

Economic Revitalization in Rural Ontario

Jeff Dixon, Associate Director

Agenda

1. About the Monieson Centre
2. Rural Economic Development Priorities
3. The Creative Economy

ABOUT THE MONIESON CENTRE

The Monieson Centre

- A Queen's School of Business research centre founded in 1998 to focus on knowledge-based organizations and the knowledge economy
- Helps organizations and communities harness their knowledge—comprehensively and rigorously
- Conducts applied, leading-edge, multidisciplinary research on economic and business problems
- Draws on Queen's faculty, graduate students, and leading thinkers at other universities
- “Engaging the world” globally and locally
- <http://business.queensu.ca/knowledge>

Sample Economic Revitalization Projects

Research projects focusing on economic revitalization in rural Ontario:

1. Research Partnerships to Revitalize Rural Economies (SSHRC)
2. The Impact of Knowledge Mobilization on Rural Economic Development (Rural Secretariat)
3. Rural Broadband Strategic Research and Impact Analysis Project (Ontario Ministry of Government Services)
4. KIS: Knowledge Impact in Society (SSHRC)
5. Identifying rural research priorities through community engagement (with U. Guelph, funded by OMAFRA)
6. Knowledge-based regional economic development (PELA CFDC)
7. Improving the retention of knowledge workers in semi-urban settings (KEDCO)
8. Decision-making and community engagement processes (Northumberland CFDC)
9. Innovative investment models for green, multi-use complexes (North & Central Hastings & South Algonquin CFDC)
10. Exploring the provision of for-profit services by NFPs (PELA CFDC)

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PRIORITIES

Discovery Workshops

- A series of 24 workshops in communities across rural Ontario
- Community leaders and academics collaborate using electronic decision making technology in order to:



- » Identify Southern Ontario knowledge needs and resources
- » Prioritize rural research needs and opportunities
- » Share experience and knowledge
- » Build lasting relationships and communication channels

- Funded by SSHRC & OMAFRA

Discovery Workshops

- Connected with 39 CFDC regions through 24 sessions:
 - Chatham
 - Mitchell
 - Hanover
 - Elora
 - Orillia
 - Alliston
 - Simcoe
 - Dunnville

- Bancroft
- Pembroke
- Peterborough
- Kemptville
- Keswick
- Smiths Falls
- Haliburton
- Belleville
- Cornwall
- Cobourg
- Picton
- Napanee
- Rockland
- Glenburnie
- Lindsay
- Gananoque



Discovery Workshops – Top Research Questions

Southern Ontario	Eastern Ontario	Northumberland
Sustainable Econ Dev	Comparative Advantage	Knowledge-Based Economy
Comparative Advantage	Sustainable Econ Dev	Youth Retention
Econ Diversification	Econ Diversification	Job Development
Youth Retention	Small Business Development	Farm Revitalization
Labour Migration & Attraction	Labour Migration & Attraction	Poverty
Farm Revitalization	Regional Strategies	Transportation
Regional Strategies	Best Practices	Aging Population
Small Business Development	Tourism	Sustainable Econ Dev
Skills Training/Education	Youth Retention	Tourism
Best Practices	Skills Training/Education	

- #1 question: Knowledge-Based Economy:
 - What are the high growth sectors in the county?
 - What can the community do to attract knowledge-based industry?
- This ranked #15 across Southern Ontario, #18 in Eastern Ontario
- Affects and is dependent on other key research priorities for Northumberland:
 - Youth retention
 - Job development
 - Poverty
 - Sustainable economic development
 - Transportation

Participants at the 2009 KIS Showcase identified it as the most important research issue for Eastern Ontario

THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

Defining the Creative Economy

“At the heart of the creative economy lie the creative industries. Loosely defined, the creative industries are at the crossroads of the arts, culture, business, and technology. In other words, they comprise the cycle of creation, production, and distribution of goods and services that use intellectual capital as their primary input.”

