy Framework

The future of rural Canada is being shaped daily by policies, programs and services designed by departments and ministries with individual mandates to help communities and sectors. Collaboratively, the Government of Canada and provincial and territorial governments are working toward a more coherent approach to advance the vitality of rural communities. A *national framework for rural policies* could support community capacity building; encourage community and sector initiatives to improve and renew the rural economic and social base; and enhance collaboration across and among governments for the benefit of rural, remote and northern Canada.

Federal–provincial–territorial working groups are busy developing plans and furthering research to determine the best course of action to achieve positive results. Priorities include:

1. Developing a national rural policy framework;
2. Setting a prioritized policy research agenda;
3. Identifying priority research topics;

4. Establishing community benchmarks and indicators;
5. Developing a community capacity building action plan; and
6. Creating a federal–provincial–territorial directory of programs and services.

Community-led decisions and actions

As the Rural Secretariat moves forward, programming is evolving from helping individual communities develop skills and capacity to creating and testing approaches to rural development and community capacity building to determine what works in rural and remote Canada. For example, several of the projects started under programs, such as *Pilot Projects* and *Rural Development Initiative*, have provided some tangible elements of sustainable success. Being able to share and adapt those achievements in other communities is a substantial next step.

Models for Rural Development and Community Capacity Building

This initiative will help further rural development and community capacity building by researching and testing models which are selected as a response to priority policy issues for rural communities. The testing will be done with the active participation of rural communities.

By understanding what makes one development strategy more effective in specific situations, the Government of Canada will strengthen its ability to help rural communities respond with local solutions to local challenges.

A Stronger Rural Voice

Citizen engagement is a cornerstone of the Government of Canada's approach to foster rural development. Developing long-term, sustainable solutions requires continuous attention to changes in the cultural, economic and environmental landscape of rural, remote and northern Canada. The Government of Canada, through the Rural Secretariat, will continue to expand its commitment to rural Canadians by maintaining open dialogue and information sharing processes that have led to success.

Developing the leaders of tomorrow

Young people will continue to play an important role in shaping the future in rural Canada. From taking part in forums and discussions, to furthering leadership and developing skills, youth are being engaged to build a sustainable future. Based on input from *Rural Dialogue* activities, the *National Rural Youth Network* was launched in 2002. Building on the success of the first *National*

Rural Youth Conference held May 2–4, 2003 in Orillia–Ramara, Ontario, the Network will continue to grow with the knowledge and skills acquired by delegates who will act as agents of change in their communities. The *Young Leaders in Rural Canada Awards* pay tribute to and highlight outstanding contributions by young people to rural communities recognizing youth in rural, remote and northern area as leaders, partners and innovators in their communities.

Third National Rural Conference

The third *National Rural Conference*, scheduled to be held in Red Deer, Alberta, October 21–23, 2004, will bring together more than 350 participants from rural, remote and northern areas, including community leaders, members of rural organizations and rural youth. They will join with representatives from all levels of government to continue the dialogue about challenges and solutions for rural Canada. Together, new strategies and tools will be explored to foster vibrant, sustainable rural communities.

The conference will also offer participants the opportunity to strengthen existing partnerships and networks, share best practices and learn about recent community development initiatives and research results. Working together, we will continue to make a difference.

Our Path Forward

Our path forward will be shaped by policies, programs and services that support grassroots innovation and action. Our goals will be achieved through collaborative efforts—citizen engagement, partnerships and horizontal coordination. By building and sharing knowledge, resources and best practices that support local, sustainable solutions, we will enhance opportunities for rural, remote and northern Canada to benefit from and contribute to Canada’s prosperity.

“The Government of Canada is listening to Canadians and is determined to adopt new ways of working together with provinces and territories.”

– Georges Farrah, Parliamentary Secretary for Rural Development, 2003–2004

Appendix

Membership of the Canadian Rural Partnership

Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada
www.agr.gc.ca

Atlantic Canada Opportunities
Agency
www.acoa.ca

Canada Border Services Agency
www.cbsa-asfc.gc.ca

Canada Economic Development
for Quebec Regions
www.dec-ced.gc.ca

Canada Mortgage and
Housing Corporation
www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca

Canada Post Corporation
www.canadapost.ca

Canada Revenue Agency
www.cra-arc.gc.ca

Canadian Environmental
Assessment Agency
www.ceaa.gc.ca

Canadian Heritage
www.pch.gc.ca

Canadian Tourism Commission
www.canadatourism.com

Citizenship and Immigration Canada
www.cic.gc.ca

Department of Finance Canada
www.fin.gc.ca

Department of Justice Canada
www.canada.justice.gc.ca

Department of National Defence
www.dnd.ca

Environment Canada
www.ec.gc.ca

Farm Credit Canada
www.fcc-sca.ca

Federal Economic Development
Initiative for Northern Ontario
(FedNor)
www.fednor.ic.gc.ca

Fisheries and Oceans Canada
www.dfo-mpo.gc.ca

Health Canada
www.hc-sc.gc.ca

Human Resources and Skills
Development Canada
www.hrsdc.gc.ca

Indian and Northern Affairs Canada
www.inac.gc.ca

Industry Canada
www.ic.gc.ca

Infrastructure Canada
www.infrastructure.gc.ca

Natural Resources Canada
www.NRCan-RNCan.gc.ca

Privy Council Office
www.pco-bcp.gc.ca

Public Works and Government
Services Canada
www.pwgsc.gc.ca

Royal Canadian Mounted Police
www.rcmp-grc.gc.ca

Social Development Canada
www.sdc.gc.ca

Statistics Canada
www.statcan.ca

Transport Canada
www.tc.gc.ca

Treasury Board Secretariat
www.tbs-sct.gc.ca

Western Economic
Diversification Canada
www.wd.gc.ca

