



Summary of Libro Professor News Stories

July 2023 – June 2024



UNIVERSITY OF
GUELPH

ruraldev.ca

Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development

The Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development was established in 2016 through the generous donations from Libro Credit Union, the Klosler family, and the Roberts family. Together, a \$1 million gift was created to serve as a catalyst for enhancing regional economic development in Southwestern Ontario. Details of research activities, graduate student engagement, online resources emerging from the Libro Professorship can be found at www.ruraldev.ca.

School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph

The School of Environmental Design and Rural Development brings together major academic fields concerned with creating strong communities in Canada and around the world. The four highly respected units that have come together to form the School share many common goals but approach them in different and complementary ways. This model reflects the imperatives in building authentic communities where planners, leaders, communicators, landscape architects, the citizens, and politicians all play important interdependent roles in strengthening communities. For more information, visit www.sedrd.uoguelph.ca.

Authors: Damilola Oyewale and Ryan Gibson

Introduction

This report presents a summary of news stories published on the [RuralDev.ca](https://ruraldev.ca) website from July 2023 to June 2024. The website serves as the online platform to promote the activities associated with the Libro Professor of Regional Economic Development at the University of Guelph.

All content has been sourced directly from the RuralDev.ca website at <https://ruraldev.ca/news/>. Stories are presented in chronological order from July 2023 through June 2024.

New Project: Emerging Voices – Rural Knowledge Transfer

July 2023

A new knowledge translation and transfer initiative titled Emerging Voices – Rural Knowledge Transfer has been funded through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance. The initiative supports the next generation of rural researchers in mobilizing their research findings to practitioners, policymakers, and communities across Ontario.

Emerging Voices will provide graduate students with training and support to develop plain-language research summaries, policy briefs, and other knowledge mobilization products.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/new-project-emerging-voices-rural-knowledge-transfer/>

Building the Future: Final Report Submitted

July 2023

The final report for the Building the Future: Rural Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development initiative has been submitted to the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

The four-year Tier 1 initiative examined the relationship between rural infrastructure investment and regional economic development outcomes across Ontario.

Key findings highlighted how communities can leverage infrastructure improvements — from broadband and transit to green infrastructure — as catalysts for broader economic development.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/infrastructure/>

Reflection on the 2023 Canadian Rural and Remote Housing and Homelessness Symposium

August 2023



Graduate student Damilola Oweyale shared reflections on the 2023 Canadian Rural and Remote Housing and Homelessness Symposium with the Rural Ontario Institute. The symposium brought together researchers, practitioners, and policymakers working on rural housing and homelessness across Canada.

Oweyale's reflections highlighted key themes, including the particular challenges facing rural and remote communities in addressing housing affordability and homelessness, and the importance of place-based approaches.

Source: <https://www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/blog/reflection-on-the-2023-canadian-rural-and-remote-housing-and-homelessness-symposium>

SEDRD Members Elected to the CRRF Board of Directors

November 27, 2023

Two members of the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development have been elected to the Board of Directors of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation. This achievement reflects the significant contributions that SEDRD members have made to rural research and practice in Canada.

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation is a national charity devoted to enhancing rural prosperity through research, knowledge mobilization, and community engagement.

Source: <https://www.uoguelph.ca/sedrd/news/2023/11/sedrd-members-elected-crrf-board-directors>

Rural and Northern Airport Access Initiative: New Reports Released

November 27, 2023

New reports from the Rural and Northern Airport Access Initiative examine the state of aviation connectivity in Northern Ontario. The initiative, led by Chris Van Dyke and Heather Graham under the supervision of Prof. Ryan Gibson, investigated the current status of airport infrastructure and scheduled flight services across Northern Ontario communities.

