



Initiative on the New Economy

**Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places:
A Report for Ste-Françoise, Québec**

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A project of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
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INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY - ABOUT THE PROJECT

The *Initiative on the New Economy* project of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation works closely with residents, service providers, voluntary organizations, business members, and decision makers to identify factors that contribute to building capacity in rural and small town places across Canada. Capacity is the ability of people residing in a place to mobilize their assets and resources to cope with stress and transition, or to capitalize on opportunities. Such capacity is built from trust and relationships grounded in institutions, organizations, businesses, and services alike. The Initiative on the New Economy is built on four key themes to explore capacity including *local governance*, *communications*, *services*, and the *environment*. This report explores the relationship between services and capacity.

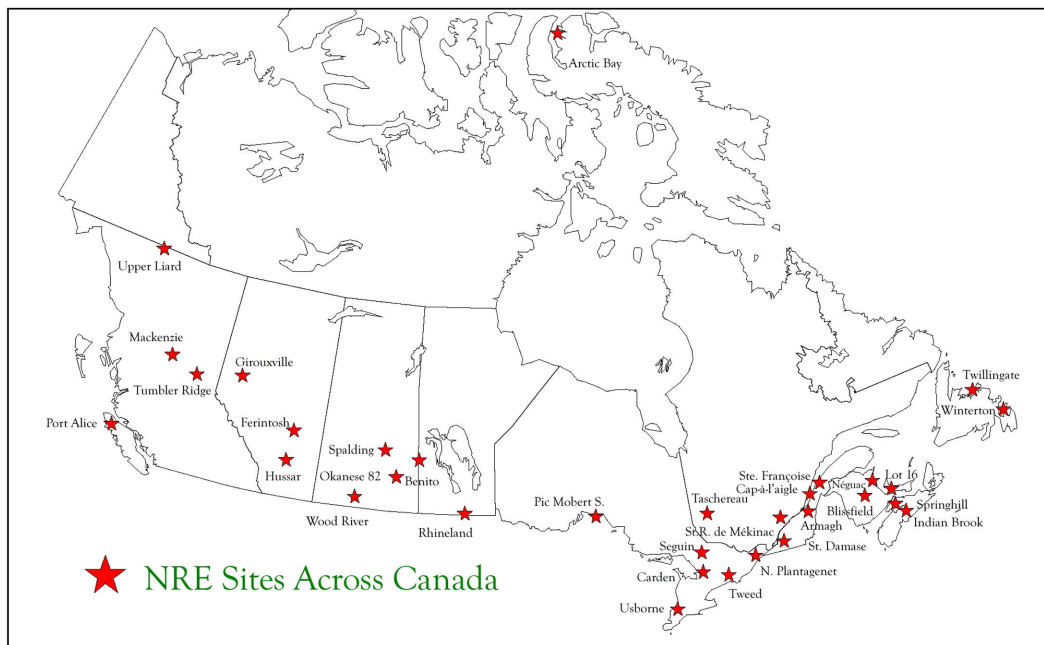
The Services Research theme conducted site profile surveys in the summer of 2005. This is the fourth survey conducted since 1998 with a goal to track services over time. Services play two key functions in building capacity. First, services help rural and small town places to cope with restructuring and transition as a result of economic downturns or plant closures. Job losses stemming from industrial restructuring or closure can place increased demands on local services for education and training, business development, counselling, health care, and other support services. Without such services, residents would have to cope with the additional burden of having to leave their town to access assistance. Job and service losses present a significant challenge to rural and small town places.

Second, services provide opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust. Together, these can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. For example, schools or seniors' centres can act as multi-functional facilities for the community where local volunteer groups, sporting clubs, local theatre, and others can do their work. Another example might be the way that post offices can act as a one stop shop for a range of government services. This report focuses on the current service provision levels in rural and small town Canada. In particular, this report will compare the availability of services in Ste-Françoise, Québec with services available in other research sites across Canada, as well as with services available in other study sites within Québec. In each of the tables in this report, the availability of services in Ste-Françoise is compared to the 24 sites surveyed across Canada and to the 4 study sites in Québec.

