

**Grand Falls-Windsor –
Baie Verte – Harbour
Breton Regional
Council of the
Rural Secretariat
Executive Council**



**Activity Report
2008-09**

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Message from the Chair



As Chairperson for the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton 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.

In the past year council has built on its understanding of the region and its people. Through the consideration of the social, economic, cultural, and environmental aspects council has begun investigating three priorities. The council believes accessing education, developing aquaculture, and delivering quality health care will significantly impact on long term sustainability for the region.

To direct the investigation, we have designed a Communication Protocol. This stipulates a set of orderly steps for the council's assistance in planning and communicating its work. For this year, the council has primarily targeted education.

The Grand Falls- Baie Verte- Harbour Breton Council, in response to the Provincial Government's efforts in developing a Youth Retention and Attraction Strategy, submitted an advice document. We believe this Strategy can influence current demographic trends which are crucial in sustaining rural Newfoundland and Labrador.

As an advisory body to government, the council looks forward to furthering deliberations with government, industry, and regional stakeholders on all three priorities. Together we can influence change.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Debbie Armstrong".

Debbie Armstrong, Chair
Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council of the Rural Secretariat

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1. Overview of the Region



The population of the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton region is estimated to be 48,303 in 2009, or about 9.5 percent of the total provincial population. This share is expected to decrease to over 7 percent over the next 15 years.

Employment in the region is estimated at 23,580 according to Census 2006, or 8.8 percent of total provincial employment. Employment in the region increased by approximately 1.0 percent since Census 2001, but has decreased by 2.0 percent since Census 1996.

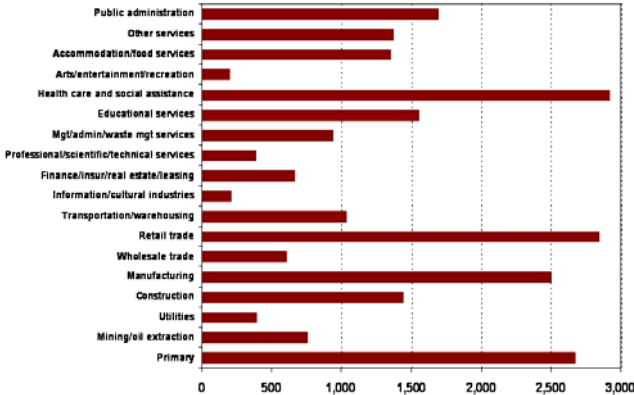
Goods-producing industries, including primary activity, mining and oil extraction, construction, utilities and manufacturing accounted for approximately 32.9 percent of employment in the region in 2006. This sector accounted for 26.8 percent of provincial employment. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 1.

Private sector services, excluding private education and health services, accounted for 39.9 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 6,170 in 2005, or 13.4 percent of employment. This compares to 27.1 percent for the province as a whole.

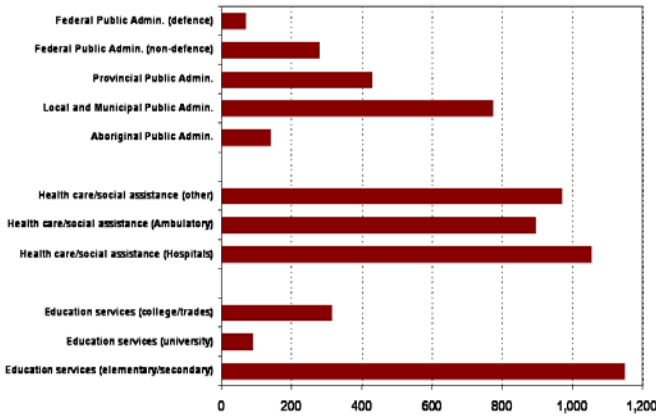
Within the broad public administration and related services group, health care and social assistance services employment totalled 2,920 and educational services totalled 1,555. Federal, provincial, municipal and aboriginal public administration, including defence services, totalled 1,695. Industry level detail is provided in Chart 2.

**Chart 1
Employment by Industry, 2005**



There were 34.8 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 3.

Chart 2
Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



period.

Faster employment growth relative to the labour supply 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 24 percent in 2005, and personal income per capita, after adjusting for inflation and personal taxes, grew by about 21.7 percent.

