

**Clarenville -
Bonavista
Regional Council
of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council**



**Activity Report
2008-09**

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Message from the Chair

As Chairperson for the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council, I hereby submit the annual activity report for the 2008-09 fiscal year. On behalf of the Council and in accordance with the *Guidelines for Annual Activity Reports for Category 3 Government Entities*, my signature is indicative of the council's accountability for the results achieved.

During this past year, the council has focussed on four of its commitments in the 2008-2011 Activity Plan. Consequently, it was proven to be a very busy and rewarding year with council developing new understandings on the issues we hope to address. In this effort, we have engaged government, academia and community stakeholders to assist us in formulating our perspectives and build our knowledge base as we seek to refine our focus in these areas to develop policy advice. Although the council is mandated to meet four times each year, given the magnitude of our work, it is evident to us that we will need to meet more frequently in 2009-2010.

Additionally, the council has provided advice on two separate issues: agriculture and youth retention and attraction. Through the announcement by the Provincial Government to develop a Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy for the province, the council felt that the timing was right to provide advice into this important initiative. As well, after reviewing the submission on Agriculture from the Stephenville- Port Aux Basques Regional Council, we felt it was important to complement the advice with a submission from this council.

In 2009-2010, the council will continue to engage government and community stakeholders as we move forward with the commitments asset forth by the 2008-2011 Activity Plan.

Sincerely,



Violet Parsons
Chair
Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region



The population of the Clarenville - Bonavista region is estimated to be 28,100 in 2009, or about 5.5 percent of the total provincial population. This share is expected to decrease to approximately 5.1 percent over the next 15 years.

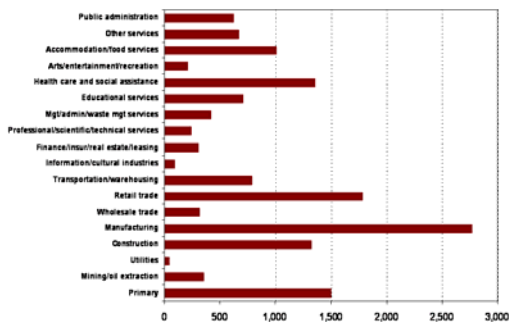
Employment in the Clarenville - Bonavista region is estimated at 14,570 according to Census 2006, or 5.5 percent of total provincial employment. Employment in the region decreased by less than 1 percent over the past five years, but increased by about 2.5 percent over the past ten years.

Goods-producing industries, including primary activity, mining and oil extraction, construction, utilities and manufacturing accounted for 41.2 percent of employment in the region in 2006. This sector accounted for 26.8 percent of provincial employment. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 1.

Private sector services, excluding private education and health services, accounted for 20.4 percent of employment compared to 46.3 percent for the province as a whole.

Last, employment in public administration and services that are largely funded or delivered by the public sector, such as education, health care and social assistance, totalled 2,695 in 2005, or 18.5 percent of employment. This compares to 27.1 percent for the province as a whole.

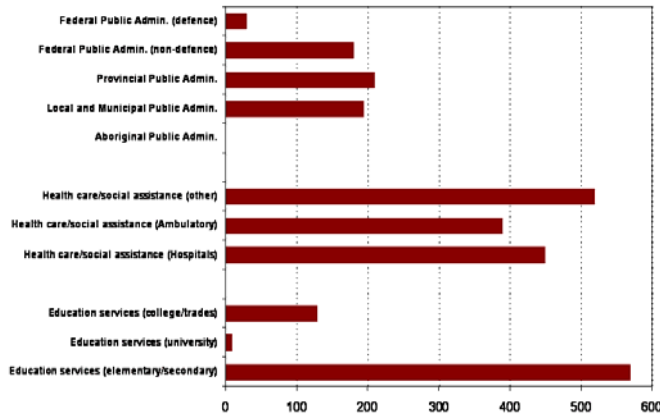
Chart 1
Employment by Industry, 2005



Within the broad public administration and related services group, health care and social assistance services employment totalled 1,360 and educational services totalled 710. Federal, provincial, municipal and aboriginal public administration, including defence services, totalled 625. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 2.

There were 93.6 persons employed in public administration and related services in 2005 per 1,000 people resident in the region in 2005. This compares to 142.7 persons per every 1,000 residents for the province as a whole. Industry level detail is provided in

Chart 2
Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



over the ten year period.

The greater decline in labour supply relative to employment opportunities resulted in a lower unemployment rate and higher incomes, and indirectly resulted in lower reliance on income support.

The regional unemployment rate declined from about 31 percent in 1995 to 22.2 percent in 2005, and personal income per capita, after adjusting for inflation and personal taxes, grew by 25.5 percent.