UN Creative Economy Report, 2008.

Creative Occupations

- Professional occupations in natural and applied sciences
- Technical occupations related to natural and applied sciences
- Teachers and professors
- Professional occupations in art and culture
- Technical occupations in art, culture, recreation and sport
- Finance and insurance administration occupations
- Professional occupations in health
- Nurse supervisors and registered nurses
- Technical and related occupations in health
- Judges, lawyers, psychologists, social workers, ministers of religion, and policy and program officers

Source: *Eastern Ontario: Canada's Creative Corridor*

- Knowledge-based jobs pay well
 - The creative economy employs 35% of Ontario's workforce, but pays 51% of its wages (*Canada's Creative Corridor*)

- Eastern Ontario has an edge in the creative economy
 - Eastern Ontario's labour force leads the province in creative occupations (37.5% vs. 34.7%) – many opportunities exist for rural economies

- Rural communities have something unique to offer “the creative class”
 - Knowledge-based workers are looking for quality of place when they seek a place to live

WHAT CAN THE CREATIVE ECONOMY LOOK LIKE IN A RURAL CONTEXT?

Traditional Rural Businesses & the Creative Economy

- The creative economy applies to traditional rural sectors



A Rural Success Story – Fifth Town Artisan Cheese Co.

- Opened July 1, 2008 in Picton, Prince Edward County
- Niche, artisan cheese products
 - A growth market (20% annual growth, vs. 1-3% in industrial cheese)
 - Underdeveloped in Ontario (fewer than 10 businesses generating \$5m/year, vs. over 85 businesses generating \$130m/year in Quebec)



Petra C. Kassun-Mutch
Founder

Fifth Town's Product – More Than Just Cheese

Fifth Town sells more than just cheese

The value of Fifth Town Cheese

=

Cheese + Ideas

Idea #1: Quality Cheese is Green

- Sustainability integrated into every process
 - 80% of construction materials from recycled materials
 - On-site windmill & solar panels
 - Connected to Bullfrog power network
 - LEEDS Platinum certification
 - 30% operating energy use vs. baseline



Idea #2: Quality Cheese is Local

- Ingredients are sourced from local farms
- Marketing is regionally branded
 - E.g., Taste Trail: a County-led branding to draw urban-based tourists to local food community
- Strategic partnerships
 - a.k.a., “Clustering”
 - Partnership with Black River Cheese builds economies of scale for marketing and transportation to urban markets



Idea #3: Quality Cheese is Communal

- Focus on customer education
- Run online contests to name new cheeses
- Use local partners to sell products at Farmers' Markets across Eastern Ontario
- Active in food events in urban centres



The Importance of Urban Links

- “These strategies reflect a reality in which rural and urban communities are highly interdependent and symbiotic with investment flowing back and forth between both.”

Chan & Dixon, “Investing in a Creative Economy,” The National Post, Feb. 2, 2010



Using Technology to Build Urban Links



- A Trent Hills restaurant:
 - “If you would like to email us please do so , we'd love to hear from you & we will respond to your emails , but PLEASE NO RESERVATIONS as we only read our emails when we get a chance. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.”
- Lack of access to broadband was the limiting factor for this business

- Technological development has created opportunities for next-generation job growth in rural communities
- A digital success story:



- Video production company founded in Toronto in 1989
 - David Hatch had previously worked for Global TV and helped launch TSN
- In 2000, Stacey Hatch, a producer, writer and director, joined the team
- They then moved the business to Bloomfield, ON



Whistlestop Productions: The New Rural Economy

- Whistlestop grew to specialize in custom sports and documentary programming:
 - A Canadian innovator in HD and now 3-D video production



Whistlestop Productions: The New Rural Economy

- Urban linkages are key to Whistlestop's success
- Initial business depended on David & Stacey's urban-based industry connections
- Geographical proximity to Toronto, Ottawa and Montreal (2-3 hr drive) was also critical

