

# RURAL SECRETARIAT

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*Regions and Government Working Together*

*Visions to Actions*  
**A Roadmap to 2020**

  
Newfoundland  
Labrador

**Rural  
Secretariat**  
For Newfoundland and Labrador

# Conference Report

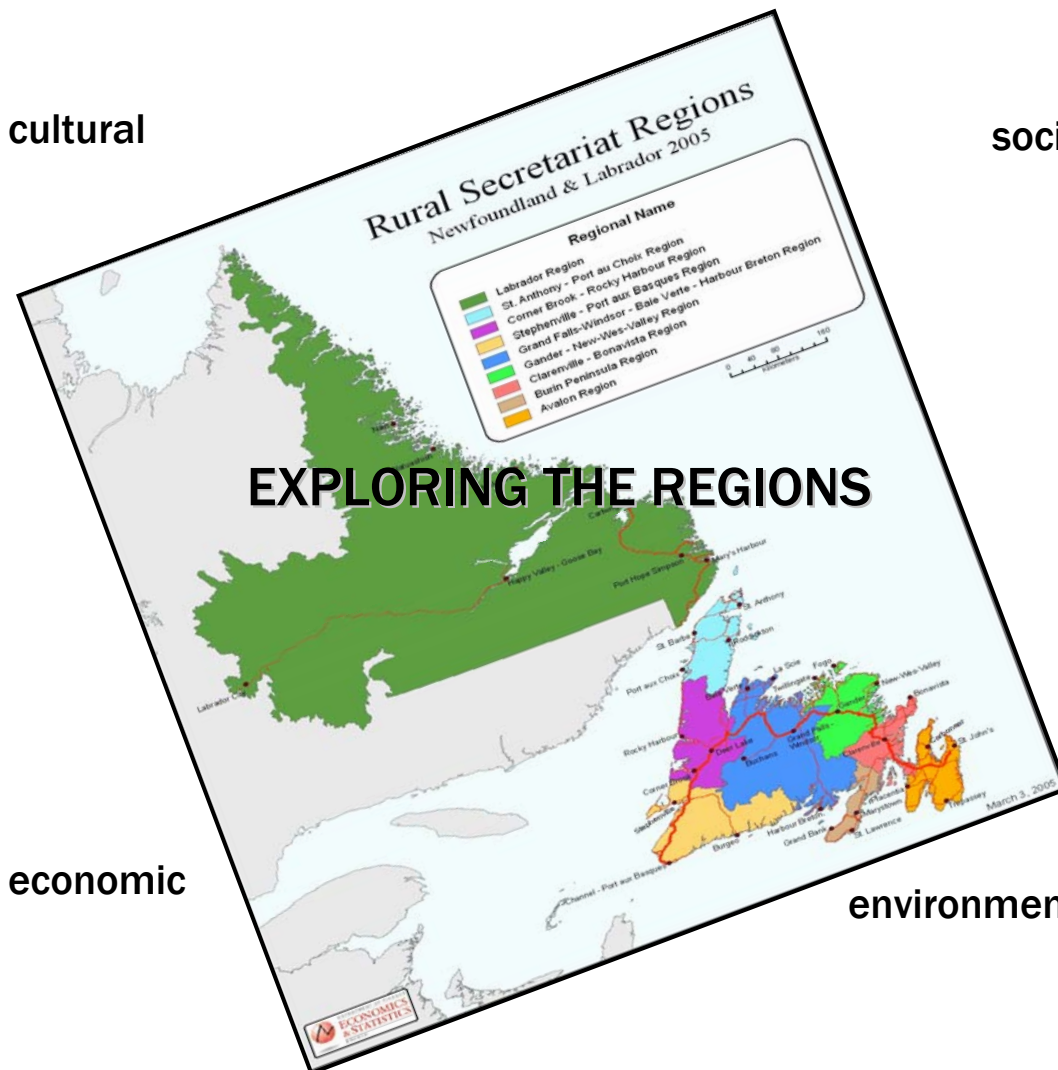
*This conference is not about us.  
 It is about the elementary school children in  
 the Gander school choir [that sang the Ode to  
 Newfoundland and Ode to Labrador at the  
 conference reception]. It is about children everywhere  
 in the province. We need to ensure that these children,  
 15 years from now, have the opportunity and choice to live,  
 work and raise families in rural Newfoundland and Labrador.*

Honourable Trevor Taylor  
 Minister Responsible for the  
 Rural Secretariat



cultural

social



economic

environmental

*Visions to Actions: A Roadmap to 2020  
Gander, NL  
November 7-9, 2007*

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## Message from the Minister

As announced in the 2007 Throne Speech, *Visions to Actions – A Roadmap to 2020* provided the forum for citizens to discuss rural issues with key decision makers.

During the two-day conference, meaningful discussion occurred between government officials, citizens and stakeholders on the opportunities and challenges facing the province's rural communities. Issues discussed included providing a greater voice for youth, how to increase economic activity, improving access to public services, skills development, infrastructure investment, along with community leadership and regional cooperation.



The dialogue confirmed the need for a regional approach to investing in the tools and opportunities required to improve accessibility to programs and services. I am confident that the conference's outcomes will be incorporated into the work of Government and the Rural Secretariat Councils as we plan for 2020.

