

# Our Communities... Our Successes!

Canadian Rural Partnership

Spring 2006

## Do rural communities and urban centres make good neighbours?

Alongside the roads leading out of a city, there are never signs that read, "You are now leaving an urban area and entering a rural region." This transition happens naturally. In Atlantic Canada, there is no clear division between rural areas and major cities; instead, each area extends into the other. And yet, we regularly hear about the major differences that exist between rural and urban regions.

Rural and urban areas have their own characteristics but the ties between them remain strong. While rural areas are affected to varying degrees by cities,

the opposite is also true: rural communities have an impact on urban areas.

Generally speaking, the closer a rural community is located to a major city, the stronger this impact. For example, 30 to 50 per cent of rural residents who live near urban centres commute to city-based employment. By the same token, if a rural community located close to a city boasts a beautiful park or a destination resort, there is no shortage of urbanites within that rural community on weekends!

Although these percentages drop as the distance from a major city increases, the interdependence remains. The projects included in this newsletter all have one thing in common: they highlight the very real, urban-rural relationship. Whether it involves the economy, tourism or culture, this unique link is present throughout Atlantic Canada.

*"Rural and urban areas have their own characteristics but the ties between them remain strong."*

## A reason to picnic rallies urban and rural alike

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It was a big dream that brought Jill Curran and Sonia O'Keefe to Ferryland Head Lighthouse, located about an hour drive from St. John's, Newfoundland and Labrador. They wanted to bring back to life the 135-year-old Ferryland Lighthouse and offer guests a special reason to visit the beautiful and historic rural area.

Well traveled, Curran and O'Keefe realized that Ferryland Head was a magic place that equalled the beauty of any other in the world. Curran had lived and worked in New Zealand and Scotland, primarily in the oil & gas industry; O'Keefe studied cooking in Ireland. Both felt the desire to return to Newfoundland.

*"In addition to the gastronomic feast, Curran and O'Keefe also offer interpretative tours of the lighthouse and host a number of events including readings, lectures, music and meditation."*

To make this dream a reality, Curran, a native of Ferryland, partnered with O'Keefe, a native of Lawn, Newfoundland. Together, their combined skills would make for a great business mix – gourmet food served with a side of history and a passion for Newfoundland culture.

Curran, in particular, had a special connection to the rustic red and white structure; her great-grandfather had been the lighthouse keeper and it was the site where her grandmother was born.

When they first opened the business in 2003, Curran and O'Keefe operated completely outdoors. Since the lighthouse had been empty for 25 years, it was in dire need of repair.

Following a successful first season, the owners decided to expand due to visitors' spoken desires to tour a restored lighthouse. Extensive renovations in early 2004 resulted in the unveiling of Ferryland Lighthouse that summer.

Visitors arrive from around the world, but the backbone of their business remains the people of the Southern Shore and St. John's. Repeat customers are the key to their success as visitors flock to experience a gourmet-style attraction in a rural setting.

Considered by many as one of Newfoundland's best kept secrets, Lighthouse Picnics offers a unique experience to its visitors. It begins with the impressive surroundings; not just the beautifully renovated lighthouse but also the view of the rocky shore from one of the oldest towns in North America. Lucky visitors may even catch a glimpse of whales!

But that is only the beginning of the Lighthouse Picnics experience. What sets this attraction apart is the gourmet picnic basket and blanket that awaits guests upon their arrival. Distinctive picnic food, using only the freshest local and organic products, include delightful dishes such as chutney-glazed ham & Emmental cheese on focaccia bread, crab cakes, Gruyere and dill tart, curried chicken with mango and cashews, sweet scones with orange butter, chocolate toffee squares and freshly squeezed lemonade.

In addition to the gastronomic feast, Curran and O'Keefe also offer interpretative tours of the lighthouse and host a number of events including readings, lectures, music and meditation.

For more than a hundred years and well before advancements in nautical technologies rendered it obsolete, the Ferryland Lighthouse stood as a beacon to passing ships. Today, thanks to the dream of Curran and O'Keefe, the site has regained its important role as the heart of Ferryland Head. Through gourmet picnics and a healthy serving of the history and culture of their beloved Southern Shore, these insightful business owners returned to their roots to make their dream become a reality.

For more information, visit [www.lighthousepicnics.ca](http://www.lighthousepicnics.ca).

## Innovative approach to promoting traditional and rural craft

Entrepreneurs, by their nature, relish the challenges of developing a new business. Tourism-oriented and arts/craft ventures tend to present their own trials and this is especially true of those located in rural or remote communities. Such businesses are founded in rural areas not easily accessible to tourists or close to large numbers of potential customers.

