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## Call for presentations: New Realities, Relationships

The UNBC Community Development Institute will host the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation's annual conference **September 25<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup>, 2014** in Prince George, BC. The conference theme, *New Realities, New Relationships*, reflects the changing relationships across industry, local and senior levels of government, and community organizations. Changes in policy and service environments, as well as changes in funding support, have reshaped expectations and operations while producing new realities for stakeholders in small communities. These changes call for new capacities and understandings.

The 2014 CRRF conference will provide opportunities to explore how new labour arrangements, development opportunities, and policies are reshaping community and economic development practices. In addition to sharing lessons and best practices, there will also be opportunities to build new skills and tools in order to strengthen the capacity of rural practitioners, researchers, and other stakeholders.

Key conference activities will include:

- The CRRF rural policy forum,
- Workshops to inform community development practice, and
- The new researchers' forum.

Conference participants are also invited to submit an abstract for a presentation or poster on one of the following key conference themes:

### 1. Restructuring of Rural Relationships

Presentations in this session should explore the changing working relationships among community stakeholders, provincial and federal governments, industry, First Nations, etc.. Debates are encouraged about the relationship between resource and community development, including who owns the resources, how those resources are used, who benefits from the development of those resources, and how this has impacted relationships across various stakeholders. Discussions are also encouraged about how provincial and federal levels of government are assisting small communities to navigate these conversations and processes. Presentations may also explore rural-urban interdependencies and relationships, as well as rural-rural relationships. Presentations should not only highlight best practice approaches, but also key lessons in order to foster learning about community development.

## **2. Building Capacity for Organizations and Governance**

Organizations in small communities have been struggling with limited capacity. In a rapidly changing rural landscape, many organizations have continued to implement long-term mandates and approaches to operations, even though the broader context and needs in their community may have changed or disappeared. Recent economic recessions have meant that there has been a loss of financial support (i.e. industry, business, and residents donations; government grants, etc.) for rural organizations. At the same time, there are calls for more coordination and integrated service delivery models. This has prompted the need to develop new mandates, roles, policies, protocols, tools, and other capacities to support organizational operations. While there have been many opportunities to connect and build synergies, there is a need to better understand problems associated with infrastructure and capacity in order to support change.

Presentations within this theme may also debate the changing capacity and role of local government. Should local governments function as jurisdiction holders or stewards of the community, or look to develop a broader vision and governance model for community development? Each of these approaches will have different implications for how community development unfolds. Presentations in this theme may also explore what local and regional trusts, governments, and organizations are doing to build rural capacity and our next generation of rural leaders. Provincial and federal policies and initiatives on this topic may also be explored.

## **3. Building Economic Resilience**

Presentations in this session should explore new labour arrangements, workforce development, and other related trends across rural landscapes. This may include a look at long distance commuting, work camps, and other workforce issues. With fewer human resources to support community economic development initiatives in small communities, presentations may explore how small communities are working together (i.e. through corridor collaborations, joint marketing, joint training and recruitment, joint purchasing, etc.) to enhance their capacity to respond to challenges and opportunities in the new rural economy.

## **4. Pursuing a High Quality of Life for Rural Communities**

With attention to services, housing, communications, transportation, and other community infrastructure issues, presentations within this theme should challenge approaches to guide the recruitment and retention of residents and workers in small communities. What are new residents and younger residents looking for in a workplace and in a community within which they want to live? Are small communities welcoming to workers and prepared for the impacts that different types of economic activities and workforces will make in their community? Discussion is encouraged about how soft capacity and infrastructure issues in small communities affect their ability to access resources.

Abstracts should be no longer than 250 words in length and should include all the presenters' names, affiliations, and e-mail addresses. Presentations should be no longer than 15 minutes in order to allow time for dialogue within the session.

Abstracts are due by **June 15<sup>th</sup>, 2014**. Abstracts may be submitted to: [ryser@unbc.ca](mailto:ryser@unbc.ca).