

CUISR:

Community – University Institute for Social Research

***Saskatchewan's Regional Economic
Development Authorities:
A Background Document***

by Neville Fernandes



Building Healthy Sustainable Communities

Community-University Institute for Social Research

CUI SR is a partnership between a set of community-based organizations (including Saskatoon District Health, the City of Saskatoon, Quint Development Corporation, the Saskatoon Regional Intersectoral Committee on Human Services) and a large number of faculty and graduate students from the University of Saskatchewan. CUI SR's mission is "to serve as a focal point for community-based research and to integrate the various social research needs and experiential knowledge of the community-based organizations with the technical expertise available at the University. It promotes, undertakes, and critically evaluatea applied social research for community-based organizations, and serves as a data clearinghouse for applied and community-based social research. The overall goal of CUI SR is to build the capacity of researchers, community-based organizations and citizenry to enhance community quality of life."

This mission is reflected in the following objectives: (1) to build capacity within CBOs to conduct their own applied social research and write grant proposals; (2) to serve as a conduit for the transfer of experientially-based knowledge from the community to the University classroom, and transfer technical expertise from the University to the community and CBOs; (3) to provide CBOs with assistance in the areas of survey sample design, estimation and data analysis, or, where necessary, to undertake survey research that is timely, accurate and reliable; (4) to serve as a central clearinghouse, or data warehouse, for community-based and applied social research findings; and (5) to allow members of the University and CBOs to access a broad range of data over a long time period.

As a starting point, CUI SR has established three focused research modules in the areas of Community Health Determinants and Health Policy, Community Economic Development, and Quality of Life Indicators. The three-pronged research thrust underlying the proposed Institute is, in operational terms, highly integrated. The central questions in the three modules—community quality of life, health, and economy—are so interdependent that many of the projects and partners already span and work in more than one module. All of this research is focused on creating and maintaining healthy, sustainable communities.

Research is the driving force that cements the partnership between universities, CBOs, and government in acquiring, transferring, and applying knowledge in the form of policy and programs. Researchers within each of the modules examine these dimensions from their particular perspective, and the results are integrated at the level of the Institute, thus providing a rich, multi-faceted analysis of the common social and economic issues. The integrated results are then communicated to the Community and the University in a number of ways to ensure that research makes a difference in the development of services, implementation of policy, and lives of the people of Saskatoon and Saskatchewan.

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ABSTRACT

This report provides background information on the development and functions of Saskatchewan's Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs). A brief overview of governmental interest in community economic development initiatives in the 1980's and 1990's provides context to the history of the REDAs' development, from this provincial program's inception (1993) to its status in 2002. Details on Saskatchewan's REDAs are provided, including an area. An overview of this program's objectives is provided, along with an explanation of the unique, community-defined partnership structure required to qualify for REDA status and government funding. A short, selected, annotated bibliography offers additional information on REDAs, CED initiatives in other provinces, and a list of websites for further information on REDAs and similar CED initiatives.

REPORT OBJECTIVES

This report's overall objective is to provide insight and substance into the organizations referred to as Regional Economic Development Authorities (REDAs). This report will ultimately serve as a basic starting point for later, more detailed research. Thus, this document should be regarded as a general precursor to future in-depth study.

In particular, this report summarizes and discusses all pertinent literature/documents in the following subjects:

- REDAs' origins and initial purposes/objectives
- Similar entities' origins, objectives, and experiences
- Academic literature on regional economic development institutions that set an evaluation of Saskatchewan REDAs into a broader context

REDA MAP

Figure 1 portrays an overall impression of the general territories that REDAs hold. It should be noted that this map is only a general interpretation of REDAs. Actual territories of each may vary.

