

Editorial

It is with great pleasure that I announce the launch of the first issue of *The Journal of Rural and Community Development (The JRCD)*. The *JRCD* is a response to a number of issues. First, a journal devoted to entirely to the topics indicated in the title is lacking. This is not to say that venues for publishing on these topics are lacking. For twenty years, the *Journal of Rural Studies* has promoted new models of rural and provides us with an array of empirical case studies from around the world. The focus though, is rural and the emphasis, studies. Similarly, the *Community Development Journal* is devoted to action-oriented works of both theoretical and applied natures. What was missing, in my opinion, was a refereed journal that was devoted to applied works of either rural or community that focused on development. Second, this void was made greater with the recent (2001) cessation of the journal *Small Town*, a publication of the Small Towns Institute based in Ellensburg, Washington, U.S.A., the essence of which is recaptured in the “Community Case Studies” section of the *JRCD*. Third, the “Policy Evaluation and Review” section of the *JRCD* follows the design of the former journal *The Operational Geographer*, a publication of the Canadian Association of Geographers, which ceased production in 1995. Together, the focus on rural and community development, with three options for publication (regular papers, community case studies, and policy evaluation and review), provides a source for a range of academics and professional practitioners in the field.

In the early stages of consultation about the *JRCD* proposal, many people argued that any new journal should be open access and on-line. Open access means that there is not charge to either publish or use. Being on-line, means that anyone with access to the Internet can access the journal. Thus, whether you are a faculty member at a large university located in a metropolitan centre or a rural community practitioner in a remote village, accessing the *JRCD* is possible through the Internet and Adobe Acrobat Reader. For potential authors, the *JRCD* provides a venue for timely publication and wide-ranging access. Because the *JRCD* is housed in a university, we are able to ensure a commitment to academic integrity and longevity.

As stated in the “Rationale” section of the journal Web Site, “{t}he purpose of the *JRCD* is to provide a venue for academics to publish findings in the field of development studies in either or both rural and community contexts”.

Consultations to an original proposal prepared in the spring of 2003, produced a proverbial shopping list of possible research topics, both thematic and methodological. The following list includes those areas deemed appropriate to rural and community development:

- economic restructuring and diversification
- social capital, capacity and cohesion
- resource development and environmental condition
- community and regional development
- action research and development
- social problems and community development
- political economy of rural development
- experiences with development activities/interventions

- program and policy evaluation
- local economic development
- condition (health, well-being, quality of life, sustainability)
- gender issues in development
- land-use, environmental and community planning
- rural governance and service provision
- changing communications technology

Describing the range within each of these topics is beyond the scope of this editorial. Doing so could also limit the range of possibilities. I will, however, provide an outline of the intent for each of the sections of the journal. In reading the following, please note that all manuscripts will be reviewed by at least two anonymous reviewers. Book reviews will be assessed by the book review editor. Please see the details on submission guidelines in the “About the Journal” section of the Web Site.

Regular Articles

Regular articles (5,000-7,000 words) will provide the reader with an appropriate scholarly context that reflects the interdisciplinary nature of the journal. Empirical analyses must have clear descriptions of methodology and techniques utilized in data collection. Limitations of any research should also be clearly stated where appropriate. Analyses should be clearly articulated, illustrating only that data which is referred to in the text. Summary and conclusions should, where appropriate, include recommendations for the future.

When interest arises, special “themed” issues of the JRCD will be developed. In fact, the second issue of Volume One will be a special issue on the “New Rural Economy”.

Case Studies

In essence, the case study section is similar to “Shorter Items” (*e.g. Health and Place*) and “Research Reports” (*e.g. Tourism Management*) found in other scholarly journals. This section should not be viewed as simply a description of a community or region, but rather how that community or region has addressed a particular issue (*e.g. economic decline or growth; population growth or decline*). Papers should include a geographic, demographic and structural overview of the community or rural region. Methods of analyzing the particular issue should be brief.

Policy and Programme Review

Policy and program is extremely broad ranging from the LEADER programmes in Europe and United Nations programs in the developing world to a community action plan and local land use planning and development policy. This section reports on how a specific policy or program has been employed in particular community or rural area. In order to provide the reader with context, papers should include a brief overview of the policy or programme, including the history,

purpose, and implementation mechanisms. Papers should include a summary that offers recommendations for the future.

Volume One, Issue One

Robert Patrick and Mark Roseland provide an opening context for the journal that illustrates the connections between urban and rural. Acknowledging society's dependence on the automobile, the authors examine sustainability indicators related to access to public transit in rural residential areas. Three types of indicators are examined: land use, community design and transit policy. As noted by the authors, their research "points to the promise of sustainability indicators as a means of providing improved community access to public transit" (p.1).

Peter Horvath and his colleagues from Acadia University assess an issue of great importance to rural areas: community services for depressed women. Thus, the context is service delivery. The issue is how the needs of depressed women are met in rural areas. In addressing this topic the authors incorporate an innovative methodology, 'Asset Mapping' and provide a comparison of the issue in two areas. In doing so, the authors recognize the limitations of the study, while also providing statements about its importance to the topic.

The case study provided by Susannah Cameron and colleagues at Brandon University is also appropriate to the first issue in that it reports on an issue, information technology and connectivity in a remote community, Churchill, Manitoba. In fact, between original submission and acceptance of the manuscript the issue had completely changed, a fact noted in the postscript of the paper.

Volume One, Issue Two

The second issue is guest edited by Dr. William (Bill) Reimer of Concordia University. This issue focuses on the "New Rural Economy" in Canada. Papers were invited from participants in a collaborative research project funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council's Initiative on the New Economy, titled "Building Capacity of Rural Communities in the New Economy". While papers were invited, all followed the same double-blind review process.

The special issue begins by a detailed introduction by Dr. Reimer that describes the New Rural Economy and the special issue dedicated to the topic. The introductory piece sets up each of the six regular papers and the case study that comprise Issue Two. I will let his introduction speak to the content.

Enjoy. Please send comments to me at ramsey@brandonu.ca. If you are interested in submitting a manuscript, you can do so through the JRCD's website: www.jrcd.ca.

Sincerely,

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