

Rural Horizon

Spring 2006

RURAL TEAM QUEBEC

Supporting the sustainable development of rural communities

Rural Team Quebec is made up of representatives from more than 20 federal departments, and key organizations involved with rural development issues in Quebec.

Our mission is to support the development of rural communities by providing information about federal programs and services and establishing partnerships. We work together as a team with rural and remote communities to support initiatives and develop tools that will address their needs. Our team also encourages the integration and participation of young people in their communities throughout the province.

In this issue of Rural Horizon, Rural Team Quebec has included articles that reflect the different aspects of sustainable development within a community – environmental, economic and social.

For more information on Rural Team Quebec, visit our Web site at www.rural.gc.ca.



1 800 O-Canada

www.rural.gc.ca

Whether you're looking for business advice, a cultural exchange or a boating safety program, the **Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services** was designed for you.

The directory lists about 200 federal programs and services for individuals and businesses.

Canada

Operation SAPPEP A project with "pep"!

by Isabelle Lamontagne
Public Health Agency of Canada

Have you heard about the Opération SAPPEP project? It stands for Service d'aide personnalisée pour les enfants et leurs parents, a personalized support service for children and parents. Established six years ago by the Pro-Jeune-Est Rimouski-Neigette Agency in the Lower St. Lawrence region, Opération SAPPEP's mission is to support young people in difficulty and their families to prevent failure at school and subsequent dropping out.

The aim of Opération SAPPEP is to improve links between schools and families and to foster the learning potential of children between 6 and 12 in need by helping with homework. It also supports the skills of parents and contributes to developing a mutual help network in the area through the involvement of volunteers.

Funded through the Community Action Program for Children of the Public Health Agency of Canada, it is delivered in Rimouski by the Pro-Jeune-Est Rimouski-Neigette agency and in Rivière-du-Loup by the Maison de la famille du Grand-Portage, which acts as an affiliate.

The project has three components: "Children," "Parents-Children," and "Parents." Help with homework (children component) by volunteers, also called "Teachers of Hope," uses a relationship approach working with the children, focusing on their strengths, and helping them to progress and achieve success. Trust between the adult and child is the foundation of the intervention. A variety of socio-recreational activities make up the Parents-Children component. The Parent part includes formal and informal meetings, exchanging information, telephone calls and theme workshops. The same approach is used with the parents as with the children, i.e. no pressure is put on them, they are invited to participate in the activities voluntarily, and get involved gradually.

Innovative tool

Over the years, a tool for maximizing support for the children in the help with homework project has been developed. This GPS kit is a guide to the process for success for volunteers and parents. The letter G stands for goût (desire) to get involved, to be motivated to do the task, P means the plan, or doing the task, and S means satisfaction, the pleasure of doing the task. The GPS kit can be used to evaluate the child's progress and to measure changes in the child's motivation, autonomy and self-esteem. It includes a game, a teaching handbook and an exercise pad.

Convincing results

In 2004-2005, significant improvements were noted in the children's motivation. Their autonomy and self-esteem also

increased. Furthermore, none of the children had to repeat their school year and parents were found to be better integrated socially and professionally. A high participation rate of the children and parents in the various activities organized was noted within the three components of this project.

Strong partnership

This project is supported by various partners including the health and community network, elementary schools for referrals of the children, colleges and universities for referrals of the "Teachers of Hope," the Sûreté du Québec for screening the judicial record of the "Teachers of Hope," and social clubs and private enterprises for support with educational supplies and food.

This project shows that innovative, intervention capabilities, creativity and a wide range of partners are a guarantee of outstanding success in a rural environment.

For more information about this initiative, contact Adèle Bourdreau, manager of Pro-jeune-Est Rimouski-Neigette agency at (418) 724-3516.



Etienne working together with Valérie his "Teacher or Hope"

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Photo : Josée Lefebvre.