Information for this report was collected in Ste-Françoise by: Sophie Anne Morin, Esther Turcotte, and Bruno Jean.

ABOUT THE SERVICE INVENTORY

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation has been conducting research in 32 rural and small town sites from across Canada. These sites form a type of “rural observatory” in which aspects of the *Initiative on the New Economy* project may be examined. The sites participating in this project reflect the diversity of the Canadian landscape, and include forestry and mining towns, farming and fishing communities, and tourism towns. Furthermore, some of these places are located adjacent to metropolitan areas, while others are more isolated.



In the summer of 2005, researchers visited 24 sites across Canada to update a service provision inventory. This included 9 sites in Western Canada, 5 sites in Ontario, 4 sites in Québec, and 6 sites in Atlantic Canada. The population of these rural and small town places varies from 150 to 5,205 people.

Distribution and size of INE participating sites

SITES	POPULATION SIZE – 2001
Western Canada	
Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia	1,851
Mackenzie, British Columbia	5,205
Port Alice, British Columbia	1,126
Hussar, Alberta	181
Ferintosh, Alberta	150
Spalding, Saskatchewan	261
Wood River, Saskatchewan	370
Benito, Manitoba	415
Rhineland, Manitoba	4,183
Ontario	
Seguin, Ontario	3,698
Tweed, Ontario	1,540
North Plantagenet, Ontario	3,848
Carden, Ontario	888
Usborne, Ontario	1,490
Québec	
Taschereau, Québec	534
Cap-à-l'aigle, Québec	720
St. Damase, Québec	1,327
St. Françoise, Québec	453
Atlantic Canada	
Blissfield, New Brunswick	674
Neguac, New Brunswick	1,697
Lot 16, Prince Edward Island	688
Springhill, Nova Scotia	4,091
Twillingate, Newfoundland and Labrador	2,615
Winterton, Newfoundland and Labrador	560

Source: CRRF NRE 2005; Statistics Canada 2001.

Data were collected to examine the availability of a range of services including:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| education | community |
| health | transportation |
| protection services | recreational |
| legal | basic Shopping |
| business services | commercial shopping |
| communication | economic development organizations |
| elderly and childcare | housing |
| government | |

AVAILABILITY

Copies of all service availability reports were distributed within the participating sites. Additionally, copies have been posted on the INE website (nre.concordia.ca) and on Greg Halseth's website (<http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>).

Copies of the larger *Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Canada* report are available in a number of locations. At the University of Northern British Columbia, copies have been deposited at the Weller Library or can be accessed on Greg Halseth's website: <http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>. Copies are also available on the Initiative of the New Economy website at: nre.concordia.ca.

For further information about this report or other available reports on services, please contact Greg Halseth at:

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**INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY
SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES: A REPORT FOR STE-FRANÇOISE,
QUÉBEC**

Description du site – Ste-Françoise, QC

Ste-Françoise est situé dans la région du Bas-Saint-Laurent, dans le MRC des Basques. La ville la plus proche, Trois-Pistoles, est sur le bord du fleuve St-Laurent, à 11 kilomètres au nord de Ste-Françoise. Ste-Françoise est une communauté d'agro-foresterie dans laquelle la foresterie demeure une activité économique locale importante. Le relief se compose de terrasses entrecoupées de quelques petites collines. L'altitude moyenne est de près de 250 mètres, avec un secteur plus montagneux près du sud-est de la paroisse (maximum 400 mètres). Le territoire est traversé du nord-est au sud-ouest par de petites rivières issues de la rivière Trois-Pistoles (Rivières aux Sapins, Ferrée, aux Bouleaux, Bérubé). La population est concentrée dans le village, qui est aligné avec les routes rurales Cinq et Huit au sud-est du village. Environ 60% des routes sont asphaltées et 40% sont en gravier.

