

## Summary

### **SERC 2: Natural Resources, Local Development, Social Economic Enterprises and Rural Revitalization in Alberta<sup>1</sup>**

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#### **Foundations for Rural Revitalization and the Reinsertion of Social Economy Enterprises: Examining Alberta Reports, Policies and Budget Commitments**

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*“The Government of Alberta officially recognizes the importance of rural Alberta and its contributions to the Alberta Advantage and is committed to work together with rural communities and rural Albertans to foster a vibrant and sustainable Alberta.”*

In its first 100 years the province of Alberta has become an economic powerhouse, largely as a result of abundant natural resources and the strong entrepreneurial spirit of Albertans. However, as the “A Place to Grow Rural Development Strategy” (2005) clearly highlights not all Alberta communities and their residents share in this prosperity. In the last 50 years rural Alberta communities have struggled to preserve local businesses, attract highly skilled professionals, and create opportunities for young people to stay in smaller communities without having to leave to build their futures. Changes in the structure of agriculture in Alberta is the

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<sup>1</sup> See detailed research information on Alberta rural revitalization/ rural renewal and related to urban/rural linkages and other selected socio-economic topics.

- Martin, Jerome and Brost, Les (2004) Growing the Future: Tomorrow’s Rural Alberta Prepared by for Rural Education and Development Association (REDA). <http://www.acca.coop/BridgeBuildersPhaseOne.pdf> (n.d./2007) [WWW document]. URL (<http://www.acca.coop/index.html>).
- Martin, Jerome and Brost, Les (May 2005) Final Report, Bridge Builder Project, Phase II <http://www.acca.coop/BridgeBuildersPhaseTwo.pdf> (n.d./2007) [WWW document]. URL (<http://www.acca.coop/index.html>).
- McNaughton, Noel (January 2006). Leadership Training in Rural Alberta: What’s in place, what works, what’s needed: A report for the Agricultural Submitted by: Alberta Community and Co-operative Association (ACCA) and Raven’s Eye Consulting Inc. <http://www.acca.coop/RuralLeadership.pdf> (n.d./2007) [WWW document]. URL (<http://www.acca.coop/index.html>).

foundation of change to rural economic health.<sup>2</sup> Several years of drought, the ongoing economic impacts of BSE and uncertainty around U.S. and international markets have taken a serious toll on farmers and ranchers across the province. Total farm income continues to drop, fewer people are employed directly in agriculture and agriculture-related industries, and the outlook for rural communities continues to present many risks and uncertainties. Agriculture is not the only industry in rural Alberta, however the decline of these once vibrant economies along with the goods and services they supply has a ripple effect in virtually every rural community in the province. (A Place to Grow 2005).

In March 2005, the Alberta provincial government released its new vision and 20 year plan for the province's future. *Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise*. This plan outlines a vision of "a vibrant and prosperous province where Albertans enjoy a superior quality of life and are confident about the future for themselves and their children." The vision outlines a future for our province where small towns, farms and ranches are a vital part of Alberta. One of the four key opportunities in the plan is to make Alberta the best place to live, work and visit, and that includes an important role for rural communities.

*Vibrant rural communities are also essential to the province's economy and overall quality of life. The Alberta government will implement a rural development strategy that assures dynamic rural communities where rural and urban families, individuals, organizations, businesses and governments are contributors to the growth, prosperity and quality of life of Albertans. The SuperNet provides an electronic highway to all communities, making it more viable for businesses and individuals to compete globally from rural areas. Health services and educational opportunities will be enhanced by new technologies, and sparsity and distance funding will be reviewed to ensure basic services are retained or developed appropriately. The economic opportunities of the Calgary-Edmonton corridor can be distributed more widely with appropriate infrastructure. (Today's Advantage, Tomorrow's Promise 2005)*

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<sup>2</sup> Szabo, M.L. (1965). Depopulation of Farms in Relation to Economic Conditions of Agriculture on the Canadian Prairies. Geographic Bulletin. Vol. 7, No. 3 & 4, pp. 187.

- Williams, A.S. (1981). Industrial Agriculture and the Small Scale Farmer. Human Organization. Vol. 30. pp. 49-62.

## **Defining Alberta's Rural Communities and Who Is A Rural Albertan**

### **Introduction**

The definitions related to what is a rural community in Alberta, and who is a rural Albertan are diverse and varied. A detailed report published in 2003 on “Rural Alberta, An Analysis of Population Growth (1996 – 2001)”<sup>3</sup> focused on - How many people live in rural Alberta?, and - Is the rural population growing or declining? The research methodology in this report sets out some clear parameters as to what is a rural community and who is a rural Albertan. Other reports and studies that were reviewed are much more liberal in their approach and definitions.

