

Rural Horizon

Fall 2006

RURAL TEAM QUEBEC

Supporting the development of Quebec's rural communities—that has been Rural Team Quebec's mission ever since it began in 1998. The Team consists of representatives from about twenty federal departments and agencies, as well as representatives of key organizations working on rural issues in Quebec, such as Solidarité rurale du Québec, Sociétés d'aide au développement des collectivités (SADCs) [Quebec community futures development corporations], and the Table de concertation des Forums jeunesse régionaux du Québec [Quebec regional youth forums roundtable].

Rural Team Quebec works to create partnerships to mobilize stakeholders in Quebec's various regions around issues affecting their rural communities. The Team also provides information about programs and services offered in rural areas, and maintains a dialogue with citizens in these rural communities to better identify their local and regional concerns.

For more information about Rural Team Quebec, visit our Web site at 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.



Worth the Trip

Would you like to get help with completing an application for Employment Insurance or Old Age Security—and have that help available close to home? Do you wish you could access Government of Canada services without travelling a long way?

The Government of Canada is addressing these needs by creating outreach service sites. Service Canada's client-service officers visit these sites to meet with residents in remote locations. These outreach service sites are located in the heart of rural communities and are open periodically for a few hours at a time.

For you, where you live

Service Canada's outreach service sites are designed to bring together a number of federal departments in a single service-delivery network that can be easily accessible. People get answers to their questions and advice from attentive officers. Federal departments are working together to make this national initiative a reality, making a full range of high-quality services available everywhere.

Some thirty outreach service sites will be set up by the end of 2007 across most of Quebec. As one client said of the outreach service site in Anse Saint Jean: *"It's easier to solve a problem by coming here. You don't have to travel a long way or wait on the phone. It's really an advantage."*

Citizens generally have questions about Employment Insurance, Income Security Programs, and the Social Insurance Number. The services offered in outreach service sites will develop as time goes by based on client needs.

Tailored services

The success of outreach service sites depends on the officers, who must adapt to their new duties. They now travel to go meet citizens and find out about their needs in order to offer the most appropriate service. The clients appreciate it. In the words of Mario Turcotte, an officer at the Abitibi-Témiscamingue Service Canada Centre: *"The clients are satisfied when we assist them. We have developed a service that is tailored to the needs of our clients and allows them to be self-reliant in their dealings with the Government of Canada."*

Officers in outreach service sites are not equipped with a computer connected to the internal network, as they are in their main offices. This therefore challenges the officers' resourcefulness to provide the best possible service using the resources available on-site. They really put themselves in the place of residents in remote regions. According to Mario Turcotte, this is the best way of understanding their situation and their needs. It's worth the trip!

Service Canada Outreach in Quebec

- › Lamarche
- › L'Anse-Saint-Jean
- › Matagami
- › Lebel-sur-Quévillon
- › Matapédia
- › Ferland-Boileau
- › Baie-Saint-Paul
- › Sainte-Anne-de-Beaupré
- › Saint-Siméon
- › Saint-Michel-des-Saints
- › Grande-Vallée
- › Saint-Maxime-du-Mont-Louis
- › Potton
- › New Carlisle
- › Saint-Thomas-Didyme
- › Témiscamingue
- › Taschereau
- › Notre-Dame-du-Laus
- › Belleterre
- › Cadillac
- › Weedon
- › Dégelis
- › Chénéville
- › Rivière Rouge
- › Notre-Dame-de-Montauban
- › Grande-Entrée
- › Fortierville

Service Canada makes it easier for Canadians to get the government services and information they need with just a click, call or visit. To find the nearest Service Canada Centre or outreach location and the available services, visit servicecanada.gc.ca and click on 'Services Where You Live', or call 1 800 O-Canada.



Services for you, in the heart of the country

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New Realities, New Opportunities: Gearing up for the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy

The Canadian agriculture and agri-food industry is an integral part of the Canadian economy and an important contributor to the social fabric of Canada. The sector faces a variety of opportunities and pressures in a rapidly evolving world. Together with government, the agriculture and agri-food sector will be seeking out new directions for future success.

In 2003, the federal, provincial and territorial governments implemented the Agricultural Policy Framework (APF) to position Canada as the world leader in food safety and quality, innovation and environmentally responsible agriculture production. Many elements of the APF expire in 2008. Meanwhile, a number of new economic opportunities are emerging, such as economic growth in markets like China, Brazil and India, the growing bio-based fuels industry and the increase in health awareness among Canadians and global consumers.

The time to build the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy is now.