Le 100^{ième} anniversaire de l'église de Ste-Françoise a eu lieu en 2001. Cet anniversaire a été un succès énorme. On avait organisé un souper communautaire et des réparations ont été faites à l'église. En 2003, les comités de développement dans Ste-Françoise et St-Clément ont fusionné et ont embauché un agent de développement pour favoriser la croissance économique et pour souhaiter la bienvenue aux nouveaux résidents du secteur.



PROFIL DE LA POPULATION - STE-FRANÇOISE, QUÉBEC

La population de Ste-Françoise, Québec, a diminué légèrement de 467 résidents en 1996 à 453 résidents en 2001 (Statistique Canada 2001). De façon générale, la population est familiale et plus âgée. Il y a une forte proportion de personnes âgées à Ste-Françoise. Ceci aura des implications importantes pour tout projet de prestation d'une gamme de services, tels que les services de santé et le logement social. La communauté fait face également à un défi à cause de l'exode de ses jeunes, surtout les individus âgés de 20 à 24 ans.

Population	Site: Ste. Françoise		
	Total	Hommes	Femmes
Population en 2001	453	245	210
Population en 1996	467	255	215
Changement de population, 1996 à 2001 (%)	-3,0 %	-4 %	-2,3 %
Total – Tous les individus	455	245	210
Âgés de 0-4	25	15	10
Âgés de 5-14	40	20	20
Âgés de 15-19	30	10	15
Âgés de 20-24	20	15	5
Âgés de 25-44	110	60	50
Âgés de 45-54	65	35	25
Âgés de 55-64	55	25	30
Âgés de 65-74	75	40	35
Âgés de 75-84	30	20	15
Âgés de 85 et plus	5	10	0
Âge moyen de la population	45.6	45.5	45.8

Source: Statistique Canada 2001.

SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES

Services play an important role in retaining and attracting residents and businesses. However, rural and small town places across Canada are experiencing tremendous change stemming from economic and social restructuring in an increasingly global economy. As a result, some small towns have been experiencing population declines. At the same time, federal and provincial government policies have been withdrawing some of the service infrastructure that can provide a foundation for revitalizing rural and small town places and assist residents to cope with stress. Some rural and small town places adjusted to transition through establishing innovative services or diversifying their local economies. These types of innovation suggest one way by which services help to build capacity within a place.

Services also help to build capacity by providing opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust, which subsequently can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. Together, services can help to enhance local quality of life and mitigate out-migration.

Educational Services

Educational institutions are playing a changing role in maintaining quality of life in rural and small town places. Schools have provided other amenities through their libraries, theatres, and art galleries in places that would otherwise not have access to such services. They have also played a larger economic development role. Community colleges can provide skilled and professional workers, act as a broker of services, and act as a repository of information. They can also design programs and services that are relevant and respond to the changing labour market conditions of small places.

Table 1: Availability of Education Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Pre-school/kindergarten	50.0	62.5	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Elementary school	63.6	66.7	75.0	75.0	✓	
High school	27.3	37.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓
CEGEP / College	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

With the exception of community colleges, educational services are available in more sites across Canada in 2005 compared to two years ago. With the exception of elementary schools, educational services are more limited in the Québec sites compared to the national sample (Table 1). In particular, none of the Québec sites offer a high school or a CEGEP / community college. While Ste. Françoise has an elementary school, young families may send their children to pre-school or high school in Trois-Pistoles. Youth must also leave to pursue post-secondary

education. The closest CEGEP or community college is located approximately 60 kilometres away in Rimouski.

Health Services

Health services play an important role in attracting new labour and retaining residents. During times of economic and social restructuring, closures in hospitals and the centralization of physical and mental health services can be difficult on the elderly and the poor who do not have access to a vehicle or who live in a place with limited transportation services. However, it is not just the utility of health services that is of concern, but also the potential loss of health care jobs that can lead to a further decline in the local economy and population.