The variable definitions include: 1) Labeling communities with population of less than 10,000 as rural, 2) Only allowing the definition of rural to be applied to communities of less than 10,000 and not within commuting distance of an urban centre, and 3) Essentially seeking inclusion of communities and directing efforts to strengthen their local economies and well-being towards places located anywhere outside of the major cities of Edmonton and Calgary (or the Highway 2 North and South Corridor).

What this suggests is that strategies towards rural economic development and revitalization may not be able to capture the full range of rural community needs and interests because the communities themselves are not clearly and consistently defined or classified. As a result consequences and risk emerge towards identifying the success factors and failures when evaluating community economic and development strategies that may not take into account the unique characteristics and influences on Alberta rural communities. It also makes it difficult to accurately compare and contrast various rural development strategies when reports and studies are inconsistent as to what is a rural community and who is a rural Albertan.

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<sup>3</sup> Rural Alberta An Analysis of Population Growth (1996 – 2001). Prepared by: Robert Hornbrook, Joerg Hannes, Michelle Bentzen, Lois Hameister (January 14, 2003).  
[http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/analysis\\_of\\_population.pdf](http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/analysis_of_population.pdf)

## **What is a Rural Alberta Community? and What is the Population of Rural Albertans?**

Based on the strict definitions presented by “Rural Alberta, An Analysis of Population Growth (1996 – 2001)” (see detailed Statistic Canada description below) the following can be generalized about rural Alberta. There are 74 rural municipalities in Alberta (111 Towns, 100 Villages, 51 Summer Villages, 8 Metis Settlements and 47 First Nation Reserves – See Appendix B for more details).<sup>4</sup> At one time, rural communities were home to the majority of Albertans. In 1951, the urban and rural populations were equal.<sup>5</sup> In Alberta there are 16 municipalities that have been granted city status. By 2001, urban dwellers outnumbered rural Albertans nearly three to one. Between 1996 and 2002, thirty-six per cent of rural communities saw no growth or a decline in their populations (Rural Alberta Land of Opportunity 2004).<sup>6</sup>

Overall, Alberta’s rural and small town population (RST) grew (5.5% - population 730,471) between 1996 and 2001. However, population growth was higher in larger urban centres (12.0% - population 2,244,336). As a result the distribution of Alberta’s population living in rural and small town areas has declined from 43.0% in 1971 to 24.6% in 2001. Alberta as a whole grew 10.3% over the same period (population 2,974,807). By 2005, the percentage of Albertan living in rural communities dropped below 20%.<sup>7</sup>

The Hornbrook report points out that rural and small town growth rates varied widely among areas Municipal Influence Zones (MIZ zones) and regions (Census Divisions) of Alberta. The fastest growing places within rural and small town areas were reserves (24.7%) and summer villages (14.1%). This rapid growth occurred mostly outside of the influence of MIZ. This indicates reserves and summer villages are unique places in Alberta, as most of the other rapid population growth occurred in or near larger urban centres. Summer villages and reserves

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<sup>4</sup> Alberta Government Municipal Affairs and Housing. 2006 Official Population List: Official population figures are as of September 1, 2006, in compliance with the Determination of Population Regulation 63/2001 under Section 604 of the Municipal Government Act <http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/images/2006pop.pdf>

<sup>5</sup> Alberta Government Municipal Affairs and Housing states that population data prior to 1960 is incomplete and therefore this department only provides information from 1960-2002  
<http://www.municipalaffairs.gov.ab.ca/ms/pdf/albertapophist.pdf>

<sup>6</sup> Rural Alberta: Land of Opportunity MLA Steering Committee Report on Rural Development (March 2004)

<sup>7</sup> A Place To Grow Alberta’s Rural Development Strategy (February 2005)

accounted for 0.49% and 5.3% respectively of the RST population in 2001. It should be noted that remote reserves grew by approximately 60% while heartland reserves indicate a 10% decline. Similarly, remote Summer Villages grew by almost 20% in the same period. In contrast remote towns and villages experienced a 5% decline between 1996-2001. The strength and weakness of MIZ was cited as the key factor influencing this trend.

Rural municipalities, towns and villages in metro-adjacent areas (strong MIZ zones) grew faster than those in other areas. Interestingly, larger rural towns (over 5000) grew faster than smaller places. Both within and across various areas of Alberta, a wide diversity of patterns of population growth and decline were noted. Metropolitan influences consistently appear to be a factor in RST growth. The exception to this trend occurred in remote areas where no metropolitan influence was recorded yet the growth rate was the fastest of all areas. This implies that remote areas have some unique characteristics.<sup>8</sup> RST near larger urban centres generally grew faster as a result of access to jobs than areas with less access. The exception of Alberta's remote areas with a population increase between 1996 and 2001 of 17.9% was noted. Remote areas in Alberta, however, accounted for only 5% of the rural population.

