

### New Governance of Official Languages at Canadian Heritage



On February 6, 2006, the Honourable Josée Verner was sworn in as Minister of International Cooperation and Minister for La Francophonie and Official Languages. We asked her a few questions about her role and her vision for official languages.

Would you describe for us your personal and professional background, and what got you into politics?

Before making the move into federal politics, I worked in communications and in the public sector for nearly 20 years. For example, in the second half of the 1980s, I worked in the government of former Quebec Premier Robert Bourassa.

In 2004, I was approached to run as a Conservative candidate in the riding of Louis-Saint-Laurent, in suburban Quebec City. Throughout the campaign, I worked very hard at the grassroots level and I am proud of the results we achieved, which served as a good basis for my election victory last January.

Over the last two years, I have been a member of Stephen Harper's Shadow Cabinet. During that time, he appointed me spokesperson on the Economic Development Agency of Canada for the Regions of Quebec, on La Francophonie, and on official languages issues.

I am proud to serve as the Member for Louis-Saint-Laurent, something I am very enthusiastic about. To assist me in carrying out these work challenges, I have the support of my spouse and three children, whom I am very proud of.

Would you tell us about your role in relation to La Francophonie and to official languages?

I believe it is essential that the Minister for La Francophonie and Official Languages demonstrate political leadership in matters involving Canada's linguistic duality. As the government's spokesperson on official languages issues, I think it is important to work closely with the provinces and the territories on behalf of the government as a whole.

The two hats I wear enable me to build bridges between all the Francophone communities of Canada and the international Francophonie so that French-speaking Canada can grow and prosper both nationally and internationally. For example, my recent visits to Saint-Boniface and to New Brunswick gave me an opportunity to realize the advantage of wearing these two hats.

How does your role relate to that of the Minister of Canadian Heritage, the Honourable Beverley J. Oda?

In forming his Cabinet, the Prime Minister gave me responsibility for the entire official languages portfolio. This includes both the horizontal coordination

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29<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE FCCF

The *Fédération culturelle canadienne-française* (FCCF) paid tribute to its own on the occasion of its 29<sup>th</sup> annual general assembly in St. John's, Newfoundland, on June 17, 2006. With its 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary approaching, the FCCF presented two awards.

The *Hommage du développement culturel* [tribute to cultural development] award was given to the *Regroupement artistique Francophone de l'Alberta*, which obtained the status of official representative of the cultural sector by signing an agreement with the *Association canadienne-française de l'Alberta*.

The *Hommage des arts et des industries culturelles* [tribute to the arts and cultural industries] award went to Arash Mohtashami-Maali and *Liaison* magazine. A man of letters and a poet, Mr. Mohtashami-Maali is the editor of *Éditions Interligne* and *Liaison* magazine, which covers artistic and cultural life in Canada's Francophone communities. *Liaison* recently expanded publication beyond Ontario and is now a Canada-wide literary magazine.

Web site: [www.fccf.ca](http://www.fccf.ca).

## WORKING GROUP ON MEDIA ARTS



At its latest meeting on March 30, 2006, the group discussed the effect of local television and film production on the vitality of minority Francophone communities.

The organizers invited a number of speakers, including René Cormier of the FCCF, Jean-Claude Mahé and Nancy Roch of Telefilm Canada, and Richard Simoens of *Radio-Canada*; workshop discussions also took place. Chief among the topics were cooperative programs and mechanisms and federal financing. Participants looked at how these elements contributed to the development of television and film and to the consolidation of the film and video industry in minority Francophone communities. They also looked at whether these programs and mechanisms were useful in helping to halt assimilation and the exodus of young Francophone talent in minority environments. On this topic, René Cormier noted that supporting television and film production meant supporting the vitality of minority Francophone communities. La Francophonie is vital to Canada's diversity, and preserving this diversity will make Canada a country where people will want to stay.

## THE LANGUAGE-CULTURE-EDUCATION LINK: ENDING ORGANIZATIONAL ISOLATION

On February 20 and 22, 2006, the FCCF and the *Table des organismes nationaux des arts et de la culture* [national arts and culture organizations issue table] held provincial consultations on the language-culture-education link in New Brunswick and Manitoba. A number of elements emerged from the discussions, including the fact that a number of entities exist and are active in this area, but often work in isolation. To end this isolation, which considerably restricts the extension of their activities, the participants resolved to periodically work on building relationships among themselves.

New Brunswick saw the creation of the *Table de concertation inter-sectorielle Arts-Culture-Éducation* [arts-culture-education intersectoral cooperation issue table] under the auspices of the province's *États généraux sur les arts et la culture*, an Acadian creation scheduled to take place in the spring of 2007. Manitoba, on its part, formed a working committee to develop an action plan and find the funds required to pursue its activities and scan its situation.

Web site: [www.fccf.ca/fccf/home/index.cfm?id=194](http://www.fccf.ca/fccf/home/index.cfm?id=194). (French only)

## WORKING GROUP ON CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT

This group, co-chaired by Pierre Bourbeau, Director General of the FCCF and Michel Lemay, Director of Arts Policy at Canadian Heritage, met on May 3, 2006, to examine various issues under FCCF responsibility at the national, provincial and municipal levels.

On the agenda were the language-culture-education connection, the national survey on cultural and artistic action and the positioning of the cultural sector in official-language minority communities. Community stakeholders from the FCCF as well as from the Yukon, Manitoba and Prince Edward Island attended.

The meeting ended with a planning exercise with the political situation and organizational capabilities in perspective. Participants began laying the groundwork for a 2006-2007 cultural development work plan. Consideration was given to the role of arts and culture at the municipal, provincial and federal levels, the visibility of Francophone communities at the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Quebec City in 2008, and FCCF preparations for an arts forum in 2008.