TREVOR TAYLOR

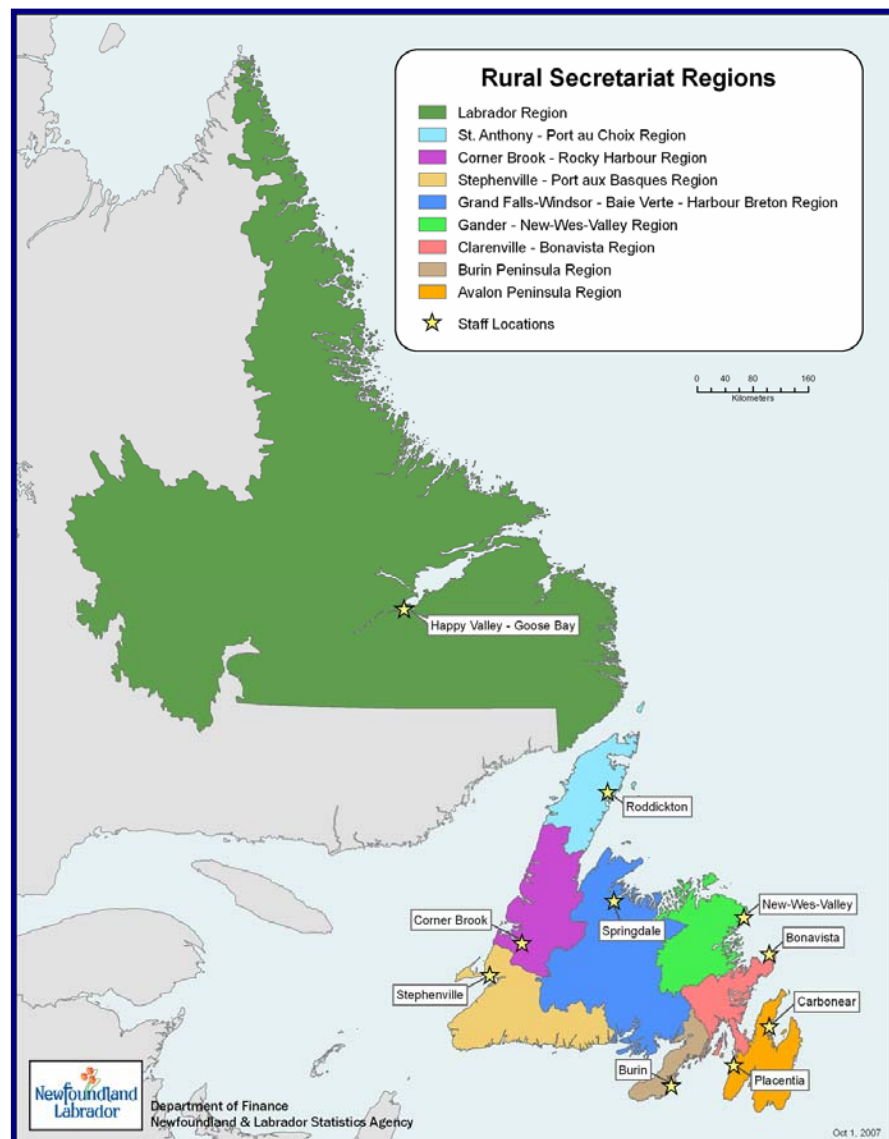
A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "T. Taylor".

Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat

## Rural Secretariat Overview

The Rural Secretariat focuses on the sustainable development of the province's regions. It facilitates information sharing, informed dialogue and collaboration within regions. It encourages integrated thinking and shared decision making on regional issues. The Rural Secretariat engages citizens to become more informed on regional issues in policy development. It involves citizens, through its citizen-based Provincial and Regional Councils, in discussions with government about long-term regional sustainability.

The Rural Secretariat has a provincial office and 10 regional offices located in nine regions throughout the province including Labrador, St. Anthony – Port au Choix, Corner Brook – Rocky Harbour, Stephenville – Port aux Basques, Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton, Gander – New-Wes-Valley, Clarenville – Bonavista, Burin Peninsula and Avalon Peninsula (See map).



Within the Provincial Government, the Rural Secretariat:

- Raises awareness of rural issues.
- Participates on interdepartmental policy development committees that are addressing issues of importance to rural areas.
- Practices and supports implementation of a Rural Lens.
- Participates on a range of external research exercises, and works with industry, community and special interest groups.
- Engages citizens through a broad citizen engagement process.

Rural Secretariat staff continues to work with Councils to support the implementation of the Councils' vision statements and their identification of major policy priorities for discussion with the Provincial Government.

Each region of the Rural Secretariat has a Regional Council. Each Council is a cross-section of volunteers balanced by gender, age and community size with economic, social, cultural, and environmental perspectives. A membership list is available at: <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalcouncil.asp>

The Provincial Council is a forum for citizens to directly engage with policy makers. It has members from each of the nine Regional Councils as well as representatives from key stakeholder and interest groups. A membership list is available at: <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/provincialcouncil.asp>

Each year the Rural Secretariat hosts *Dialogue Days*. These forums, held annually beginning in 2004, bring together the Provincial Government, Regional and Provincial Council members, business representatives and other stakeholders to discuss regional sustainability. Each *Dialogue Day* has been different, but collectively they have helped shape the ongoing discussions that the Rural Secretariat promotes between government and citizens in the province.



Linda Brett, Regional  
Partnership Planner

## Conference Synopsis

The Provincial Government announced the conference during the Throne Speech, April 24, 2007: *“My Government this fall will bring together all Regional and Provincial Council members of the Rural Secretariat, the three orders of Government and senior public officials for a fully-interactive conference under the theme “Visions to Actions: A Roadmap to 2020”. Together, those who know rural issues best will chart the best course forward, region by region, initiative by bold initiative.”*

The conference was held at Gander, November 7-9, 2007 and was attended by close to 200 participants, including the Premier, Ministers, Rural Secretariat Regional and Provincial Councils, Deputy Ministers, senior federal officials and stakeholder organizations. There were 30 youth representatives in attendance. The conference agenda and speakers’ biographies are included as Appendices A and B.

Sheila Kelly-Blackmore, Chair of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, opened the conference. She highlighted the significant turnout of Ministers and spoke about how pleased she, the Rural Secretariat and the Provincial Government were to see the youth representation at the conference. Rob Greenwood, Director of Memorial University’s Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, served as navigator for the event.

The Honourable Danny Williams, Premier, and the Honourable Trevor Taylor, Minister Responsible for the Rural Secretariat, each addressed the conference and confirmed the Provincial Government’s commitment to advancing the growth and development of rural areas. Minister Taylor also spoke about the role of youth in the conference and the need to further engage youth through the Regional Councils.

Keynote addresses were delivered by Sharon Manson Singer, president of the Canadian Policy Research Network who focused on international, national and provincial rural trends; Jerry Byrne, CEO of DF Barnes Group of St. John’s who focused on business and labour market opportunities within the province specifically with respect to the offshore oil industry; and, Ivan Emke, associate professor, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College who discussed issues regarding citizen engagement and community responsiveness to change.