The Greater Snow Goose and farmland: Where things stand

From time immemorial, poets and artists have celebrated the springtime arrival of the Snow Goose flocks in the skies over the St. Lawrence Valley in Quebec. While many see the geese as harbingers of better days, others consider the birds a nuisance they could gladly live without. And yet, the Snow Geese bring with them a boost to the Quebec economy - twenty times more than what they cost in damages*!

Since the mid 1990s, the flocks' rapid growth and its south-westward expansion in Quebec are largely due to the increase in corn cultivation. The geese are taking advantage of environmental conditions that are highly favourable to them. The greater availability of cornfields in their staging areas provides the birds with a source of high-energy food, resulting in healthier species and a lower natural mortality rate. Many scientists now consider the species to be overabundant.

The management measures adopted by the Canadian Wildlife Service between 1999 and 2003 have reined in population growth. The results of the 2005 spring count yielded a population estimate of some 814,600 birds, whereas projected numbers would have been twice that if no control measures had been implemented.

One key measure introduced was the spring conservation harvest throughout the farmlands of Quebec. In addition to reducing goose numbers, this hunt – the first since 1916 – sought to limit the damage done by the birds in the cultivated fields of the St. Lawrence Valley. About 90 per cent of the damage done affects fields of forage crops. According to the latest data, while the damage is still spreading, it is less severe.

The escalating trend away from dairy farming in favour of intensive cash crop production is actually creating ideal conditions for Greater Snow Goose expansion and sharpening the challenge of controlling it. Specialists estimate that the only lasting solution for controlling this North American species, in both the medium and long term range, is an extended harvest south of the border.

The next delicate step in the Snow Goose population management process will see the Canadian Wildlife Service drawing up a five-year action plan for keeping the continental population healthy enough to recover from any disaster, whether natural or manmade (epidemics, oil spills, etc.), without threatening the ecological integrity and biodiversity of their natural habitats, yet minimizing farming losses and optimizing the economic spin-off for local communities.

* To find out more about Greater Snow Goose issues, go to Environment Canada's Green Lane at: www.qc.ec.gc.ca

Harbour authorities: The anchors of our community

by Michel Plamondon
Fisheries and Oceans Canada

“There’s a lot of activity on a dock. Everybody’s strolling around with their friends or family. There are fishers preparing their tackle. Everyone’s excited. You can hear the ocean.” That’s how Gilles Vigneault, chairman of the Cap-aux-Meules Harbour Authority in the Magdalen Islands describes the atmosphere on the docks.

Since 1990, about 40 harbour authorities have been created in the Gaspé, on the North Shore and in the Magdalen Islands. A harbour authority is a non-profit organization that operates and manages a fishing port according to local needs and government guidelines. Each authority is made up of volunteers who see to the smooth functioning of harbour facilities and represent the interests of users in dealings with Fisheries and Oceans Canada concerning harbour services and operational priorities.

Members of the harbour authorities’ boards of directors use their knowledge to serve coastal communities. They play an integral role in regional economies that are closely tied to the sea. In these communities, thousands of jobs depend on the commercial fishery. Fishers can count on harbour authorities to provide safe and efficient facilities where they can unload their catches. Harbour authority staff members take care of the day-to-day management including maintenance and any minor repairs required to keep their facilities in top shape.

Harbour authorities operate independently and as such they manage their own budgets. They establish user fees in accordance with the costs of minor and essential maintenance. Fisheries and Oceans Canada owns the harbours and is responsible for any major work that needs to be done.

Communication is essential to developing better synergy between users and harbour authorities.

“There is a very good chemistry between the members of my harbour authority,” Vigneault said, adding that they work well with authorities in other jurisdictions. “We help each other out and share our experiences to solve problems.”

In Quebec, the Regional Harbour Authority Advisory Committee was launched in 2001 to counsel and advise Fisheries and Oceans Canada. Three of its members represent the interests of Quebec on the National Harbour Authority Advisory Committee.

Perhaps other organizations in rural communities could follow the example of the harbour authorities’ volunteer members. They encourage co-operation and communication to bring their joint ventures to successful completion and create positive spin-offs for society.