Total incidence of income support - the percentage of people that received income support at some point during the year - declined from 16.9 percent in 1995 to 9.9 percent in 2005.

One of the key long term labour market challenges facing the region relates to how to meet employment demand as the labour supply ages and declines over the next decade.

Today, about 37.4 percent of those ages 15-64 are ages 50-64. This is expected to increase to about 44.5 percent by 2020. Over the same period, the labour force age population is expected to decline by about 17.9 percent from about 19,300 to just under 16,400 persons.

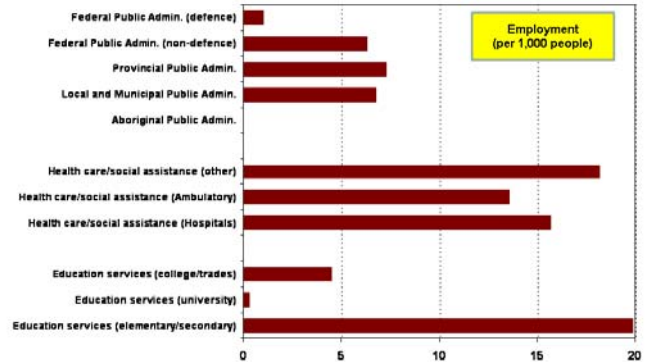
Additional information, including gender-specific information and information for other levels of geography, can be found at www.communityaccounts.ca and www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural

Chart 3.

The profile of employment in the region is also changing. In 2005, 81.7 percent of employment was considered full-time (30 or more hours per week) and 35.4 percent of employment was considered full-year (50 or more weeks worked per year). By comparison, 34.3 percent of employment was considered full-time in 1995, and 34.3 percent was considered full-year.

The potential labour supply is declining at a faster rate than employment. The labour force population (ages 15-64) was estimated at 23,900 in 1995 and 19,300 in 2005, representing a decline of about 19.2 percent

Chart 3
Per Capita Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



2. Regional Council Overview

The Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council is comprised of 12 members; seven female and five male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including eleven members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The Council met six times in 2008-09. Council members also participated in two Knowledge Mobilization Sessions in partnership with the Leslie Harris Center at Memorial University: one on Rural Education and one on Regionalization.

The council does not have a budget and, as such, an audited financial statement is not required in this report. Meetings of the council and associated costs are funded through the budget of the Rural Secretariat. Below is a summary of the expenditures for the region including both planner and council costs:

	Clarenville- Bonavista Budget 2008-09	Clarenville- Bonavista Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	12,400.00	13,797.35
Supplies	2,500.00	677.45
Purchased Services	2,500.00	672.33
Total Budgeted	17,400.00	15,147.13

The Rural Secretariat also funds a regional planner position in the region, who among other duties, act as an information resource for the council and facilitate the work of the Council. The planner for the Clarenville - Bonavista region is Colin Holloway. His office is located at the Bonavista campus of the College of the North Atlantic.

Regional Council members	Community
Bill Abbott	Bonavista
Shelly Blackmore	Port Union
Lisa Browne	Clarenville
Marilyn Coles-Hayley	Elliston
Darryl Johnson	Port Union
Fay Matthews	Arnold's Cove
Don Mifflin	Bonavista
Maria Moran	St. Jones Within
Violet Parsons (Chair)	Bloomfield
Barry Pearce	Port Rexton
Edith Samson	Port Union
Mervin Wiseman	North Harbour

* For an updated listing of council members please visit <http://www.exec.gov.nl.ca/rural/regionalmem.asp> .

3. Mandate

The Regional Council mandate is:

- To develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities of a region.
- To review key regional economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- To identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change.
- To advance regional cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage regional partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- To nominate an individual to represent the region on the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat.

4. Lines of Business

The council supports the Rural Secretariat's two lines of business.

- **Partnership Development.** The Rural Secretariat engages citizens and coordinates the development of partnerships to focus on sustainable regional development and provide direct consideration of regional issues in the development of public policy.
- **Regional Impact Awareness and Action.** The Rural Secretariat conducts research and analysis, and provides informed advice on opportunities and challenges in all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.

5. Values

The core values explain the character of the organization. These values are paramount to the mandate and activities of the Council and are as follows:

Collaboration	Each person is committed to working together effectively.
Creativity	Each person seeks and supports new ideas and approaches.
Empowerment	Each person is responsible for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions.
Inclusion	Each person acknowledges others' views and perspectives and has the right/opportunity to express their own.
Learning Culture	Each individual is recognized and valued for the skills that they bring and is encouraged to continue to learn.
Transparency	Each individual gives and shares open and objective advice based on sound information and principles.
Trust	Each person is open and supportive when participating in partnerships and follows through on requests and commitments.