*“I am encouraged by the turnout of all of cabinet and the premier for the conference, this speaks well of government’s commitment to rural sustainability.”*

*Sheila Kelly-Blackmore*

The conference also featured a youth panel. The Honourable Shawn Skinner, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment introduced the session. Panelists included Chan Wiseman of FINALLY (North Harbour), Trina Appleby of Appleby Consulting (Burin) and Burin Regional Council, Jay McGrath, a university student and Avalon Regional Council member (St. Bride's), and Darrell Rice, youth coordinator (Botwood).

Three small group break-out sessions were held throughout the event. These sessions allowed participants to discuss rural opportunities and challenges as well as actions government and citizens could pursue in response. Six major rural policy issues were discussed, including infrastructure, public services, regional partnerships and development, economic growth, skilled labour, and youth retention and engagement. Key challenges and suggested solutions and actions, as identified in the small group discussions, are summarized in Section 3.

Rob Greenwood identified possible next steps from the presentations and break-out sessions. He noted that every organization (government and non-government) should compare what was said during the conference to their existing plans – does it reinforce what you are already doing? Does it conflict? Who do you think is the appropriate lead? How does your organization stack up? He also noted that government departments, businesses, organizations and stakeholders should consult with each other, and that if non-governmental organizations do not have the resources or authority to do what they should be doing to benefit regional sustainability, then work on improving governance is needed.

Over the coming months, it is expected that Rural Secretariat Regional Councils through their discussions with government officials and other stakeholders will reflect on the outcomes at this conference. In doing so, they will develop a listing of specific actions and next steps to advance identified policy priorities as the province plans for 2020.

*"I was impressed to see the dialogue between citizens, cabinet and youth organizations discussing youth retention. I feel this is the most crucial issue facing our province today."*

*Jay McGrath, panelist youth*



*Rhonda Tulk-Lane, FINALLY!*



*James Farrell, MUN Student Union*



*Youth Panelists Jay McGrath, Trina Appleby, and Chan Wiseman*



*Danny Huxter  
Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton Regional Council*



## What We Heard: Break-out Sessions

Over the past two years, common themes have been emerging through Regional and Provincial Councils' deliberations on the pillars of long-term regional sustainability. These pillars include infrastructure, public services, regional partnerships, economic growth and skilled labour. Youth retention is also a common theme. The challenges, solutions and actions identified in this section summarize the perspectives and points brought forward by participants during the break-out session discussions.

*The material in this section reflects the views and outcomes of the small group discussions at the conference.*

*We need better Research and Development around design and construction of environmentally friendly municipal infrastructure, and this will require far more collaboration between government, communities, MUN and CNA.*

*Infrastructure group participant*

## Infrastructure

The challenges affecting infrastructure that were identified during the break-out sessions included: providing environmentally-friendly infrastructure, infrastructure design, broadband and transportation. The following were suggested as potential solutions to infrastructure challenges:

**Challenge:** Environmentally-friendly infrastructure

*There is a need to mitigate the impact of infrastructure on the environment and to plan to adapt to environmental change. How can we balance these needs?*

**Solution/ Actions:**

- a. Proper research and development for design and construction of environmentally-friendly infrastructure by way of investments and more collaboration occurring among stakeholders.

**Challenge:** Infrastructure investments

*Councils are challenged by the overwhelming needs for infrastructure improvements. How do we allocate finite resources among regions and communities, and among differing infrastructure priorities?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Meet infrastructure needs based on community size, location and realistic expectations through more collaboration between government and regions.
- b. Offer more innovative services. The Rural Secretariat should initiate dialogue on this topic for further discussion in the future.
- c. Review the state of existing infrastructure that is currently available to determine where investments are needed.
- d. Consult and engage engineers within the Provincial Government as well as (if necessary) engineering departments of public education institutions within the province on infrastructure needs.

**Challenge:** Broadband

*Telecommunications linkages, primarily broadband, are seen as vital for regional growth. Communities without broadband are challenged to create new business opportunity and stronger social ties. How do regions gain access to and benefit from broadband services?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Each region needs to be equipped and have complete access to affordable communications.
- b. Educate citizens on broadband, what benefits they provide, and what services are possible for each.
- c. Train more individuals to use communications systems and e-commerce.
- d. Attract more industry and business using broadband by identifying business to attract and ensuring other local employers, employees and others are properly trained.

**Challenge:** Transportation

*Coastal settlement patterns present transportation infrastructure challenges, particularly given economic, social and demographic trends. How do we invest to meet these trends?*



**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Offer rebates on air travel from places offering inadequate and costly air travel services such as in Labrador.
- b. Provide access to public transportation in rural communities but keep environmental considerations in mind (for example: bus services, car pooling). Also, consult with the transportation industry: can buses be used for other purposes such as drop-off/pick-up services for senior events.
- c. Increase road safety by paving roads at a high quality and reviewing accident “hot spots” on highways.

## Public Services

Participants identified challenges to public services including: access to services, regionalism, defining citizens’ expectations and maximizing available resources. With respect to Municipal Government, participants discussed which of our towns and businesses are significant for the future sustainability of regions, where public services should be delivered, and how public services can be enhanced. The following were identified as potential solutions to the challenges identified:

*“Our province needs to build stronger regional partnerships in the delivery of key public services.”*

*Public Services participant*

**Challenge:** Access to public services

*Regions wish to have access to public services within reasonable commuting distance. How can we better share existing resources and infrastructure to improve delivery? How do we bring players together to ensure efficiency?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Multi-service delivery – partnering of municipalities and community-based organizations to provide ease of access to public services. Potential actions include:
  - Invest in high speed broadband to enable citizens in rural areas to access on-line services.
  - Partner with local municipalities and community-based organizations to support use of on-line services to reduce issues created by low literacy and low income barriers. Computers can be intimidating for certain populations and so communication is key and training is what is needed.
  - Develop multi-service delivery model for regions based upon a criteria which defines where specific services can be accessed.
- b. Promote what is available now through partnerships with community-based organizations.
- c. Develop regional centers to house computers with internet services so that community members can access on-line information on public services.

