



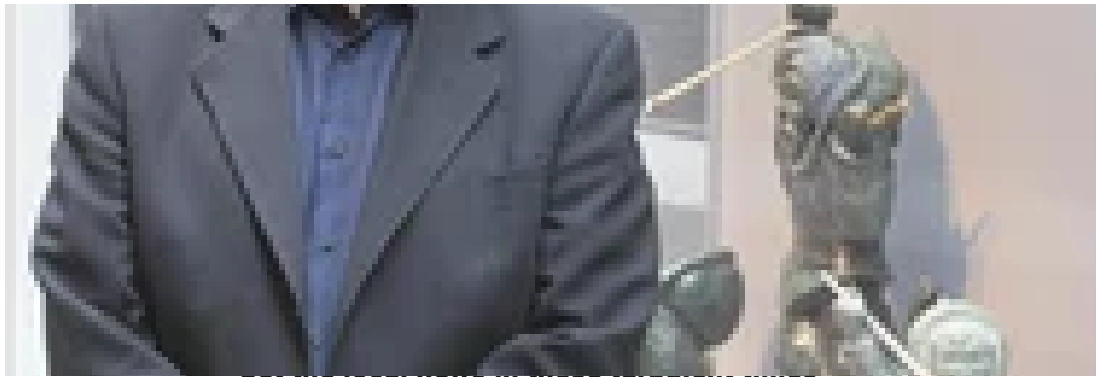
Business

Project looks at business in the north

A partnership between northern communities and University of Saskatchewan researchers could improve business prospects across the north, says the mayor of Île-à-la-Crosse.

Alex MacPherson • Saskatoon StarPhoenix
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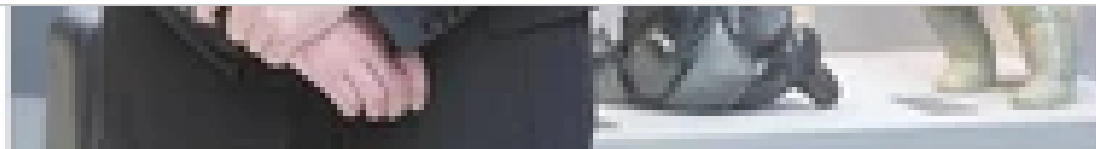
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Lee Swanson of the Edwards School of Business is the lead researcher for the Building Northern Capacity Through Entrepreneurship project. He says it is important that the project have an impact on the people living in the north. PHOTO BY GREG PENDER, THE STARPHOENIX /The Starphoenix

A partnership between northern communities and University of Saskatchewan researchers could improve business prospects across the north, says the mayor of Île-à-la-Crosse.

“Entrepreneurship (in the north) has never really, I think, been fully explored,” Duane Favel said Wednesday.

“We believe that examining it first of all, and then bringing in the skills and assets that we need to help people become successful, is something we want to attract to our northern communities because of all the potential up there.”

The five-year Building Northern Capacity Through Entrepreneurship project, part of a comparative study with northern Scandinavia, was launched last year. Favel said it represents a valuable opportunity for historically marginalized northern communities.

“I think it’s going to make a tremendous amount of difference in terms of getting people interested in going into entrepreneurship.”

The project is funded by a \$291,000 Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council grant, supplemented by money from the Edwards School of Business, the Johnson-Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy, and the International Centre for Northern Governance and Development.

According to its lead researcher, the study is about more than publishing academic papers.

“None of this makes any difference to anybody unless we make an impact on the people,” said Lee Swanson, a professor at the Edwards School of Business.

“At the core of this is that desire to work with the communities ... to help them better understand their situations and help them better understand how entrepreneurship is contributing – or not, in some cases – to their desires (and) what they want for their futures.”

The project’s second phase, which began this spring with a research trip to Pinehouse, is expected to continue through 2016, including at least one journey to Île-à-la-Crosse, Swanson said.