## **Conclusion<sup>9</sup>**

In summary, within the broader provincial context Alberta's rural and small town population grew between 1996-2001. However, over time the percentage of the Alberta population living in rural and small town is declining. Two main reasons are cited for this decline 1) some rural and small town places are being reclassified into urban zones, and 2) The population in the larger urban centres is growing faster. Rural and small town population grew in metro-adjacent areas. This growth is linked to where there was easy access to jobs in larger urban centres. However, exceptions occurred to this trend with the rapid population growth on reserves and in summer villages located in remote areas where there was no access to urban jobs. Larger towns and

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<sup>8</sup> (This is a significant point that needs further research and dialogue to explore linkages to natural resources development in oil and gas, mining and forestry based industries).

<sup>9</sup> For More Details See - Rural Alberta An Analysis of Population Growth (1996 – 2001). Prepared by: Robert Hornbrook, Joerg Hannes, Michelle Bentzen, Lois Hameister (January 14, 2003).  
[http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/analysis\\_of\\_population.pdf](http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/analysis_of_population.pdf)

villages were more successful in terms of population growth than smaller communities. The fastest population growth occurred along Highway # 1 (Medicine Hat – Calgary –Banff corridor) and Highway # 2 (Edmonton – Calgary corridor) and in the resource rich areas around Grande Prairie and Fort McMurray. Other areas, the more rural areas, were less successful generally but displayed a wide diversity of patterns of population growth and decline.

## **Overview of Alberta Rural Definitions**

### **Statistics Canada Rural and Small Town<sup>10</sup>**

Statistics Canada's rural and small town (RST) definition refers to the population living outside the commuting zones of larger urban centres, specifically, outside Census Metropolitan Areas (CMAs) and Census Agglomerations (CAs). A CMA has an urban core of 100,000 or over and includes all neighbouring municipalities where 50 percent or more of the work force commutes into the urban core. A CA has an urban core of 10,000 to 99,999 and includes all neighbouring municipalities where 50 percent or more of the labour force commutes into the urban core. Thus RST Alberta represents the non-CMA and non-CA population. It includes all the residents outside the commuting zones of larger urban centres.

There are four distinct rural areas based on the Metropolitan Influence Zone (MIZ) concept developed by Statistics Canada. The areas are:

1. Strong MIZ (30% and 50% of the work force living in these areas commute to larger urban centres for work) also referred to in this paper as metro-adjacent.
2. Moderate MIZ (5% and 30% of the work force living in these areas commute too larger urban centres for work) also referred to in this paper as heartland.
3. Weak MIZ (less than 5% of the work force living in these areas commute to larger urban centres for work) also referred to as intermediate in this paper.
4. No MIZ (no one in these areas commutes to a larger urban centre for work) also referred to as remote in this paper.

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<sup>10</sup> Rural Alberta An Analysis of Population Growth (1996 – 2001). Prepared by: Robert Hornbrook, Joerg Hannes, Michelle Bentzen, Lois Hameister (January 14, 2003).  
[http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/analysis\\_of\\_population.pdf](http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/analysis_of_population.pdf)

## **A Place to Grow Alberta Rural Development Strategy<sup>11</sup>**

- Rural Alberta is defined as populations living in towns of under 10,000 people.
- 95% of Alberta's communities are rural, yet only 19% of Albertans live in rural communities.
- Almost all of the provinces natural resources are in these areas.
- Rural Alberta has lower rates of population growth than urban Alberta. (The fastest growing communities around Calgary – Okotoks, Airdrie, Cochrane as exceptions. These communities grew to over 10,000 people in less than 5 years. – Stats Alberta First)
- The population is older and less educated than urban centres. (Over 15% of urban dweller hold a university degree compared to only 8% in some rural areas).
- Incomes are lower in, especially for rural women.

## **Rural Alberta Development Fund<sup>12</sup>**

The Alberta' Rural Development defines "rural" as the approximately one million Albertans who live outside of Calgary and Edmonton. This would include all mid-size cities. A community and/or communities can be defined as geographic (e.g. municipality) or interest (e.g. education) based. It can be a combination of both. It could also be a group of communities (i.e. involving a region). Note: This fund is directly linked to the Alberta Rural Development Strategy, however, it reflects a much broader definition of rural Alberta than the report.

## **Growing the Future: Tomorrow's Rural Alberta<sup>13</sup>**

This project adopted the definition of *rural* contained in the "Rural Alberta: Land of Opportunity" Report of the MLA Steering Committee for Rural Development (2003). Thus we have defined rural Alberta as the population living in rural municipalities, towns, and villages of less than 10,000 people and beyond commuting zones of larger urban centers.