**Challenge:** Regionalism

*Organizations and community groups within regions need to work together and collaborate closely with government. How do we promote regional thinking and encourage new approaches to regional governance and partnerships?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Pilot governance models to identify best practice for sharing services and a new regional governance. Potential actions include:



- Need to engage community, in a broad sense, in order to inform and educate so that people can be comfortable with decision making e.g. future location of schools, waste management, land use planning, etc.
- Provide “regional block funding” for the delivery of certain public services such as municipal services and fire protection.
- Review and re-organize community development models.
- Government should merge programs that are offering similar services that are competing for similar pots of money.
- Money should not be thrown at regions as a solution to regional sustainability. What is needed is a plan for strategic investment and the best return on investment.
- Governments should reflect on their approaches to municipal governance and supports to community-based organizations in an effort to reduce duplication, build partnerships and capitalize on working together.
- Communicate necessary information. Establish an information navigator to assist citizens in finding information on public services. Citizens do not know how to access services and an office is needed to inform citizens and employers on where services are located and who is responsible for delivery.

**Challenge:** Defining citizens’ and government public services’ expectations

*Government is challenged to meet citizens’ expectations in delivering a wide range of public services in rural areas. How do we build a better understanding of these issues?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Define community expectations, find balance between community and government expectations and determine what is realistic. Community engagement, education and awareness are critical.

- b. Through roundtable discussions with community members, define community successes, needs and priorities for sustainability. Then discuss openly with Regional Councils and government.

**Challenge:** Maximizing available resources

*How do we ensure that government resources are being fully utilized in an equitable and effective manner, and that investments in regions are fairly distributed?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Examine mandates of government-funded organizations to reduce duplication and increase efficiency. Potential actions include:
- Allocate funding blocks by Rural Secretariat regions and empower community leaders to decide where it allocates money (e.g. fire service delivery).
  - Community core needs to be identified as money is allocated.
  - Leased spaces vs. owned buildings. Why is government spreading out government offices all over the region? We should put services under one roof.
- b. Re-define and restructure municipal structure to find new ways to balance public spending in all rural communities, both for incorporated and unincorporated communities.
- c. Change youths' perspectives by promoting entrepreneurship to youth. Use available services to create sustainable opportunities. Youth need information on what opportunities will yield better investments. Information should be available for all regions.

## Regional Partnerships & Development

Participants identified challenges affecting regional partnerships and development including: thinking regionally, empowering communities and regions, lack of shared vision, leadership and volunteerism, participation levels, education, and fear of losing autonomy.

Participants also spoke about ways to get community members involved and to attract volunteers. Participants identified potential solutions:

**Challenge:** Think regionally and empower communities and regions

*In the past, communities have been competitive around infrastructure and public services. However current demographic and economic challenges require regional thinking. How do we promote regional cooperation to ensure long-term sustainability?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Make programs and services more accessible through information sharing, revised funding mechanisms, facilitating a common understanding, and developing resources for research and development.

*"Our regions need to embrace a common vision for the future and build a culture of regional cooperation."*

*Regional Partnerships  
and Development  
participant*

- b. Decentralization. Transfer more authority and or services to regional structures. Actions to begin this process could include consultation with government, community members, educational facilities and the Rural Secretariat to clarify needs.
- c. Develop strong partnerships and develop a communications plan. It is important that it is communicated clearly when regional governance and structures are being put into place.
- d. Develop a pilot project around new forms of regional governance.

**Challenge:** Lack of shared vision

*Communities, organizations and departments are perceived to lack a unified vision of the future. How do we create common goals and clearly defined regional outcomes?*

- Solution/  
Actions:**
- a. Encourage community knowledge of and contribution to the vision documents created by the Regional Councils through the continuation of the community engagement process.
  - b. Through the community engagement process, participants should be encouraged to share success stories of cooperation from their communities.
  - c. Define regions and communities and consider a unit of analysis where communities work, plan and think together.

**Challenge:** Leadership and volunteerism

*Demographic trends are creating challenges to recruitment for the volunteer sector. Where will volunteers come from?*

- Solution/  
Actions:**
- a. Increase participation through researching barriers to participation, providing support systems for volunteers, and targeting audiences such as youth (through the school system) and those ages 25-40.

**Challenge:** Education

*Education is critical to the success of regions and the province. How can we enhance education and skills development?*

- Solution/  
Actions:**
- a. Community members need to come together to tackle education issues in a positive matter and develop specific action plans.
  - b. Determine an engagement list to bring together the right people to talk about education issues.
  - c. Inform youth about opportunities and work to improve youth accessibility to education.

**Challenge:** Fear of losing autonomy

*Rural communities fear that they will lose their identity through regionalization. How do we maintain a strong sense of community within strong regions?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Seek to ensure people feel like they have control over the changes occurring in their regions.
- b. Maintain or enhance community identity.

## Economic Growth

Participants identified challenges including: human capital investments, investment in research and development, commercialization, economic growth planning, transportation and communications infrastructure, entrepreneurship opportunities and demographic challenges. Participants discussed the province's changing workforce, attitudes and supply of skilled labour as well as the importance of career planning. Participants identified the following potential solutions to identified challenges:

*"We are transitioning to a new generation in rural areas, and we need to better understand that generation's employment expectations. It is very different from their parent's generation."*

*Economic Growth  
participant*

**Challenge:** Human capital investments

*Today's economy is based on the strength of human capital. How do we ensure that each region has skilled people to compete globally?*

**Solutions/  
Actions:**

- a. Through strategic planning in infrastructure and restructuring in communities, investments need to be made to improve the quality of life by making quality programs and services available.
- b. Taking a regional approach and using multipurpose infrastructure that may already exist also needs to be considered.
- c. Secondary school curriculum needs to provide access to programs that meet the increasing labour demands.

**Challenge:** Investments in research and development (R&D) and commercialization

*R&D investments are increasingly important in a globalized knowledge-based economy. How does rural Newfoundland and Labrador gain access to more R&D?*

**Solutions/  
Actions**

- a. Support micro-business and business incubation processes from idea to commercialization by creating a research and development fund and making business incubation centers accessible.
- b. Conduct feasibility studies in rural areas through the development of a research and development fund. Also, make business facilitation personnel available to support business growth.