The reports include an overview of flight connections and destinations at Northern Ontario airports, and an analysis of changes in the number of flights between 2021 and 2023.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/northernairports/>

Embedding Wealth in Communities: Experiences from Rural Canada

December 2023

Prof. Ryan Gibson presented research on place-based philanthropy and wealth embedding in rural communities at the International Association of Community Development Researcher Forum in Dublin, Ireland. The presentation, titled "Embedding Wealth in Communities: Experiences from Rural Canada," explored how community foundations, cooperatives, and other place-based financial institutions can anchor wealth in rural communities.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/resources/>

2024 Rural Symposium

March 2024



The 2024 Rural Symposium was held on March 1, 2024 in Guelph, Ontario. The annual event brought together graduate students, Ontario government staff, rural practitioners, and researchers to share emerging rural research. The 2024 Rural Symposium featured presentations on rural transit funding, international agricultural worker housing, workforce development, rural economic development, and COVID-19 migration impacts. Presentation and poster contributions from the 2024 Rural Symposium are published in the Rural Review: Ontario Rural Planning, Development, and Policy.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/2024-rural-symposium/>

Research Sharing at Two Days of Rural Canada Conference

March 22, 2024



Rural research from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development was on display at the Liminal Spaces: Two Days of Rural Canada conference in St. Catharines, Ontario. The following students and alumni presented:

- Danika Hammond – Defining rural: Advancing a place-based rural criteria matrix
- John Dale – Optimizing local governance: How municipalities navigate the impacts of austerity in rural Ontario
- Ridah Telfah – The early settlement experiences of Syrian families in Southwestern Ontario.
- Kyle Rich, Gord Nelson, Chris Ugwu, and John Dale – Social infrastructure in rural communities

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/research-sharing-at-two-days-of-rural-canada/>

Ela Mastej Successfully Completes PhD Qualifying Examination

March 20, 2024

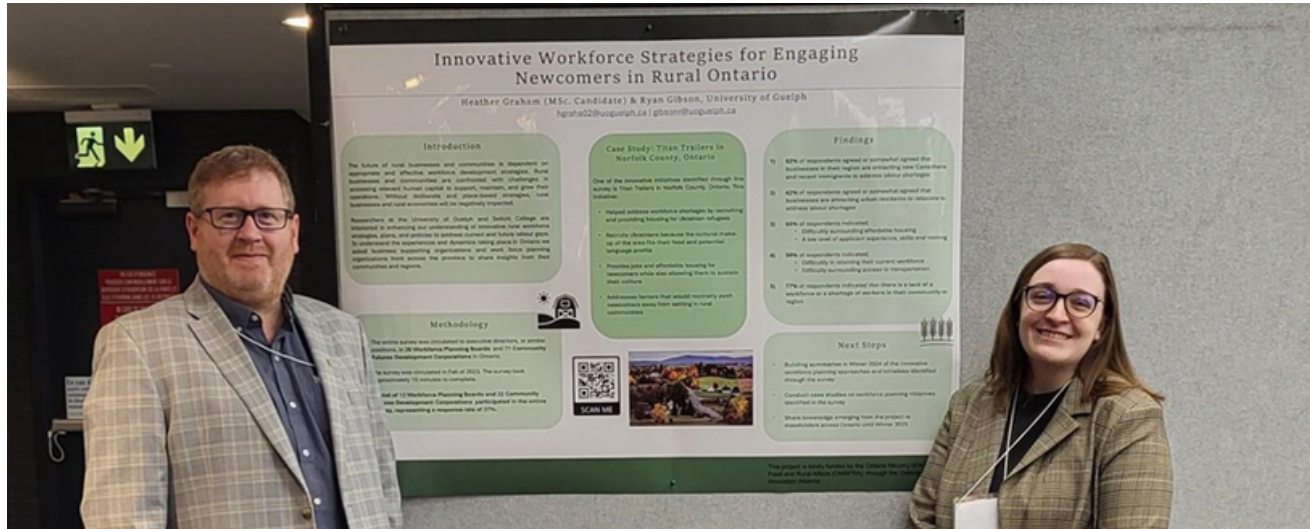


Congratulations to Ela Mastej for successfully completing the Qualifying Examination in the Rural Studies PhD program! Ela's qualifying paper was titled "Confronting Colonial Legacies of Environmental Assessment by Exploring the Nexus of EA and Participation." Her presentation and discussion were recognized as outstanding by the examining committee.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/master-successfully-completes-phd-qualifying-examination/>

Innovative Workforce Strategies in Rural Ontario

March 2024



Research on innovative workforce strategies in rural Ontario was presented at the 2024 Rural Symposium and at the Our Immigration System: The Way Forward Conference in Montréal. Graduate students Heather Graham and Prof. Ryan Gibson, shared findings from ongoing research examining how rural communities and businesses are responding to persistent labour shortages.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/innovative-workforce-strategies-in-rural-ontario/>

Measuring the Urban Exodus: Statistics Canada Data Trends in Rural Ontario

March 2024



As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, there has been a visible migration of urban populations into rural communities. A new research initiative is examining the migration trends taking place in Ontario and their impact on rural communities, economies, and environments.