Total incidence of income support, or the percentage of people that received income support at some point during the year, declined from 19.3 percent in 1995 to 13.0 percent in 2005.

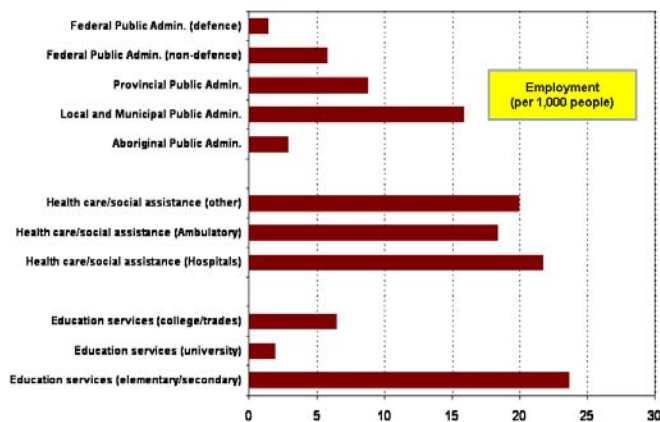
One of the key long term labour market challenge facing the region relates to how to meet employment demand as the labour supply ages and declines over the next decade. Today, about 37 percent of those ages 15-64 are ages 50-64. This is expected to increase to about 44.0 percent by 2020. Over the same period, the labour force age population is expected to decline by about 14.5 percent from about 33,020 to just over 28,207 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/.

The profile of employment in the region is also changing. In 2005, 79.4 percent of employment was considered full-time (30 or more hours per week) and 37.3 percent of employment was considered full-year (50 or more weeks worked per year). By comparison, 78.6 percent of employment was considered full-time in 1995, and 35.3 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 40,993 in 1995 and 34,633 in 2005, representing a loss of about 15.5 percent over the ten year

Chart 3
Per capita Public and Related Services Employment, 2005



2. Regional Council Overview

The Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council is comprised of 12 members; five female and seven male. The council currently has representation from larger and smaller communities throughout the region, including ten members from communities of less than 5,000 people. The council met five times regional meetings in 2008-09 besides new members attending an Orientation Session in Deer Lake.

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:

	Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Hr Breton Budget 2008-09	Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Hr Breton Expenditures
Transportation & Communication	29,500.00	28,684.06
Supplies	2,500.00	2,176.59
Purchased Services	4,900.00	4,728.67
Total Budgeted	36,900.00	35,589.32

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 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton region is Linda Brett. Her office is located in Springdale.

Regional Council members	Community
Deborah Armstrong (Chair)	Grand Falls-Windsor
Karen Beresford	Grand Falls-Windsor
Gerry Burke	Baie Verte
Jerry Dean	Botwood
Phoebe Foster	Miawpukek Mi'kamaway Mami'omi (Conne River)
David Hayashida	King's Point
Jamie Kendell	Morrisville
Hubert Langdon	English Harbour West
Steward May	Belleoram
Don Stewart	Harbour Breton
Joan Strickland	St. Alban's
Bernice Walker	Norris Arm

*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 three years.
- To identify policies and programs which either advance, negatively impact or need to be developed to encourage the necessary change over the three-year period.
- 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	to commit to working together effectively
Creativity	to seek and support new ideas and approaches
Empowerment	to assume responsibility for participating in discussions, making informed decisions and taking personal responsibility for their contributions
Inclusion	to acknowledge others' views and perspectives and exercise the right and opportunity to express their own
Recognition	to recognize and value the skills that each bring
Transparency	to share open and objective advice based on sound information and principles
Trust	to be open and supportive when partnering and to follow 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 Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton 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 result that the council will be striving towards as they move forward. 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 show 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: Communication

In identifying communication as a priority, council aimed to develop a logical process which would help them: (i) reach agreement on the priorities for change and (ii) investigate these priorities. This process is outlined in a communication protocol document, which articulates this process for government and community stakeholders. It uses a four step logical approach:

1. Priority selection is based on establishing an asset inventory and conducting a strengths and weakness analysis of the inventory.
2. Priority development is a systematic planning cycle of primary and secondary research with Council members.
3. Issues identification recognizes a rationale for intervention and then proceeds to identify macro to micro policy initiatives. These initiatives determine potential initiatives and other advice from the Council to government.
4. Recommendation selection includes a criteria assessment which determines the critical elements to be presented to government.