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## NEW GOVERNANCE OF OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AT CANADIAN HERITAGE

of all federal official languages initiatives and the management of official languages support programs. I am supported by the Official Languages Secretariat in my horizontal coordination responsibilities, and by the Official Languages Support Programs Branch in the management of those programs formerly under the responsibility of the Minister of Canadian Heritage. That said, I work very closely with my colleague, Ms. Oda.

**Under the *Official Languages Act*, the federal government is committed to promoting the development of official-language minority communities in Canada, and the full recognition and use of English and French in Canadian society. How do you believe that commitment should be fulfilled?**

I firmly believe that the official languages of our country represent a unique social, cultural and economic asset to all Canadians.

I work with the provincial and territorial governments to advance our linguistic duality and to support the development of official-language minority communities. Naturally, we all do so within our respective areas of jurisdiction.

I also work with all my Cabinet colleagues to ensure that linguistic duality is an integral part of the decision-making as well as policy and program development processes. Our government's approach is a simple one: we want to stress the achievement of tangible results and measurable objectives in the area of official languages.

**In your view, what are the challenges facing you with respect to the official-language minority communities, namely the French-speaking community outside Quebec and the English-speaking community in Quebec?**

First, I have resolved to listen to the needs and challenges of our official-language minority communities. I have in fact embarked on a cross-Canada tour to meet with the members of such communities. To date, I have met with Franco-Manitobans, Franco-Ontarians, Acadians in New Brunswick and representatives of the Anglophone community in Quebec. I also intend to visit the official-language minority communities in the other parts of Canada.

Like the Prime Minister, I wish to restate our government's unwavering commitment to a modern and dynamic linguistic duality in Canada, which is a fundamental value of our society.

## Embracing the Francophone Milieu



This was the theme for the discussions between Manitoba's community leaders and federal officials held on June 1 and 2, 2006 in Winnipeg. Manitoba's Francophone community welcomed the national and regional representatives of some twenty federal departments and agencies with a view to identifying areas for cooperation and promoting the development of the community. The theme was inspired by the strategy entitled *Agrandir l'espace francophone du Manitoba* (Expanding our Francophone

milieu in Manitoba), which aims to welcome Francophone newcomers to the province, facilitate their relations with bilingual people and make parents of exogamous families aware of the importance of using French.

This encounter fit into the context of meetings of national coordinators for the implementation of section 41 of the *Official Languages Act*, organized by Canadian Heritage. Daniel Boucher, President and Chief Executive Director of the *Société franco-manitobaine* (SFM), drew a portrait of the community and its main challenges – promotion of community and rural activities, collaboration with and professional development of artists, and support for athletes and officials, to name a few of the examples listed in the community's

global development plan. Alain Boucher, coordinator of the bilingual services centres of Manitoba's French Language Services Secretariat, presented collaborative arrangements between the different levels of government and the community, such as bilingual services centres, the partnership committee on the economic development of Francophones in Manitoba, the task force on improving French services within Manitoba's justice system, and the *Conseil communauté en santé* [healthy communities council]. Finally, Mariette Mulaire, Executive Director of the Economic Development Council, talked about the branding campaign *C'est si bon/Ensemble – Together*, which arose from a major project to position Manitoba's bilingual municipalities and the added value of French as key factors in Manitoba's growth.

Some one hundred participants, divided into workshops, explored such topics as the arts, culture and heritage, health and early childhood, and economic and international development. Federal representatives used this opportunity to exchange information on programs and policies in common areas, namely, health, early childhood, justice, and so forth. Participants came up with new approaches to supporting community development: promoting health through sports, with a focus on well-being rather than competition; advertising the communities, tourist attractions through international



From left to right, H el ene Fiset and Alain Boucher, of the Provincial French Language Services Secretariat, Louise Trahan, of the Interdepartmental Coordination Directorate, Natalie Gagn e, of the SFM, and Simone Neveux, master of ceremonies.

marketing initiatives; and making greater use of new technologies to raise young people's awareness of government programs and services.

The event included a tour of Saint-Boniface, during which national and regional coordinators visited Winnipeg's bilingual services centre and Franco-Manitoban cultural centre. The day ended with a reception hosted by the Francophone community and featuring a great comedy number delivered by *Elles M N O P*. The group's three performers treated participants to a lively and humorous presentation centred around French cultural identity. The day ended with presentations on best practices showcasing the creativity and team spirit of a number of federal departments and agencies.

## Franco-All o!



Marie Gaudet  
Service Canada

I am a native *fransaskoise* who now lives in Alberta. In the West, it is challenging to retain our mother tongue and encourage our kids to learn it.

So I began, in my job as official languages officer, to write weekly e-mails to our bilingual staff in Alberta. I keep it light and entertaining and try to open peoples' eyes to the panorama of assorted activities offered by our lively Francophone community.

In Edmonton, my email evolved into a weekly coffee-break group which calls itself "*Franco-all o*". Initially, it was a struggle to find participants.

When word got around that we had a large French-friendly family in Canada Place, the little coffee-break that thought it could, did! Other departments joined in, some offering their own coffee and lunch sessions, thus providing alternative opportunities. For example, Western Economic Diversification's group, *Les D ine- a-Mots*, and Justice's group, *Le Bistro francophone*, also meet weekly, with plans for more groups to join in. Some offices also developed e-newsletters (e.g., Canada Revenue Agency in Calgary produces *La francofolie albertaine*). A retirement session was recently conducted in French by the Alberta Federal Council. The significant common thread is that all federal employees are invited to every session.

It's now quite common to hear French spoken in our building's food court (at least on Thursday afternoons). The little coffee-break that could continues on, replete with new friends working together to learn *my* language — what an honour!

Alberta is proud to provide some positive overtones to the whole official languages issue. That's really what Canada's all about!



## A look back at the ConverGence 2006 forum in Manitoba: Enhancing cooperation through better mutual understanding

In March 2006, the Manitoba Federal Council, the provincial French-language services secretariat and the *Société franco-manitobaine* joined forces in an overview of the status of the Francophone community in Manitoba.