As a part of the Urban Exodus: Understanding the Impacts of Migration to Rural Ontario as a Result of the COVID-19 Pandemic initiative, a set of research insights have been developed by graduate research assistant Heather Graham (MSc Rural Planning and Development student), Ryan Gibson and Sara Epp to outline key findings on COVID-19 pandemic migration based on data published by Statistics Canada following the 2021 Census and special COVID-19 surveys.

Some key findings include:

- Urban businesses and organizations were nearly four times more likely than rural businesses and organizations to anticipate shrinking their office locations as a result of a transition to workforce teleworking.
- The top three industries anticipating shrinking of their office locations as a result of teleworking were: information and cultural industries (44.8%), administrative and support, waste management, and remediation services (28.8%), and accommodation and food services (26.9%).
- In all industries, workforces did not anticipate continuing to primarily telework once the COVID-19 pandemic was over.
- Only 10.8% of all urban businesses and organizations and 8.9% of all rural businesses and organizations anticipated that between 90 and 100% of their workforces would continue teleworking post pandemic.

- The census divisions with the largest population decreases between 2016 and 2021 were Rainy River (3.3%), Timiskaming (2.6%), Cochrane (2.2%), and Algoma (0.3%).

The following research insights can be found on the project website:

- Perceptions of Post-Pandemic Teleworking for Urban and Rural Workforces
- Impact of COVID-19 on Workforce Teleworking in Urban and Rural Businesses and Organizations
- Workforce Perceptions of Post-Pandemic Teleworking Across Different Industries
- Impact of COVID-19 Workforce Teleworking on Businesses and Organizations Across Different Industries

The Urban Exodus initiative is led by Dr. Sara Epp and involves Dr. Chris Fullerton (Brock University), Dr. Ryan Gibson (University of Guelph). Over the coming months the initiative will conduct a survey of rural communities and conduct case study research to better understand COVID-19 related migrations to rural Ontario. Watch the project website for future activities and updates.

This research initiative is funded by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), through the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

Heather Graham, Ryan Gibson, and Sara Epp

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/measuring-the-urban-exodus-statistics-canada-data-trends-in-rural-ontario/>

Exploring the Rural Research Landscape across Ontario

March 2024



The Rural Futures project at the University of Guelph is on a mission to promote the impactful research work happening in Ontario, particularly as it relates to rural people, places, and the environment. As an initiative aimed at promoting rural-focused research by students and faculty, Rural Futures is committed to making these outputs accessible to everyone.

Through our dynamic new directory, Rural Futures is shining a spotlight on the diverse researchers driving discoveries and innovations across disciplines. By profiling backgrounds, studies, and projects, the site gives visitors a compelling glimpse into the full rural research landscape. Want to learn about the latest in agriculture, sustainability solutions, community development strategies and lots more? The directory has you covered.

Over the past months, Rural Futures' social media presence has captivated audiences with a series of researcher spotlights. Posts on Twitter (X), Facebook and LinkedIn under #RuralGuelph feature PhD researchers like Joshua Barrett who has explored the impact of policy and partnerships on rural economic development with previous research on labour mobility effects. Master's student Rhiannon James is also exploring agricultural tile drainage and groundwater interactions. Lot of other weekly spotlight posts can be found by simply searching #RuralGuelph on Twitter (X), Facebook and LinkedIn.