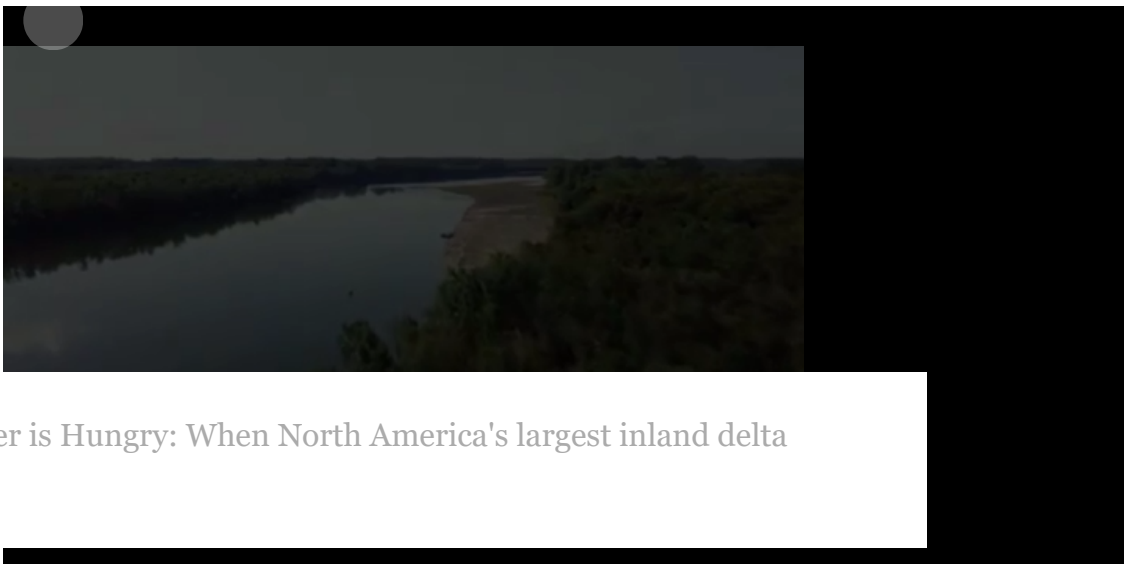
The work, which includes surveys and videotaped interviews with high school students, will allow people and institutions across the province to better understand the northern economy, he said.

“(It) is still a bit of a sharing economy. We wish to capture that because it’s not really captured in other places very much.”

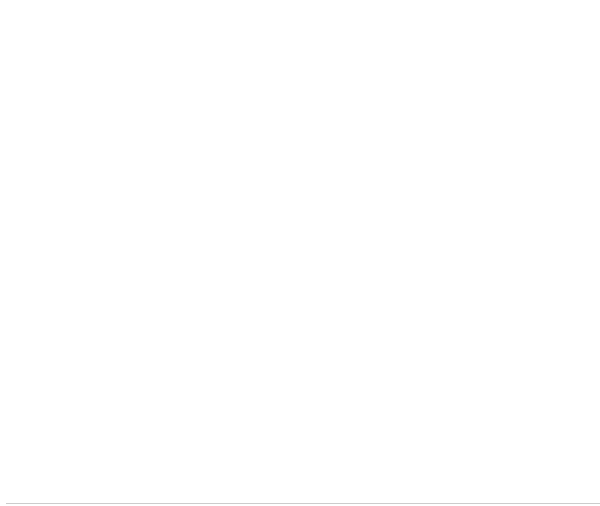
Meanwhile, Favel is optimistic that the participatory research will benefit a new generation of northerners in Île-à-la-Crosse and across the north.

“Historically, we’ve never paid too much attention to (engaging youth),” he said. “But there’s tremendous potential there.”

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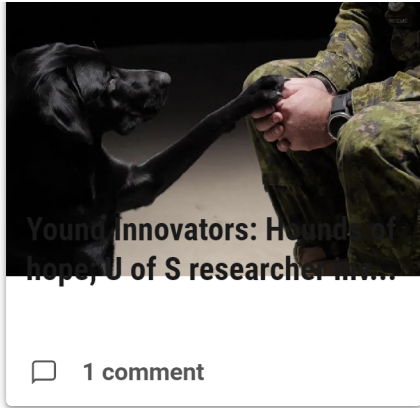
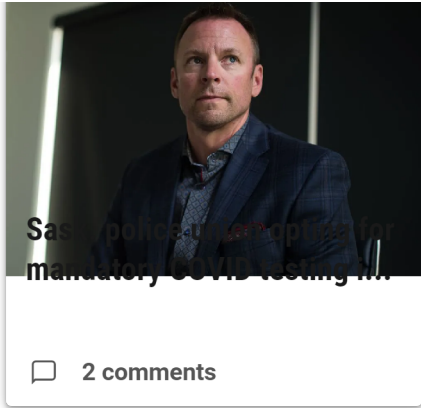
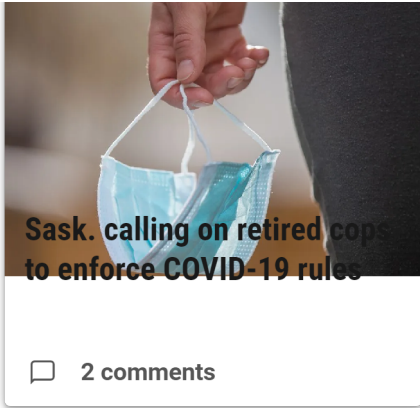


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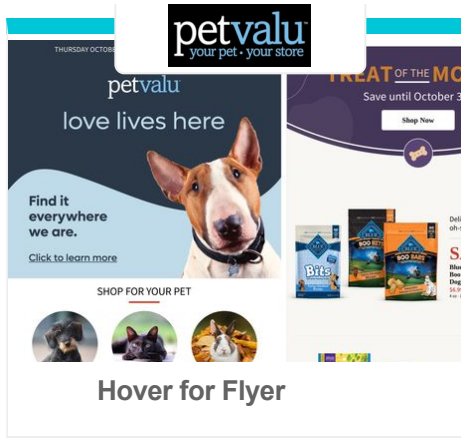
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