Table 2: Availability of Health Infrastructure - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Hospital	18.2	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Health centre / CLSC	27.3	37.5	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Medical clinic	40.9	37.5	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Blood / urine testing facility	36.4	41.7	50.0	50.0	X	✓
X-ray facility	22.7	20.8	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Baby delivery facility	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
CT scan facility	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Nursing home	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Pharmacy	40.9	37.5	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Ambulance	36.4	41.7	25.0	0.0	X	✓
Emergency services	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Health facilities are limited in most of the rural and small town places examined (Table 2). This has changed very little over the last two years. Of particular interest is that fewer than 40% of sites across Canada in 2005 have a health centre, hospital, or pharmacy. This carries important implications for residents commuting for medical emergencies or health care reasons.

Sites in Québec have more limited health facilities compared to the national sample. Half of these sites, though, have blood / urine testing facilities in their community. While Ste. Françoise does not have any of these health facilities, residents are able to access most of them within 30 minutes in Trois-Pistoles. The closest baby delivery and CT scan facilities are roughly 60 kilometres away in Rivière-du-Loup.

Table 3: Availability of Health Professionals - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		Québec % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Doctors	36.4	41.7	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Nurses	36.4	41.7	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Dentists	27.3	25.0	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Dental surgeons	9.1	8.3	25.0	25.0	X	X
Optometrists	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Home care visits	54.5	70.8	50.0	50.0	X	✓
VON	13.6	20.8	0.0	25.0	X	X
Social workers	22.7	29.2	0.0	25.0	X	✓
Public health nurse	31.8	37.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

The availability of health care professionals is also limited in small places. In fact, only home care visits are available in more than half of the sites across Canada in 2005 (Table 3). Even those services considered as essential, such as doctors, are only available in just over 41% of the sites across Canada. The presence of health professionals is more limited in Québec sites. None of these sites have an optometrist or a public health nurse. Ste. Françoise residents access most of these services approximately 11 kilometres away in Trois-Pistoles.

Table 4: Availability of Health Programs / Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		Québec % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Physiotherapy	22.7	25.0	0.0	25.0	X	✓
Speech therapy	31.8	25.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Occupational therapy	13.6	17.4	0.0	25.0	X	X
Respite care	22.7	21.7	0.0	0.0	X	X
Prenatal care programs	*	39.1	*	33.3	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

The availability of health care programs and services is also low in the sites examined across Canada. However, new services being tracked in 2005, including prenatal care programs, are more widely available (Table 4). Health care services and programs are less widely available in Québec sites compared to the national sample. However, more sites in Québec offer physiotherapy and occupational therapy compared to 2003 results. For Ste. Françoise residents, emergency services, physiotherapy, and prenatal care programs are accessible nearby in Trois-Pistoles. However, residents must commute beyond 30 minutes to access speech therapy, occupational therapy, and respite care in Rivière-du-Loup. Overall, the limited availability of

health services in Ste. Françoise may pose challenges for retaining residents who do not have access to their own vehicle.

Protection Services

Protection services contribute to community capacity in a number of ways. For example, volunteer fire departments and various crime watch programs provide opportunities for community involvement and interaction, both of which can build trust and leadership.

Table 5: Availability of Protection Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Police (Local / RCMP)	22.7	33.3	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Fire department	68.2	79.2	50.0	50.0	X	✓
911 emergency line	86.4	83.3	100.0	50.0	X	X
Security services	4.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	X
Alarm services	22.7	37.5	25.0	25.0	X	X
Neighbourhood watch	31.8	29.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Rural crime watch	13.6	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	X
Victim's services – police based	*	16.7	*	0.0	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Protection services are more available than most other services (Table 5). Most notably, fire departments and the 911 telephone number are available in more than half the sites across Canada. Since 2003, some sites across Canada appear to have recovered policing and fire department services. While half of the Québec sites have a fire department and 911 service, the availability of other protection services is more limited. Furthermore, while all Québec sites offered a 911 emergency line service in 2003, just 50% of these Québec sites continue to do so today. Ste. Françoise has a more limited range of protection services compared to other sites in Québec and across Canada. The closest police detachment is located in Trois-Pistoles, while the nearest fire department is located in St. Jean de Dieu. Other services, such as police-based victim's services, security services, and alarm services are only available beyond 30 minutes in Rivière-du-Loup. There are no neighbourhood watch or rural crime watch programs in the region.