Interested in exploring the accomplishments of these emerging talents and their unexpectedly relevant contributions? Take a closer look by visiting the Rural Futures website at rural.uoguelph.ca where you can immerse yourself in the dynamic realm of rural research. Featuring enlightening profiles and a continuous flow of engaging social updates, Rural Futures is committed to sharing the inspiration generated by the university's most innovative minds, transforming the landscape of Rural Ontario.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/exploring-the-rural-research-landscape-across-ontario/>

New Report on Rural and Northern Ontario Airports

March 2024



The COVID-19 pandemic created fluctuations in flight service, both nationally and internationally. Over the past months, researchers have investigated the changes in scheduled flight services in rural and northern Ontario. To gain a greater depth of understanding of these changes, an inventory was created based on information collected from 66 Northern Ontario Airports. The new report creates an inventory of Northern Ontario airports. The information collected for the inventory includes names of the Northern Ontario airports, their ICAO identifiers, the airports' owner or operator names, the year the airports were constructed, the number of runways, the length of each runway, and whether each airport accommodates scheduled services, or chartered or personal services. [Take a read of the report!](https://ruraldev.ca/new-report-on-rural-and-northern-ontario-airports/)

Source:<https://ruraldev.ca/new-report-on-rural-and-northern-ontario-airports/>

Embedding Wealth in Rural Communities

March 2024



On 27 November 2023, Ryan Gibson share research on embedding wealth in rural Canadian communities at the International Association of Community Development's Researcher Forum. The presentation explored how rural and small communities can benefit from existing wealth to build their futures. Insights from community wealth building experiences from rural Canada were be shared, focusing on lessons learned, impacts, and transferability. A copy of the presentation and a series of online resources can be found below.

- [Webinar recording](#)
- [Presentation](#)
- [Online resources](#)

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/embeddingwealth/>

Danika Hammond Successfully Defends MSc Thesis

March 2024



Successful Thesis Defence - Danika Hammond

Congratulations to Danika Hammond for successfully defending her Master of Science (Planning) thesis – Advancing Economic Development in Small and Remote Rural communities; A Convergent Mixed-Methods Study of Provincial Rural Policy in British Columbia! Stay tuned for an electronic copy of the thesis!

Thank you to Dr. Sarah-Patricia Breen (Selkirk College), Dr. Patrick Brouder (Thompson River University), and Dr. Dave Guyadeen (University of Guelph) for participating in the examination committee.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/danika-hammond-successfully-defends-msc-thesis/>

Innovative Rural Approaches to Labour Force Development

March 2024



Amid economic uncertainties exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, Ontario faces challenges in tight labour markets, high unemployment rates, and a significant skills gap, particularly in rural areas, where approximately 250,000 jobs remain unfilled. In response to these pressing issues, a research initiative has been launched to spotlight innovative workforce development strategies aimed at addressing rural labour force challenges.

By conducting an online survey involving Workforce Planning Boards and Community Futures Development Corporations, the initiative aims to identify and showcase diverse innovative initiatives in rural labour force planning, highlighting successful strategies, projects, and collaborations by various stakeholders.

The research initiative aims to:

- **Analyze Innovative Workforce Development Strategies:** Evaluate innovative strategies and plans designed to address labour shortages in rural Ontario.
- **Build Detailed Case Studies:** Develop detailed case studies showcasing a wide range of innovative workforce development initiatives.
- **Showcase Diversity:** Highlight the diversity of workforce development strategies and projects across rural Ontario.

Highlight Successful Initiatives: Capture successful initiatives while addressing the unique challenges and successes in different regions and sectors, fostering a nuanced understanding. Using data collected from an online survey of Workforce Planning Boards and Community Futures Development Corporations in Ontario a series of innovative practices were identified:

- Dufferin County and Georgian College: Offering bursaries to Early Childhood Educator candidates.
- First Work Programs: Best practice sharing and development in employment services.
- Rural Northern Immigration Pilot Programs: Facilitating skilled foreign workers' permanent residency in areas like Sudbury and Thunder Bay.
- Skills Development Fund: Supporting projects targeting labour shortages, focusing on disadvantaged groups.

Preliminary Findings

Diversity in Key Actors: Collaboration among private sector, local governments, provincial government, and federal government enhances solutions to labour shortages.

Titan Trailers: Cultural support boosts newcomer retention and local economy.