6. Primary Clients

The primary clients of the Regional Council include the Rural Secretariat, the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat, and departments and agencies within the provincial government, among others.

The council will also engage individuals, groups and organizations within the region as it carries out its work.

7. Vision

The Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council supports the vision of the Rural Secretariat:

Sustainable regions with healthy, educated, prosperous people living in safe, inclusive communities.

Through its work, the council is identifying priorities that contribute to regional sustainability which considers economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects.

8. Mission

The mission statement identifies the priority focus area of the council. It represents the key long-term objective that the council will be striving towards as they move forward with their work. The priority focus areas support the strategic directions of the provincial government. The statement also identifies the indicators that will assist both the council and the public in monitoring and evaluating success. The council will report on its mission statement in its 2010-11 Annual Report.

The mission statement of the council is as follows:

By 2011, the council will have participated in an ongoing community engagement process that will demonstrate the value of two-way communication between the Provincial Government and citizens.

9. Report on Performance

In its 2008-11 Activity Plan the council identified four goals. This section outlines each of these goals, its measure and indicators, and describes activities undertaken by the council to advance its achievement.

The activities and performance of the council with respect to each of the goals as outlined below, is in support of the provincial government's strategic directions for the Rural Secretariat (Appendix A). In particular, the council's performance allowed for the development of new partnerships with various

stakeholders at the regional level, and provided a new regional forum to discuss citizens' perspectives on regional and rural sustainability. The council recognizes that these strategic directions are long-term in nature and believes that its activities in 2008-09 and beyond will further support these directions.

9.1 Issue 1: Partnerships and Community Development – Regional Governance

In 2008-2009, the council studied the concept of regional governance in great detail. These activities allowed the Council to identify four areas of focus for consideration in developing a regional governance model: community leadership; regional collaboration; models of regional governance and the importance of understanding demographic trends within regions and communities.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have developed a position paper on regional governance options that identifies ways to meet the sustainability needs of the Clarenville - Bonavista region.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have defined the areas of focus required to develop a regional governance model.

Measure:

Areas of focus defined.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Current status of community leadership described through examples and best practices documented.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council undertook a range of consultations and related activities to better understand local community leadership practices, issues and challenges. Council consulted with municipalities, Regional Economic Development Boards (REDBs), regional tourism groups, voluntary organizations and provincial government entities (e.g., regional waste management authority). • The council compiled an inventory of baseline information and findings from its consultation work. It decided that its first areas of focus should relate to documenting best practice in community leadership. The other areas of focus pertained to the council seeking information on the differences between regional governance, regionalism and regionalization. This work was also complemented by other activities as outlined in the section below. • Given the diverse range of organizations consulted by the council and the range of perspectives brought forward by these organizations, the council did not feel it could complete a best practices document this year. It intends to conduct further community engagement work to better describe community leadership practices in 2009-10.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Jurisdictional reviews, evaluation and research conducted.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council analyzed how it would complete a jurisdictional review of regional governance models provincially, nationally and internationally. Council, in partnership, with the Leslie Harris Centre at Memorial University, engaged experts and academics to learn what was happening in other jurisdictions. • The council reviewed status of municipal plans, historical municipal electoral data and infrastructure (as it relates to shared services). • The council consulted with local organizations in the Clarenville – Bonavista region to gain input on thoughts and perspectives on regional governance. (see previous indicator). • The council has learned that there are several layers of complexity to consider, including the work of Municipalities Newfoundland Labrador to promote regionalization, as well as regional governance models in Europe and some Maritime provinces. • It felt that it would benefit from engaging academic researchers to complement their own work, specifically to fill information gaps they were unable to complete relating to this indicator. To accomplish this, Council organized a session on regionalization and regional governance with presenters from Memorial University’s Departments of Geography and Political Science. Topics covered included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Regional governance approaches used in other jurisdictions (British Columbia, New Brunswick and Nova Scotia); ○ Criteria that can be used to better define regions such as socio-economic conditions, transportation, and geographic dispersion of employment; and ○ The history of regionalization, specifically what motivates regionalization and how lessons learned from other jurisdictions can help inform the development of regional governance models. ○ This session on regionalization was held in partnership with the Burin Peninsula and Gander - New-Wes-Valley Regional Councils, and Memorial University’s Leslie Harris Centre. 38 participants included municipal leaders and representatives from voluntary organizations in the region attended. The session report is available through the Harris Centre’s website. • While the council has gathered the information on regional governance, it feels it is not in a position to evaluate and put forward one specific model for the region to government. The council will require more time to continue to gather additional information and consult with the community as part of its evaluation process.