Through this Protocol, the process that it will use to identify future priorities, issues and recommendations will be transparent and accountable. Government and community stakeholders will have access to their methodology through the communication protocol.

Goal: By 2011, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have strengthened communication with the provincial government and citizens on matters of regional and provincial interest.

2008-09 Objective: By March 31, 2009 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have developed a protocol to guide communications with government and community stakeholders.

Measure: Completed current planning process.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Planning cycle for established priority issues completed	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The planning cycle was established as the second logical step of the communication protocol, priority development. The council completed the education planning cycle by agreeing to key components of the planning process identified in their communications Protocol. This plan is a blueprint for it to follow; enabling them to investigate their first priority, education (performance report on education is outlined in Section 9.2).

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Evaluation completed with annual reviews slated for minor modifications</p> <p>Planning cycle revised</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council completed an evaluation of work done to date by reviewing the planning cycle and assessment criteria for selecting issues. • The council deliberated on and revised the planning cycle model based their ongoing work, which was then incorporated into the Communications Protocol.
<p>Communications protocol developed</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council prepared a Communications Protocol document. • The council agreed that the Communication Protocol is a living document that would be reviewed annually and modified as necessary.
<p>Priorities re-visited and revised, as necessary</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In its 2008-11 Strategic Plan, it identified their three priorities: education, aquaculture, and health. After the Communication Protocol was finalized, Council confirmed these priorities.
<p>Improved communication and information sharing with the provincial government and community stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It distributed their communications protocol document to community stakeholders such as Regional Economic Development Boards, Community Business Development Corporation, Primary Health Care, and Status of Women. • It submitted their communication protocol to the Minister responsible for the Rural Secretariat. • Through engagement activities, such as the joint Education Forum and Regional Council meetings, Council used their communications protocol to advance communication and share information.

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 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have evaluated the process of establishing and investigating regional priorities and advising the Provincial Government.

2009-10 Measure:

- Council will have evaluated existing communication protocol.

2009-10 Indicators:

- Regional Partnership Planner surveyed council members regarding communications protocol
- Communication protocol modified as required

9.2 Issue 2: Education

In 2008-09, education was the issue of focus for council. Through submission of an education advisory paper, they communicated their regional perspective to government with advice on how education is delivered in the K-12 school system, post-secondary training and education and life long learning for adults. It believes all Newfoundlanders and Labradorians of all ages, should have equal access to quality education regardless of geography. This does not mean that education must be delivered in the same way, but that all citizens should have equal opportunity to access quality education.

Goal: By 2011, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have communicated an informed regional perspective on specific areas affecting education delivery.

2008-09 Objective: By March 31, 2009 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have completed the planning cycle for education priorities, including examination of potential models and processes for rural education delivery.

Measure: Communication of an informed regional perspective on educational services.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Research data collected and reviewed on issue of education	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council reviewed Provincial Government literature on education and skills enhancement, including <i>All the Skills to Succeed: Report of the Newfoundland and Labrador Skills Task Force Report, Department of Education Strategic Plan 2008-2011, Foundation for Success: White Paper on Public Post-Secondary Education, and Education and Our Future: A Road Map to Innovation and Excellence.</i>• The council developed an initial set of education priorities to engage community on.
Identified and engaged with citizens and stakeholders on issues identified in education priority	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council completed the last meeting of an eight-focus group series which engaged teachers, principals, students, parents, and a community representative. Topics of investigation included multi-grade and multi-age schooling, Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, community use of schools, and the value of education.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It consulted nine researchers from Memorial University's Faculty of Education and Department of Sociology who were conducting research on topics being reviewed by Council. • It hosted an education forum in collaboration with the Harris Centre on e-learning and an alternative service delivery model for rural schools. Two other Regional Councils, members from two school boards, and academic researchers attended. The forum's report was published on Memorial University's Harris Centre website. • It also discussed the history and implications of distant education on students in Coast of Bays.
<p>Consensus developed on advice to be forwarded to the provincial government</p> <p>Advice communicated to the provincial government</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Upon reaching consensus on policy options, the council compiled an education advisory paper and submitted it to government. • It identified a series of policy options. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • K-12 school system: connecting students to full educational opportunities, Centre for Distance Learning and Innovation, and multi-age/ multi-grade schooling • Post-secondary education: tuition and living costs associated with attaining education and training as well as the coordination of public/ private training institutions. • Life-long learning: removing barriers to training and employment

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, Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have engaged with citizens and stakeholders to communicate on identified educational issues.