## **Classification of Regional Types<sup>14</sup>**

In mapping the socio-economic diversity of rural Canada, the classification of regional types into predominantly urban, intermediate, rural metro-adjacent, rural non-metro-adjacent and rural northern regions captures the variation of the identified dimensions relatively well, while

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<sup>11</sup> Alberta Government Rural Development <http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/>

<sup>12</sup> Rural Alberta's Development Fund <http://www.ruralalbertasfund.com/program-details.htm>

<sup>13</sup> Growing the Future: Tomorrow's Rural Alberta (2004): Prepared by Jerome Martin and Les Brost For Rural Education and Development Association (REDA) <http://www.acca.coop/BridgeBuildersPhaseOne.pdf>

<sup>14</sup> Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin Catalogue no. 21-006-XIE. Vol. 5, No. 2 (March 2004). Mapping the Socio-economic Diversity of Rural Canada. *Alessandro Alasia, Statistics Canada* <http://www.statcan.ca/english/freepub/21-006-XIE/21-006-XIE2003002.pdf>

showing the diversity of socio-economic conditions within each regional type for other dimensions.

## **A Place to Grow Alberta Rural Development Strategy**

To begin the process of examining where social economy enterprises (SEE) might find some relevance as tool or mechanism for rural community revitalization, a brief analysis of the “A Place to Grow Alberta Rural Development Strategy” (February 2005)<sup>15</sup> provides some insights into the Alberta government’s policy direction and budget commitments. This report provides a detailed and critical overview of the current state of Alberta’s rural communities. It then sets out a number of key foundations and drivers identified by the provincial government in consultation with rural leaders and stakeholders towards the continued development and implementation of a comprehensive rural development strategy. What is not clearly outlined or identified in this report are the differences between “*rural economic growth*”, “*community economic development*” and “*rural community development*”, and how the government intended to further develop these areas through new policy directions and strategic initiatives.

“*Economic Growth*” does not mean “*community development*”. *Rural economic growth* is about more quantity, an increase of goods and services of a given economy. *Community economic development* (CED)<sup>16</sup> often involves *alternative entrepreneurial activities* arising out of situations in which typically marginalized groups (such as homeless youth, aboriginal peoples, rural women) are denied the credit and infrastructure from mainstream lending institutions that enables businesses to develop and grow. Often these alternative activities are redirecting economic flow back towards local communities. A growing number of these alternative entrepreneurial activities seek to align and conduct business practices within a sustainable manner consistent with environmental contexts. CED is a process which seeks to provide alternatives to the highly individualistic and competitive globalizing economy.

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<sup>15</sup> Alberta Government Rural Development <http://www.rural.gov.ab.ca/>

<sup>16</sup> For a more detailed explanation of Community Economic Development and Community Development see Appendix A.

Focusing on cooperative patterns of ownership and production, CED is generally a more “people-centred” form of economic development (Campfens, 1997 p.5).

*Rural community development* is more qualitative, and associated with the improvement of the living conditions of citizens, the economic well-being of the population, reduction of the rate of poverty, and unemployment and qualities related to social and human capital. Traditionally rural community development seeks to enhance participation of the community. Participatory democracy is promoted to “counter the apathy, frustration and resentment that often arise from feelings of powerlessness and oppression in the face of unresponsive power structures”. (in Collier's terms, "community development"). Various forms of rural community development have also contributed to building upon the “capacity and initiatives” of local communities to “identify needs, define problems, and plan and execute appropriate courses of action”. The goals of this kind of community engagement are to “foster confidence in community leadership, to increase competency, and to reduce dependence upon state, institutional and professional interventions”. ("social planning"). Community resources also play an important role in the interface between CED and CD. Community resources (human, technical and financial) and, where necessary, resources from outside the community (in the form of partnerships with governments, institutions and professional groups) are often mobilized in order to ensure balanced, sustainable forms of development.” ("community organizing").

The Alberta Rural Development strategy identifies eight challenges facing rural Alberta communities, establishes a vision for rural development, and recommends strategic directions towards strengthening the four pillars of rural communities: Health Care, Learning and Skill Development, Economic Growth, and Community Infrastructure. The report also focuses on critical linkages necessary for sustainability and the need for a stronger rural voice in government decision-making. As a result of the report, provincial ministries undertook an inventory of programs and policies, analyzed gaps and identified opportunities for action. The new Alberta Rural Development strategy was incorporated into government business plans 2004-2007 with an emphasis on Department Ministers as key champions to lead this initiative.