Dufferin County: Educational-local partnerships impact labour needs.

Western Ontario Wardens Caucus: Regional collaboration aids in overcoming labour challenges.

Rural Northern Immigration Pilot Programs and Upskill Canada: Innovative approaches to labour and economic growth through permanent residency facilitation and short-cycle training programs, respectively..

Next Steps

Over the next year research will continue to understand how rural workforce development initiatives are assisting rural communities and rural economies. Upcoming research activities will include continue analysis of innovative case studies, create innovative work force case studies, create online map of innovative work force case studies, conduct knowledge mobilization of findings, and conduct in-depth case studies to enhance the understanding and transferability of 2-3 innovative rural labour shortage strategies. For more information on this initiative please visit www.ruraldev.ca/lsna or contact Paul Sitsofe, Niju Mathew, or Ryan Gibson.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/addressing-rural-labour-shortages-innovative-ontario-case-studies/>

Oyewale Successfully Defends MSc Thesis

March 2024



Congratulations to Damilola Oyewale for successfully defending his MSc (Planning) thesis this morning! Damilola's graduate thesis was titled "Evaluation of the Impact of the Provincial Policy Statement on International Agricultural Workers' Housing in Ontario". An online copy of the graduate thesis will be available shortly – stay tuned!

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/oyewale-successfully-defends-msc-thesis>

Linking Research and Policy: Reflections on the 2024 Rural Symposium

March 2024



The School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph, in partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), hosted a one-day symposium to showcase rural research being conducted at the University of Guelph. The Rural Symposium is an opportunity for graduate students to share their research with researchers, policy analysts and program staff with the OMAFRA, and rural organizations.

Presentations from the day focused on many of the key concerns and opportunities encountered in rural Ontario, such as engaging newcomers to address workforce development, housing for International Agricultural Workers, agricultural communication for addressing climate change challenges, access to local food, rural transit, Indigenous food systems, veterinary service access, best practice management for potatoe production, examinations of rural policy, economic development opportunities, and many more.

Further information about the 2024 Rural Symposium, including copies of presentations and posters, can be found at <https://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/ruralReview>. Highlights from the Rural Symposium can also be found on social media (#ruralsym24).

Source:<https://ruraldev.ca/linking-research-and-policy-reflections-on-the-2024-rural-symposium/>

Congrats to Josh Barrett

March 2024



Congratulations to Josh Barrett (PhD candidate in Rural Studies, University of Guelph) who received the Best Student Paper Award at the 2024 American Association of Geographers in April 2024 in Honolulu, Hawaii. The manuscript, co-authored by Kelly Vodden, focuses on how rural local governments in Newfoundland and Labrador are using entrepreneurial approaches and partnerships to achieve local development. The article, titled "Partnerships in Place: Facilitating Rural Local Government Entrepreneurialism in Newfoundland and Labrador", was published in The Canadian Geographer.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/congrats-to-josh-barrett/>

Advancing Green Infrastructure Solutions in Rural Regions

March 2024



Article

Advancing Green Infrastructure Solutions in Rural Regions: Economic Impacts and Capacity Challenges in Southwest Ontario, Canada

Jay Maloney¹, Sean Markey^{1,*}, Ryan Gibson² and S. Ashleigh Weeden²

¹ School of Resource and Environmental Management, Simon Fraser University, Technology and Science Complex 1, 643A Science Rd, Burnaby, BC V5A 1S6, Canada; Jay.Maloney@wsp.com (J.M.)

² School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, 50 Stone Road East, Guelph, ON N1G 2W1, Canada; gibsonr@uoguelph.ca (R.G.); ashleighweeden@gmail.com (S.A.W.)

* Corresponding author. E-mail: spmarkey@sfu.ca (S.M.)