2009-10 Measure:

- The council have engaged with citizens and stakeholders and communicated identified educational issues.

2009-10 Indicators:

- The council distributed education advisory paper to citizens and stakeholders
- The council held discussions on educational issues with citizens and stakeholders

9.3 Issue 3: Aquaculture

According to Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, the wild fisheries are approaching their sustainable limit and predict by 2030 there will be a 50 to 80 million tonne shortage of seafood. It is projected that 50 percent of the global demand for seafood will have to come from aquaculture. Given the above demand, the history of aquaculture development in the region and the potential for aquaculture growth, the council determined that the expansion and management of this industry could be a strong economic pillar for regional sustainability. This investigation has begun, but greater attention is targeted for 2009-2010.

Goal: By 2011, the Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have communicated an informed perspective on regional sustainability in developing the aquaculture industry.

2008-09 Objective: By March 31, 2009 Grand Falls -Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have identified specific issues related to aquaculture.

Measure: Specific issues identified.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Presentations and literature review initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council reviewed provincial government documents such as Government of NL Economic Review 2007, Strategic Plan – NL Aquaculture 2000, Seafood Industry Year in Review 2007, 2006 and 2005, and the Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture Strategic Plans for 2006-2008 and 2008-2011.• The council examined web sites Canadian Aquaculture Industry Alliance, Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations, and the Newfoundland Aquaculture Industry Association (NAIA).• NAIA presented to the council an overview of the industry; its history, challenges and potential for Atlantic salmon, Stealhead trout, and blue mussels. This builds on information previously delivered presented by Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Cooke Aquaculture and Nature Sea Farms personnel. In addition Council attended

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
	<p>Newfoundland Aquaculture Industries Association's Annual General Meeting where many provincial, national and international speakers presented data on topics such as national marketing campaigns, benefits of eating salmon for the human brain, and bio-security research.</p>
<p>Increased collaboration and improved communication and information sharing with the provincial government, industry partners and citizen stakeholders</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council engaged in collaborative discussions with industry stakeholders, Department of Fisheries and Oceans and the Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development government officials, and community citizens in exploring the challenges and opportunities for developing a sustainable aquaculture industry. • These active engagements occurred during Council meetings and through the following events : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two aquaculture Showcases hosted by industry association, Newfoundland Aquaculture Industries Association, for community, government (Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture, Department of Fisheries and Oceans, Department of Innovation, Trade and Rural Development, Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency), and industry stakeholders to share knowledge and understanding of the industry. • Aquaculture industry association's promotional events through attending affairs, on-going dialogue and visiting salmon harvest sites in Belleoram and Harbour Breton. During these tours there is a mixture of community, government (DFA and INTRD) and industry. This adds to Council's previous experiences visiting a salmon farm in Pool's Cove and mussel sites in Flat Rock Tickle and Sunday Island Cove. • Council members attended NAIA's Annual General Meeting: <i>Cold Harvest Conference</i> where environmental sustainable issues were discussed with provincial and national experts including government officials from DFA, and INTRD. • Community Meeting held in Conne River on the impact of aquaculture development for the Coast of Bays sub-region. Participants included DFA and INTRD personnel as well as industry and community representatives.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Increased collaboration and improved communication and information sharing with the provincial government, industry partners and citizen stakeholders (Continued)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As a result of these collaborative discussions, the council has made preparations for a future debate on May 22, with Atlantic Salmon Federation and Cooke Aquaculture Public Relations Officer to identify resolutions regarding sustainability issues. • To assist in knowledge exploration, the Director of Aquaculture, DFA, has offered his assistance. • The council's collaborative efforts have centered on reaching government, industry and community stakeholders to build relationships and understanding that will best influence sustainable development. • The council's aquaculture communications and collaborative efforts have increased from the previous year. In 2007-08, the council identified health as a priority for investigation and their Regional Planner presented at a regional Wellness Coalition Conference.
Aquaculture issues identified	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The council investigated sustainability issues for aquaculture. Areas of interest identified to date include infrastructure, bio-security, public awareness and communication, skilled labour force, waste management and site availability.