Developing good marketing and networking skills is crucial for these business owners. Frequently applied in urban areas, this kind of approach can be very complicated for rural entrepreneurs who are isolated from other businesses.

animating and interpreting its art trade by means of tools similar to those used in the museum.

Currently, ten ÉCONOMUSÉE can be found in the Atlantic Region, nine of which are located in rural communities. Their expertise includes a wide range of products – everything from soap and pewter jewellery to chocolate and wine. Once such ventures become part of the Network, the artisans are profiled in brochures and promotional materials distributed in the Atlantic Region, Québec and Ontario as well as at tourism offices, tour operator fairs, etc. In addition to

this direct marketing, owners can also receive training in a variety of business-related topics including promotion and merchandising. Future plans for the Network include an on-line store featuring its members' crafts and products as well as the development of the membership, especially in the fields of woodworking, glass and ceramics.

Becoming a member of the Network enables the artisans to get the best of both worlds: they can focus on creating stunning pieces knowing that they have support for marketing and promotion. Another interesting element of the Network is that it gives exclusivity to each member, meaning that no direct competitor can become part of the circuit.

Since becoming an ÉCONOMUSÉE, business owners have noted a major increase of visitors in their workshops, a direct result of the new promotion activities undertaken by the Network!



*Located in picturesque Mahone Bay, Amos Pewter has designed and handcrafted exquisite gifts and keepsakes since 1974. Designs are distinctly Nova Scotian and inspired by nature and beautiful coastal surroundings.*

To help out a new organization is working towards developing a unique cultural tourism experience by promoting the work of artisans. The Atlantic ÉCONOMUSÉE® Network is currently setting up a circuit, across the Atlantic region, to showcase traditional trades and expertise.

By definition, an ÉCONOMUSÉE is a small, artisanal craft or agri-food business recognized for the quality and authenticity of its know-how. Open to the public, the business has special areas for



*The Dark Tickle Company is located in Griquet, on the Great Northern Peninsula in Newfoundland-and-Labrador. They manufacture jams, sauces, vinegars, teas, drinks and chocolates from unique wild berries.*

The Atlantic ÉCONOMUSÉE Network is part of the International ÉCONOMUSÉE Network Society that was created in Québec in 1992. Its role is to promote sustainable development by setting up projects aimed at heritage preservation and the presentation of a trade/know-how. It is supported by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and Canadian Heritage.

For more information on the ÉCONOMUSÉE Network, visit [www.economusees.com](http://www.economusees.com) or contact the co-ordinator by email at [info@economusee-atl.com](mailto:info@economusee-atl.com) or by phone at (506) 854-2933.

## When you have a National Site in your backyard...

Rural Canada showcases many historical gems important not only for the region, but for the country and continent as well. At the federal level, Parks Canada is responsible for managing these national and international treasures. The agency is the guardian, the guide, the partner and the storyteller of Canada's National Historic Sites.

In the Atlantic region, you can find close to 30 National Historic Sites and seven National Parks, the vast majority of these attractions are located in rural communities. In 2004–2005 alone, there were more than 3,500,000 visits to these Atlantic sites. The small town of Canso, a coastal fishing town on the Eastern Shore of Nova Scotia, boasts its own National Historic Site: the Canso Islands.

The Canso Islands have been a centre for European fishing and fur trading since the 1500s. Prior to this recorded date, the Mi'kmaw First Nations fished the island waters. By the early 1700s, Canso was a colonial New England fishing station and the commercial heart of Nova Scotia.

Tragically, this thriving fishing community became a casualty of the Anglo-French rivalry for North America; Canso was destroyed and abandoned in 1744. Today, this National Historic Site commemorates the significant role the fishery played in the international trade and commerce of the early 18<sup>th</sup> century.

Following the collapse of the ground fishery in the 1990s, it was recognized that diversification efforts were crucial to the survival of the town that today boasts a population of 900 residents. Tourism is one such growth industry, and as such, the National Historic Site plays a key role in keeping the community afloat. Staff salaries and visitor spending in the area contribute towards the economic well being of the community. Indeed, in 2004, more than 1,500 tourists visited the Canso Islands Historic Site; the community not only welcomed the tourists but they also embraced the economic impact these visits had in this small coastal community.

### Did you know?

The Government of Canada has designated more than 800 sites, 500 persons and 300 events as being of national historic significance. Together, they comprise what is known as the system of National Historic Sites of Canada.

## For a rural taste on your plate, come to the market!

Almost everyone is familiar with the supermarket. In cities, you have your choice and they're usually conveniently located and easily accessible. However, more and more cities are attracting another kind of market: the farmers' market.

