



## Rural Communities Impacting Policy Project Fall 2005 Update

### RCIP Meetings

***Management Committee*** - Sept 7

***Agenda*** - Evaluation, Knowledge Mobilization, Fall Schedule, Future of RCIP, Funding

***Student Training Work Group*** - Sept 26

***Agenda*** - Evaluation Report on Internships, Future of Student Training Program

***Policy Work Group*** - October 14

***Agenda*** - Finalize "The Rural Policy Challenge" Paper, Dissemination Plan, Intern Reports

***Community Training Work Group*** - November (Date TBD)

***Agenda*** - Follow-up to Community Training Roundtable, Community Training Workshop Report, Future Plans for Community Training

Notices of meetings, agendas and locations will be confirmed with work group participants.

### Policy Change Projects

RCIP Summer Student Interns have completed their research and are preparing reports for review by their Project Teams and the Policy Work Group.

***Coastal Area Management*** - Corey Toews held focus groups in various South Shore municipalities - Barrington, Shelburne, Liverpool and Lunenburg - to talk about the challenges and successes of coastal management. Municipal elected officials, staff, community groups, and other interested parties participated. The results of this project will be of interest to communities and municipal governments as a way of sharing experiences and best practices in coastal area management.

***Healthy and Sustainable Community Development*** - Joy Elliott sent out a survey to 74 community development associations and received 16 back. She also conducted focus groups in Lakeside (HRM), Truro, Guysborough, Baddeck and Sydney. The results from this project will be of interest to provincial and federal officials, community development groups, and regional development authorities that are working on sustainable community development.

***Retention of Health Professionals in Rural Communities*** - Amelie Lombard conducted interviews in Yarmouth County to explore what the community can do to create favourable conditions for the retention of health professional in rural communities. Outcomes of the research will include a "menu" of 'community environment' retention options for the particular region. Community Health Boards from three District Health Authorities - Capital Health, Guysborough Antigonish Strait, and South West Nova - are involved in developing case studies. The results of this project will be of interest to other DHAs across the province.

## **Community Training**

The RCIP Project is delivering free workshops for community groups interested in using research to influence public policies until the end of October. Erica de Sousa is conducting the training. Since the RCIP Project's SSHRC grant is ending in January 2006, no more workshops are being booked at this time. However, groups that have expressed an interest in receiving the training are being placed on a waiting list for 2006, if new funding permits the continuation of the training program. The Community Training Roundtable Report (June 4, 2005) has been completed and is posted on the RCIP website. There is much interest and potential for partnerships and collaborations between Anglophone and Francophone groups. A second

roundtable discussion will be held in conjunction with the Celebrating Community Innovation Conference in Wolfville on November 17-18.

## **RCIP Presentations**

The RCIP Project will be presented at several events this fall.

***Volunteer Forum*** - - Sept 23-25 in Debert, NS. Sponsored by the Canadian Voluntarism Initiative in Nova Scotia. RCIP Training Workshops are on the agenda. Eric de Sousa will deliver the workshops. Malcolm Shookner presented the Community Training Roundtable Report.

***GeoNova Days*** Oct 4 in Dartmouth, NS - Sponsored by Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Affairs. A CCN or RCIP representative will speak on a panel about data distribution and pricing policy in Nova Scotia.

***National Rural Research Conference*** - Oct-12 in Twillingate, NL. Sponsored by the Canadian Rural Partnership. Renée Lyons will deliver a keynote speech and make a presentation about the RCIP Project.

***ANPR Fall Forum*** Oct 24-26 in White Point Beach, NS. Sponsored by Atlantic Networks for Prevention Research. Malcolm Shookner will make a presentation about how rural communities have influenced policies through the RCIP Project.

***Celebrating Community Innovation Conference*** Nov 17-18 in Wolfville, NS. Co-sponsored by the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency and the Nova Scotia Office of Economic Development. RCIP will lead two roundtable discussions: Community Data Roundtable on community access to data for planning, development and research; Community Training Roundtable to develop plans for future collaboration and funding for community training.

## **RCIP Project Evaluation**

The RCIP Project is working with Horizons Community Development Associates on the evaluation of the project. All participants in the RCIP Project will have the opportunity to express their views through a web survey to be conducted from October 17 to November 7. Further details

about how to participate in this on-line survey will be sent out to all RCIP participants. Follow-up is also being done with community groups that received training, groups that had summer student interns, and the students themselves, to identify what benefits they may have enjoyed as a result of their involvement in the RCIP Project. A final evaluation report will be completed by January 2006 to inform future planning for RCIP.

## Knowledge Mobilization

What have we learned from the RCIP Project? Who needs to know what we've learned? These are the questions behind the Knowledge Mobilization Plan under development. A series of topics have been identified for writing by teams of people who have something to say and want to be involved. Topics include:

- Forging Sustainable Futures for Rural Communities
- Rural Communities Influencing Policies: Case Studies
- Training Students to do Research in Rural Communities: An Interdisciplinary Model
- Community Workshops, Policy Forums and Student Internships as Linked Mechanisms for Collaboration
- The Rural Policy Challenge
- The Policy Entrepreneur: Linking Community Groups with Policy Makers
- Building Capacity for Policy Change in Rural Communities
- Common Findings in Rural Nova Scotia Research: The RCIP Project 2002-2005
- Science Shops in the Nova Scotia Context

If you would like to be involved in any of these topics, contact Malcolm Shookner, the RCIP Project Coordinator, at (902) 494-1590 or [Malcolm.Shookner@dal.ca](mailto:Malcolm.Shookner@dal.ca) No previous writing experience is necessary!

## The Future of RCIP

A Strategic Planning Session was held in May to discuss the future of RCIP and to consolidate our many ideas into funding proposals for next year and beyond. A report called, "The Future of RCIP: Strategic Directions for CCN

and AHPRC" was prepared to document what we agreed on. Highlights of the report include:

- Renewing the Partnership: CCN and AHPRC re-affirm their commitment to working together in the future, based on the Collaborative Partnership Agreement that defines RCIP.
- The Goal of the Partnership: Build capacity of rural communities to use social science research to generate knowledge for developing and influencing policies that contribute to the health and sustainability of rural communities.
- The Research Question: What are the conditions needed for healthy and sustainable rural communities in Nova Scotia and Atlantic Canada?
- Objectives:
  - 1) Conduct community-based research in rural communities using participatory research methods.
  - 2) Facilitate knowledge mobilization for improved policies and practices.
  - 3) Promote policy development and change to support rural sustainability.
  - 4) Improve access to data and information for community-based research.
  - 5) Provide capacity building and training for research and knowledge mobilization.
  - 6) Model the RCIP Project in other communities in Atlantic Canada.

The full report will be available soon.

For more information about the RCIP Project, visit our website - [www.ruralnovascotia.ca](http://www.ruralnovascotia.ca) - or contact:

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