Based on these accomplishments, the council feels it is in a position in 2009-10 to communicate, to government, an informed regional perspective on aquaculture development as it relates to regional sustainability. It recognizes that its 2008-11 Activity Plan requires them to communicate this perspective in 2010-11 but wishes to complete this task in 2009-10. Within the parameters of its objective for 2010-11, the council will communicate their aquaculture perspective to regional stakeholders.

The council will work toward the following measure and indicators for its 2009-10 Objective.

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010 Grand Falls -Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have collected and studied sufficient information to prioritize aquaculture issues pertaining to regional sustainability.

2009-10 Measure:

- It will have collected and studied sufficient information to prioritize aquaculture issues

2009-10 Indicators:

- It engaged with provincial Department of Fisheries and Aquaculture and industry stakeholders
- It prioritized identified aquaculture issues

9.4 Issue 4: Health Care

Accountability, public communications, quality assurance, access and timely availability of health services have dominated the health debate within the council. Although this is the latest priority of investigation, the council wishes to understand the challenges of delivering care in a large rural, as well as experience and perceptions of its residents. The council's intends to logically explore possibilities, through dialogue and research, and thereby provide advice to government from a regional perspective.

Goal: By 2011 Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have developed an informed regional perspective on regional health care in relation to sustainability.

2008-09 Objective: By March 31, 2009 Grand Falls -Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have discussed issues related to health care.

Measure: Specific issues identified.

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
Presentations and literature review initiated	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council received presentations from Central Regional Integrated Health Authority officials on population health and Primary Health Care.• Presentations on population trends and health care costs focus Council's thinking on alternate delivery models to enhance health.• The council reviewed Central Regional Integrated Health Authority Strategy Plan 2008-2011.
Increased collaboration and improved communication and information sharing with the provincial government, industry partners and citizen stakeholders	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The council has engaged with Central Health through discussions and presentations on topics of Primary Health Care and Population Health to better understand and express health issues from a regional perspective.• As a result of these engagements, the council has become involved in two initiatives that help reach this objective:

Indicator	Accomplishments 2008-09
<p>Increased collaboration and improved communication and information sharing with the provincial government, industry partners and citizen stakeholders (Continued)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The council have initiated the planning process for a Joint Regional Council Meeting (partnering with the Gander – New-Wes-Valley regional Council). This event was conceived as an opportunity for government officials, Health and Education Boards, citizens, and MHAs were invited to explore regional sustainability for public services. • The council's Regional Planner collaborated with Central Health personnel and another Regional Partnership Planner in establishing a Community of Practice in Community Development. As this is in its formation stage, it is hoped this collaboration, based on determinants of health, will further extend coordinating efforts amongst community stakeholders, government, and industry. • The council engaged with Green Bay Community Advisory Committee, which has community, industry, municipal and Central Health representation for Primary Health Care, in identifying risk areas for population health and possible interventions. • The council's health communications and collaborative efforts have increased from the previous year. In 2007-08, the council identified health as a priority for investigation and their Regional Planner presented at a regional Wellness Coalition Conference.
<p>Regional health service issues identified</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identified issues of interest such as recruitment and retention, alternate delivery models, preventive care models, quality assurance and accountability.

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

2009-10 Objective:

By March 31, 2010 Grand Falls -Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton Regional Council will have completed research related to regional health services as its relates to regional sustainability.

2009-10 Measure:

- The council have completed research related to regional health services as it relates to regional sustainability.

2009-10 Indicators:

- The council compiled research

10. Additional Highlights

The Grand Falls-Windsor - Baie Verte - Harbour Breton 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, four 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, it focused on factors influencing young adults' decisions to leave Newfoundland and Labrador and what would entice young immigrants to choose this province as a location for permanent employment. It made an array of recommendations to address both issues such as increasing tax or loan incentives to attract those who choose to stay and work, lowering student debt by linking incentives to working in the province, increasing job availability to gain work experience, increasing directed recruitment to international students and increasing financial support for the implementation of the province's Immigration Strategy.

Three Regional Council members attended a learning event hosted by the Rural Secretariat on October 15, 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.