“Everyone has their say,” concludes Vigneault.

Through their commitment, harbour authorities act as anchors to many communities.



Donald Pealy, Wharfinger for the Grande-Entrée Harbour Authority, checking the winch used to unload fish caught by local fishers.



Do you have a wood smoke problem?

Did you know that wood smoke contains more than one hundred different toxic substances such as polycyclic aromatic hydrocarbons (PAH), volatile organic compounds (VOC), fine particulate matter (PM2.5) and carbon monoxide (CO)?

Indeed, on an annual basis in Québec, wood heating contributes to 47 percent of fine particulate matter emissions coming from human activities (industrial, transport, etc). This can be inhaled deep into the lungs. Those suffering from cardiovascular and respiratory disease, as well as young children and the elderly, are especially vulnerable to the presence of these pollutants in the air.

Here are some tips to reduce wood smoke:



DON'T...

...use your wood stove or fireplace if you don't have to

...heat with wood when a smog alert is in effect unless wood heat is your main heating source

...burn garbage, plastic or glossy magazines and cardboard

...burn wet, green, shore driftwood, painted or treated wood

...store wood in a wet environment

...let a fire smoulder overnight

...close your damper while your fire is burning



DO...

...use your wood stove or fireplace only if you have to

...be informed of winter smog conditions and follow the advice regarding wood heating

...make a small hot fire

...burn clean, dry wood

...in the city, if possible, switch to another type of heating

If you must heat with wood, upgrade to a new EPA certified wood stove



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THE WAPIKONI MOBILE ADVENTURE

Movie and music mobile takes to the road

In the fall of 2002 Quebec filmmaker Manon Barbeau (Productions des Beaux Jours) developed the idea of a mobile training/production studio. Her dream? To deliver access to video and musical know-how to Quebec First Nations communities. Barbeau's idea was sound: teach young Aboriginals who lived in rural communities how to use digital technology and guide them through the world of script development and production. Thus the creation of the Wapikoni Mobile along with the establishment of a non-profit organization to carry out the activities of this project. Working with the National Film Board, Barbeau and her Aboriginal partners unveiled the Wapikoni Mobile in 2003, named after a young Aboriginal who died in a car accident.

Mobile stayed for a one-month period. In 2005, the Innu community of Mashteuiatsh, (Saguenay Lac-St-Jean) was added to the itinerary. The journey continues in 2006.

This initiative has resulted in some 80 short films so far. The works produced are available on www.onf.ca/launchers/index.php?id=107 Web site. They were also shown at various events or festivals such as Festival international du cinéma francophone en Acadie, Festival Off-courts – Trouville (France) and Festival du Film court de Victo.

Reaction from the viewers is uniform. They leave feeling deeply moved by the films, a rich reward and life-altering moment for the young creators. Many of their lives have been transformed by the visit of the Wapikoni



"Perched on top of the Obedjiwan "hill", the shooting team begins location shooting of the Ninan documentary"

Photo: Arnaud Bouquet

The Wapikoni Mobile took to the road in 2004. It was designed to provide young Aboriginals an opportunity to express themselves through artistic creations in video and music. Fostering the emergence of new talents and the development of new skills, the project also gives the participants a chance to break out of their day-to-day reality. They are able to reach out to and beyond their community to share their reality with others. It is hoped that this process will contribute to breaking down existing prejudices.

The participants are given on-site training via workshops designed using an instructional method developed by Barbeau. Professional trainers guide participants through the learning process. Web workshops, given by a specialized trainer/facilitator, provide students with the opportunity to interact with other online participants.

The mobile studio made its initial run in summer and fall 2004 to six Algonquin and Atikamekw communities in the Lanaudière, Mauricie and Abitibi-Témiscamingue administrative regions: Pikogan, Lac Simon, Kitcisakik, Obedjiwan, Wemotaci and Manouane. In each community, the Wapikoni

Mobile with some becoming hooked on the industry and still others, winning prizes.

