

Searching for Entrepreneurialism in Rural Newfoundland

This document summarizes a presentation delivered by Josh Barrett University of Guelph at the 2024 North Atlantic Forum Conference held in Letterfrack, Ireland in June 2024.

KEY MESSAGES OF RESEARCH

Rural Local Governments: Building Economic Development Capacity Through Entrepreneurialism focuses on two communities in Newfoundland: Grand Falls- Windsor and Bonavista. Each community has taken a unique path to entrepreneurialism and is representative of change in rural communities.

- ❑ Grand Falls- Windsor (Pop. 13,853 in 2021) is the largest community in central Newfoundland. It was previously a pulp and paper mill town from 1905-2009. Since removing the primary source of employment, the community prioritized pursuing a technology sector and attracted the Exploits Valley Centre for Information Technology Corporation in 1997 with the aim to diversify their economy beyond the forestry sector.
- ❑ Bonavista (Pop. 3,190 in 2021) holds significant importance to the local heritage and is the location of the first landfall in North America from European explorers in 1497. Established the Bonavista Historic Townscape Foundation (BHTF) following the moratorium to rebuild the socio-economic fabric of their community. Over 1,000 structures in the community have heritage designation.

IMPACTS FOR RURAL COMMUNITIES

Entrepreneurialism provides pathways for rural communities to diversify and promote niche forms of economic development. Both communities experienced enhanced quality of life. Suggesting that local economies leverage social enterprise and allow productive governance to promote entrepreneurialism.

- ❑ Resource based economies are still entrenched in Newfoundland. Through some cases of diversifying are appearing.
- ❑ Grand Falls-Windsor: focused on addressing community needs (i.e., aging population) and establishing relevant programs prior to closure of paper mill.
- ❑ Bonavista: Heritage development was targeted not for tourism but to enhance sense of place, community, attracting people to live there Year-round versus seasonal initiatives.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This research summary is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, through the [Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance](#). We are grateful for the support of the [Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation](#) and the [Rural Ontario Institute](#).

FURTHER INFORMATION

Further information on this research can be found on the [North Atlantic Forum website](#).

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