**Challenge:** Transportation and communications infrastructure quality and availability

*Rural areas need access to key transportation and communication infrastructure in order to be sustainable. What are the main challenges and how do we address them?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Provide improved ferry and transportation services. Work with ferry and other transportation service providers to reduce costs.
- b. Increase broadband and cell phone services to reach rural areas.

**Challenge:** Planning processes

*Economic strategies are vital for regions. How do we mobilize firms, communities and government to create successful economic strategies?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Strengthen local leadership and increase regional opportunities to inform policies and to create regional opportunities.
- b. Create more inclusive and closer linkages to the planning process and create better strategies from local to regional to provincial levels. Actions required include coordinating programs and services by way of local level relationship building and through looking at the business case focus as a priority.

**Challenge:** Entrepreneurship

*Entrepreneurship is a function of education, business supports and a culture which supports and values risk-taking. How do we enhance these supports and build such a culture?*

**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Simplify business funding processes through regional coordination, and decision-making. Provide information on entrepreneurship, e.g., how to get started, helpful contacts, funding sources etc.
- b. Implement one-stop-shopping coordination through rationalizing the process by use of local resources and streamlining access to services and resources.
- c. Provide education and awareness of entrepreneurship in schools.
- d. Value and provide support for existing entrepreneurs.

**Challenge:** Demographic challenges

*Population aging and out-migration are creating labour supply challenges. How do we respond to these shortages and ensure skilled people are available for regional economies?*



**Solution/  
Actions:**

- a. Provide sustainable and year-round employment by offering entrepreneurship support as discussed above, business-based planning and market development (global/local).
- b. Accept the changing labour force realities and transitions, develop immigration strategies and offer student debt relief.

## Skilled Labour

Participants identified the major challenges affecting skilled labour, including attitudes, awareness and lack of accessible education, social skills and youth engagement, and career development and labour shortages. Participants also discussed the need for: educational institutions and industry to collaborate and identify training and skills needs within the province, more trades opportunities for females, creating awareness of available programs and funding opportunities. Participants identified the following potential solutions to identified challenges:

*“We need to change negative attitudes about rural areas by making people more aware of opportunities available to skilled workers.”*

*Skilled Labour  
participant*

**Challenge:** Attitudes, awareness and lack of accessible education

*There are opportunities and success stories in rural areas. How do we communicate the importance of education to young people to take advantage of such opportunities?*

**Solutions/  
Actions:**

- a. Highlight employment opportunities and success stories through the development of a marketing plan. Also, through the marketing plan, inform individuals of major developments on the horizon such as Voisey’s Bay Smelter, liquefied natural gas (LNG) and Lower Churchill and employment opportunities that would come from the developments
  - The primary focus of the campaign should be specifically geared toward youth. Utilize youth oriented media forums such as Facebook and YouTube.
  - Organize a planning team to aid in the development of the marketing plan. Planning teams should be widely representative including private sector with a predominately youth-based decision-making team.
- b. Allocate funding to industry to create incentives for businesses to offer apprentice spots and mentorship programs; to identify new direct and indirect businesses due to demographic shifts and economic diversification; to create jobs through research and development; and to provide workplace training.

- c. Develop the means for post-secondary courses to be accessible in rural areas through distance learning.
- d. Link post-secondary education programs to provincial industry training needs.
- e. Eliminate barriers for citizens through offering child care supports, offering funding to businesses and/or groups of businesses who can provide child care services to their employees, and offering appropriate training.
- f. Red Ochre Regional Economic Development Board has developed a database on individuals who have moved out of the zone. When jobs become available in the zone, they send information out to their contacts in the database to inform them of the opportunity that is available. This could be used as a model to build on.
- g. Offer incentives to recent graduates that stay in the province.
  - Balance financial inequalities of urban and rural students.
  - Link incentives to educated youth remaining in the province for employment through tax-free salaries or loan forgiveness.
  - Colleges and universities need to become strong publicly-funded training institutions and be equipped to respond to provincial needs of industry and development.



Lori O'Brien, Labrador Regional Council

**Challenge:** Social skills and youth engagement

*We are challenged to engage young people on the issues facing their regions and give them forums to express themselves. How do we build youth leaders in regions?*

**Solutions/  
Actions:**

- a. Engage youth in conferences – locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- b. Communicate the importance of the opinion of youth to increase youth confidence at conferences, meetings and other events.
- c. Discuss youth engagement with youth organizations such as FINALLY, Community Youth Network and Junior Achievement.

**Challenge:** Career development and labour shortages

*Population aging and out-migration are creating labour supply challenges. How do we respond to these shortages and ensure skilled people are available for regional economies?*

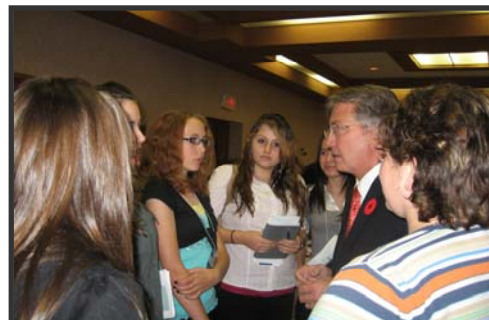
**Solutions/  
Actions:**

- a. Offer more programs to support personality and need assessments and offer career exploration services to all citizens.
- b. Programs should be available to citizens where they can explore a variety of different fields similar to what is being done with the Women Exploring Trades program offered by College of the North Atlantic (CNA) – women have the opportunity to explore a variety of trades and then enroll in the full-fledged program at CNA in their area of interest. This program should not be limited to just women but should be open to all citizens.
- c. Involve private sector in hosting career fairs outside the province.
- d. Recognize and analyze the causes for changing demographics and shortages in skilled labour.
  - Utilize mobile workforce by creating employment opportunities for workers when they are home.
  - Market employment opportunities to mobile workforce for those interested.
- e. Provide subsidized child care, flexible work hours and other services to facilitate marginalized groups to enter the labour force.
- f. Increase participation of marginal groups in the workforce
  - i. Women
    - Increase number of subsidized child care seats
    - Increase subsidized maternity benefits by public and private employers
    - More flexible maternity leave; paid and unpaid
    - Review international adoption policies
    - Fund training for women not attached to the workforce
  - ii. Aboriginals
    - Increase career services to aboriginal graduates
  - iii. Immigrants
    - Target international students as research indicates higher and longer retention rates
    - Continue with provincial immigration strategies
  - iv. Persons receiving income support
    - Re-visit Employment Insurance and how it affects labour supply.