Based on these accomplishments, Council will work toward the following measure and indicators for it's 2009-10 Objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Clarenville – Bonavista Regional Council will have identified and furthered options to advance regional governance model for the Clarenville – Bonavista region.

Measure:

- Options identified to advance regional governance

Indicators:

- Community engagement work completed
- Current status of community leadership described through examples and best practices documented.
- Evaluation of information gathered on regional governance models completed.
- Working paper on best practice in community leadership is developed.

9.2 Issue 2: Multi-service delivery of rural education

In 2008-2009, the Council commenced its community engagement and research on multi-service delivery of rural education. Because of a strong focus on this objective, the Council submitted a draft document to government departments aiming to further its dialogue and engagement opportunities in 2009-2010.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have developed a position paper which explores options for multi-service delivery of rural education.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have identified and documented “best practices” for a multi-service delivery approach of rural education in the region.

Measure:

Identified priority areas for multi-service delivery in rural education for the Clarenville - Bonavista region

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Research completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council consulted with officials from the Eastern and Central School Boards, Eastern Regional Integrated Health Authority, in addition to school administrators, and other Regional Councils. As well, two consultations were held with officials at Memorial University's Faculty of Education, and the Department of Tourism, Culture & Recreation, Health & Community Services, Human Resources, Labour & Employment, and Justice. • It, through its planner, participated in Memorial University's Symposium on Education in May 2008. The Symposium brought together researchers and educators from schools, schools boards, the Department of Education and the Faculty of Education to discuss how education has changed in 50 years, how it will change in the next 15 to 20 years, and what collective steps need to be made to address the anticipated needs of students and the community. • The council was represented by the planner at a Community Education conference in Saskatchewan in October 2008. Representatives, including educators and school-based professions, researchers and policy analysts from Saskatchewan, British Columbia, and New Brunswick, were asked to focus on best practices and implementation strategies for community schools and community education. • The council initiated a community engagement process in the region. Through the Planner, facilitated meetings were held with 27 school administrators, one school council, and officials from the Eastern School Board. • The council reviewed research on community school processes. Examples included international organizations (United Nations World Health Organization), academic institutions, other provincial government strategies, policy documents and legislation (e.g., New Brunswick, British Columbia and Saskatchewan), provincial community based organizations (e.g., Community Education Network of Southwest Newfoundland)

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Regional priority areas identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of their research, the council has concluded that there is broad support for multi-service delivery model utilizing schools as hubs in rural communities. There were a mix of pilots and approaches such as Neighbourhood Learning Centres and “communities in schools” to help expand on its research. • The council also learned that there were challenges with this approach in consideration of other legislation (e.g., Schools Act), and current board policies (lockdown policies, use of schools by external groups and other departments for local service provision, and after school bussing arrangements). • In the short-term, it identified best practices, as well as potential pilot sites located in three regions in the province. • Best practices – school administrator has to be on side. Solutions have to be consistent with principles of life-long learning, responsive to needs of community, including community participation in decisions, and provision of services to range of clients such as children/ students families. Coordination requires additional resources such as a Community School Coordinator for administrative items, community consultation, and to facilitate better working relationships amongst key partners. • The council identified three pilot sites – Rushoon, Summerford, and Stephenville. This was based from a provincial scan and these places had moved in this direction. The council feels it is best to build on early successes and where there is already community support for an integrated approach to service delivery. It also explored potential sites in the Clarenville-Bonavista region, which will require further consideration. • The council has developed a draft document which identifies an integrated service delivery model for rural regions in Newfoundland Labrador. It submitted the document, as a draft, to the Departments of Rural Secretariat, Education, Health & Community Services and Human Resources, Labour & Employment, Tourism, Culture & Recreation, and Justice. This document includes an overview of best practices as summarized above.

Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for its 2009-10 objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have initiated the community engagement (i.e. roundtable discussions) process related to multi-service delivery of rural education.

2009-10 Measure:

- Continue community engagement process

2009-10 Indicators:

- Community engagement sessions held
- Facilitated sessions with government held
- Feedback incorporated into draft position paper

9.3 Issue 3: Employment and Human Resource Development

Throughout 2008-09, the Regional Council attempted to develop an inventory of current infrastructure and human resource needs for the region with respect to the following primary industries: fishing and aquaculture; agriculture; oil and gas; and forestry. This process included consultations with Regional Economic Development Boards, business stakeholders, and government departments. Through this process Council discovered that there is little existing data in the region to document current infrastructure and human resource needs for these primary industries.

In 2009-10 the council will be working with Provincial Government departments and local agencies to identify ways in which this information can be gathered/obtained in order to further the research that begun in 2008-09. Building on this research, it will engage local stakeholders in 2009-10 in order to develop an advisory paper to submit to the Provincial Government in 2010-11 as per its commitment.