Regional Council members attended public consultations and workshops on issues that will influence the Region's sustainability. For example, one council member participated in Poverty Reduction Strategy talks in Grand Falls-Windsor while three others attended in Harbour Breton. In addition, one council member participated in a one-day workshop on Community Enterprise. She was able to share best ways to support economic development, job creation and income enhancement through the social economy.

The Provincial Government established a Community Development Committee to respond to the Abitibi-Bowater mill closure. The Grand Falls-Windsor – Baie Verte – Harbour Breton Regional Council Chairperson sits on this committee allowing the group to benefit from all the regional thinking that has occurred through council in the past three years. Although she does not represent the Rural Secretariat on this Committee it is this regional process that has cultivated an informed regional deliberator.

11. Opportunities and Challenges Ahead

As the nature of the work of the council is all-encompassing and long-term in nature, the opportunities and challenges faced by the council remain fairly similar from year to year. However, it is these opportunities and challenges that guide the council members in their work and provide them with the drive to move their agenda forward over the course of the year.

Collaboration

Collaboration requires a spirit of cooperation and a willingness to work together for mutual gain. It requires citizens, stakeholders and interests to step out of their 'comfort zones' and to look at issues through multiple perspectives and lenses. While the council is committed to regional collaboration, it is aware that this is a long term project.

Long-term thinking

Thinking long-term, in the context of the work of the council, is necessary if regional sustainability is to be achieved. Thinking long-term will be challenging for citizens, stakeholders and interests given that there are immediate issues to be addressed within the region.

Citizen Engagement

There is an opportunity through this process for citizens, stakeholders and interests throughout the region to inform public policy development. The success of this process will hinge on the ability of participants to listen to each other, and discuss issues in an open, informed and respectful manner.

Vision Development

The vision statement for the council is not intended to achieve a final form. It is intended to be an organic document that seeks to identify what the council wants to achieve over the long term. As regional circumstances change over time, so too will regional priorities.

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

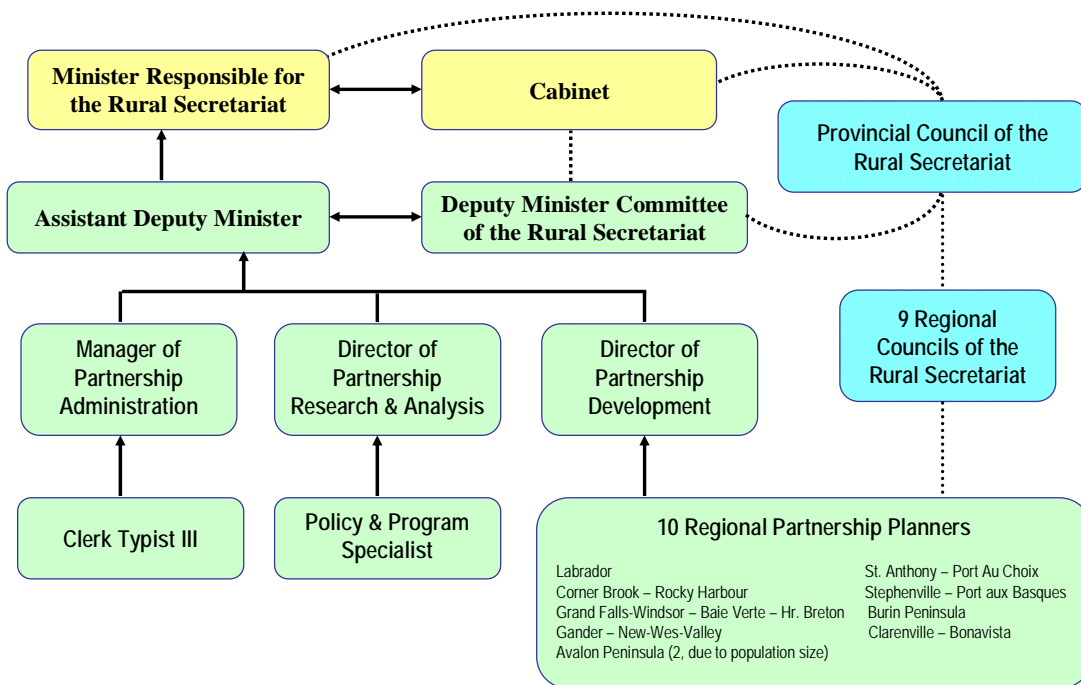
Outcome Statement: Improved Government understanding of and response to significant and long-term regional issues.