Legal Services

Legal services are another example of specialized services that are often not found in rural areas. The absence of legal services has important implications as residents must commute to go to court, to access legal services such as preparation of wills or for purchasing real estate, or to have passports or affidavits signed.

Table 6: Availability of Legal Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Lawyer	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	X
Notary	40.9	45.8	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Court	18.2	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Overall, legal services are very limited in the study sites across Canada (Table 6). The availability of legal services in Québec sites is more limited when compared to the national sample. In fact, none of these sites have a lawyer or a court. Ste. Françoise residents and business owners must travel beyond 30 minutes to the closest court or lawyer in Rivière-du-Loup. A notary public is available in Trois-Pistoles.

Financial Services

Businesses also play a role in providing a range of activities that enhance the quality of life of a place, as well as the viability and stability of the local economy. Business members also play an important role in community development as they can provide leadership in, and support for, local volunteer groups. Small local businesses are also an important source for fundraising and sponsorship of specific local organizations or events.

Table 7: Availability of Financial / Business Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Banks	36.4	33.3	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Credit Union / Caisse Populaire	50.0	50.0	100.0	100.0	✓	
ATM	50.0	54.2	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Micro-financing	9.1	16.7	0.0	25.0	X	X
Insurance office	50.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Industrial park	22.7	20.8	25.0	25.0	✓	
Real estate office	18.2	20.8	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Accounting	50.0	50.0	25.0	25.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

In general, credit unions, ATMs, insurance offices, and accounting services are found in half the rural and small town sites across Canada (Table 7). The availability of these services has remained fairly stable over the last two years. In 2005, more Québec sites have a caisse populaire and micro-financing offices compared to the national sample. Fewer Québec sites have banks, ATMs, insurance offices, or accounting. Ste. Françoise residents and businesses benefit

from the availability of a credit union and an industrial park in their community. Most of the other financial services are accessible in Trois-Pistoles. The closest micro-financing office is located in Rimouski.

Communications

Connectivity is crucial in the new economy. Communication services also allow residents to maintain contact with family and friends. With improved communication infrastructure, rural and small town places can improve local employment opportunities, and support business networks.

Table 8: Availability of Communication Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		Québec % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Cell phone – analog	86.4	91.7	50.0	100.0	✓	
Cell phone – digital	40.9	83.3	25.0	75.0	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Ste-Françoise residents and businesses benefit from the availability of both analog and digital cell phone service (Table 8). Overall, analog cell phone service is widely available across the study sites in Canada. Approximately 83% of the sites in the national sample also enjoy digital cell phone service. All of the sites in Québec offer analog cell phone service. While fewer Québec sites have digital cell phone service, there has been a substantial increase in the proportion with digital cell phone service since 2003.

Elderly and Childcare Services

Childcare services provide an important part of the educational and care services in rural and small town places. Childcare also provides men and women with children an opportunity to participate in the labour force. Other services of importance are seniors' services including nursing homes and retirement homes. These services are particularly important given the aging of the Canadian population.

An inventory of 24 sites across Canada indicates that while many are equipped to meet the needs of young families, others are not yet well equipped with seniors' care facilities (Table 9). In contrast to the national sample, sites in Québec are well equipped to meet the needs of young families and senior citizens. More Québec sites offer daycare services and senior citizen retirement homes compared to the national sample, although none of these sites have a nursing home. Like other sites in Québec, Ste. Françoise has a daycare. However, the closest senior citizen nursing or retirement homes are located in Trois-Pistoles.