*"This province is changing.  
Through change comes opportunity."  
Minister Trevor Taylor*

# Youth Session

During the break-out sessions following the youth panel, participants discussed youth out-migration. Six major drivers of youth out-migration emerged: lack of opportunities, attitudes, infrastructure, global exposure, student debt and debts in general, and level of engagement. Potential solutions were suggested for each.



Community Youth Network Representatives and Premier Williams

**Challenge:** Lack of opportunities

*Youth retention requires opportunities for them to stay. How do we create opportunity and retain our young people?*

## Solutions/ Actions

- a. Getting the message out to youth that there are opportunities here.
  - Identify opportunities currently available and those that will be available in the near future.
  - Encourage entrepreneurship and change thinking from 'no opportunities exist' to 'I can create opportunities.'
  - Integrate awareness programs in schools and develop career programs for youth.
- b. Offer tax breaks to youth who stay in the province for the first \$100,000 they make and offer debt reduction programs.
- c. Through government and industry working together, offer permanent positions rather than temporary.
- d. Create sustainable employment through government, the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, communities and industry working together.
- e. Create a better service for advertising jobs.

*"We have to be engaged in the important decisions impacting us."*

*Youth participant*

**Challenges:** Youth attitudes

*Young people are often unaware of the opportunities in the province, or have been influenced by negative views of the prospects of rural areas. How can we overcome these challenges and communicate optimism for the future?*



**Solutions/  
Actions**

- a. Market to youth from within the education system.
  - Work within the education system to change attitudes and create awareness of opportunities in the province.
  - Market opportunities, programs and services that are already available and promote and encourage youth to seek employment and start businesses in the province.
- b. Enhance the mentorship and peer process through government and industry partnerships.
- c. Recognize globalization and urbanization and acknowledge that out-migration is part of our culture and that youth may feel the need to move for a period of time.
- d. Embrace the idea of mobile workers (those who work out of the province but their family and their dwellings remain in the province) rather than out-migration. Supports are needed for the family members that remain in the province such as accessible childcare, flexible work, maternity leave and parental benefits.

**Challenge:** Global Exposure

*Young people are more aware of the opportunities throughout the world than in the past. How do we encourage global opportunity while promoting opportunities to live and work in rural areas?*

**Solutions/  
Actions**

- a. Create incentives for youth to take advantage of exposure.
- b. Create a marketing plan to advertise the appeal of smaller communities and the rural way of life.
- c. Encourage and enable youth to participate in conferences locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.

**Challenge:** Lack of infrastructure

*Youth have high expectations regarding public services and infrastructure. How do we ensure that our regions have a sufficient mix of programs and infrastructure?*

**Solutions/  
Actions**

- a. Enhance infrastructure to allow youth to move to rural areas easier.
  - Make telecommunications accessible and affordable.
  - Build major centers and bring municipalities together.
  - Increase services in areas where they are lacking.
  - Create more multi-purpose facilities.
  - Engage youth in the decision-making processes deciding what infrastructure is needed and what needs to be updated.



**Challenge:** Student debt and youth debt in general

*Student debt is put forward by many as a major factor forcing young people out of their communities and out of the province. How do we ensure that student debt does not drive youth out-migration?*

**Solutions/  
Actions**

- a. Encourage government and the business community to offer economic incentives for youth to stay in the province.
- b. Offer new and promote current debt reduction programs and tax credits for educated youth who stay in the province.

**Challenge:** Youth Engagement

*There are strong benefits to young people becoming more engaged in their communities. How do we provide opportunities for such engagement?*

**Solutions/  
Actions**

- a. Advertise skill sets and their relevance to job prospects in regions.
- b. Create succession plans for careers available within the province.
- c. Encourage government and the business community to offer permanent positions, signing bonuses and other incentives to keep youth in the province.
- d. Engage youth in discussions about incentives to retain and attract them to the province.



*Premier Williams addresses the media*



*Penelope Rowe  
Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat*

# Evaluation

Participants' opinions of the conference including the speakers' sessions, youth panel, and small group discussions, were mostly positive. Participants were actively involved in the conference as question and answer periods were extended during all three speeches and more time was sought at the end of each break-out session. The main issue identified by participants was insufficient time and focus.

*"It is important to continually expose senior decision makers in government to citizens' views. We have choices to make about where our regions are going, and it is important to get citizen input into that process."*

*Kerry Murray, Avalon Council Chair*

There were 87 written evaluations completed and returned. Positive feedback was focused on the level of engagement and the range of participants from varying backgrounds, educations and professions. Participants were also pleased with the attendance and engagement of Ministers and Deputy Ministers. Several evaluations indicated that the participants felt the conference was valuable and provided new learning.

Some indicated that the conference and the break-out sessions were too short, needed to be more focused, and needed more youth involvement. Participants expected the conference to be more focused on actions and suggested that there is a need to clarify the roles of the Regional Councils and Rural Secretariat.

From the evaluation, the following points have been identified:

- While citizens, government and other stakeholders are committed and interested in the process of citizen engagement, there needs to be continued engagement and actions or results in the near future to keep momentum.
- Because the role of the Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils is that of a long-term advisory function, the Rural Secretariat needs to continue to communicate its role and value in a way that is understandable to citizens.
- Youth want to be engaged and government, Regional Councils and stakeholders want their input: there is an opportunity to bring youth, government, Regional Councils and stakeholders together.



*Nina Mitchelmore, Regional Partnership Planner, facilitates Small Group Discussion*

Section  
**5**

*Appendices:*

Appendix A – Conference Agenda

Appendix B – Keynote Speakers & Youth Panelist Biographies



Evening Reception with entertainment from the Gander Academy Choir; Chris Morrison, Pianist; and Isabel Blackwood reading a short story.