- As video production has shifted to digital media, web connectivity is now more important than geographical proximity:
 - Whistlestop's primary business partner is based in Europe – they have never met in person
 - Broadband allows transfer of large media files to urban-based clients

The New Rural Economy in Prince Edward County

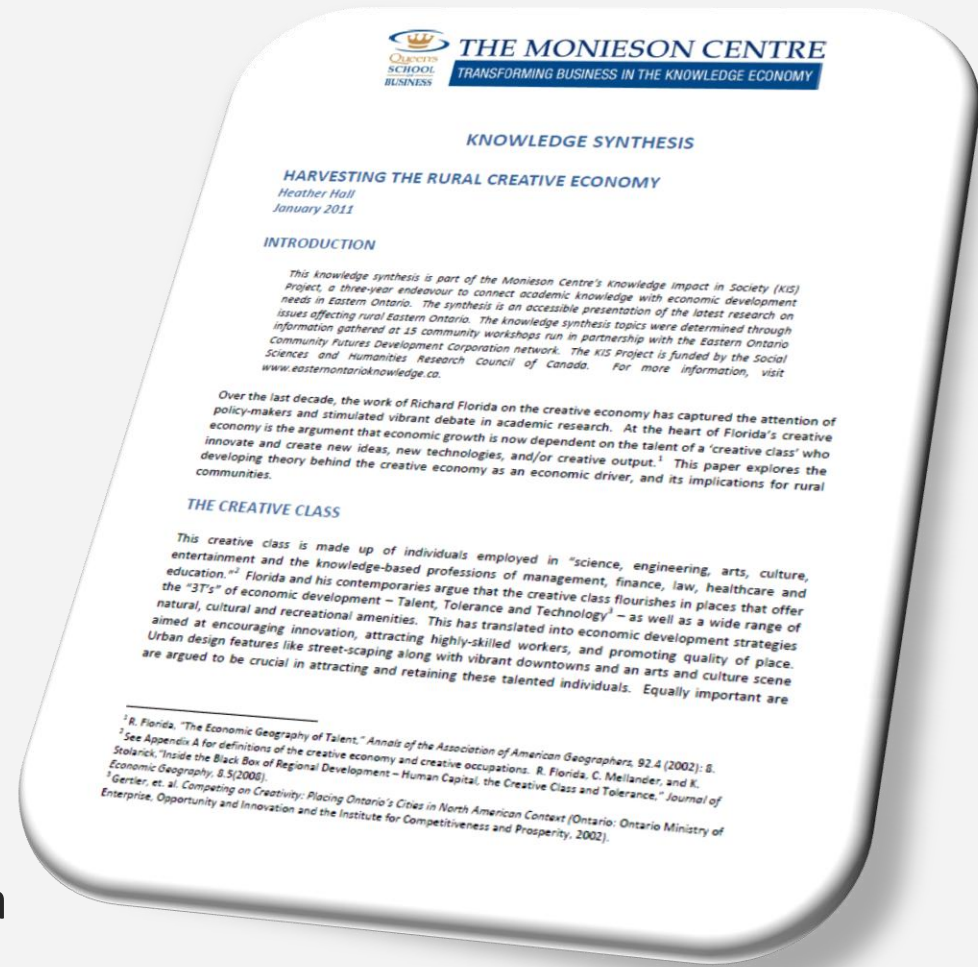
- Prince Edward County is now launching several incubators:
 - The Headlands - a multimedia incubator
 - Now home to WhistleStop Productions
 - Helping build new businesses and talent that work cooperatively
 - Home of Loyalist College's new 3D video production program
 - A high-tech incubator is linking urban-based retirees in the County with young tech start-ups