Consulting Canadians

All Canadians will have the opportunity to participate in national consultation sessions in January and February 2007. The purpose is to spark public debate on the future of the agriculture and agri-food sector in Canada. Beginning January, Canadians can participate in the consultations:

- 1) Via AAFC Online: www.agr.gc.ca/nextgen.
- 2) By mailing responses to AAFC.
- 3) By attending a consultation event.



A full suite of materials including a discussion paper, guiding principles and economic backgrounders have been developed to help stimulate discussion and debate with industry and Canadians during the cross-country consultations. More details about the public consultations will be made available in the near future.

For information on how to participate in building the next generation of agriculture and agri-food policy, contact your provincial or territorial agriculture office, call 1 800 O-CANADA (1 800 622-6232), TTY 1 800 926-9105, or visit www.agr.gc.ca/nextgen.

Migration et nouvelle ruralité: devenir une collectivité d'accueil A new tool for RCMs

by Sylvie Bellerose

Strategic Land Development Advisor/Responsible for writing and co-ordinating the *Guide Solidarité rurale du Québec*

Solidarité rurale du Québec (SRQ) has just produced a guide entitled *Migration et nouvelle ruralité : devenir une collectivité d'accueil* [migration and the new rurality: becoming a host community]. This new tool was designed for elected officials and rural community stakeholders interested in meeting the challenge of today's rural demographics. The declining birth rate combined with an ageing population, and in some areas the youth exodus, is threatening the vitality of rural communities. This guide is a tool for those interested in exploring the issue of repopulation, finding solutions and taking concrete action in their respective communities.



The Guide is the eighth publication in the *Réflexion* series addressing Quebec demographics, ageing population issues and migration to rural areas. It explains the process for becoming a host community, presents various types of candidates for migration and gives an overview of what they need to know. The Guide also contains examples of existing host communities in rural Quebec and lists information sources and support organizations.

Migration et nouvelle ruralité : devenir une collectivité d'accueil is based on the findings of a study conducted in 2006 for the SRQ by Alain Péricard of Passez Go. His study, *Les migrations ville-campagne et leurs conséquences dans les territoires ruraux du Québec* received funding from Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Rural Secretariat.

The rural population decline can be reversed, as demonstrated in several cases in Europe. Péricard's study shows that the regions that have developed successfully by attracting city-dwellers are those that have the ability to receive them and to put in place the appropriate services and infrastructure. Using the Guide, interested rural communities can plan for the in-migration of new residents and mobilize all the resources available to them to achieve their repopulation objectives.

This 15-page guide can be obtained for a modest fee by contacting srq@solidarite-rurale.qc.ca or calling the SRQ secretariat at 819-293-6825.

SRQ is a coalition that focuses on rural communities. It acts as rural issues advisor to the Government of Quebec, and is involved in various activities in partnership with Canada's new government.

The *Centre d'accès communautaire Internet musical*: An initiative that's striking the right chord!

It is often said that music has a civilizing influence. One thing is certain: it promotes harmony. This is especially true in the Abitibi-Ouest region, where an initiative of the local Community Futures Development Corporation (CFDC) is making beautiful music.

The CACIM

Located in the Club de l'âge d'or, the La Sarre Centre d'accès communautaire Internet musical [Internet music community access centre] (CACIM) gives musicians from all walks of life, young and old alike, the opportunity to access leading-edge computer equipment and software at a low cost.

Young musicians can indulge their passion for music in soundproof rooms containing cutting-edge equipment. Using Internet-connected computer equipment, they can create their own musical arrangements and record demos.



Internet music community access centre (CACIM) of the Abitibi-Ouest CFDC, La Sarre

Certain musical instruments (software, console, sound system, drums, and so on) are also available.

Created through the co-operative effort of senior citizens in the Abitibi-Ouest region, the CACIM offers activities intended to help young musicians benefit from the experience and advice of their elders, many of whom

are long-time music enthusiasts. In return, the seniors are able to increase their general knowledge of software applications as well as improve their computer skills for other purposes such as researching on the Internet, accessing government programs, staying in touch with family via e-mail and using on-line services.

Significant spin-offs

Currently, about 30 youth bands of three to eight members each, along with several folk groups made up of senior citizens, are taking advantage of the services and activities offered by the CACIM. Given the chance to develop their skills, who knows, maybe some of them will make a career out of their music.

“[Translation] At the CACIM, I can use their equipment and get great sound quality at a low cost, as well as meet other musicians. I can also practise with my band and record demos for promotional purposes,” says Alexandre Picard, a 17-year old student who plays guitar and drums.

Obviously, a project like the CACIM contributes to a better quality of life in the communities of Abitibi-Ouest, and strengthens the region's social fabric by offering activities that include youth and help reduce the isolation of the older generations.

