

Social Cohesion

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Six Rural Communities to be the Focus of University Research

Balcarres, Carlyle, Craik, Eastend, Naicam, and Willow Bunch are six rural communities that will be the focus of studies by University of Regina researchers. The Peepeekisis First Nation near Balcarres and the Pheasant Rump Reserve near Carlyle will also participate in the study.

The goal is to collect and share information to support the future of rural communities in southern Saskatchewan. This is the largest Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC) grant ever received by the University of Regina. The formal title of the project is "Rural Adaptation and Social

Cohesion for Sustainable Development of the Prairies."

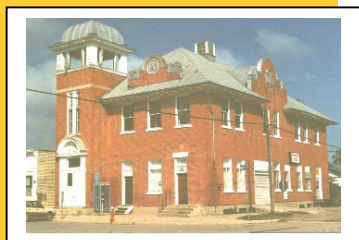
In what ways do people cooperate and share to make their communities better places for all? How do they cooperate and share in their business, social, cultural and spiritual activities? **'Social cohesion'** refers to the bonding effect within a society that arises from the willingness of individuals to enter into relationships with one another to increase their ability to survive and prosper. It is an on-going process that reflects the participation of individuals within the wider society and is also a measure of shared and divergent values in facing common challenges.

In the past, southern Saskatchewan communities have

adapted to many different challenges. Survival has often depended on a willingness to cooperate in facing these challenges.



Balcarres



Craik



Naicam



Carlyle

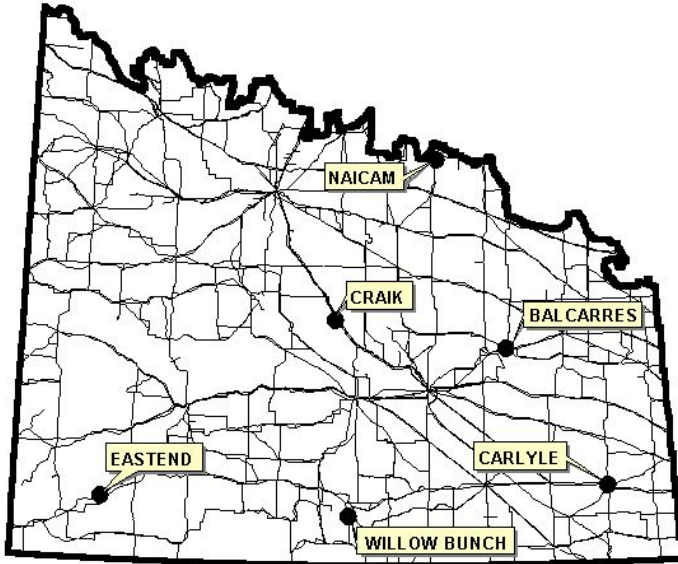


Willow Bunch



Eastend





"We are thrilled with the SSHRC award. This is a unique project that combines the skills of university researchers from six different areas, all focused on meeting the needs of rural Saskatchewan. We are determined that the end result will be information that will allow communities and policymakers to create programs that are in the best interests of the people living in rural Saskatchewan."
 D. Gauthier, Project Director

Researchers



Dr. **David Gauthier**, a geographer, and director of the Canadian Plains Research Center, is the Project Director. Along with his research assistant, Allison McPhee, he is responsible for work on indicators of community sustainability.

Along with Gauthier, the U of R co-investigators include:



Dr. **Harry Diaz**, sociology, He and his research assistant, Mark Nelson, are responsible for the questionnaire and interview study related to community behaviour.



Dr. **JoAnn Jaffe**, sociology, will be studying the role of civil society organizations informal networks and community organizations.



Dr. **Marion Jones**, economics. She and her assistant, Stacey Kadyschuk, will be surveying community economic issues.



Dr. **Barbara Powell**, women's studies and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts. She and her research assistant, Katherine Fafard, are studying women's issues.



Dr. **Kevin Quinlan**, education, and his colleague, Abu Bockarie, and research assistant, Paul Wolf, will be studying education and training issues.



Dr. **David Sauchyn**, geography, and his research assistant, Jennifer Stroich, will be studying the landscape and physical resources of the regions.

Dr. **Randy Widdis**, geography, along with Post-Doctoral fellow Lisa Dale-Burnett, will be studying the history of rural communities.



Community Study Objectives

The research project's six objectives are designed "*to create a base of interdisciplinary knowledge to assist rural communities and policy-makers in addressing the challenges of sustainable development on the southern prairies*". The main objectives of the project include:

- 5· **Providing the essential historical context for community-building** within rural, southern Saskatchewan;
- 5· **Describing how decisions are made in rural communities adapting to change;**
- 5· **Developing recommendations on education and training programmes** that support change in rural communities;
- 5· **Assessing how various levels of government and institutions**

encourage/promote change in rural communities;

- 5· **Characterizing how past changes to the environment affected communities** and developing a model to identify how communities may be affected by further environmental stresses;
- 5· **Developing recommendations for effective policies to help rural communities to survive.**

You will see the results of this study in a resource package that will be given to your community and to decision-makers. The final product will be an international conference on public policy recommendations to be held at the University of Regina. The conference proceedings will be published by the Canadian Plains Research Center University Press.

"Rural Saskatchewan is experiencing widespread changes that are significantly impacting upon the life of rural residents," Gauthier said. "At a time when many rural residents are viewing their situation with dismay, social, economic, political and environmental changes are impacting upon the social cohesion and the viability of rural communities. We hope that by working with rural communities our research project will help to develop strong guidelines and important background information to address the future sustainability of those communities in southern Saskatchewan."

We Need Your Help – Message from the Researchers

We have developed a **telephone survey and questionnaire**. During the Fall 2001 we want to conduct telephone interviews with a maximum of **700 residents** among the six communities. We know that people are busy and we do not want to impose on your time. If you are called we urge you to participate. It would help us, but more importantly, it will help yours and other Saskatchewan communities.

We will also be talking to you directly in your communities. During those visits we would be pleased to meet with anyone who feels they have information to contribute or who would like to hear more about the project.

Feel free to contact us at CPRC.

Thank you for your cooperation and support.



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We're on the Web!

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Community Contacts for More Information

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About Our Organization...

CPRC's mandate is to initiate, undertake, encourage and support transdisciplinary research and scholarly work relevant to all aspects of prairie life. CPRC strives to accomplish its mandate by assisting research focused on the Canadian Plains, providing education opportunities for students and professionals concerning the Canadian Plains, and enhancing scholarly communication. An increasing emphasis by CPRC is the development of an ecosystem, trans-disciplinary perspective for the Canadian, and particularly Saskatchewan, prairies. With 30 years of service to the University of Regina, the Canadian Plains Research Center is the longest serving research center at the University. It administers a graduate degree-granting program and houses Saskatchewan's only accredited university press.



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