



THE MONIESON CENTRE

TRANSFORMING BUSINESS IN THE KNOWLEDGE ECONOMY

Discovery Workshop Report

Prescott-Russell

December 10, 2009

INTRODUCTION

This report is part of the Monieson Centre's Knowledge Impact in Society (KIS) Project, a three-year endeavour to connect academic knowledge with economic development needs in Eastern Ontario. The report is a summary of information collected at a 3-hour workshop in Rockland, ON. Fourteen community leaders and business people from Prescott-Russell gave feedback on their community's economic development needs and research questions. This information, along with similar information gathered in 14 other communities in Eastern Ontario, will guide the research pursued over the course of the KIS project.

The workshop was hosted by Martine Plourde, Regional Director at RDÉE Ontario, in collaboration with John Candie, Executive Director at the Société de développement communautaire de Prescott-Russell. Jeff Dixon, Project Coordinator, The Monieson Centre, introduced the KIS project and Professor Richard Fontaine, from the Université du Québec à Montréal, facilitated the workshop with the support of George Jackson, associated facilitator at Queen's Executive Decision Centre. The KIS project is funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada. For more information, visit www.easternontarioknowledge.ca.



Société de développement communautaire
Prescott-Russell
Community Development Corporation
Une Société d'aide au développement des collectivités
A Community Futures Development Corporation

QUESTION 1

What are the pressing issues, challenges and needs with respect to rural economic development and making Prescott-Russell a vital community (economic, social, health)?

Top Issues:

1. **Strategic planning.** Strategic planning and an integrated economic development implementation plan (cultural, social, health, tourism, agriculture).
2. **Unified political and economic visions.** Political and economic leaders that do not share the same vision (roles and responsibilities, scope, decision power).
3. **Implementation capacity.** Improving the capacities of local organizations working with key sectors (financing, organizational development, economic development tools).
4. **Attracting new investors.** We need to bring in financing and new money, particularly through tourism (attracting and retaining tourism, commercial and industrial investment, etc.).
5. **Developing a culture of entrepreneurship.** Weak entrepreneurial culture and fear of risks need to be addressed.
6. **Regional cohesion.** Because there are three sub-regions in our county and two cultures (English and French-speaking), we need a linking of communities to work towards common strategies (geographic, linguistic and economical duality).
7. **Workforce training.** Lack of resources for workforce development, training, etc. (especially in the east).
8. **Buying locally.** We need better understanding and awareness of the impacts of buying locally or not.
9. **Regional cooperation and partnerships.** It is difficult to target priorities (lack of mobilization, working together for a common goal, etc.). We don't have a culture of working together as business partners, or equipping ourselves with the tools that would stimulate commercial exchanges between us (collaborating to promote our own "brand").
10. **Tourism.** We lack a major attraction in the tourism sector.
11. **Value-added agriculture.** We have to diversify our agricultural sector by developing value-added products.

QUESTION 2

If you had access to our researchers for a year, what would you ask them to study? Given the immensity of the research “wish list” and scarcity of available resources, what are your research priorities?

1. **Tourism branding.** How do we develop a brand tied to tourism for Prescott-Russell (e.g., Papanak Zoo, Calypso)?
2. **Economic trends.** What are the economic and socio-economic trends for the next 3 to 5 years?
3. **Support for businesses.** How can we better support our businesses?
4. **Best practices in economic development.** What structures (e.g., organizational) could we emulate for being strategic in our region’s economic development (e.g., KEDCO, OCRI, Renfrew County economic development, etc.)?
5. **Bilingualism.** How do we reconcile both cultures and capitalize on the fact that we are the most bilingual region in Canada not the most divided region in Canada?
6. **Economic losses.** What losses has Prescott Russell experienced in the various economic sectors (health, commercial, tourism, agriculture, etc.)?
7. **Regional exodus.** In concrete terms, what do we need to bring our people back?
8. **Rural economic decline.** What risk factors are involved in rural economic decline?
9. **Government roles.** What is the role of government in supporting Community Economic Development and social entrepreneurship?
10. **Immigration.** What is the potential of an immigration and migration attraction strategy for our region?