A success based on partnership

As project proponent, the Abitibi-Ouest CFDC played a key role in CACIM's creation. “[Translation] The CACIM is a project that meets a local need, and its success is the result of a partnership with various community stakeholders. We are proud of the way we have used our resources to create local activities and develop networks, particularly with our seniors,” says Thérèse Grenier, Director General of the Abitibi-Ouest CFDC.

Canada's new government is a partner in this initiative via its Community Access Program (CAP), which is administered by Industry Canada and aims to provide Canadians with affordable public access to the Internet and the skills they need to use it effectively.

For more information, contact
> Abitibi-Ouest CFDC: (819) 333-3113
> Industry Canada: <http://cap.ic.gc.ca>

Revitalizing rivers by protecting banks in agricultural areas: communities get organized

Quebec farmland is crossed by 40,000 km of watercourses and 200,000 km of ditches; management organizations agree that the banks of many watercourses in agricultural areas are in urgent need of restoration.

In a number of Quebec regions, farmers have combined forces with various partners to restore the banks of the rivers and streams that border their land. One such project is the Vacher Brook watershed¹ in the Lanaudière region. The waterway winds through farmland in a number of municipalities before flowing into the Assomption River in Saint-Paul. The Vacher Brook water quality improvement project, which began in 2005, focuses on the personal and professional activities of inhabitants living in the area. It analyses the impact the residential, forestry, industrial and agricultural sectors have on the watercourse's water quality.

At the agricultural level, this particular management project began with an analysis of the state of the waterway and its branches. The more than forty farmers participating in the project will receive a document presenting study results along with a diagnostic assessment of their own properties. Many of the farms that have already received an assessment have taken various steps (protecting drain outflows, planting trees and shrubs, installing drains, etc.) to reduce the amount of soil that is lost and carried into streams each year. The work of individual farms under a coordinated watershed-wide project will significantly benefit both the general population (improved water quality, restored habitats for aquatic life, etc.) and farmers (less soil loss).

In an approach geared towards collective action, Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada's Greencover Canada (GC) program (\$3.6 million as of 2008) was created to provide financial support to farmers who wish to develop buffer strips on their farms. Farmers who want to fight erosion of the banks or plant buffer strips, shelterbelts or wooded corridors can receive a combined GC-Prime-Vert (Quebec Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Food (MAPAQ) program) contribution of up to 70 per cent of eligible project expenses.



Restoration of the Vacher Brook banks . Source : CDAQ

The program is administered in Quebec by the *Conseil pour le développement de l'agriculture du Québec* [Quebec Agricultural Development Board] (CDAQ). CDAQ, MAPAQ, Environment Canada, Quebec department of sustainable development, environment and parks (MDDEP) and AAFC collaborate in the analysis of the projects presented in this program. To be eligible for financial support, farmers must submit a collective project that involves a minimum of two farms in the same watershed. CDAQ issues calls for proposals four times a year. More information on this program can be found on CDAQ's internet site at www.cdaq.qc.ca.

¹A watershed is an area of land that drains into a single watercourse.



Community Information Database – A quick access to information at the community level

The Community Information Database was developed collaboratively by the Rural Secretariat, provinces, territories, other federal departments, and community groups. It is a free on-line web-based resource intended to help users quickly capture demographic/socio-economic data for specific or multiple geographic regions from an interactive map.

This site provides users with a consistent, reliable, and accessible source of statistical indicators at the community level in Canada. The data is sourced mainly from the 1996 and 2001 Statistics Canada's Censuses of Population, and includes:

- > *population*
- > *age*
- > *average personal and family income*
- > *employment rate*
- > *education*
- > *employment by sector*
- > *language*
- > *resource reliance*
- > *economic diversification*

This innovative tool is especially useful to community groups, private or non-profit community organizations, government policy makers, businesses, researchers and research organizations and universities.

Whether it is to measure, assess and compare community performance or to identify key socio-economic aspects and trends at the community level, the CID provides information and analysis essential to community development planning. The Community Information Database is available at www.cid-bdc.ca.

For more information on the CID, please contact:

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The Rural Secretariat is a focal point for the Government of Canada to work in partnership with Canadians in rural and remote areas to build strong, dynamic communities.

Our Web sites addresses
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www.rural.gc.ca

www.servicecanada.gc.ca

www.agr.gc.ca/nextgen

www.solidarite-rurale.qc.ca

<http://cap.ic.gc.ca>

www.cdaq.qc.ca

www.cid-bdc.ca

FOR INFORMATION ON GOVERNMENT OF CANADA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES:

Phone: 1-800-0-CANADA (1-800-622-6232)
TTY/TDD: 1-800-465-7735

Web: www.canada.gc.ca

Service Canada Access Centres



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

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