The review of current infrastructure and human resource requirements has also included a revised demographic profile for the Clarenville-Bonavista region to better reflect the results of the 2006 census data. This piece of work was completed in partnership with the Newfoundland Labrador Statistical Agency.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have developed a position paper to identify anticipated human resource and infrastructure needs in key industry sectors in support of regional sustainability.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have initiated a review of the current human resource and infrastructure capacities in key industry sectors.

Measure:

A review of current human resource and infrastructure capacities for fishing and aquaculture, agriculture, oil and gas, and forestry industries has been initiated.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Current status of human resource capacity within key industry sectors documented.</p> <p>Current demographic profile completed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council was able to commence its documentation of the human resource capacity for the following primary industries: fishing and aquaculture, agriculture, forestry, and oil and gas. • The council completed a demographic profile of the region. In this profile, Council compiled key labour market supply, labour market demand, and educational attainment, demographic and related indicators for the region overall as well as for the industry sectors identified. • The council also reviewed industry profiles completed by Discovery Regional Development Board and the Schooner Regional Development Corporation. • As a result, the council identified data gaps it wishes to pursue in 2009-10. It will seek to engage Newfoundland Labrador Statistics Agency, government departments, and industry stakeholders (e.g., Regional Economic development Boards, Chambers of Commerce, industry associations) in this regard.
<p>Inventory of infrastructure initiated.</p> <p>Current educational programs described</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In the context of this issue, council refers to infrastructure as public buildings, transportation routes, public services and physical training-related infrastructure as well as softer programming infrastructure including on-the-job training. • The council also reviewed business inventory database of Discovery Regional Economic Development Board. This review and subsequent discussion allowed the council to identify that there are gaps in education programs to support the needs of local firms and industries outside skilled trades. For example, there are limited non-skilled trades course offerings to support the development of the forestry and sawmilling in the region. • The council documented location of K-12, public post secondary and private post secondary institutions (e.g. Discovery Centres and Key-In College). • The council compiled inventory of College of the North Atlantic (Clarenville and Bonavista) and Key-In College (Clarenville) course offerings.

Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for it 2009-10 objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have identified future human resource and infrastructure requirements in each key industry sector.

2009-10 Measure:

- Future human resource and infrastructure requirements identified.

2009-10 Indicators:

- Complete a review of Regional economic strategies, planning documents and programs.
- Engagement sessions held with post secondary institutions and industry to further document anticipated human resource requires, in addition to planned educational program delivery models to support the four primary industries as described above.

9.4 Issue 4: Regional Vision Development

A regional vision document represents a vision for the future that has been created by the Clarenville-Bonavista Regional Council. It is intended to be a dynamic working document that will be adapted as: priorities are achieved, new priorities are identified, community engagement discussions prescribe and the regions of Newfoundland and Labrador continue to grow and change. The vision will identify what citizens want to see in 15-20 years. Today that time frame is 2022-27. In five years, that time frame will be 2027-32.

As priorities are accomplished new priorities will be identified. This will provide an opportunity for us to be informed about what is moving and changing in our regions, where the next opportunity will be and where the next challenge will be. It will also provide a challenge for all involved to have faith in the process and realize that it will take time until these priorities are accomplished. It takes time to make significant change and it is important for this council to remain focused on the future, even in the midst of immediate challenges.

The Regional Council believes that the regional vision document is a living document: it requires continuous input from citizens as new policies and programs are created by governments and new developments occur in communities.

Based upon input received from citizens and community-based groups in 2008-09, the council sees that citizens are engaging in meaningful dialogue about key policy and program issues which impact the future sustainability of the region.

Goal:

By March 31, 2011, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have a regional vision that is reflective of its community engagement process and the input received from the citizens of the Clarenville - Bonavista region.

2008-09 Objective:

By March 31, 2009, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have initiated the community engagement process to validate and seek additional input into the vision document.