One noticeable factor concerning the Wapikoni Mobile is the concerted efforts on the part of its financial and Aboriginal partners. Many federal and provincial departments have contributed to the success of this three-year pilot project. Upon completion, the management responsibilities and equipment will be transferred to the participating communities.

For more information on this project, contact Lorraine Gagnon at Indian and Northern Affairs Canada at 418-951-4429 (gagnonlo@ainc-inac.gc.ca) or consult the aforementioned Web site.

Prosperity-building initiatives for the MRC Asbestos

by Lyne Montpellier
Canada Economic Development

Mining has been the economic backbone of the Estrie region's MRC d'Asbestos, the Asbestos Regional County Municipality, for more than 125 years. In recent years, however, a succession of plant closures and job layoffs has shaken the industry considerably.

In 2002, Jeffrey Mine, a producer of chrysotile asbestos announced it was shutting down operations and laying off all 320 employees. Then, in early January, Magnola announced the closing of its plant in Danville, depriving 380 workers of their livelihoods. Within a matter of months, 700 direct jobs had been lost, to say nothing of the catastrophic impact it had on indirect jobs. Even though Jeffrey Mine resumed operations for brief periods, its closure sent serious shockwaves through the community of almost 15,000 residents.

The community rallies its forces...

In November 2003, over 100 citizens from the community participated in a summit which focused on the development of the MRC d'Asbestos.

On the agenda that day was a presentation of the results of an in-depth survey. Findings from more than 75 enterprises and stakeholders of the MRC clearly outlined the region's strengths, assets and possibilities

for economic diversification. It was a pivotal day during which the community banded together to decide the fate of its future. The region's forces had been mobilized!

Throughout the day, the participants' belief in their community, their determination and will to take control of their future was on full display. It was evident that everyone was deeply committed to remaining in the region. Likewise, the participants were determined to bolster their economy in order to secure a better quality of life for future generations.

The summit culminated in the adoption of a plan that called for the diversification of the regional economy for the future. It was unanimously agreed to move forward with a five-year plan to develop a prosperous and diversified MRC firmly rooted in sustainable development and recognized for its strong sense of innovation.

The Government of Canada's role in the process...

Communities are clearly the ones to identify solutions and rise to the challenges of economic diversification to reach their full potential. As such, the Government of Canada lent its support to MRC d'Asbestos stakeholders from the earliest rumblings of the economic crisis.

Canada Economic Development and its regional partner, the SADC de la région d'Asbestos, the Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) joined regional economic stakeholders in setting up a special strategy committee. The result? A socio-economic diagnostic and action plan for the region. The goal, at that stage, was to raise public awareness by stimulating dialogue (notably through the summit) and to help organize the region's economic diversification efforts.

A support program specifically geared to the needs of enterprises in the MRC has subsequently been established. In April 2004, the \$3.3 million Regional Strategic Initiative (RSI) was officially announced. This initiative consists of a series of support measures for projects developed by young entrepreneurs, rural enterprises developing niche products or services, and enterprises seeking to improve their productivity and innovativeness. All these initiatives fall within the prosperity-building sectors flagged during the November 2003 summit.

To date, Canada Economic Development has contributed some \$2.2 million to 20 projects in the region, generating \$13.9 million in total investment and the creation of 105 jobs.



Photo: Mr. Sylvain Laroche

Ushering in a new era...

These courageous individuals, whose deep love for their region led them to take hold of their destiny, recently decided to change the name of their municipality to the MRC des Sources. Clearly, this too is a sign of the vitality, strength and prosperity that is sure to follow. For more information on this initiative visit the following websites:

http://www.dec-ced.gc.ca/asp/ProgrammesServices/irs_asbestos.asp?LANG=EN

www.sadcasbestos.com

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For more information, please visit our website at www.tc.gc.ca/youth/quebec

The Rural Horizon is a semi-annual publication of the Rural Team Quebec for the residents of rural and remote communities of Quebec.

This publication is also available electronically on the Web at the following address:
www.rural.gc.ca/team/qc/quebec_e.phtml

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