Harvesting the Rural Creative Economy

- Community-level support will help traditional and digital rural businesses make the urban links necessary to succeed in the creative economy:
 - Provide critical infrastructure links to urban centres:
 - Hard infrastructure & Broadband
 - Provide education and skills training to build & attract a knowledge-based labour force
 - Support innovation and entrepreneurship
 - Encourage industry clustering
 - Create opportunities for business partnerships, increasing access to urban markets
 - Foster local quality of place to attract urban-based knowledge workers and tourists

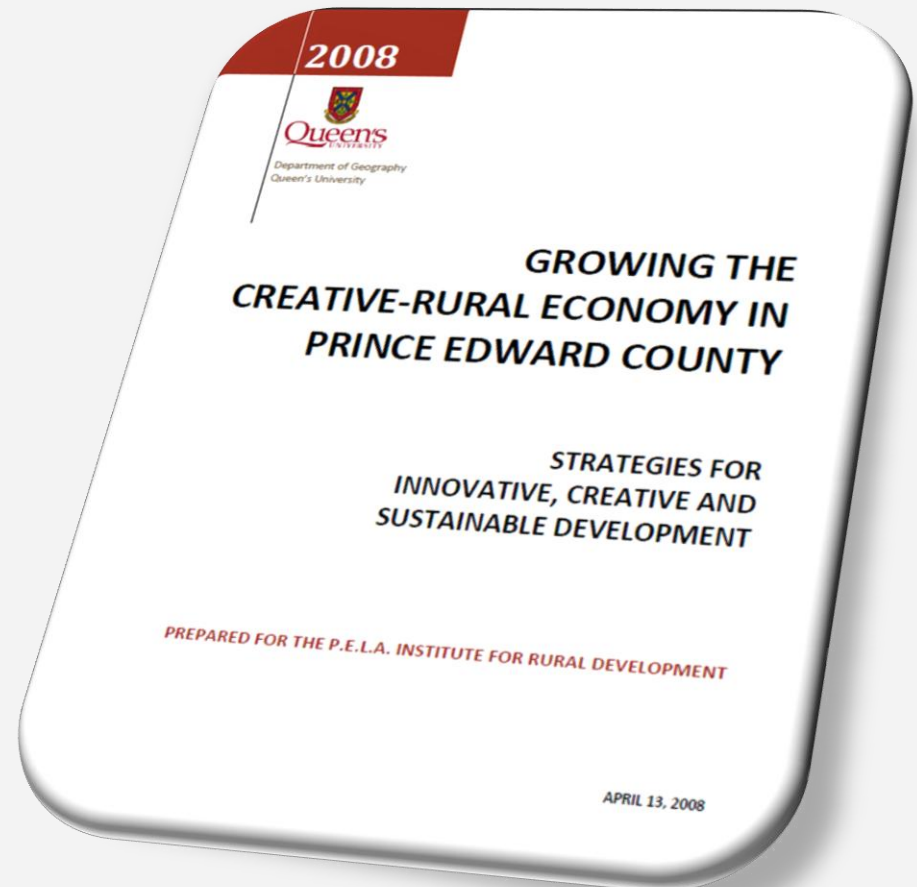
Creative Economy Resources – Knowledge Synthesis

- “Harvesting the Rural Creative Economy”
 - A summary of leading research and best practices
- “Any community leader seeking to understand how Richard Florida’s creative economy applies to rural communities should read this paper.”
 - Mike Knutson,
www.reimaginerural.com
- Available at:
www.economicrevitalization.ca



Rural Creative Economy Research

- Strategies for the Rural Creative Economy:
 - Youth retention
 - Servicing aging population
 - Encouraging innovation
 - Promoting sustainable tourism
 - “Growing the Creative-Rural Economy in Prince Edward County”, Dr. Betsy Donald
- Available at:
www.economicrevitalization.ca



- Filled with free rural economic development resources:
 - Workshop Reports
 - Knowledge Syntheses
 - Success Stories
 - Links to YouTube content
 - Rural Creative Economy Conferences & Seminars



Thank You

www.economicrevitalization.ca

www.business.queensu.ca/knowledge