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

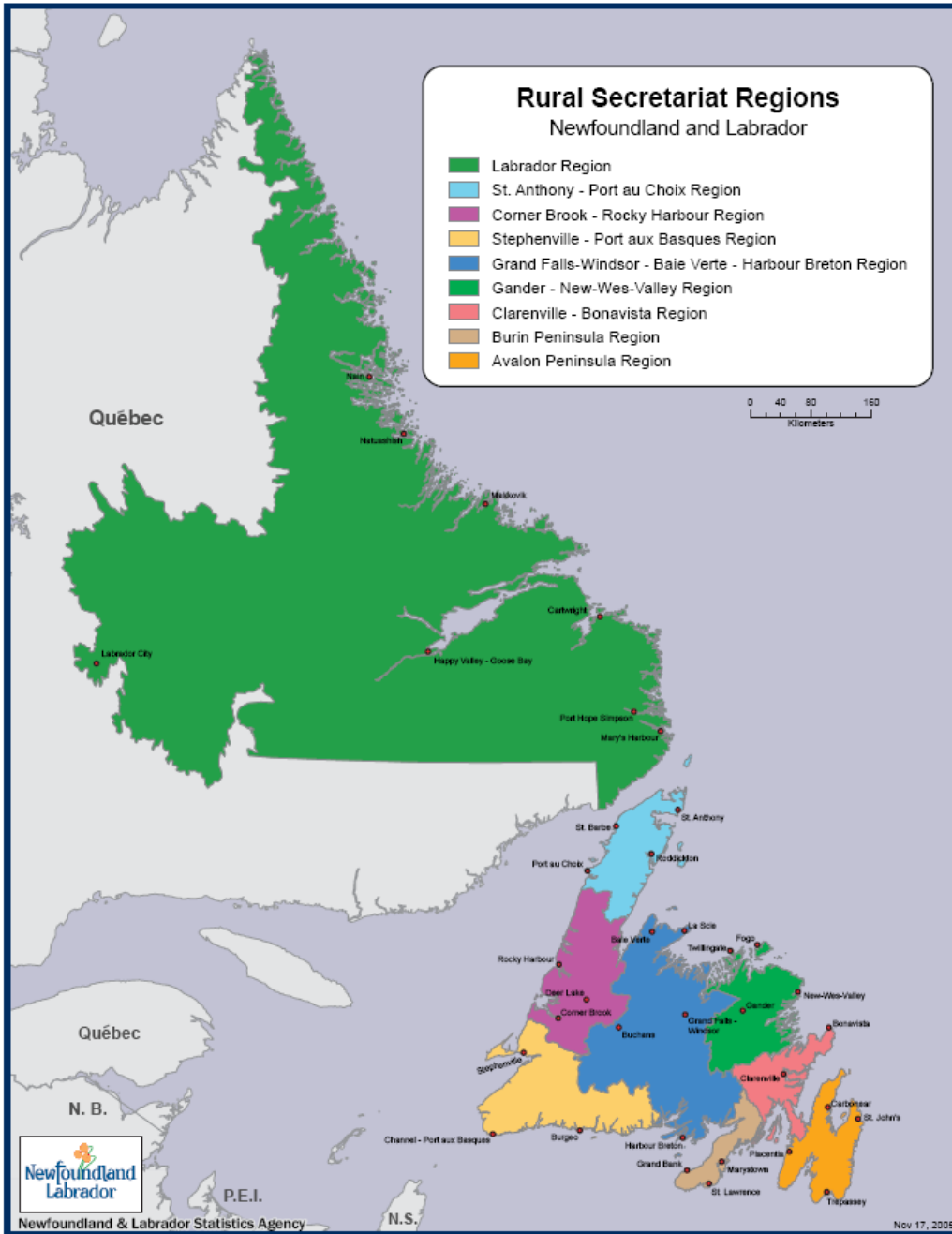
- Regional perspectives which can inform the development and implementation of public policy

Appendix B: Organizational Structure

Rural Secretariat Structure



Appendix C: Map of Rural Secretariat Regions



Appendix D: Mandates 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.

Photo Credit:



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Rural Secretariat

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