



Rural Development in Ontario

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Presentation Overview

- Ontario in a Canadian Context
- Challenges & Realities in Rural Ontario
- Rural Economic Development in Ontario
- Concluding Comments



Government Structure

- Federal government – Canada
- Provincial government – Ontario
- Municipal government
 - Urban – City of Ottawa
 - Rural – Counties/townships

Ontario the "Economic Engine" of Canada

■ Canada Population & Land Mass

- Can. ranks 35th in world in pop. (32 million) - 3.3 people/sq km
- Can. ranks 1st in world in land mass(9.9 mill sq km)

■ Ontario Land Mass

- 2nd largest province in Canada - 1 mill. sq km

■ Ontario Population

- 12 million

- Rank # 1 out of 10 provinces & 3 territories
- 39% of Canadian population

■ Ontario Gross Domestic Production - \$517 billion

- Rank # 1 out of 10 provinces & 3 territories - ***40% of Canadian GDP***



“Snap Shot” of Rural Ontario

■ **Ontario Population**

- *40% rural (communities outside major urban)*
- 60% urban

■ **Southern Ontario**

- 93% of total provincial population, 20% land mass
- Diversified economy including manufacturing, advanced manufacturing, agriculture, bio-products, tourism etc.

■ **Northern Ontario**

- 7% of total provincial population but 80% of land mass
- Resource based (forestry, mining, tourism)
- Advanced manufacturing I.e. mining, forestry etc.



Ontario Municipalities (441)

Rural Small Town municipalities

- 50% of municipalities (218) with population less than 5,000
- 80% of municipalities (348) with population less than 15,000
- 92% of municipalities (404) with population less than 50,000

Larger Urban

- 8% of municipalities (37) with population 50,000 +
- 5% of municipalities (12) with population 100,000 +



Rural Challenges

- De-population of rural areas - including youth
- Labour shortages & lack of skilled workers
- Lack in economic diversity (businesses & jobs)
- Medical and social service shortages
- Municipal infrastructure



Rural Realities

- ***ALL*** communities – no matter the size strive for strong local economies
- Challenges in rural & small town areas
 - Limited resources for community & economic development
 - Limited staff
 - Limited expertise
- Strengths:
 - Strong community spirit & volunteer base
 - Willing to implement actions to improve community

Rural Development Mandate



Vision:

- Build strong and vibrant rural communities

Mission:

- The Rural Development Division collaborates with partners and stakeholders to achieve strong and vibrant rural communities through advocacy, expertise, resources and investments



Pillars of a Strong Rural Community

- Economic
 - Entrepreneurship/business development
- Social
 - Health, education, social services, workforce
- Governance & Leadership
 - Local government, community capacity/ability
- Environment
 - sustainable environment

Principles of Rural Development?

- **Provincial government to enable communities**
 - Support systems, good business climate, resources

- **Community-based & “bottom-up”**
 - Municipalities/communities doing rural development

- **Collaboration, cooperation & partnership**
 - Organizations, local government, provincial & federal government & business (sectors)

- **Building community capacity**
 - Leadership and organizational

Who is Involved in Rural Development in Ontario?

- **Municipalities**
 - Key responsibility for rural development locally
- **Economic Development organizations**
 - Community Futures Development Corporations
- **Provincial rural mandate (OMAFRA)**
 - Rural policy, programs/resources, funding & staff support
 - *Other ministries* provide programs & support to rural communities
- **Federal government**
 - Regional economic development support

Rural Development Division Support to Rural Communities?

- ***Rural Policy*** – Rural Policy Branch
 - Provincial policies to support rural I.e. education, energy etc.

- ***Building Capacity*** – Rural Programs Branch
 - Develop tools, resources & programs to support communities in economic development efforts
 - REDDI website – www.reddi.gov.on.ca
 - Regional economic analysis
 - Community & downtown revitalization
 - First Impressions
 - Business retention and expansion

Rural Development Division Cont'd

■ *Staff Support to Municipalities & Businesses*

- Entrepreneurship/business development
 - Business management, export, product develop. I.e. trade missions, value-added to agriculture etc.
- Community economic development
 - Develop strategies (tourism, manufacturing etc.),
 - partnership development, funding & program support, investment attraction, Manufacturers' Alliance etc.
 - Building community capacity for building strong communities

■ *Funding Support* - Rural Investments Branch

- Specific community projects that support economic development

Examples of Community & Economic Development Strategies

- Regional approach to economic development
 - Partnerships with other organizations and municipalities
 - Area promotion and investment attraction (Ontario East)
- Rural tourism strategies
 - Businesses, organizations and regions working together
 - Niagara Wine Festival, rural touring routes etc.
- Business investment attraction (www.2ontario.com)
 - Municipality to provide information to site locators
 - Municipalities must have land, services, workforce

Examples of Development Strategies Cont'd

■ Entrepreneurship

- Support for small business development agriculture and rural businesses
- Enterprise Centres, business counselling, loans
- www.energizingentrepreneurs.org/content/chapter1.php
- www.sirolli.com

■ Downtown revitalization – www.mainstreet.org

- Improving the appearance and functioning of downtown
- Entrepreneurship support

■ Business retention and expansion

- Assisting existing businesses to grow in a community
- www.brei.org

Example: Business Retention & Expansion as a Strategy

- Community-based strategy to **visit businesses** and identify their issues, concerns and opportunities
- Develop **relationships** with businesses
- **Develop and implement actions** to meet business needs
- Support the **retention and growth of existing businesses**



BR+E Project Impacts

- Outcomes & Impacts from 46 projects
 - Saved 10 businesses & 1050 jobs
 - Created 100 new jobs
 - Saved \$45 million in wages in 10 communities
- Improved business climate
- Specific actions implemented to help businesses



Conclusion

- Local government in *partnership* with business community & organizations to provide leadership
- Provincial government provide support systems which *enable* municipalities to take action
- *Strong communities = strong provincial and national economies*