

University of Saskatchewan studies northern economy

Researchers seek to understand idea of "the good life."

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Wild rice is one of the elements in the northern economy. (Supplied)

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A long-term study of northern Saskatchewan's economy is entering a new phase as researchers begin visiting communities, gathering feedback from people who live and do business there.

Researchers are looking into local views of "the good life."

"It's research for them, to help them build their own futures," said project leader Lee Swanson.

The University of Saskatchewan Aboriginal Entrepreneurship project is supported by the Edwards School of Business, and a \$300,000 grant from the federal government.

The goal of the study, according to Swanson, is not to become directly involved in business projects in the north, but rather to observe. The problem, he said, is that too many organizations attempt to approach the northern economy, in the same way they would do business in the rest of Canada.

"The economy in the north to a large extent in the past has been a sharing economy and to some extent it still is today."

An example of the sharing economy is when someone returns from a successful hunt and shares meat with his or her neighbours in exchange for other goods and services.

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Another key part of the study, Swanson said is to understand the thoughts and dreams of young people.

"The future of these communities is within the youth that have grown up there. Many of these people in the north love where they live and have strong community foundations and would love to have a way to stay in the north."

The study involves 10 northern communities, and the end result should help enhance and build entrepreneurship in the region.



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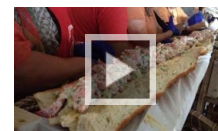
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