The 2006 provincial government budget “Strengthen Today Securing Tomorrow” clearly shows a renewed commitment to rural Alberta with a new \$100-million Rural Development Project Fund<sup>17</sup> with a focus on helping communities development rural projects to meet regional needs. In general the budget addresses building community capacity with aims towards priorities in building the capacity of rural communities to respond to changing circumstances, including ensuring that rural communities remain safe and secure. Approximately 25 new initiatives received funding totalling more than \$260 million. Economic development in rural regions is expected to be enhanced with priorities aims that build on rural Alberta's traditional economic strengths in agriculture, forestry, oil and gas, mining, and manufacturing, while expanding innovative and value-added business opportunities. The budget provides \$1.3 million annually to support stable long term funding to regional economic development alliances.<sup>18</sup>

The number one concern of rural Albertans concerning environmental issues and is access to, and management of, water resources. Rural Albertans also recognize the value of environmental conservation, especially when it comes to tourism promotion. However, rural Albertans feel that they bear all the costs of the landscape and natural resources values (lands representing scenic, recreation, agricultural, wildlife, historic and watershed values) while all Albertans reap the benefits. With respect to specific funding related to community development and linkages to environmental issues and natural resources benefiting tourism/ecotourism: \$24-million was invested in parks including repairing basic visitor facilities like trails, picnic tables and camping sites, most of which operate outside the province's major urban cities.

In other areas of business and economy, the rural population on farms is declining from 50% in 1971 to approximately 25% in 2007. Non-farming and ranching related employment is critical to sustaining many farming/ranching households. However, advances in extraction and harvesting technology related to agriculture and the forestry industry has resulted in a loss of

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<sup>17</sup> Alberta Government News Release (March 29, 2006) “*Rural lens focused on Budget 2006 Province commits more than \$260 million for 25 new rural initiatives*”. <http://www.gov.ab.ca/acn/200603/1964646ACEBFE-C10F-78C6-4AA7B217DE626E98.html>

<sup>18</sup> (Are any of these SEE related?).

jobs for rural Albertans. These same technologies require new skills, however, rural Albertans lack access to the training and development of emerging skill requirements. Further disadvantages also emerge as various technologies are identified and promoted as key factors towards rural revitalization.

Employment skills development and training also received attention. Many ministries implemented the use of advanced technology to enhance service access for rural Albertans, including, satellite telecommunications and use of high-speed Internet equipment through mobile career and employment projects. Expanded videoconferencing also brought additional services to children and families. Community-based learning was increased through the use of operating grants to rural libraries to support life-long learning. Another \$1.2 million was provide to the regional library system to determine how rural libraries, already wired for the Alberta SuperNet, can be key information sources in rural Alberta. Priorities included providing opportunities for rural youth to ensure a strong effective voice, help to encourage young people to stay in rural communities and build their futures. Similarly priorities and actions were identified to ensure Aboriginal Albertans participate fully in rural development opportunities across the province.

Alberta's rural communities are at a critical intersection in their economic viability and community well-being. Rural Alberta has already lost several generations within their social fabric and many communities continue to loose the majority of the 15-25 year old demographic. Of those who leave rural communities, only 25% return. Moreover, less than a quarter of Canadian's view rural communities as a good place to make a living. The challenges ahead identifies the need for rural communities to work together to meet the needs of residents. Regional cooperation has been identified as critical to sustaining rural communities. Specifically, the Alberta rural development framework targets the support of regional alliances and partnership initiatives, including rural-urban joint initiatives.<sup>19</sup> The strategy also suggests the

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<sup>19</sup> (How does this support, enhance or erode rural revitalization – does this lead to urbanization and loss of the rural communities and their unique identities?)

creation of rural tax credits to encourage investment in rural businesses and rural-located research and development.<sup>20</sup>

Broader partnerships with industry, government and ministries within government have been identified as key success factors in Alberta's approach to rural development. The strategy does identify opportunities for or the exploration of new kinds of alternative enterprises. These include support for rural partnerships, regional cooperation, alliances and grassroots community organizations through a combination of incentives, tools and information, training, best practices information, and direct support work with communities to establish a network of business incubators to provide business and entrepreneur support services in rural Alberta

The strategy outlines priorities to enhance tourism opportunities in rural communities by providing targeted funds to establish, expand and market tourism opportunities (plans for developing, packaging and marketing eco-tourism and ag-tourism); developing new tourism destinations in rural Alberta; revitalizing provincial parks and campgrounds to support rural tourism and enhance the quality of life in rural Alberta, and improving access to and advertising/signage about rural tourism sites, attractions, and local businesses. It is, however, silent towards the ongoing concerns of rural Albertans regarding the stewardship and compensation for natural capital and ecological services that are prime features and activities supported by rural communities. Instead, the strategy focuses on mitigative solutions to the impacts of agricultural on the environment along with various priorities associated with safe and secure potable drinking water supplies and adequate treatment and discharge of municipal wastewater. (Could add more here about the emphasis on rural communities to reduce GHG emissions and climate change issues etc. Along with a brief mention about emerging land trusts and the development of sustainable agriculture practices to encourage stewardship and conservation etc.).

