

# The State of Rural Canada 2015

Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation  
Fondation canadienne pour la revitalisation rurale



## Background on The State of Rural Canada

The [Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation](#) (CRRF) has at the heart of its mission the promotion and enhancement of the quality of life in Canada's small and rural communities. Founded in 1988 as the Agriculture and Restructuring Group, and in response to the lack of interest in rural Canada and in particular rural research (Reimer, 2008), CRRF was organized with a focus on developing rural research and knowledge dissemination and promoting an active process of engagement with rural stakeholders.

The idea for this State of Rural Canada report came about in order to draw attention to rural challenges and opportunities, and to provide a source of information and a platform for information sharing. The report contains chapters on each province and territory and ends with a discussion chapter that offers a synthesis of core themes and a series of recommendations for advancing rural development in Canada. Each chapter has been authored by volunteers, who have generously donated their time and knowledge to the report. Their efforts emulate a tradition of volunteer commitment that is so prominent within rural communities themselves. The chapters provide some statistical data, but they are not intended to be statistical reports. Rather, we asked each provincial team to share their perspectives on a variety of core themes affecting rural Canada. We also asked the authors to limit the size of their chapters – something that was a challenge given the diversity of rural issues and the passion each author team has for the subject! As such, the chapters do not cover everything – no report is capable of capturing every dimension and issue within rural Canada – and may contain opinions and perspectives that others disagree with. We hope this approach provides important context and nuance to our portrayal of rural Canada, and that it serves to stimulate discussion and debate – within each province and across the country as a whole.

The report is important because rural Canada is important to the country. Rural areas are the sites of food production, resource extraction, energy generation, clean water and air, and future carbon sequestration. In other words, rural Canada is a site of significant economic activity, job creation, environmental stewardship, and social/cultural production. Throughout much of CRRF's history the federal government of Canada was a partner and supported CRRF in a variety of different ways. However, the recent federal government preoccupation with fiscal challenges means they are no longer the active partner they once were, although they continue to support CRRF activity where possible. However, we would argue that rural has taken a "back seat" in terms of policy development and while CRRF was successful in the mid-1990s arguing for a cross sector, holistic approach to rural development (Reimer, 2008)

federal policy has, for the most part, once again focused on economic sectors at the expense of a more holistic approach to rural development. The recent closure of the Federal Rural Secretariat, and many other provincial programs, speaks to how current senior governments view rural Canada from a sector perspective and fail to take a holistic and cross sector perspective with regard to rural policy and development. In addition, the elimination of the mandatory census means that rural communities and organizations do not have access to information to inform their planning. While it is true that the same argument could be made for urban communities, urban communities have greater human and fiscal resources that can be drawn upon to meet this new information deficit.

The State of Rural Canada 2015 can be found at [www.sorc.crrf.ca](http://www.sorc.crrf.ca). Further information on the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation can be found at [www.crrf.ca](http://www.crrf.ca).