Table 9: Availability of Elderly and Daycare Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		Québec % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Daycare	45.5	54.2	75.0	100.0	✓	
Senior citizen's nursing home	18.2	20.8	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Senior citizen's retirement home	33.3	37.5	50.0	75.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Government Services

Town halls and post offices are the most frequently available government services in rural and small town places. Post offices not only provide a service and identity, but also opportunities for routine social interaction to build relationships. Other government services play an important role in community capacity by providing a local source of expertise and knowledge upon which the community can draw.

The rural and small town sites examined across Canada do not have access to many government services (Table 10). Of particular concern to sites experiencing social and economic restructuring is that none of the sites have Employment Insurance or social assistance offices. Consequently, during restructuring or plant closures, households experiencing stress will have to go outside the site for services for information and assistance.

Table 10: Availability of Government Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise: 2005	
	Canada % Yes		Québec % Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Employment Insurance	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Provincial auto license office	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Social assistance office	22.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Town hall	68.2	70.8	75.0	75.0	✓	
Post office	81.8	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

While more sites in Québec have a town hall and a post office compared to the national sample, none of the Québec sites have other government services. This may put additional pressure on households who may need to travel to access assistance during periods of change. The availability of government services in Ste. Françoise, including a town hall and a post office, resembles the service provision in other Québec sites. The closest provincial auto license office and social assistance office to Ste. Françoise is located in Trois-Pistoles. However, residents must commute beyond 30 minutes to the closest Employment Insurance office in Rivière-du-Loup.

Community Services

Community services can provide an important foundation from which to build relationships, and can be important sources to draw upon during times of economic and social stress. The availability of community services in rural and small town places varies considerably (Table 11). While fewer sites across Canada have second hand stores compared to two years ago, more sites in the national sample offer clothing depots and senior drop-in centres.

Table 11: Availability of Community Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Food bank	31.8	25.0	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Clothing exchange / depot	18.2	29.2	50.0	25.0	X	✓
Second hand stores	40.9	29.2	50.0	25.0	X	✓
Youth drop-in centre	22.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Women's drop-in centre	22.7	16.7	25.0	0.0	X	X
Senior's drop-in centre	31.8	41.7	0.0	25.0	X	X
Half-way house	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Women's resource centre	9.1	8.3	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Women's safe house	*	8.3	*	0.0	X	✓
Personal aid services	31.8	37.5	0.0	50.0	X	✓
Victim's services						
– comm. based	*	25.0	*	25.0	X	X
Churches	*	95.8	*	100.0	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Overall, sites in Québec did not have as many community services when compared to all the sites across Canada. In fact, the availability of clothing depots and second hand stores has declined in the Québec sites since 2003. At least half of these sites, though, have personal aid services and churches. The availability of personal aid services will be important during periods of social and economic change. In Ste. Françoise, the church will play an important role in providing support to its members. Many other community services may be accessed within 30 minutes in Trois Pistoles including a food bank, clothing exchange, second hand store, women's resource centre, women's safe house, and personal aid services. For the remaining community services, residents must travel approximately 60 kilometres to Rivière-du-Loup.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure can have important implications not only for attracting economic activity to a place, but also for enhancing the quality of life of vulnerable groups in rural and small town places. Transportation services, especially freight services, can play an important role in attracting industry by providing additional options to export products. However, without adequate, affordable transportation options, mobility can be difficult for women, seniors, or those with disabilities to move within the community and to access services in adjacent centres. Being mobile enables citizens to have access to services, to be involved in the community, to develop local friendship ties and support networks, and to experience social activities.

The higher availability of gas stations and automobile repair services in these places reflects Canada's general reliance on the automobile (Table 12). Other transportation services are less frequently available, most notably local transit service, passenger rail service, and airport service.