The *ConverGence 2006* forum was attended by almost 200 individuals, federal and provincial employees and community representatives. The objective was to help people get to know one another better and foster the change in culture needed to undertake ongoing dynamic and enriching activities.

The first day of the forum was particularly colourful. A group of young people presented an eloquent interpretation of the history of French Manitoba, which is very closely

linked to the history of Aboriginal peoples in the region, and the institutions that have been created over the years. A theatre company, *Elles M N O P*, then offered a humorous depiction of the trials and tribulations of French-language life in Manitoba at different periods. The day ended with presentations on best practices showcasing the creativity and team spirit of a number of federal departments and agencies.

The next day, the participants studied various ways of identifying the advantages and disadvantages of models for cooperation between governments and Francophone communities. They selected five positive characteristics and drew up a list of priorities and key elements to foster optimum cooperation. The five characteristics are:

- a fair and inclusive partnership;
- sustained commitment from leaders;
- a comprehensive strategic plan that meets the needs of Franco-Manitobans;
- targeted actions leading to tangible results; and
- light and flexible structure and operations.

*ConverGence 2006* provided an opportunity for the participants to start working together. Complementary activities over the two days promoted understanding of the intricacies of the Franco-Manitoban context and helped bring about a common vision that will encourage effective, committed cooperation.



*Elles M N O P* performing



Ronald Duhamel award recipients Mike Styre and Edmond Labossière

Mike Styre, Manitoba director of the Canada Border Services Agency and founding co-chair of the Manitoba Federal Council's Official Languages Steering Committee, and Edmond Labossière, a former special advisor in the provincial French-language services secretariat, accepted the award on behalf of their respective teams.

### RONALD DUHAMEL AWARD

The Franco-Manitoban community used the occasion of *ConverGence* to present its Ronald Duhamel award, which recognizes excellence and innovation in service to Manitoba Francophones.

Two teams of public servants, one federal, one provincial, were honoured for setting up the first three bilingual services centres in St. Boniface, St. Pierre and Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes.

## SIGNING OF AGREEMENTS ON EDUCATION BETWEEN



## CANADIAN HERITAGE AND THE PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES

In March 2006, all of the agreements with the provinces and territories for minority-language education and second-language instruction were concluded. These agreements allocate federal contributions totalling close to a billion dollars which will be paid out over a four-year period until 2008-2009.

### A long tradition

The Government of Canada has been providing financial assistance to the provinces and territories for over 35 years now so that they can discharge their minority-language education responsibilities and offer second-language instruction programs.

This relationship, within a field of provincial jurisdiction, is governed by a multi-year protocol negotiated between the Council of Ministers of Education, Canada (CMEC), on behalf of the provinces and territories, and Canadian Heritage. This protocol is the multilateral instrument that sets the main parameters for bilateral collaboration between the Government of Canada and each provincial or territorial government. The most recent Protocol for Agreements for Minority-Language Education covers the period 2005-2006 to 2008-2009.

### Protocol

The new Protocol determines the financial distribution of a federal envelope of \$1,019,388,000 over four years in support of the same major objectives as the previous protocols:

- to offer young English-speaking and French-speaking Canadians living in minority communities an education in their own language; and
- to offer the entire school clientele the opportunity to learn their second official language.

It provides the amount of \$107,872,000 for the implementation of the bursary programs *Explore* and *Destination Clic* and the language assistant programs *Accent* and *Odyssey*, as well as \$911,516,000 for the implementation of bilateral agreements between Canadian Heritage and each province and territory.

### Bilateral agreements

The bilateral agreements concluded between Canadian Heritage and each province and territory have a term of four years and are cost-shared. Each provincial and territorial government has developed a multi-year action plan which is now incorporated in its bilateral agreement. This action plan outlines the strategies that a province or territory plans to implement in its regular education

programs over the four-year period. It also describes the additional strategies that will support specific provincial or territorial issues in minority-language education and second-language learning.

A total of \$656 million will be allocated to maintaining and improving regular programs, \$153.3 million to supporting additional strategies for minority-language education, and \$102.2 million to supporting additional strategies for second-language learning.

### Complementary funding

In addition to the funding provided for in their bilateral agreement, the provinces and territories can take advantage of complementary funding to respond to emerging priorities. In this case, separate agreements may be concluded with certain government bodies over the four years.

### In concrete terms...

Here are a few examples of measures implemented by the provinces and territories under the newly concluded agreements:

#### Regular programs

- Support and framework for educational systems and programs
- Development of educational programs
- Teacher training and development
- Post-secondary initiatives

### Additional strategies

- Francization and linguistic upgrading
- New approaches to second-language instruction
- Specialized educational services for improving first-language or second-language skills
- Development of teaching resources
- Recruitment of new teachers
- Tools for evaluating language skills

The intergovernmental agreements also provide for mechanisms for

consulting with the lead stakeholders in the education sector, and an accountability framework which will help the two levels of government better communicate to the public the results of this renewed intergovernmental collaboration.

For more information about the official languages programs of Canadian Heritage, please visit the following Web site:

#### Agreements in education:

[www.pch.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/entente-agreement/education/index\\_e.cfm](http://www.pch.gc.ca/progs/lo-ol/entente-agreement/education/index_e.cfm)



## SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CENTRES: NEW INVESTMENTS IN ATLANTIC CANADA



The year 2006 brings good news for three Francophone and Acadian communities of New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island. Last March, the Department of Canadian Heritage and the governments of those provinces signed two agreements which attest to their fruitful collaboration on the issue of the *centres scolaires et communautaires* (CSC) [school and community centres]. These agreements also confirm the unequivocal commitment the Department has made to the CSCs in Atlantic Canada.