What the strategy does say that is encouraging is a priority action recommendation towards a review of current provincial government rules, regulations and policies, including the use of

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<sup>20</sup> (Are the rural development strategies promoting learning and skill development aligned with the needs of education and training requirements needed for emerging technology, research and development? Will there be

publicly funded infrastructure, use of Crown lands, and location of government programs and services. This needs to be undertaken to ensure that they provide the necessary flexibility towards the support for rural development. The strategy also focuses on a priority action to provide targeted support to municipalities and community-owned cooperatives to ensure that all businesses and homes in rural Alberta are linked to the SuperNet.<sup>21</sup>

### **Implementation Funding**

The Alberta government provided \$100 million provided towards the implementation initiative of province's Rural Development Strategy, released in 2005. Funding by the Government of Alberta will be used to invest in projects that stimulate economic growth and address rural challenges and opportunities.

Funding is administered through the newly created Rural Alberta's Development Fund<sup>22</sup> which is a not-for-profit company incorporated in 2006 under Part-9 of the Companies Act (Alberta). It was created to fulfill a commitment by the Government of Alberta to support communities, regional alliances, government departments and not-for-profit organizations in kick starting community-building projects that would contribute to the growth and prosperity of rural Alberta.

### **Focus of Funding of Rural Alberta's Development Fund**

Only projects that contribute to the growth, prosperity or quality of life of rural Alberta will be considered. A project must demonstrate how it supports the community and it must involve the community and/or communities where it is to be implemented. The Fund defines 'rural' as the approximately one million Albertans who live outside of Calgary and Edmonton. This would include all mid-size cities. A community and/or communities can be defined as geographic (e.g. municipality) or interest (e.g. education) based. It can be a combination of both. It could also be

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opportunities and a balance between professional and trade/apprentice-based labour markets? What are the connections, if any, to SEE?)

<sup>21</sup>(Forth coming research - perhaps add more from the Canada West Foundation, Chinook Institute – Natural Amenity Communities etc.)

<sup>22</sup> Rural Alberta's Development fund <http://www.ruralalbertasfund.com/about-the-fund.htm>

a group of communities (i.e. involving a region). The Fund is particularly interested in considering projects that are identified as priorities through comprehensive community planning processes or where a broad cross-section of the community is involved.

## **Potential Funding Linkages to Social Economy Entreprises**

The Alberta's Rural Development Fund announced, in May 2007, \$4.5 million in funding to support five rural Alberta projects.<sup>23</sup>

### **Bioeconomies/Local Food Systems**

#### **Project: KILLAM REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE**

- *Fund contribution is \$234,000*

This project will attract key agri-businesses into the region. Potential value-added businesses will be identified and screened, with the most likely prospects approached and enticed through joint planning to locate in the area. There are already a number of realistic targets including ethanol or biodiesel processing facilities, a commercial food/food supplement greenhouse, a bio-mass refinery and flaxseed production facilities.

Project partners include Killam and District Business Development Association, the Town of Killam, Killam Chamber of Commerce, **Battle River Agri-Ventures Cooperative, Pure Produce Greenhouses** Alberta and Lakeland College. Expected results include:

- Enhanced agricultural base generating increased crop demand and revenue.
- Increased local economic activity and employment.
- Secondary value-added services for local residents.
- Local ownership and return on investment for regional groups.

#### **Contact:**

Bill Gibb, President, Killam & District Business Development Association T: 780-385-2398  
[kdbda@telus.net](mailto:kdbda@telus.net)

#### **Focusing Questions:**

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<sup>23</sup> News Release Rural Alberta's Development Fund (May 25, 2007). "Development Fund Sponsors Five New Projects - New funding to help a number of rural communities and regions"  
<http://www.ruralalbertasfund.com/pdf/development-fund-sponsors-five-new-projects.pdf>

- *Find out more about Battle River Agri-Ventures Cooperative, Pure Produce Greenhouses. Do they have SEE linkages. Preliminary research suggests that this is not a SEE.*

### **Natural Resources Stewardship/Ecotourism**

#### **Project: RECREATION AND HABITAT LANDS ACCESS AND STEWARDSHIP TRAINING**

- *Fund contribution is \$100,000*

This project will recruit and train rural Albertans to help preserve and protect 30,000 acres of wildlife habitat throughout Alberta. The habitats are owned by the Alberta Fish & Game Association. The pilot phase of the project aims to recruit enough volunteer stewards for 20 of the Association's 80 properties. All habitat sites will be filmed and catalogued, with visual and written information placed on DVD and the Internet. A Volunteer Stewardship Manual will detail responsibilities of stewards and to guide stewardship activities. Pilot phase volunteer recruitment and training is expected to be completed by October 2008.