## Appendix A - Conference Agenda

### Visions to Actions – A Roadmap to 2020 Hotel Gander

*Wednesday, November 7, 2007*

Time	Topic	Description
5:30 – 9:00	Registration	
7:30 – 8:30	Opening Reception	Welcoming Remarks from Chair, Sheila Kelly-Blackmore, Hon. Minister O'Brien and Hon. Minister Taylor.

*Thursday, November 8, 2007*

Time	Topic	Description
8:30–9:00	Opening Remarks	Chair, Sheila Kelly-Blackmore, Chair of Provincial Council
	Conference overview	Conference Navigator, Rob Greenwood, Leslie Harris Center
9:00–9:40	Keynote Address: An overview of rural trends nationally and internationally	Sharon Manson-Singer, President, Canadian Policy Research Network, Ottawa
9:40–9:50	Response followed by Q & A period	Michael Graham, Chair, Burin Regional Council and Campus Administrator, Burin CNA campus
10:20–10:50	Theme 1: Economic and labour market response to change in Newfoundland and Labrador	Jerry Byrne, CEO of DF Barnes Group, St. John's
10:50–11:00	Response followed by Q & A period	Bernice Walker, Grand Falls-Windsor-Baie Verte-Harbour Breton Regional Council and President, Corona College
11:00-12:30	Break out session	All conference participants
12:30–1:45	Lunch and Luncheon Speaker	Hon. Danny Williams, Premier
1:45–2:15	Theme 2: Enhancing community responsiveness	Ivan Emke, Sir Wilfred Grenfell College, Corner Brook
2:15–2:25	Response followed by Q & A period	Penelope Rowe, Provincial Council of Rural Secretariat, and Executive Director of the Community Services Council NL
2:35–3:30	Break out session	All conference participants
3:50–4:15	Recap of the day & closing remarks - What participants said - Potential action items	Rob Greenwood & Sheila-Kelly Blackmore
7:00	Dinner and Entertainment	Rising Tide Theatre

*Friday, November 8, 2007*

<b>Time</b>	<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>
8:45–9:00	Conference overview	Conference Navigator, Rob Greenwood
9:00–10:00	Theme 3: Retaining and engaging youth	<b>Panelists</b> Hon. Shawn Skinner, Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment  <b>Youth leadership</b> – Chan Wiseman (FINALY)  <b>Youth opportunity</b> – Trina Appleby (Appleby Consulting, Burin Regional Council)  <b>Social and cultural change</b> – Jay McGrath (University student, Avalon Regional Council)  <b>Youth mentorship</b> – Darrell Rice (Community Youth Network Coordinator, Botwood)
10:00–11:00	Break out session	All conference participants
11:30–12:00	Conference conclusions and next steps followed by Q & A period	Conference Navigator, Rob Greenwood
12:15–1:30	Lunch and Luncheon Speaker	Hon. Trevor Taylor Minister Responsible for Rural Secretariat
1:30	Concluding remarks conference close	Sheila Kelly-Blackmore



*Dinner Entertainment: Rising Tide Theatre*

## Appendix B

### Biographies (Keynote Speakers, Conference Navigator, Chair of the Provincial Council & Youth Panelists)

#### Sheila Kelly-Blackmore, Chair of the Provincial Council



Ms. Kelly-Blackmore has been involved in business management, community and international development work for more than 30 years. Over the past 11 years as general manager of St. Jude Hotel in Clarenville, with a staff of 40+ employees, she has been recognized with a number of provincial tourism business excellence awards. Most recently, the property received national recognition from the Tourism Industry Association of Canada with the CTHRC Award of Excellence in Human Resources Management.

A past president of Hospitality Newfoundland and Labrador, Ms. Kelly-Blackmore continues to serve on the provincial executive and board. She was personally recognized by the provincial tourism industry with the H. Clayton Sparkes "Accommodator of the Year Award." Her business management background is coupled with several years serving as a Community College Administrator in St. Anthony and the Yukon and international development work in Suriname and Sri Lanka.

Ms. Kelly-Blackmore resides in Sandy Cove, Bonavista Bay where she serves on the local town council. Ms. Kelly-Blackmore has been involved with numerous community volunteer organizations. Her years of volunteer international development work in Canada and overseas were honored with the James Robinson's Award from Canadian Crossroads International.

#### Dr. Rob Greenwood, Conference Navigator



Rob is the founding Director of The Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Policy and Development, which was launched on October 1st, 2004. The Harris Centre's mandate is to coordinate and facilitate Memorial University's educational, research and outreach activities in the areas of regional policy and development. He is cross-appointed with Memorial's Faculty of Business Administration.

Rob has operated his own consulting business and has served as a Director and Assistant Deputy Minister of Policy in Economic Development departments in Newfoundland and Labrador and in Saskatchewan. He was Vice-President, Corporate Development, Information Services Corporation of Saskatchewan, and was founding Director of the Sustainable Communities Initiative, a partnership of the University of Regina, the City of Regina, and the National Research Council of Canada.

Rob holds a Ph.D. in Industrial and Business Studies from the University of Warwick, England, which he attended as a Commonwealth Scholar and an Institute of Social and Economic Research Doctoral Fellow. He was Newfoundland's representative on the International Advisory Board of the North Atlantic Islands Program. He has taught, consulted, published and presented extensively on community economic and regional development, strategic economic planning, sectoral and cluster development and knowledge mobilization. He is Past-President of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation, Chair of the National Rural Research Network and past-Chair of the North Atlantic Forum.

### Dr. Sharon Manson Singer, Keynote Speaker



Dr. Manson Singer has more than two decades of experience in the public policy environment. From 1997 to 2001, she held a number of deputy minister positions in the British Columbia government, including being the lead deputy minister for British Columbia during the creation of the National Child Benefit and the National Children's Agenda. Dr. Manson Singer was a tenured professor at the University of British Columbia and is also an adjunct professor at the School of Public Administration at University of Victoria and Faculty of Management at Royal Roads University.

Her areas of expertise include health and social policy, research methods, voluntary sector management and leadership. She has served as an expert advisor to all levels of government in Canada and internationally on issues related to income security and poverty reduction. Her Ph.D. in social welfare economics is from Brandeis University in the United States where she studied as a National Welfare Fellow. Between 2001 and 2005 she operated her own consulting firm, providing advice on corporate governance, public policy design and advice, strategic management, business development and human resources development counsel to the private, public and voluntary sectors both in Canada and internationally.