In New Brunswick, the Government of Canada is investing no less than \$10 million in the expansion of the community component of *CSC Samuel-de-Champlain*, in Saint John, and the *Centre communautaire Sainte-Anne*, in Fredericton. Various activities will be made possible thanks to these new infrastructures, particularly in the field of early childhood. These centres will also continue to ensure the sociocultural development of these communities. The renovations should be completed by 2008.

In Prince Edward Island, a brand new CSC will be opening in the Prince West region, specifically in Tignish. The Government of Canada is granting just over \$2.4 million to the community component. The community is expected to have this new space at its disposal in 2007. A day care centre and rooms that can accommodate various community and cultural activities are among the infrastructures that can now be built thanks to the federal contribution.



Josée Verner and New Brunswick Premier and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs Bernard Lord, at the start of construction to expand the *Centre communautaire Sainte-Anne*

The CSCs have been part of the sociocultural landscape of the official-language communities for nearly 28 years. The *Centre communautaire Sainte-Anne* was the very first establishment of this type. Since the construction of the centre in 1978, the Department has funded over 70 community and cultural centres in most of the regions of Canada. About 20 community centres have been attached to minority academic institutions. That is the case in Atlantic Canada, where the provincial governments finance the academic portion of these establishments, which play a key role in the minority community as community catalysts and promoters of French.

For information, please see the news release at the following link: [www.pch.gc.ca/newsroom](http://www.pch.gc.ca/newsroom).

# Rendez-vous de la Francophonie

## Best practices

In 1999, to mark the Year of La Francophonie in Canada, the Treasury Board Secretariat organized the first official launch of the *Rendez-vous de la Francophonie* for the federal Public Service. Since then, this activity has continued to grow in popularity under the auspices of the Public Service Human Resources Management Agency of Canada (formerly a part of the Treasury Board Secretariat). The following are examples of best practices in interdepartmental cooperation.

## PUBLIC SERVICE HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT AGENCY OF CANADA

### Launching of the *Rendez-vous*: An annual event!

The steering committee consists of representatives from a number of departments. The Agency's Bernadette Larrue has been a consistent contributor. She notes that an increasing number of Francophiles are participating, and in recent years has received registrations from Canada School of Public Service students and from Anglophones discovering the Canadian Francophonie.

The first launch was attended by just over 200 people at the National Library, a number which rose to more than 600 in 2006 at the Canadian Museum of Civilization. In the beginning, the activities were limited to an hour of formal presentations and performances. Today the event is preceded by an informal fair, during which people spend an hour circulating among various kiosks set up by government departments.

Web site: [www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/ollo/even/index\\_e.asp](http://www.hrma-agrh.gc.ca/ollo/even/index_e.asp)

## CANADIAN HERITAGE

### Working with the community

In 2006, the Department of Canadian Heritage spearheaded the celebrations on March 22, marking the *Rendez-vous de la Francophonie* in Alberta. The Department worked closely with the Alberta Federal Council and with a number of other government departments, including Health Canada, the Canada Revenue Agency, the Canada School of Public Service and Industry Canada. The steering committee, whose members included representatives of the Franco-Albertan community, facilitated the planning of the various activities surrounding the celebrations of the *Rendez-vous de la Francophonie*.

This type of collaboration opens the way for informal exchanges between community and government organizations, leading in turn to better communication between the two parties. Ginette Taylor, a Canadian Heritage employee, notes that "promoting interchange and collaboration is part of our mandate, and it's a very nice part of the job. I felt it was only normal to have community representatives take part in the March 22 event, because the purpose of the day was to promote Francophone culture."



# la Francophonie activities

## PUBLIC WORKS AND GOVERNMENT SERVICES CANADA

### A day spent learning more about Francophone culture

On March 20, the International Day of La Francophonie, hundreds of Public Works and Government Services Canada employees took time out of their workday to participate in some of the many activities:

- Translation Bureau representatives were present showcasing *The Language Nook*, *TERMIUM*, *The Canadian Style* and other bilingual tools available to departmental employees.
- Noon provided an opportunity to listen to the music of Canadian Francophone artists or watch *La Grande Séduction*, a Quebec film with English subtitles.
- Posters gave information on Francophone culture in each province and territory, and especially on some internationally known personalities.
- Lucky employees won door prizes including tickets to many of the National Capital Region's museums as well as Translation Bureau language tools.

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*Rosie Westwood,  
Public Works and Government Services Canada*

## LA FRANCOPHONIE ACCORDING TO DIANA

La **Francophonie** is music in voice and warmth in words;  
It is a song that resonates to the rhythm of its accents and colours.

La **Francophonie** is goodwill and friendship that extend between land and sea;  
It is the warmth of the sun or the warmth buried in the snow under a brilliant sky;  
It is tradition, help and sharing;  
It is the deep ties, relationships and pride that define us.

La **Francophonie** is unifying, and openly welcomes anyone who wants to be embraced by its images and sounds.

La **Francophonie** is the perseverance of a people with grand dreams and a lot to say.




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*From a speech by Diana Monnet,  
Vice-President, Official Languages Branch, Public Service  
Human Resources Management Agency of Canada,  
at the launch of the 2006 Rendez-vous de la Francophonie in the Public Service*

## A policy at Health Canada to support the minority communities: A good example to follow

In April 2003, barely a month after publication of the Government of Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages, the senior management of Health Canada asked its officials to develop a policy to promote equitable access to departmental activities, programs and projects in the official-language communities. After a summer of consultations and a year of steady work, on December 1, 2004, Health Canada adopted the Policy to Support Official Language Minority Communities.

### Communicating and responding to needs

The policy statement reads as follows:

*The Health Canada branches and regional offices whose programs, projects, activities or services are associated with public activities must play an active role in promoting the development of official language minority communities, in accordance with the intent of Part VII of the Official Languages Act.*

This policy applies to all Health Canada branches and regional offices. It was developed to ensure that the commitments under Part VII of the Act are honoured and to respond to needs expressed by the communities. It also follows from the priority that the federal government has given to accessibility of health care in the country.