#### **Expected results include:**

- More opportunity for Albertans to participate in conservation activities through stewardship.
- More public information and educational material on Alberta wildlife habitats.
- Better access to detailed information on recreational opportunities in Alberta.
- Preservation of critical wildlife areas in Alberta.

**Contact:** Martin Sharren, Executive Vice-President, Alberta Fish & Game Association. T: 780-437-2342 [martin@afga.org](mailto:martin@afga.org)

#### **Focusing Questions:**

- *What is the structure of ownership of these Fish & Game habitat sites?*
- *How are they funded?*
- *Are there any SEE linked with the development, use and stewardship of these properties?*

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## Appendix A

### Community Economic Development and Community Development

The following provides a brief overview of the unique characteristics of community economic development (CED) within the broader context of community development (CD).

#### **A. Unique Characteristics of Community Economic Development within Community Development**

- Community Economic Development (CED) is that face of Community Development (CD) that specifically focuses upon the strengthening or maintaining of the particular (usually local) economy, and the participation of the community's members in productive and meaningful employment (Collier, 2003 p.20).
- CED often involves *alternative entrepreneurial activities* arising out of situations in which typically marginalized groups (such as homeless youth, aboriginal peoples, rural women) are denied the credit and infrastructure from mainstream lending institutions that enables businesses to develop and grow. Often these alternative activities are redirecting economic flows back towards local communities. A growing number of these alternative entrepreneurial activities seek to align and conduct business practices within a sustainable manner consistent with environmental contexts.
- CED is a process which seeks to provide alternatives to the highly individualistic and competitive globalizing economy. Instead, CED focuses on cooperative patterns of ownership and production, and generally a more "people-centred" economic development (Campfens, 1997 p.5).
- CED activities can be more for mutual aid among a defined group of people or for more expressly political ends, seeking wider social change. In the latter case, community economic development is often accompanied by the "conscientizing" of the participants as to the sources of their marginalization and deliberate strategizing to link with other social change forces within their society (Collier, 2003 p.20; Campfens, 1997 p. 6).

#### **B. Where does CED overlap with other faces of Community Development?**

CED overlaps with CD generally through sharing the following social principles, articulated by Campfens (p. 24):

**A) Participation:** Participation must be enhanced for all levels of society (or a community) and participatory democracy must be promoted to "counter the apathy, frustration and resentment that often arise from feelings of powerlessness and oppression in the face of unresponsive power structures". (in Collier's terms, "community development")

**B) Capacity Building and Initiatives:** To the greatest possible extent, CD should build upon the “capacity and initiatives” of local communities to “identify needs, define problems, and plan and execute appropriate courses of action”. The goals are to “foster confidence in community leadership, to increase competency, and to reduce dependence upon state, institutional and professional interventions”. (“social planning”).

**C) Community Resources:** Community resources (human, technical and financial) and, where necessary, resources from outside the community (in the form of partnerships with governments, institutions and professional groups) should be mobilized and deployed in an appropriate manner in order to ensure balanced, sustainable forms of development.” (“community organizing”).

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## **Appendix B**

Alberta is governed through three general types of municipalities, urban, rural and specialized. For detailed information and maps about particular municipalities, check the [Municipal Profiles](#) page. To find out who to contact in your municipality, check the [Municipal Officials search](#).

### **Urban Municipal Governments**

Alberta's urban municipalities consist of areas where there is a concentration of people and buildings. The Municipal Government Act describes the characteristics of the different types of urban municipalities, cities, towns, villages, and summer villages. To learn more about urban municipalities, visit the [Alberta Urban Municipalities Association](#) website.

### **Cities**

There are 16 municipalities in Alberta that have been granted city status. To qualify as a city, there must be sufficient population size present with over 10,000 people. Cities may establish ward systems with the same number of councillors in each ward. Candidates, or those elected to the municipal council, are required to be residents of the wards they represent. Cities are governed by a mayor who is elected at large and an even number of councillors or aldermen. There should always be an odd number of people on council to avoid tie votes. Elections for cities and all local government units are held every three years. In respect to the size of the 14 city councils, 7 have 7 councillors, 5 have 9 councillors, Edmonton has 13 and Calgary has 15. Including the mayors, who are also considered councillors, there are a total of 122 elected city officials.

### **Towns**

A town can be formed when the population is at least 1,000 people and may exceed 10,000 people unless it requests a change to city status. Under the Municipal Government Act a town is governed by a mayor and 6 councillors, unless otherwise specified. The mayor and councillors are elected at large. The size of the council is set by municipal bylaw and presently ranges from 5 to 7 councillors. Councillors are required to be resident in their municipality. There are a total of 111 towns and over 740 elected town officials.

