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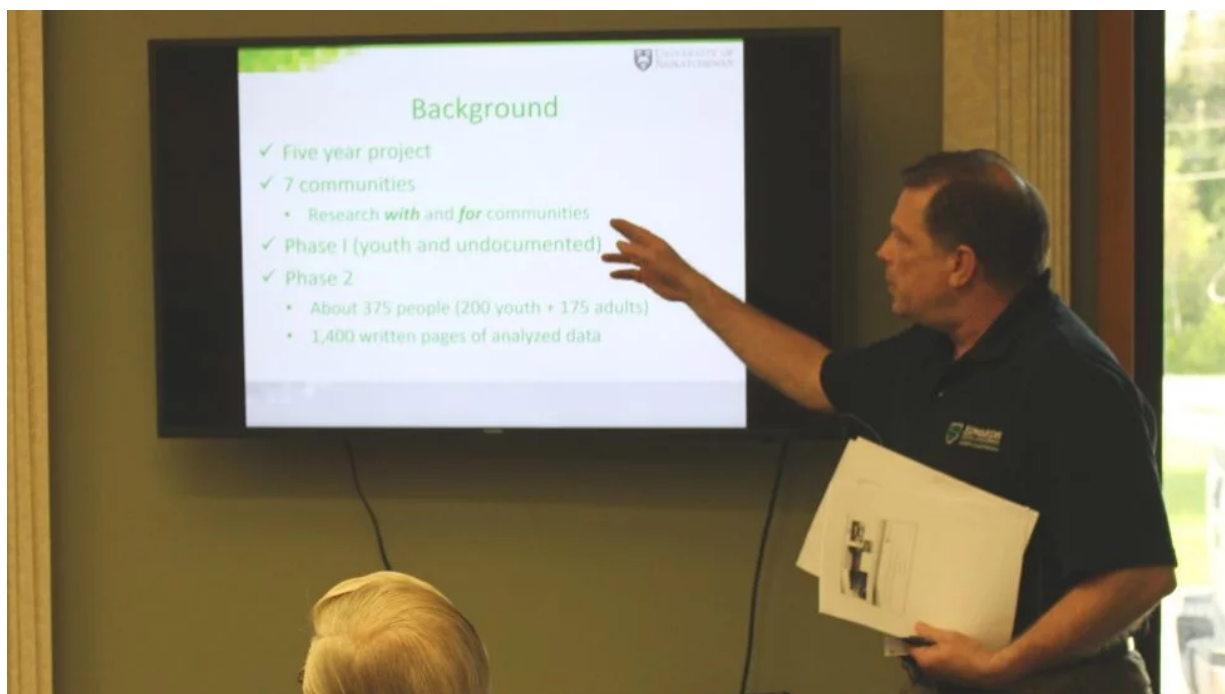
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Researchers seek validation for data collected during economic study

By [Derek Cornet \(/author/derek-cornet\)](#)

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Dr. Lee Swanson presents some of his results to La Ronge Council.

 Derek Cornet/IarongeNOW Staff

The Building Northern Capacity through Entrepreneurship research project is in the midst of visiting communities to find out if the economic development data collected during the project is accurate.

Associate Professor Dr. Lee Swanson said the five-year project, led by the University of Saskatchewan's Edwards School of Business, is now in its final year and he's in Île-à-la-Crosse this week present his work. Swanson presented some of his results at a regular La Ronge Council meeting last week, where he informed the councillors he'll be back in July to hold a more comprehensive meeting, which will be open to the public.

"We're going to ask the community members to validate the information we collected," Swanson said. "We collected a massive amount of data, about 1,400 pages of analyzed data so far, and we've spoken directly to over 375 people, and that was just phase two alone."

With the vast majority of data already compiled and studied, Swanson noted northern communities share similarities but also have differences when it comes to building economic capacity. For example, he said, more remote communities such as Hatchet Lake may have more difficulty developing because residents don't have access to a highway like those in La Ronge too. There's also a technological gap, Swanson added,

where northerners don't have the same services as other Saskatchewan centres when it comes to resources like Internet speed.

The research so far also indicates northerners find it difficult to raise capital to start businesses in more remote areas, Swanson said, and accessing education can also prove to be challenging.

"Through entrepreneurship in these communities, there is opportunity to develop in ways that can help local people achieve the type of lifestyles they want," Swanson said.

"Entrepreneurship and business development can be one of those tools used to help create the type of lifestyle people wish to have in their communities."

Swanson said he will also visit Cumberland House and Hatchet Lake to present his findings next week.

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