### Five guidelines

The policy is broken down into five guidelines, and is sufficiently flexible to take account of the specific context and constraints of each region of the country:

- Actively and in concrete terms, make departmental personnel more aware of the communities' needs and of the government's commitments under Part VII of the Act.
- Involve the Official Language Community Development Bureau from the beginning of the process of developing policies, programs, documentation, call letters and guidelines, to ensure that those commitments are acted upon.
- Consult the communities when grant and contribution programs are being created or reviewed, and include them in the requests for proposals.
- Work together with the communities, and offer them technical support and advice as required, so that they can respond more effectively to requests for proposals.
- Ensure that requests for proposals for programs or services intended for the public require an understanding of the context of the official-language communities in the target population and an explanation of how the project will meet the official languages requirements and needs of the communities. The proposal's analytical grid must include a section that covers this requirement.

### Tracking progress

The branches, regional offices and agencies of Health Canada must report on their activities and progress under this policy in the *Status Report on the Implementation of Section 41 of the Official Languages Act* which the minister submits each year to the Department of Canadian Heritage.

A formal evaluation of this policy is planned in its third year of implementation. The Official Language Community Development Bureau will then be able to determine how effective the policy is in orienting the Department's activities and programs. A departmental committee will assist the Bureau in this task.

For more information, contact the Official Language Community Development Bureau at (613) 957-8987.

## 2003-2005 SECTION OF THE *FRANCOMMUNAUTÉS VIRTUELLES* HIGHWAY: THREE, TWO, ONE... START CLICKING!

Marie Tremblay  
Industry Canada

Industry Canada's *Francommunautés virtuelles* program is pleased to announce the completion of the fourth section of its virtual highway.

The purpose of the program is to help Canada's Francophone and Acadian communities participate fully in the knowledge-based economy by enabling them to connect to the information highway and use information and communications technologies (ITC) for their community economic development.

Looking for adventure? Then sit down in front of your computer and hit the road. All it takes is a keyboard and a curious mind. You don't even need a seatbelt!

Our first stop offers die-hard on-line shoppers a brand new e-commerce experience that is unique in Canada. *Francoboutique* ([www.francoboutique.ca](http://www.francoboutique.ca)) is a showcase for Canadian entrepreneurs whose range of products and services might surprise you. It is home to *Portail des métiers d'art acadien* ([www.metiersdartacadiens.ca](http://www.metiersdartacadiens.ca)), a site for Acadian crafts that makes time stand still, taking you back to the ways of old and awakening your inner artist.

Perhaps your interests lie more in health and education. Many of the stops along the new section are aimed at students and teachers at all levels. Examples include *Vecteur* ([www.vecteur.ca](http://www.vecteur.ca)), a compilation of educational resources, and *Enpairs* ([www.enpairs.ca](http://www.enpairs.ca)), a gateway to educational resources made available by new information technologies.

Did you know there is a health village in Canada? Well, there is, and it's in the Maritimes, more specifically on the Acadian Peninsula. It's easy to find; just follow the highway to [www.cybervillagesante.cipanb.ca](http://www.cybervillagesante.cipanb.ca).

If you're a genealogy or history buff, stop at the *Histoire de la Mauricie* gateway ([www.histoire-mauricie.ca](http://www.histoire-mauricie.ca)) and delve into a chapter of history that for too long has been the exclusive domain of those in the know.

These are just a few examples of the many stops along the 2003-2005 section of the *Francommunautés virtuelles* highway. Check the *Francommunautés virtuelles* Web site ([www.francommunautes.ca](http://www.francommunautes.ca)) for details about the contest marking the start of construction on the 2006-2008 section of this superhighway!

For more information, contact Guy Parent, *Francommunautés virtuelles*, (613) 991-4657.

## COMMUNACTION: A VIRTUAL ONE-STOP SHOP

Anne-Marie Demers  
Industry Canada

"*CommunAction.ca* is the one tool I use every day," says Michel Hall, an Industry Canada regional advisor for implementation of section 41 (Quebec Region). "I check the *What's New* page every morning to get the latest on official languages, and I use the site regularly to help my clients in the Anglophone minority community access the programs and services they need."

Launched in March 2003, *CommunAction.ca* is a virtual resource centre whose main goal is to help

official-language minority communities quickly find Government of Canada programs and services that support local and economic development. Industry Canada manages the site in cooperation with the four regional development agencies: FedNor, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, Canada Economic Development for Quebec Regions, and Western Economic Diversification.

*CommunAction.ca* also includes a host of programs and services offered by other departments, such as Canadian Rural Partnership and Infrastructure Canada. Simple and advanced searches

can be done by theme, region and clientele.

"It's a great tool and easy to use; it helps me serve my clients in a truly horizontal way," says Michel Hall.

For information, contact the Section 41 - Official Languages Act Directorate of Industry Canada at (613) 954-2783.

## Major support for rural communities in the Atlantic Region

Pierrette Williams

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Since last summer, official-language minority communities in Eastern Canada have had access to a new program, the Innovative Communities Fund (ICF). This Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) program focuses on investments that create jobs, establish partnerships or links with rural communities, and offer a range of options for long-term economic and social capacity building.

The ICF draws on community strengths and provides the tools needed to identify opportunities for sustainable economic growth. With a budget of \$175 million over five years, the program aims to:

- develop competitive, productive, strategic industry sectors;
- strengthen community infrastructure in rural communities; and
- invest in projects that enhance communities' capacity to overcome economic development challenges and take advantage of their strengths, their assets and the opportunities presented.

The Village of Balmoral is among the recipients of ICF support. The community received \$85,846 to create a business centre. Businesses in the area can use the centre to hold meetings, conferences or training courses. High-speed Internet access will also be made available to business people.

To qualify for funding, recipients must meet certain criteria. For more information, go to the ACOA Web site: [www.acoa.gc.ca](http://www.acoa.gc.ca).