Table 12: Availability of Transport Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise: 2005	
	Canada		Québec		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	% Yes		% Yes			
2003	2005	2003	2005			
Local bus transit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Inter-community bus station	31.8	29.2	0.0	25.0	X	✓
Train – passenger	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Train – freight	36.4	29.2	0.0	25.0	X	✓
Airport	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	X
Helicopter port	22.7	25.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Boat / ferry terminal	18.2	25.0	25.0	25.0	X	X
Taxi	27.3	25.0	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Gas station	86.4	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓	
Automobile repair	63.6	70.8	25.0	50.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

When compared to sites across Canada, more Québec sites have a gas station. However, fewer Québec sites have most other transportation services. A greater proportion of Québec sites have an inter-community bus station, freight train service, and automobile repair shops compared to two years ago. The limited availability of transportation services in Ste. Françoise will pose difficulties for residents who do not have their own vehicle, but who must commute to access a range of services.

Recreation Services

When examining all of the sites, recreational services show the greatest range of availability compared to any other service category (Table 13). This bodes well for the retention and attraction of residents, as well as the overall quality of life of these places. More notable recreational services available include community playing fields, community centres, libraries, municipal parks, hiking trails, and campgrounds. Many of these services can be important places

where events can foster a sense of community. Across Canada, most sites are also able to offer either an indoor skating rink or a community gym. Recreational services less frequently available across Canada include fitness facilities, such as athletic clubs and swimming pools, as well as entertainment features such as cinemas. Since 2003, live theatre and tennis courts are found in more sites in the national sample. Declines in recreational services between 2003 and 2005 in the national sample include outdoor municipal swimming pools and skiing trails.

Table 13: Availability of Recreation Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Curling rink	31.8	37.5	0.0	0.0	X	X
Bowling lanes	22.7	20.8	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Indoor municipal swimming pool	13.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Outdoor municipal swimming pool	18.2	8.3	0.0	0.0	X	X
Indoor municipal skating rink	50.0	54.2	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Outdoor municipal skating rink	31.8	33.3	75.0	75.0	✓	
Community playing field	81.8	79.2	75.0	50.0	X	✓
Community gym	50.0	50.0	25.0	50.0	X	✓
Community centre	81.8	75.0	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Municipal athletic club	18.2	16.7	25.0	0.0	X	✓
Theatre (live performance)	13.6	33.3	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Cinema (movie theatre)	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Museum	36.4	41.7	0.0	25.0	X	✓
Library	77.3	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓	
Municipal parks	77.3	79.2	75.0	50.0	X	✓
Provincial parks	22.7	16.7	50.0	25.0	X	✓
Tennis courts	31.8	45.8	25.0	50.0	X	✓
Skiing trails	50.0	37.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Hiking trails	63.6	62.5	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Golf courses	36.4	37.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Campgrounds	68.2	66.7	0.0	25.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

In 2005, a greater proportion of sites in Québec offer recreational amenities such as outdoor municipal skating rinks and public libraries when compared with sites across Canada in 2005. However, some recreational services, such as a curling rink, bowling lanes, municipal swimming pools or athletic clubs, live theatre, movie cinema, skiing trails, and golf courses are not available in any of these sites. Ste. Françoise offers an outdoor municipal skating rink and a library. Residents may access most of the other recreational amenities within 30 minutes in Trois-Pistoles or in St. Mathieu.

Shopping

Shopping services contribute to the success of the local economy and are considered to be an important gauge of economic health of rural and small town places. Shopping is also an

important recreational activity and provides opportunities for social interaction. Low levels of shopping services can lead to out-of-town shopping and perhaps even out-migration.

Table 14: Availability of Basic Shopping Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Grocery store	68.2	70.8	50.0	50.0	✓	
Farmer's market	13.6	25.0	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Liquor store	54.5	62.5	25.0	25.0	X	✓
Bakery	27.3	37.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

The service inventory indicates that most sites across Canada are able to offer shopping services that residents would need to access on a more frequent basis, such as grocery stores (Table 14). In fact, basic shopping services have been increasing in the 24 sites examined in the national inventory. However, a lower proportion of sites in Québec have basic shopping services. While Ste. Françoise has a grocery store, other basic shopping services are available in Trois-Pistoles. For more specialized shopping, residents must travel approximately 260 kilometres to Québec City.