### **Villages**

Villages may be formed upon request by 30% of electors in a community with a population of at least 300 people. They may apply for town status when the population reaches 1,000 people. The council of a village consists of 3 councillors, one of whom is the mayor. There are 100 villages in Alberta.

### **Summer Villages**

Generally, the provisions related to a village apply to a summer village except that in the latter, elections and annual meetings are required to be held in the summer. Those who own property in the summer village and others over age 18 and resident in the village on election day are entitled to vote. However, electors for school representation, if any, must be defined as resident. A summer village is the only type of municipality where a person can vote twice in municipal elections: once in the summer village and once in the municipality where their permanent residence is located. There are 51 summer villages in Alberta. Summer villages can no longer be created in Alberta.

### **Specialized Municipalities**

Specialized municipalities are unique municipal structures that can be formed without resorting to special Acts of the Legislature. Often, specialized municipalities allow urban and rural communities to coexist in a single municipal government. There are 4 Specialized Municipalities in Alberta. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo and Strathcona County are two examples.

### **Rural Municipal Governments**

There are 74 rural municipalities in Alberta. The designation "rural" should not be interpreted to include farm or resource based areas only. That is, some of these municipalities contain substantial country residential populations.

### **Municipal Districts**

A municipal district (M.D., also called a county) is a government form in rural areas of the province. It includes farmlands as well as unincorporated communities such as hamlets and rural residential subdivisions. The council consists of one councillor per ward, one of whom is elected by council as reeve. Presently the number of wards varies from 4 to 11, with the most common being 7. As of May 2006, there were 64 Municipal Districts with approximately 440 elected

municipal district officials. To learn more about Municipal Districts visit, the [Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties](#) website.

### **Hamlets**

The council of a municipal district or specialized municipality can designate an unincorporated community that is within its boundaries to be a hamlet. A community can be a hamlet if it consists of 5 or more dwellings, has a generally accepted boundary and name, and contains land that is used for non-residential purposes.

### **Improvement Districts**

The provincial government, through Alberta Municipal Affairs, is responsible for all functions of local government in the improvement districts, including the levy and collection of taxes. The residents of an improvement district (I.D.) elect representatives, who are subsequently appointed by the Minister, to an advisory council which assists in the administration of each district. Six of the seven I.D.s are located in national parks – I.D. No. 4 (Waterton), I.D. No. 9 (Banff), I.D. No. 12 (Jasper), I.D. No. 13 (Elk Island) and I.D. No. 24 (Wood Buffalo) – and 2 are provincial parks: Kananaskis Improvement District (including Kananaskis Provincial Park) and the I.D. No. 25 (Willmore Wilderness). The provincial and federal governments have the primary responsibility in these areas except for school affairs. There are a total of 33 people elected/appointed to the advisory councils of 4 of the 8 I.D.s. The council, generally consisting of 7 to 9 members, guides the activities of the improvement district manager and staff. The formal power rests with the Minister of Municipal Affairs, but most power and responsibility has been delegated to the councils.

### **Metis Settlements**

There are 8 Metis settlements in Alberta covering a total area of approximately 1.25 million acres (0.5 million ha). There are presently 5,500 Metis residing in the settlements. These are the only Metis settlement corporations established under the Metis Settlements Act.

### **Special Areas**

[Special Areas](#) refers to a rural area in southeast Alberta administered by a board of three people appointed by the Lieutenant Governor in Council. Technically, there are three Special Areas in southeast Alberta, but for simplicity and in accordance with the common usage these will be referred to as one unit. The areas were established under the Special Areas Act in 1938 due to extreme hardship of the drought years of the 1930s. The Special Areas Act of 1938 has more or less remained intact although there were some amendments in 1966 and 1985. An advisory council of 13 is elected in accordance with the Local Authorities Election Act.

The population of the Special Areas is 5,756 people. The land area of about 5 million acres (2,024,292 ha) is comprised of 2 million acres (809,717 ha) of privately held land, 1.5 million acres (607,287 ha) of crown land and 1.5 million acres (607,287 ha) of tax recovery land. There are a number of agreements between the Special Areas and the urban municipalities within it. These agreements cover fire protection, ambulance, library, recreation, regional waste collection, some limited family and community services and the development and operation of medical centers. The Special Areas is also involved in the Prairie Association for Water

Management, which has membership extending from the City of Calgary to Kindersley, Saskatchewan. The Association will examine, in concert with government agencies, rural and urban needs and develop water resource plans and strategies.

**Reserves**

A reserve is not a part of any municipality. The British North America Act, 1867, places exclusive legislative authority on matters related to aboriginal peoples and reserves with the national parliament. The reserves, which range in size from 1,089 acres (441 ha) to 354,667 acres (143,532 ha), have a total area of 1,622,630 acres (656,669 ha). All but two of the smallest reserves are occupied.