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## Atlantic Symposium: Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* up for discussion!

The Atlantic Symposium on Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* took place on May 16-17, 2006, in Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island. Some 165 people from all over Atlantic Canada and even the national capital attended the event.

### Hot topics

The organizing committee comprised members of the four federal councils, and the Prince Edward Island Federal Council served as host for the Symposium. The objective of the forum was community growth and development, and creating awareness in the federal Public Service in the regions as to the role that they can play.

The participants looked at the effects of the November 24, 2005, enactment of Bill S-3, *An Act to Amend the Official Languages Act*, from an Atlantic perspective. The effects are real, as every federal institution now has a duty to take "positive measures" to implement the government's commitments under the *Official Languages Act*. Moreover, Part VII is now binding, which means that a court remedy can be sought in respect of the obligations it contains.

### Guest speakers

A number of speakers shed light on the letter and spirit of the Act. Questions were also raised about the new obligations of departments and agencies in the region, the role of Canadian Heritage in ensuring coordination and evaluation, and follow-up to the mid-term evaluation of the Government of Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages.

The participants broke into workshops to discuss what form the consultations with minority communities might take; use of the accountability framework in the Action Plan; and methods of applying the "41 lens" (Part VII perspective) to decision-making processes. Lastly, the participants discussed the "positive measures" federal government departments and agencies might take to enhance the vitality of minority communities and promote English and French.

### High satisfaction

The intensity of input was remarkable. At the end of two days of open listening, lively discussion and brainstorming, the participants came to the conclusion that there is a need to grasp the ins and outs of Part VII in the region and that action must be taken to make regional public services, senior managers in particular, more aware of how they can implement Part VII in their region with input from their communities.

A report will be released by the end of June, and the organizing committee will present the Symposium's recommendations and findings to the four Atlantic federal councils in the fall.

Documents relating to the Symposium are available on the Web site of the Prince Edward Island Federal Council at [www.peifc-cfipe.gc.ca](http://www.peifc-cfipe.gc.ca).



RESEARCH RESEARCH **RESEARCH** RESEARCH RESEARCH

## The official-language minorities, their medias and their community vitality

On March 16 and 17, 2006, a symposium was held in Montreal on the theme *Media, Governance and Official-Language Minorities in Canada*. Organized by the Association for Canadian Studies, the symposium had the benefit of support from a number of partners, including the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, the *Centre d'études acadiennes* of the *Université de Moncton*, and the Quebec Community Groups Network.

For the 80 or so academics, researchers, community leaders, journalists and media representatives, the objective was to identify the challenges facing the official-language minority media, particularly in the way they serve their local target communities.

The symposium organizers chose the formula of round tables and workshops to encourage reflection and discussion. The themes ranged from the role of the media in minority communities, priorities and strategies for defining communities of readers, and the media as a tool for establishing closer relations with the majority community.

### The media are needed

The research team of Canadian Heritage's Official Languages Support Programs Branch (OLSPB) presented the preliminary results of an analysis of some questions drawn from public opinion polls conducted between 2002 and 2005.

These results show that all members of the official-language minority communities selected consider that the media play an important role in promoting access to artistic and cultural events in their region.

Among the various media, the community newspaper is generally considered the most important media tool. However, the level of satisfaction reported conceals certain regional disparities. An analysis of the opinions of more than 3,000 Quebec Anglophones shows that, among other

things, satisfaction with the various media sources decreases substantially as one moves away from the big urban centres (Montreal, Laval, Gatineau).

### Creating bonds and mutual support

This assembly made a major contribution to establishing ties between the members of Quebec's Anglophone communities and those of the Francophone communities outside Quebec. In addition, the presence of representatives of the print media, radio and television encouraged the development of alliances and partnerships in order to better serve the minority communities.

Thanks to their discussions, the participants now have a better grasp of the realities specific to the two minority communities, such as media accessibility, the readers' profile, the role of the media as an information and governance tool, and the challenges and needs characteristic of the two minority communities. In short, the entire exercise helped to improve understanding of the role of the media in a minority setting.

For more information: Martin Durand, OLSPB Research Team, at (819) 994-1917.

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## IPOLC AT WORK

### Short dramas *Embargo* and *Louez un mari* to be produced for television

Jeanine Basile  
Telefilm Canada

This winter, Telefilm Canada, *Radio-Canada* and the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) announced the production of two short dramas as part of the 2005-2006 edition of the competition that operates under the Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official-Language Communities (IPOLC). *Embargo* and *Louez un mari* are from Ontario and New Brunswick respectively.

This is the second edition of the competition. It was designed to offer Francophone producers, screenwriters and directors working outside Quebec the opportunity to refine their skills in TV drama production. It is also intended to expand the pool of Francophone creators in provinces other than Quebec.

This year the jury of Telefilm Canada, *Radio-Canada* and NFB representatives had to choose from among five projects that met the selection criteria, all of them by talented French-Canadian newcomers.

*Embargo*, writer-director Jocelyn Forgues (Moose Creek), Productions R. Charbonneau (Ottawa)

Marc Ladouceur has taken over the family cattle ranch from his father, but as the summer draws to a close, things are getting rough for Canadian ranchers. Onerous decisions by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, a US embargo on Canadian beef – everything is playing against them. The ranchers mobilize, but the Ladouceur farm is sinking deeper into debt and the situation is taking its toll on Marc and Julianne's marriage. Is there any way out?

*Louez un mari*, writer Gracia Couturier (Moncton), director Jean-Claude Caprara (Ottawa), De Bellefeuille Productions (Moncton)

Hoping to find a soul mate, or at least a young woman to accompany him to his ex-love's wedding, Maurice takes a job with a housekeeping agency, convinced that he will meet the perfect candidate. But from disappointment to enthusiasm and back again, he rides a roller coaster of emotions before finally discovering that the best solution is often right under your nose.