*"It attracted 10,000 people on its opening day and now draws crowds of more than 5,000 every Saturday morning."*

Farmers' markets offer a different experience to customers. The setting encourages people to take their time, meet the vendors, learn about the products and chat with their neighbours. Freshness is key as produce available at markets has usually traveled less than that in a supermarket. It might actually have been picked the same day!

The Marché de Dieppe Market is one of the newest markets in the Atlantic region. It opened in June 2005, providing people from the city and surrounding areas with the ideal place to purchase fresh local produce harvested in rural south-eastern New Brunswick. It attracted 10,000 people on its opening day and now draws crowds of more than 5,000 every Saturday morning.

The Marché de Dieppe Market provides farmers from neighbouring rural communities with access to urban consumers and provides city residents with quality, locally grown produce. What better way to illustrate the mutual benefit of strong rural and urban economies? The 18,000-square-foot market currently showcases more than 100 vendors, offering a wide variety of fresh farm produce and craft products. It also serves as a farm produce wholesale distribution point for the south-eastern region of New Brunswick.

While the City of Dieppe owns the building, the market is managed by the Really Local Horticultural Co-operative, a non-profit organization representing 25 rural farm owners and operators from the area. The Co-operative has also created the Eco-Logik trademark, used to promote high-quality products grown using predetermined methods. These products now have a 'place of choice' at the market.

This market is only one example of how farmers' markets improve the quality of life and economy of both rural and urban regions. It ensures that fresh and locally grown produce and products are easily distributed from farms and villages to the cities in Atlantic Canada.

The Marché de Dieppe Market is the result of a partnership between the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, the Government of New Brunswick, the City of Dieppe and the Really Local Horticultural Co-operative.

## Do you know your rural communities?

The Rural Secretariat recently published Rural Profile Reports for the Atlantic Provinces (based on the 2001 Census). Take a look at the questions below and test your knowledge of rural communities!

1. What percentage of the population of New Brunswick lives in rural communities?

A 47 %    B 63 %    C 29 %

2. In Canada, tourism destinations found in rural areas attract \_\_\_\_ % of Canadian tourists.

A 35 %    B 50 %    C 75 %

3. What percentage of the population of Newfoundland and Labrador lives in cities?

A 37 %    B 46 %    C 54 %

4. In 2001, new houses built in rural areas represented \_\_\_\_ % of all new housing constructions in Prince Edward Island.

A 22 %    B 33 %    C 44 %

5. In 2001, there were \_\_\_\_\_ teachers and professors working in rural Nova Scotia, representing 33 % of the total number of education providers in the province.

A 10,634    B 8,903    C 5,780

6. In 2001, \_\_\_\_ % of university-educated Newfoundlanders and Labradorians chose to live in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

A 20 %    B 30 %    C 40 %

7. \_\_\_\_\_ % of all self-employed people in NB are from rural communities.

A 29 %    B 38 %    C 50 %

8. \_\_\_\_ % of the agriculture, forestry, fishing and hunting industries' labour force live in rural Atlantic Canada.

A 63 %    B 76 %    C 81 %

9. Representing 45 % of the province's total population, what was the rural population of Prince Edward Island in 2001?

A 43,657    B 57,038    C 60,736

10. \_\_\_\_ % of Nova Scotia's Aboriginal People lives in rural communities.

A 45 %    B 69 %    C 81 %

If you want more information regarding rural communities in your province, visit [www.rural.gc.ca](http://www.rural.gc.ca).

Answers on page 4.

## Is your community ready to host a rural dialogue?

Should your community host a rural community dialogue session? The following information will help you to determine if your community would benefit from such an undertaking. Hosting a community dialogue can:

*Provide expertise to existing and new community partnership;*

*Reach a common ground through the integration of formal institutions/partnerships with neighbourhood leadership and grassroots organizations;*

*Pinpoint common issues and identify the resources to address them;*

*Sustain an on-going community exchange between the groups/partnerships;*

*Enable organizations/groups to implement ideas;*

*Launch new initiatives and strengthen the impact of existing community improvement partnerships;*

*Focus corporate and organizational investments to increase community benefits.*

If you are interested in hosting a rural dialogue in your community, obtain a free **Community Dialogue Toolkit** by calling 1 (613) 759-6610.

# Victoria by the Sea creates a niche chapter in the history book



The Victoria Playhouse Theatre Company is located in the Victoria Community Hall.

Picture by Wendell Dennis

past 85 years. It has been used for everything from recruiting activities during wartime to plays, concerts, turkey and bean suppers. It has hosted quilting bees, fashion shows, Christmas and school concerts, Women's Institute activities and community council meetings.