Dr. Manson Singer has a long history of service to the business and voluntary sectors having served as Vice-Chair of BC Hydro and BC Hydro International and on the executive boards of the United Way, Social Research and Development Corporation, Laurier Institute, Canadian Council on Social Development, Centre for Non-Profit Management, Britannia Community Services Society, BC Addiction Foundation among many others.

## **Jerry Byrne, Keynote Speaker**



Born and raised in Newfoundland and Labrador, Jerry graduated from Memorial University in 1977 with a Bachelor of Engineering degree. In 1983 he founded a successful instrumentation company, SEA Systems, and went on to establish companies on a local, national and international scale both in Newfoundland and Labrador and the United States.

Jerry is currently President and CEO of the D. F. Barnes Group, a company that has grown under his leadership over the past 5 years from a 10 person “mom and pop” operation on the St. John’s waterfront to an internationally recognized group of seven companies with over 500 employees. Revenues have grown from \$1 million a year to over \$60 million this year.

Jerry and D.F. Barnes have won several awards and have been featured in many world trade magazines and newspapers.

Jerry is active with the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of Newfoundland and Labrador, Junior Achievement and the St. John’s Board of Trade. He Chairs and is a Director with Newfoundland and Labrador’s Oil and Gas Industries Association (NOIA) and also chairs several committees.

## **Dr. Ivan Emke, Keynote Speaker**



Ivan Emke is currently an Associate Professor of Social/Cultural Studies (and Head of Social Science) at Memorial University’s Grenfell College Campus. He teaches courses in Communication, Culture, Rural Canada, Social Movements, Research Methods, Cultural Anthropology and Death and Dying. He concentrated his university education in four major disciplines: Communication Studies, Public Relations, Anthropology, and Sociology.

His research includes two major themes, the first of which focuses around the relationship of communication tools and strategies to community economic development. In this area, he is interested in how effective communication can engage communities at a grassroots level, and thus facilitate decision-making and crisis management. Conversely, failures in both intra-community and inter-community communication can create serious barriers in long-term social and economic development. Specific communication tools under study (in addition to face-to-face interactions) include both profit-based mainstream media (such as community newspapers) as well as non-profit community-based media (such as public access cable television and low power radio).

In addition to personal research in this area, Professor Emke is a part of several academic-based research groups. As a member of the New Rural Economy project, he is involved in the Communications Theme group and also coordinates two field sites in

Newfoundland. He is a co-director of a communication sub-node of an Atlantic research group which is operating under a grant through Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) of Canada's Social Economy Suite. He is also part of a recent Community-University Research Alliance, centred in the Bonne Bay region, which has just been funded by SSHRC. This year, Ivan been working on a proposal to set up a Rural Research Centre in western Newfoundland, by trying to bring together a group of educational, economic development and government partners.

The other research theme, a conversation-stopper at parties, is the Funeral Services Industry in Canada and the US. You can ask him about that one at your own discretion.

### **Panel on Youth Retention and Engagement**

#### **Trina Appleby , Youth Panelist**

Trina Appleby is the owner of Appleby Consulting, a Burin Peninsula based consulting business. Trina was elected to the NOIA Board of Directors in February 2007, and is the first person from the Burin Peninsula to be elected to the NOIA board.



In past years, Trina has completed several projects pertinent to skilled trades shortages specific to construction and fabrication for the oil and gas industry for the Schooner Regional Development Corporation.

Current and past projects have included both regional partners, and industry stakeholders including: operators, major contractors, industry associations, unions, government, labour and regulatory organizations.

Years of industry research, coupled with working in rural environments – especially the Burin Peninsula, provides Trina with insight into local strengths, opportunities, and the effects of regional, provincial, national, and international drivers to the future development of Newfoundland and Labrador's offshore.

#### **Jay McGrath, Youth Panelist**

Jay McGrath is 23 years old from Branch. He is a graduate of Memorial University with a double major in History and English and is nearing completion of a degree in Business Administration. He is currently on a workterm placement with the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development. Jay is a columnist for the Charter regional newspaper serving Placentia and the Cape Shore and recently finished up as a member of the Community Editorial Board with the Telegram.

In addition to volunteering on the Avalon Regional Council, he also volunteers with the Red Cross as a member of their Recruitment Team, the Community Linkages Concept Committee, and the Cape Shore Rural Development Association. He recently finished a five-year term on the Board of Directors, including two years as chair, with Futures in Newfoundland and Labrador's Youth. His volunteer efforts saw him nominated for the Young Leaders in Rural Canada Award in 2006.

## Darrell Rice, Youth Panelist

Darrell has been working with youth for almost ten years. Most of that time he has been employed with the Botwood Boys and Girls Club/ Community Youth Network as the Executive Director. This position has seen Darrell involved in numerous programs that have had elements of mentoring and leadership. Some such programs are employment related, peer counseling, teen mentorship, volunteer initiatives and many others. Outside his work he is also a mediator with Alternative Measures, involved in Crime Prevention, serves on the Central Jumpstart Committee, a volunteer firefighter, he has coached broomball, volleyball, hockey and numerous other sports. Darrell was actively involved in the Boys and Girls Club growing up and it was here where he was introduced to leadership programs and still holds dear the mentors he had as a youth. With these experiences to draw on and new ones he has encountered, the idea of leadership and mentoring has and always will be a big part of Darrell's life.

## Chan Wiseman, Youth Panelist

Chan Wiseman, 27, is a Political Science graduate from Memorial University and a Business Diploma graduate from the College of the North Atlantic. He is currently employed as the Human Resource Planner with the Newfoundland and Labrador Federation of Agriculture (NLFA). He is also the owner/operator of Northern Furs Inc., a fox farm located in North Harbour, Newfoundland and Labrador. Chan is the president of the Newfoundland and Labrador Young Farmers Forum, and is a member of the Newfoundland and Labrador Fur Breeders Association (NLFBA). In his spare time he is an avid baseball fan, enjoys traveling, and lives an active and healthy lifestyle.

Michelle Power & Mike Pittman, Innovation, Trade & Rural Development prepared slideshow presentations for viewing during the conference. The following are some slides from the presentations:





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