As with the two short dramas produced from the first year of the competition, *Rébut* and *Un bon gars*, these two new dramas will be broadcast on the *Radio-Canada* network. Telefilm Canada will invest in these projects and the NFB will act as associate producer. The contributions of each of these agencies will be supplemented by the Department of Canadian Heritage.

The Interdepartmental Partnership with the Official-Language Communities (IPOLC) is a Canadian Heritage initiative, launched in June 2000 with an annual budget of \$5 million, which provides complementary funding to that received by federal institutions looking to support official-language minority community development. On March 31, 2006, Canadian Heritage signed 18 memorandums of understanding (MOUs) with 17 federal institutions. These MOUs generated an investment of \$37 million from federal institutions, \$22 million from Canadian Heritage and \$16 million from other sources, for a leverage of \$75 million for the first five years of the initiative.

[www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/ipolc](http://www.canadianheritage.gc.ca/ipolc)

## Léon Leadership Award of the Commissioner of Official Languages



The winner of the Commissioner of Official Languages' Léon Leadership Award for 2005-2006 is Alan Latourelle, CEO of the Parks Canada Agency.

Since Mr. Latourelle assumed his duties in 2002, the Agency has made numerous efforts to fully integrate the official languages into its operations and to promote the linguistic duality of Canada.

One fine example of its many best practices is Parks Canada's policy of designating all of its senior management positions bilingual. In the area of linguistic duality, the Agency has introduced a program called *Parks Canada in Schools*, which is designed to provide teachers throughout the country with course materials concerning the protected heritage areas managed by the Agency. In 2004, Parks Canada also seized the opportunity of the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the arrival of French settlers in Canada to create a lesson plan for high school students in order to encourage greater knowledge of individuals, events and places of national historic importance related to the French presence in Canada.

To learn about the *Parks Canada in Schools* program, visit the Web site: [www.pc.gc.ca/apprendre-learn/prof/index\\_e.asp](http://www.pc.gc.ca/apprendre-learn/prof/index_e.asp).

## Le Cornouiller d'or awarded to a Canadian Heritage employee

The *Cornouiller d'or* award of the *Fédération des francophones de la Colombie-Britannique* (FFCB) pays tribute to government employees who have made an outstanding contribution to the development of the province's French-speaking community. This year it went to Nicole Laplante, a program officer at the Department of Canadian Heritage.



Yseult Friolet, Director General of the FFCB, with Nicole Laplante

Ms. Laplante has lived in Vancouver since 1980, and she joined the official languages team at Canadian Heritage in 1998. Since then, the FFCB and all of the Francophone associations of British Columbia have been able to rely on her remarkable collaboration, wise advice and continuous support for the community. Ms. Laplante was a member of the management committee for the Canada-Community Agreement from 1998 to 2005 and a member of the Canadian Heritage team for the renewal of the second Canada-Community Agreement. Congratulations Ms. Laplante!

## En Route to Stanstead ... Where Capacity Exists!



The Community Table of the National Human Resources Development Committee for the English Linguistic

Minority of Quebec, along with the Community Economic Development and Employability Committee (CEDEC) of the Eastern Townships, launched the *Capacity Exists Toolkit* in May 2006. This resource, funded by Human Resources and Social Development Canada, was developed for communities to initiate discussion and action around local development issues.

Included in this toolkit are a facilitation guide, an accompanying PowerPoint presentation, and a video portraying the role of the Eastern Townships CEDEC supporting a capacity-building process with a group of women in a local employability program, *Tools for Life Stanstead*. The CEDEC supported the women as they learned how to organize and host a public forum and develop skills which would engage them in their community while enhancing their employability.

Using a capacity-building approach, CEDECs encourage the English-speaking communities of Quebec to recognize their considerable skills and knowledge and use them as building blocks for community economic development. To consult the Guide, visit the Website: [www.buildingcommunities.ca/ct/en/publications.htm](http://www.buildingcommunities.ca/ct/en/publications.htm).

## REGIONAL INITIATIVES



### An innovative program serving Franco-Newfoundlanders

Thanks to a “travelling” information service, the Francophone residents of Port-au-Port peninsula now have access in their language to information on a range of federal programs and services. Since March 2006, a bilingual officer from Service Canada’s Stephenville office has been offering an information service in Mainland (La Grand’Terre). Since a Community Access Program site has been established there by Industry Canada, it is easy to direct and advise people looking to find information on the Internet.

This new “travelling” service is a one-year pilot project set up at the initiative of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federal Council. It is the product of community consultations held on the peninsula in the fall of 2003. There are a number of French-speaking communities in this region whose origins date back to the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Each of the three communities of Black Duck Brook (L’Anse-à-Canards), Mainland (La Grand’Terre) and Cape St. George (Cap St-Georges) has 200 to 300 Franco-Newfoundlanders.

The main request made at the consultations was for access to a federal government representative who could offer information services in French. An advisory committee composed of representatives of various departments and agencies reviewed and recommended various service models, on the principle that it was essential to have a number of departments working in collaboration.

Seven other departments and agencies have made financial contributions and also sit on the project’s steering committee. The Francophone community of Newfoundland is extending a warm welcome to this promising, innovative project, which has the benefit of the unfailing support of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federal Council.

For information, please see the Web site of the Newfoundland and Labrador Federal Council:  
[www.nlfc-cftnl.gc.ca](http://www.nlfc-cftnl.gc.ca).

### First *Rendez-vous de l’Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse*

The very first edition of the *Rendez-vous de l’Acadie de la Nouvelle-Écosse* on March 10, 2006, proved a great success for the *Conseil de développement économique de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (CDÉNÉ) and the *Fédération acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (FANE).

The *Rendez-vous* was officially launched by honorary guests Senator Gérald Comeau and the CEO of the Office of Acadian Affairs, Vaughne Madden. Nearly a hundred community leaders from across the province came to Halifax for the occasion. It was an opportunity for them to renew their desire to create partnerships and their commitment to the community and the many partners in a position to support the comprehensive development of the Acadian community.