Received: 27 April 2024; Accepted: 30 May 2024; Available online: 31 May 2024

Congratulations to Jay Maloney, Sean Markey, Ryan Gibson, and Ashleigh Weeden for their recent peer reviewed journal publication titled "Advancing Green Infrastructure Solutions in Rural Regions: Economic Impacts and Capacity Challenges in Southwest Ontario, Canada". The abstract for the article published in Rural and Regional Development is listed below:

Green infrastructure (GI) is a growing topic in urban planning, asset management, and climate change adaptation. However, rural regions have been under-represented in the discourse. This paper explores the benefits and challenges associated with the implementation and management of GI through a regional study of rural communities in southwestern Ontario. Our focus concerns the inter-relationships between GI, economic resilience, and the development of rural places.

Findings show rural communities benefit from GI initiatives like natural stormwater management, park naturalization, and natural heritage restoration, which provide low-cost municipal services, conserve agricultural soils, and contribute to the amenity appeal of rural places. Challenges surrounding awareness, organizational capacity, and environmental regulation have slowed the uptake of GI and led to inconsistencies across jurisdictions. A mix of supportive policies, funding of demonstration projects with economic monitoring, and training to build professional capacity will advance the use and efficacy of GI across rural regions.

This publication emerges from a multi-year research initiative called Building the Future: Rural Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development.

This initiative was supported by the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/advancing-green-infrastructure-solutions-in-rural-regions/>

Josh Barrett (PhD Candidate) Awarded Best Student Paper Award

March 2024

Congratulations to Josh Barrett for receiving the Best Student Paper Award at the American Association of Geographers Conference in Honolulu, Hawaii! Josh's award-winning paper examined rural local government entrepreneurialism in Newfoundland and Labrador, drawing on research from his PhD dissertation.

Josh is a PhD candidate in Rural Studies at the University of Guelph, supervised by Prof. Ryan Gibson.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/josh-barrett-phd-candidate-awarded-best-student-paper-award/>

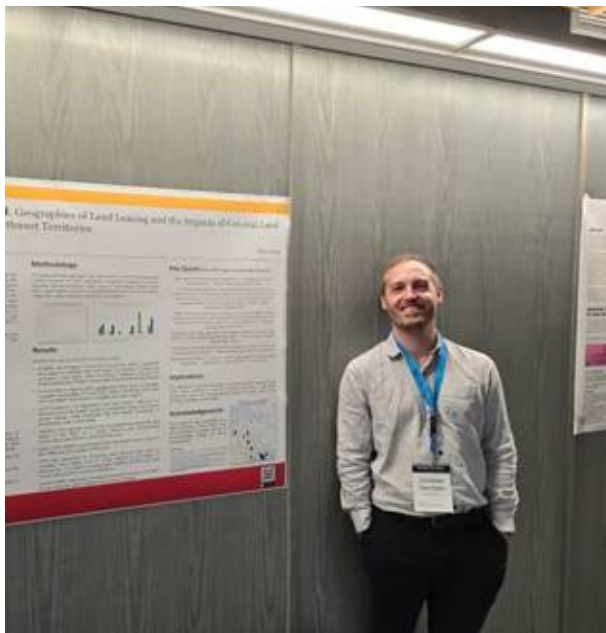


Northern Dialogues Conference Explores Remoteness and Sustainable Livelihoods

May 21, 2024



The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and Yukon University co-hosted the Northern Dialogues: Remoteness and Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural and Northern Canada Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon. The conference addressed the intersection of remoteness and sustainable livelihoods across three themes: innovation and community development, education, health and social systems, and culture, heritage, and wellbeing. Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/northern-dialogues-conference-explores-remoteness-and-sustainable-livelihoods-in-rural-and-northern-canada/>



Shanley Weston's MSc Thesis Now Available

May 3, 2024



Shanley Weston's MSc (Planning) thesis is now available in the University of Guelph's Atrium. Shanley's thesis is titled "Darkest Days: A Scoping Review of Violent Crime in Rural Canada." The thesis provides a comprehensive scoping review of research on violent crime in rural Canada, examining patterns, trends, and contextual factors that shape experiences of violence in rural communities.

Source: <https://ruraldev.ca/shanley-westons-msc-thesis-now-available/>

Van Dyke's MRP on NWT Residential Land Leasing

May 8, 2024



Congratulations to Chris Van Dyke who successfully completed his Master of Planning Major Research Paper titled "Home on Borrowed Land: Geographies of Land Leasing and the Impacts of Colonial Land Policy on Housing in the Northwest Territories."