Economic Development Organizations

Economic development organizations can play an important role in promoting the community to attract not only additional businesses, but also to attract a wider population base. While there is not a wide range of economic development organizations in these sites, it is particularly critical to note that only approximately 20% of the sites across Canada have a Chamber of Commerce (Table 15). As these organizations are comprised of local business individuals, they are important sources to draw upon during economic and social change. On the other hand, more sites in the national sample offer financial and business consulting services compared to two years ago.

While half of the Québec sites have a women's leadership group, a challenge will be accessing leadership and assistance from other types of economic development organizations. A challenge facing Ste. Françoise during times of transition may be the absence of economic development organizations, many of which are only accessible more than 30 minutes away in Rivière-du-Loup or Québec City. However, some economic development organizations and programs, such as Community Futures and retraining programs, are available in Trois-Pistoles.

Table 15: Availability of Economic / Development Organizations - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Business Dev. Bank of Canada	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Community Futures Dev. Corp.	0.0	8.3	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Chamber of Commerce	18.2	20.8	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Local bus. dev. corp.	18.2	8.3	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Economic / community trust	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Career training / placmt. prgm.	13.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Financial / business consulting	27.3	37.5	0.0	25.0	X	✓
Real estate boards	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Tourism associations	27.3	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	X
Rotary clubs	18.2	12.5	25.0	0.0	X	X
Retraining programs – general	*	8.3	*	0.0	X	✓
Retraining programs – women	*	0.0	*	0.0	X	X
Women’s leadership groups	*	41.7	*	50.0	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Housing

Housing has been used as an incentive to attract residents to rural and small town places. However, lack of housing options as a population changes, or ages, can be a problem and can lead to out-migration. Housing options can improve the quality of life of residents, especially the more vulnerable citizens, including senior citizens or those with disabilities.

Table 16: Availability of Social Housing Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Ste-Françoise:	
	Canada		Québec		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Co-op housing	13.6	8.3	25.0	0.0	X	X
Rent supplement units	22.7	20.8	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Asstd / sub. housing – seniors	31.8	50.0	0.0	50.0	X	X
Asstd / sub. housing – families	31.8	29.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Asstd / sub. housing – singles	9.1	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	X
Asstd / sub. housing - disabled / special needs	13.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Although, social housing does not appear to be widely available in sites across Canada, there have been some important changes (Table 16). Most notably, there has been an increase in the availability of assisted or subsidized housing for seniors from approximately 32% of the sites across Canada in 2003 to 50% in 2005. While the availability of social housing is generally

limited in Québec, half of these sites offer assisted or subsidized housing for seniors. Ste. Françoise does not have any social housing options. This can pose challenges for individuals or families seeking cheaper housing options to meet their budget needs. Rent supplement units are available in Trois-Pistoles, however, other social housing options are only available beyond 30 minutes in Rivière-du-Loup.

Challenges and Opportunities for Ste-Françoise, Québec

Even though there are limited services in Ste. Françoise, its residents and businesses may access most of the services needed within 30 minutes in Trois-Pistoles. These services include a range of educational, health, protection, legal, community, financial, transportation, and government services, as well as recreational amenities. Furthermore, as forestry communities typically consist of young families, Ste. Françoise is equipped to meet some of their needs with the provision of an elementary school and daycare. However, a concern for the community is the exodus of youth who must leave to finish their high school and pursue post-secondary education.

Ste. Françoise also has a substantial population of seniors, as well as a number of residents who are close to retiring. A challenge for the community in the future may be to retain these residents who may require a range of health and community services, as well as different shopping and housing needs. These challenges may be compounded by few transportation options that may make it difficult for some seniors or residents with disabilities to remain in the community.

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