

Northern Sharing



Through meaningful partnerships with communities affected by the economic and social conditions in Saskatchewan's North, we are working together to create knowledge that can be mobilized into actions leading to positive change.

Introducing the first of our regular newsletters on northern capacity building

We are pleased to provide you with this first edition of our regular newsletter for people interested in improving the conditions in Northern Saskatchewan Communities. This newsletter is a product of a northern capacity building project for Northern Saskatchewan residents and communities that is being conducted by and for northerners. Over the next 3 to 4 years you can use these newsletters to better understand what is happening with this project and how it can help northern communities build better futures for themselves and their residents.

Since this project started several months ago we have been building a network of connections across Northern Saskatchewan. Together, we have started to learn about the economic and social aspirations of our northern communities and how entrepreneurship might be playing a role. Over the next year we will be visiting several northern communities to finish establishing partnerships with them and to begin assessing the role that entrepreneurship might play in their regions as a way to improve social and economic conditions in ways desired by the communities. We will also assess the nature of the

entrepreneurship in those areas, including how readily it is embraced in the communities.

This project is also a comparative one with Northern Scandinavia, which shares much in common with Northern Saskatchewan – but also has many differences. We are working with colleagues in Northern Norway and Northern Sweden in particular to try to understand what has worked in their remote and primarily Indigenous communities. We will be reporting back to you with the results of that comparative analysis.

We refer to the efforts to improve social and economic conditions in the north as *capacity building*. Capacity building is a pressing and important issue in all Canadian provincial north areas, including Northern Saskatchewan.



Why this project is needed

Despite being a major contributor to the Saskatchewan and Canadian economies as a result of its vast resource-based wealth, Northern Saskatchewan is the second poorest region in the country with a median income of just \$13,600. Its population is mainly young and primarily Aboriginal.

While the general consensus is that more can and should be done to improve conditions in the North, few effective solutions have been implemented.

The outcomes from this project will include new models and insights that will positively impact communities in Northern Saskatchewan. For individual communities, it should result in better knowledge about what is happening in other northern communities in both Canada and where there are similar conditions and challenges in Norway and Sweden. This project will also provide communities with opportunities to share their successes.



Our Pinehouse Visit

On December 5 members of our project team were welcomed with open arms – as usual – when we visited Pinehouse. We are looking forward to working with our partners in that community throughout 2015.

When in Pinehouse we attended the Reclaiming Our Community (ROC) meeting during which those in attendance generously shared their knowledge and perspectives on how the lives of all citizens in that community can continually improve. We are looking forward to returning to Pinehouse and to working with other communities.

Did you know

... that the Saskatchewan Chamber of Commerce published the Northern Business Task Force Report in December 2014? It lists 12 recommendations designed to improve conditions in Northern Saskatchewan. Access the report from the saskchamber.com home page.

Our Project Team

Most of the University of Saskatchewan members of our project team are well known to many in Northern Saskatchewan. Lee Swanson and Ken Coates are leading the project with Joelena Leader coordinating most of the data collection and analysis work with the help of Dazaway Landrie-Parker, J.D. Bell, Billy Rowluck, Danette Starblanket, and Paola Chiste. Valuable support is provided by Vince Bruni-Bossio, David Zhang, and Dana Carriere. The rest of this team is made up of many members of our northern communities. In future issues of this newsletter we will profile some of our team members so you can get to know them better.