On average, the theatre presents more than 100 performances a year, and during peak season, it operates seven days a week. It was not always this way. It was in 1981 that residents voted to encourage the production of live theatre

in their community hall. Residents recognized that the theatre was an important draw for the tiny community of 150 people and it was a catalyst for sustainable community development.

The theatre is only one shining example of the quality of life shared by the community. By the late 1800s, the settlement was prosperous with three wharves and many thriving businesses. Because of its sheltered harbour and strategic location, Victoria became an important seaport and trading partner with Europe, the West Indies and other East Coast ports. In the days of the steamboat travel, Victoria was a regular stop on the schedule; it brought visitors from Charlottetown and other cities to spend a few days relaxing in the beautiful village by the sea.

When the Trans-Canada Highway by-passed the community, residents were stunned. In order to survive, many businesses and facilities relocated to nearby Crapaud. Although it would have been easy to give up, Victoria by the Sea decided to establish itself as an historic seaport village and artistic enclave. Today, its reputation in this niche has proven successful. Although visitors no longer arrive via steamboat, they continue to stroll along tree-lined boulevards and quaint streets reminiscent of a by-gone era. Many tourists flock to the area to take in a village alive with galleries, tea rooms, craft boutiques, elegant inns, a chocolatier, and of course, the Victoria Playhouse Theatre.



Beautiful painting of Main Street in Victoria by the Sea

Painting by Wendell Dennis

The Victoria Playhouse is supported by Heritage Canada under the Arts Presentation Program.

For more information on this dynamic community and the Victoria Playhouse Theatre, visit [www.victoriabythesea.ca](http://www.victoriabythesea.ca) or [www.victoriaplayhouse.com](http://www.victoriaplayhouse.com).

Even Win Bradley, the notorious ghost haunting the Victoria Playhouse, approves of the changes in the small rural community of Victoria by the Sea!

The story of the Playhouse is indicative of the spirit in the community. Founded in 1819, the village of Victoria by the Sea is located on the south shore of the Island halfway between Charlottetown and Summerside. Promoting itself as Prince Edward Island's 'longest running little theatre', the Victoria Playhouse celebrates its 25th anniversary this summer.

The building was constructed between 1912 and 1914 by architect/carpenter Win Bradley. It is still widely known for its intimate decor and excellent acoustics. The hall itself has a rich history as it has been the focal point of community activity for the

## Answers to the quiz 1 A 2 B 3 B 4 C 5 C 6 B 7 C 8 C 9 C 10 A

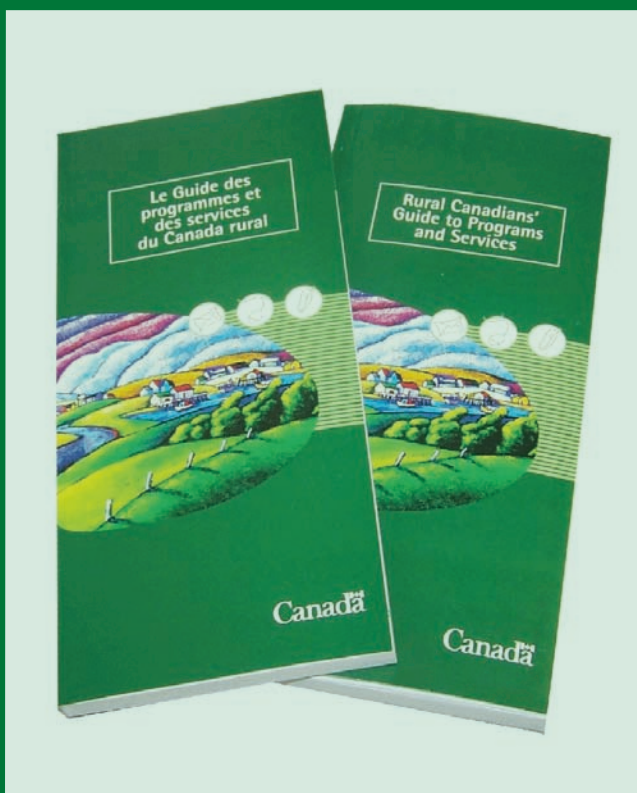
If you have a question, comment or would like to receive a copy of this newsletter, contact:

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Are you looking for information on programs and services provided by the Government of Canada but don't know where to start? If so, the Rural Canadians' Guide to Programs and Services is for you!

This guide was especially put together for Canadians in rural and remote communities. It is part of the Canadian Rural Partnership, the federal government's rural initiative.

In addition to a short description of each program or service, there is also a point of contact where Canadians can go for information by telephone, Internet or both.

The programs and services have been arranged under three themes to help you find the information that meets your particular needs: Key Contacts Points, Information for Business and Information for People and Communities.

To get your free copy, call 1 (613) 759-6610.