

New Report Released on State of Rural Canada

The **Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation** has released a report entitled ***State of Rural Canada 2015***. The report provides a brief overview of rural development in each of Canada's provinces and territories. Overall, the report is very supportive of rural communities across Canada, arguing that rural areas have historically been overlooked by other levels of government. The report makes three key recommendations:

1. Provincial, territorial, and federal governments must develop a new and robust vision and policy framework for rural Canada.
2. Rural communities must be active participants in understanding, planning and investing in their own futures.
3. All Canadians must participate in the window of opportunity that follows the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada to acknowledge and seek serious corrective steps to heal the "historical trauma" suffered by Aboriginal peoples in this country.

The AAMDC is supportive of these recommendations, and is hopeful that the report will assist in increasing the consideration that provincial, territorial, and federal governments give to rural communities when making policy and operational decisions.

In addition to its overall recommendations, the report drew several interesting conclusions about rural Alberta. Most notably was the identification of the infrastructure challenges faced by rural municipalities. Similar to the AAMDC's position, the report points out that most of Alberta's rural municipalities have very large infrastructure networks despite low populations, which typically leads to high per capita expenses.

The report also identifies four "key factors for the future," all of which may impact rural development in Alberta in the coming years:

1. Emphasis on agriculture and economic development
2. Political change
3. Oil reliance (Dutch disease)
4. Amalgamation/regionalization

To read the Alberta section in its entirety, see page 17 of the report.

Please note that each chapter is on a different province or territory and each are written by different authors, consequently there may be different perspectives from the different authors. That being said the chapter on Alberta aligns very well with the AAMDC perspective.

The AAMDC will be sharing the report with provincial ministers, as it is important that provincial decision-makers have a strong understanding of rural issues, both in an Alberta context and more broadly.

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