Measure:

Initiated the community engagement process.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Number of community sessions/ meetings held.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council distributed the Vision document to representatives from 43 municipalities in region, and distributed it at a regional municipal symposium hosted by the Discovery Regional Development Board. Council, through the Planner, also circulated the Vision document at a multi-stake forum on regional poverty reduction and homelessness.• The council, through the planner, hosted two regional multi-disciplinary engagement sessions – community youth networks, employment corporations, career counsellors, government departments, regional school and health boards, and other groups such as Family Resource Centres.• Bonavista Partners Network – Department of Innovation, Trade & Rural Development, Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, College of the North Atlantic, Department of Human resources, Labour & Employment, Community Business Development Corporation, Service Canada, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency, and the Discovery Regional Development Board.• In total, the council met with 28 individuals who reviewed and discussed the contents of the Vision document in detail.
Community feedback received and documented.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council documented all feedback received. Council will review the feedback in 2009-10 also in context of pending engagement sessions.• Broad endorsement of vision of council, especially the need for public transportation systems.• Broad endorsement for initiatives already taken by government: mandatory career development in K-12 system; voluntary, community service hours for high school graduates.• More engaged dialogue – people focused more on important regional issues rather than seeking to understand the role of the council in developing a vision for the region.• Participants sought detail and clarification about vision – e.g., fewer more stable firms in fishery.• Specific areas where the council over or underestimated specific goals such as labour market participation by females or need for public daycare and affordable youth housing.

Based on these accomplishments, the council will work toward the following measure and indicators for it 2009-10 Objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010, the Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council will have expanded the community engagement process concerning the vision document.

2009-10 Measure:

- Expanded community engagement process to include a larger number of sessions with individuals and community-based organizations.

2009-10 Indicators:

- Expanded number of sessions held
- Regional Vision document is revised based upon documented Community feedback received.

10. Additional Highlights

The Clarenville - Bonavista Regional Council is seeking to broaden public dialogue on long-term opportunities and challenges facing the region. It aims to provide input and advice to the provincial government on these opportunities and challenges. This is a long term process that will require ongoing collaboration with citizens, stakeholders and interests in the region.

The council feels that its performance in 2008-09 has allowed it to make advancements in this process. The council is providing an open and transparent means for rural perceptions, realities, opportunities, challenges and potential solutions to be discussed, debated and deliberated. It has brought together citizens, stakeholders and interests from differing backgrounds with differing priorities and perspectives, differing bases of information and knowledge, and differing expectations. It has built confidence, leadership and trust, and it has broadened public awareness of issues.

In addition to the points raised in Section 9, three additional highlights are worthy of mention. These are consistent with the Rural Secretariat's strategic directions and mandate, and will serve to inform the work of the council in 2009-10 and 2010-11.

The Regional Council developed and submitted an advice document to the Minister of Human Resources, Labour and Employment with respect to the Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy. In its submission, the council focused on the need for greater collaboration between departments, public colleges, employers and School Boards to: find solutions to address housing and transportation cost for rural students; review the Student and Grant Program seeking incremental decreases linked to employment in Newfoundland and Labrador; and find opportunities for shared delivery of services in rural communities. The council also recommended that partnerships be sought with small and medium size businesses to develop a comprehensive human resource management plan to assist the recruitment and retention of young people to rural communities. Finally, the council recommends that departments collaborate with rural regions,

including Regional Councils for the Rural Secretariat, to: identify how infrastructure investments should be made; develop a database of existing infrastructure in the regions; identify what will be the minimum public services; and, how best to provide broadband.

The council also submitted a policy advice document on Agriculture to the Minister of Natural Resources. In this submission, council focused on the need for a comprehensive review, including an Agricultural Summit and the establishment of a Task Force to follow-up on anticipated recommendations. This review would consider public good issues such as food security including the feasibility of a federally inspected abattoir, as well as issues impacting public and animal welfare and environmental sustainability. In addition, the council suggests strategic research and development investments in the agricultural industry including relationship building between industry stakeholders and the Research and Development Council, Memorial University of Newfoundland, as well as the Applied Research Centre at the College of the North Atlantic and the Cold Climate Facility in St. John's. Finally, the Council sees the need to increased linkages between the industry and the K-12 education system with focus on business modelling, human resource development and succession planning.

The Regional Council is keenly interested in gaining knowledge on the issues impacting rural communities. Three Regional Council members attended a learning event hosted by the Rural Secretariat on October 14, 2008. Building on the annual Dialogue Day events from 2004 to 2007, this event was facilitated by Dr. Rupert Downey of the University of Victoria and focused on community-based research. This learning event was followed by the *Knowledge in Motion '08* conference hosted by the Leslie Harris Centre of Regional Development of Memorial University. This conference focused on the importance of linking university research to community development needs and priorities and how to translate knowledge to inform public policy and decision making.

11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the council is broad-based and long-term in nature, the challenges and opportunities faced by the council remain fairly similar from year to year. The council feels that these challenges and opportunities can be categorized along three themes.

Provision of Policy Advice to government

The council's mandate commits it to reaching consensus on the priorities for change in its region and to identifying policies and programs to encourage desired change. The challenge for the council, given the range of issues, perspectives, interests and needs within its region, is to reach consensus on priorities for change and on policy advice to provide to government. The opportunity for it is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can both provide informed bottom-up policy advice to government as well as respond to top-down policy level requests from government that may impact on the region.