One of the key results of this *Rendez-vous* is the enhancement of the *Plan de développement global* [comprehensive development plan] developed by the CDÉNÉ and the *Fédération culturelle acadienne de la Nouvelle-Écosse* (FÉCANE). The event was such a success that there are hopes of repeating it annually.

### Enhancement of the *Plan de développement global*

The comprehensive development plan integrates two plans, one developed by the CDÉNÉ and the other by the FÉCANE. The first, a community economic development plan, is the product of a series of five community forums and surveys conducted throughout the province by the *Réseau de développement économique et d’employabilité* (RDÉE), a priority project of the CDÉNÉ. The other, a cultural integration and development plan, is the result of a provincial series of public forums.

The *Plan de développement global 2006-2009* of the Acadian community of Nova Scotia includes six sectors: arts and culture, economy and employability, education and continuous training, communication and technology, law and politics, and health and well-being. This new enhancement of the plan lays the ground for a sharper focus on the main objectives of each sector and allows for another step to be taken in achieving them.





## REGIONAL INITIATIVES



### New avenue of interdepartmental communication

In February 2006, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) organized an interdepartmental meeting with Canadian Heritage.

One objective of the meeting was to offer section 41 training relating to the roles and responsibilities of the regional official languages coordinators at ACOA. Another was to hold a discussion forum between the ACOA coordinators and Canadian Heritage officers responsible for interdepartmental coordination in Atlantic Canada and at the national level.

This was the first meeting of this kind in Atlantic Canada, and the participants reiterated the importance of establishing an ongoing proactive dialogue between the two departments. The discussions served to identify the challenges shared by the two organizations, and above all, avenues of collaboration for providing more effective support to the region's Francophone communities.

This productive meeting is another manifestation of the federal government's commitment to enhancing the vitality of the French linguistic minority communities in Canada and supporting and assisting their development.

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### Health and social services: English-language accessibility

In February 2006, the Community Health and Social Services Network (CHSSN) held its sixth Annual Conference on Accessibility of Health and Social Services in the English Language.

The conference, on the theme of "Building Links," had over 200 participants representing the federal and provincial governments as well as regional and local organizations that are members of the CHSSN. The objective was to identify strategies and models for promoting the health and well-being of English-speaking communities within the new reality of Quebec's health and social services network.

The proceedings addressed various demographic research projects and data on the Anglophone communities. Innovative projects were also examined, and strategies explored for maintaining the current level of investment and improving access to English-language services. Workshop topics included community resources and local service networks, the reorganisation of services in Montreal, determinants of health, the social economy, language training strategies and retention of human resources, the role of the media in health and social services, and the role of the school. The discussions were intense and interesting links were created.

This conference is one of the positive effects of the Government of Canada's Action Plan for Official Languages. It has been made possible by funding from Health Canada, the Public Health Agency of Canada, and Canadian Heritage's Official Languages Support Programs (Community Life component). The conference report is available online at [www.chssn.org](http://www.chssn.org).

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### Annual meeting of Francophone stakeholders in the justice sector

The annual meeting of Francophone stakeholders in the justice sector for the province of Ontario was held in Toronto from March 1 to 3, 2006.

Offered to officially launch the two days was a meet-and-greet reception, attended by representatives of the community and of provincial and federal organizations involved in the justice field. This was the occasion to announce the renewal of the memorandum of understanding between provincial and community organizations on the Ontario Provincial Police Strategy.

There were two components to the meeting: a community consultation on needs in the field of justice services in French; and a confirmation of the preliminary results of the study called *État des*



## REGIONAL INITIATIVES

*lieux, les services en français dans le domaine de la Justice en Ontario.* Those results will be elaborated upon in the course of 2006 by the University of Ottawa research team responsible for the study.

The meeting also afforded an opportunity to establish ties, clarify specific issues in justice services for the Francophone community, and promote the Justice Canada programs that can meet the community's needs.

For more information: Adel Ghié at (613) 954-3723.

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### *Coalition pour la promotion de la langue française et de la culture francophone en Saskatchewan*



The *Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise* is the initiator and administrator of a coalition that aims to promote a dynamic, inclusive and modern image of the French language and culture in Saskatchewan. The objective of the *Coalition* is to arouse the interest of the province's citizens in the many advantages of learning French and participating in the Francophone culture.

The *Coalition* includes the community, government and private sectors. It has developed a plan which over the next five years calls for it to:

- create partnerships;
- coordinate communications efforts; and
- develop and set up common communication strategies:
  - representations to interest groups;
  - public relations campaign with the media;
  - promotional campaign; and
  - personalized marketing.

The kickoff for the promotional campaign came in March 2006 as part of *Francofièvre*, a major cultural event which brought together 1,500 young Saskatchewan Francophones and Francophiles at a concert featuring local talent and well-known groups (*Projet Orange, Les Respectables*). *Francofièvre* was developed to make young people more proud to use the French language and to publicize the French-speaking community.

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### Forum on official languages



In April 2006, some 60 people met in Edmonton for an official languages forum under the theme of "Seize the moment."

Organized by the Interdepartmental Network of Official Languages Coordinators and the Alberta Federal Council, the forum was designed to provide an update on the repercussions of the recent amendments to the *Official Languages Act* with the passage of Bill S-3.

A number of speakers had accepted the invitation of the organizing committee. They traced the context of the amendments to the Act, spoke of their effects in a unilingual work environment, and discussed implications for the public service hiring process. They explained the amendments and specified what they entail for the implementation of Part VII of the Act.

The participation was outstanding. Official languages coordinators, human resources professionals, program officers and supervisors made up most of the audience, and reported that they were very satisfied with the day. The forum was an opportunity both to answer questions and to fuel the enthusiasm of people with an interest in the official languages. A success right down the line!