The research examines how colonial land policies in the Northwest Territories have shaped the geography of land leasing and its profound impacts on housing access and affordability for residents.

Source:

<https://ruraldev.ca/van-dykes-mrp-on-nwt-residential-land-leasing/>

SEDRD Research Shared at Northern Dialogues Conference

May 2024



The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation and Yukon University recently co-hosted the Northern Dialogues: Remoteness and Sustainable Livelihoods in Rural and Northern Canada Conference in Whitehorse, Yukon. The conference addressed the intersection of remoteness and sustainable livelihoods framed across three interrelated themes: (i) innovation and community development, (ii) education, health, and social systems, and (iii) culture, heritage, and wellbeing.

Over the four-day conference, knowledge emerging from the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development was well represented. The following presentations, panel discussions, and posters were shared:

- Addressing labour shortages through newcomer attraction in rural Ontario and British Columbia John Dale and Ryan Gibson
- Braiding Food Systems: Co-Constructing Sustainable Seed Systems with Northern Ontario First Nations – Charlotte Potter, Silvia Sarapura, Paul Benalcazar, Annette Peltier-Flamand, and Corina Thompson
- Breaking path dependency? Factors to enhance capacity for rural local governments in Newfoundland and Labrador, Canada Josh Barrett
- Exploring Northern Attitudes: “Main Street Town Square” Pedestrian Pilot Project in Downtown Whitehorse Cathy Wan Yi Lin and Sara Epp
- Exploring the impact and potential of place-based philanthropy for community development in rural and northern Canada Alex Petric, Ryan Gibson, Sean Markey, Kelly Vodden

- Home on Borrowed Land: Residential land leasing and housing attainability in the Northwest Territories Chris Van Dyke
- Rural Equity in Emergency Planning: A Public Health Agenda Danica Fitzsimmons, Amanda Mongeon, Keltie Hamilton

A brief description of each conference contribution can be found online. The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation was established in 1989 to contribute to the revitalization and sustainability of rural Canada through collaborative research for rural leaders in the community, private sector, and in all levels of government.

The Foundation works to create credible insights and to improve our understanding of issues and opportunities that are of common interest to rural residents across Canada. Knowledge and better understanding are the fundamental pillars for the welfare of rural communities and environments.

Building Sustainable Communities through Immigration and Housing: North Atlantic Forum

June 2024



Graduate student Damilola Oweyale presented research at the 2024 North Atlantic Forum Conference in Renvyle, Co. Galway, Ireland. The presentation titled "Building Sustainable Communities through Immigration and Housing: A Review of Ontario International Agricultural Workers" examined the housing conditions and experiences of international agricultural workers in rural Ontario.

Congratulations to Jay Maloney, Sean Markey, Ryan Gibson, and Ashleigh Weeden for their recent peer reviewed journal publication titled “Advancing Green Infrastructure Solutions in Rural Regions: Economic Impacts and Capacity Challenges in Southwest Ontario, Canada”. The abstract for the article published in Rural and Regional Development is listed below:

Green infrastructure (GI) is a growing topic in urban planning, asset management, and climate change adaptation. However, rural regions have been under-represented in the discourse. This paper explores the benefits and challenges associated with the implementation and management of GI through a regional study of rural communities in southwestern Ontario. Our focus concerns the inter-relationships between GI, economic resilience, and the development of rural places. Findings show rural communities benefit from GI initiatives like natural stormwater management, park naturalization, and natural heritage restoration, which provide low-cost municipal services, conserve agricultural soils, and contribute to the amenity appeal of rural places. Challenges surrounding awareness, organizational capacity, and environmental regulation have slowed the uptake of GI and led to inconsistencies across jurisdictions. A mix of supportive policies, funding of demonstration projects with economic monitoring, and training to build professional capacity will advance the use and efficacy of GI across rural regions.

This publication emerges from a multi-year research initiative called Building the Future: Rural Infrastructure and Regional Economic Development. This initiative was supported by the Ontario Agri-Food Innovation Alliance.

This Page is Left Intentionally Blank

www.ruraldev.ca