Regional collaboration

The council's mandate commits it to sharing information, advancing regional cooperation and to encouraging regional partners to more actively participate on matters that can advance regional sustainability. The challenge for council is to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body within the region that can advance collaboration. There are two opportunities for the council. First, it can position itself as a broad-based and cross-sectoral advisory body that can lead, participate and/or support regional collaboration across a range of sectors, communities and interests. Second, as a broad-based advisory body, it can identify the various supports necessary to foster collaboration and provide advice to government to advance efforts to provide such supports.

Regional communications

The council understands that a range of non-governmental organizations in rural areas provide advice to government on a range of policy matters. In large part, these organizations are focused on particular agendas, needs and interests, such as and among others, regional economic development, environmental awareness and protection, social policy advancement and municipal governance. The challenge for council is to openly and positively communicate its mandate and role to other regional stakeholders and interests, and to position itself as an objective, informed and influential advisory body that can assist other stakeholders. The opportunity for the council, through new and strengthened relationships with regional stakeholders, is to ensure that a broad range of perspectives are considered as it identifies regional priorities, provides advice to government and fosters collaboration.

Appendix A: Strategic Directions

Strategic Directions

1. **Title: Regional Partnership Development**

Outcome Statement: Stronger and more dynamic regions.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

- Partnership Development
 - Within regions
 - Between government and regions
- Forum for informed discussion and priority identification that links economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional sustainability.

2. **Title: Assessment of Policy on Regional Sustainability**

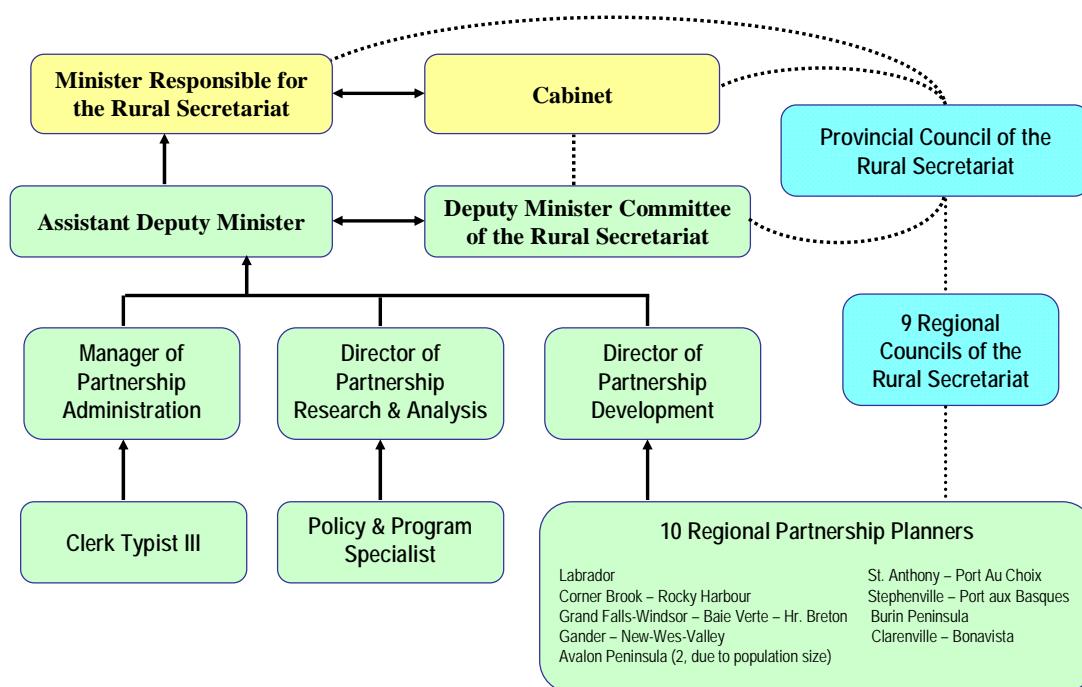
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

Clarifying Statement: This outcome requires systemic intervention by the Regional Council in the areas of:

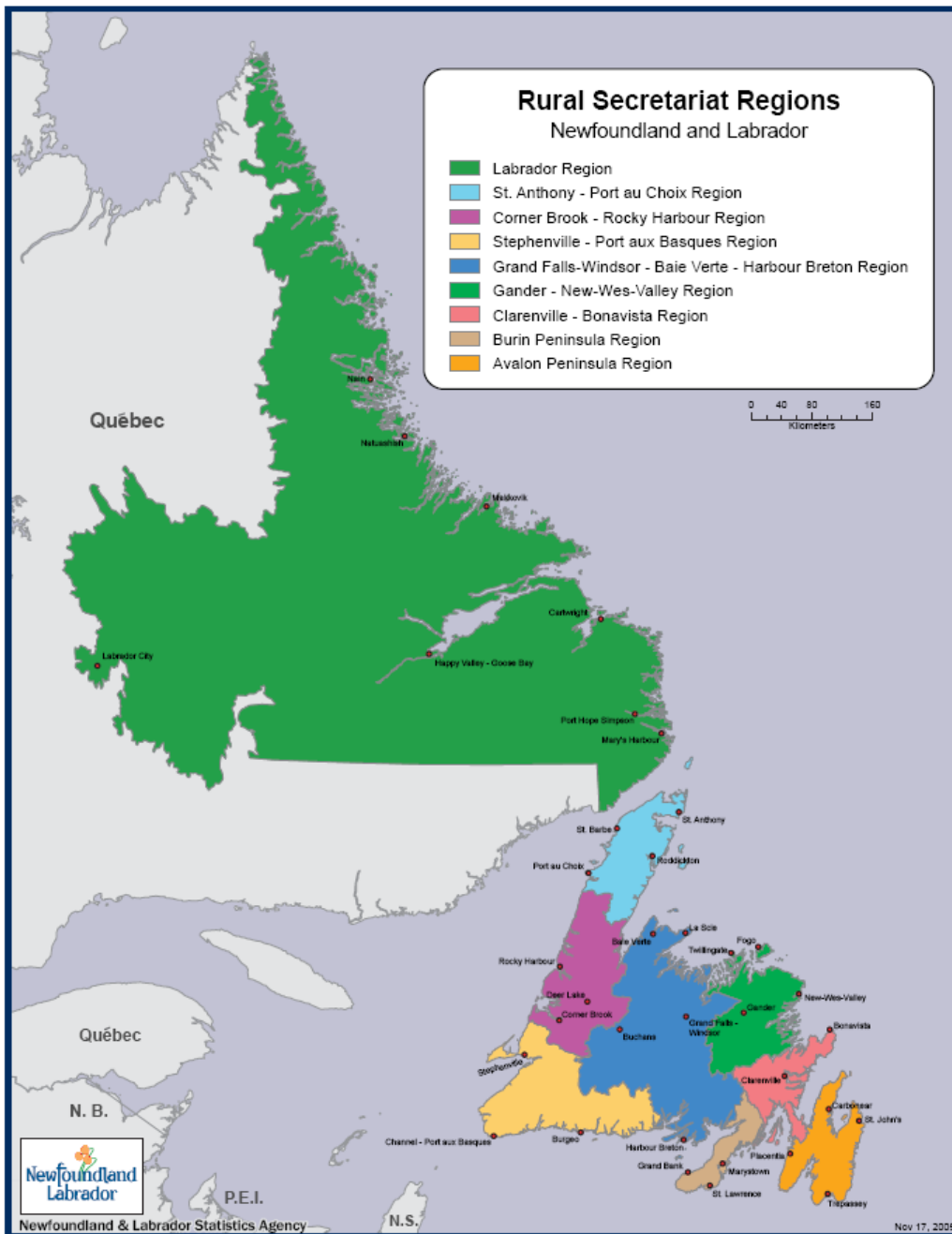
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandate of Rural Secretariat and Regional Councils

Mandate of the Rural Secretariat

The Rural Secretariat's mandate is to:

- Promote the well-being of all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador through a comprehensive and coordinated approach to economic, social, cultural and environmental aspects of regional development.
- Act as the focal point for government to work with local and regional partners to build strong and dynamic regions and communities.
- Ensure that regional concerns are considered throughout the provincial government and promoted at the federal level.
- Carry out research and analysis of economic and social issues affecting all regions of Newfoundland and Labrador.
- Help communities and regions identify and take advantage of growth opportunities.

Mandate of the Provincial Council of the Rural Secretariat

The Provincial Council's mandate is to:

- Develop a common, evidence-based understanding of the social, economic, environmental and cultural realities facing the province.
- Review key provincial economic and social measures (e.g. education levels, demographic trends, health status, income levels, EI usage, economic diversity) and to reach agreement on the priorities for change over the next five years.
- Identify and advise government on policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the five year period.
- Advance cooperation through the sharing of information on and discussion about economic and social measures, and to encourage government and community partners to take action on and be accountable for those areas within their mandates.
- Meet twice annually with the provincial Cabinet and deputy ministers to advance regional development priorities.
- Serve as an external sounding board for government for the development of strategies, policies, programs and budget issues that will affect provincial and regional sustainability.

Cover Pictures



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Rural Secretariat

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