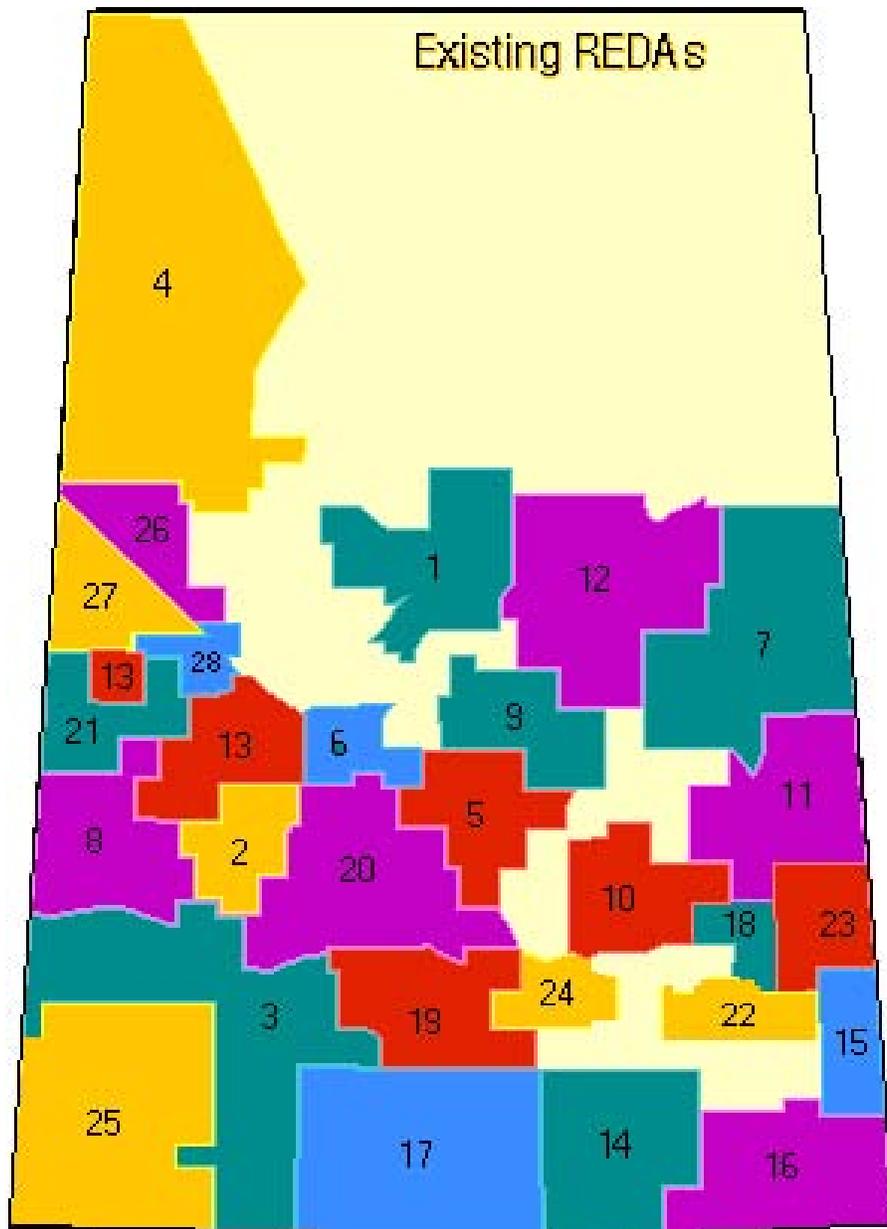
REDAs' ability to form themselves and choose partners based on common interests and goals determine the physical boundaries. As **Figure 1** illustrates, REDA boundaries follow no regular pattern and are likely to change due to each REDA's shifting interests and partners.

SASKATCHEWAN'S 28 REDAs

The 28 REDAs and their general regions are listed below. Also shown is the date of incorporation (in parentheses) and population of the region (in brackets).

1. Prince Albert REDA - Prince Albert region (5 May 1992) [57,082]
2. Entrepreneurs 2000 REDA - Rosetown region (27 April 1993) [7,871]
3. Southwest REDA - Swift Current/Leader/Val Marie region (17 March 1994) [33,663]
4. Northwest REDA - Buffalo Narrows region (21 April 1994) [14,577]
5. Long Lake REDA - Watrous region (9 April 1994) [8,886]
6. Saskatoon REDA - Saskatoon region (3 February 1994) [219,442 - region]

Figure 1. Saskatchewan REDAs



Source: [http://www.gov.sk.ca/econdev/programs_services/regional_economic_development_authorities_\(redas\)/complete_reda_map.html](http://www.gov.sk.ca/econdev/programs_services/regional_economic_development_authorities_(redas)/complete_reda_map.html)

7. Etomami Valley REDA - Hudson Bay region (14 March 1994) [18,158]
8. West Central REDA - Kindersley region (5 May 1994) [12,920]
9. Carlton Trail REDA - Humboldt region (27 October 1994) [21,706]
10. Touchwood Hills REDA - Ft. Qu'Appelle/Cupar/Raymore region (2 September 1994) [13,071]
11. Good Spirit REDA - Kamsack region (10 March 1994) [37,566]
12. Eden REDA - Tisdale region (4 May 1995) [32,832]
13. Midwest REDA - Biggar region (17 May 1995) [13,023]
14. South East REDA - Weyburn region (25 September 1995) [19,568]
15. Gateway REDA - Moosomin region (9 May 1995) [11,725]
16. Cornerstone REDA - Estevan region (12 March 1996) [28,619]
17. Red Coat REDA - Assiniboia region (28 March 1996) [17,347]
18. South Parkland REDA - Melville region (28 December 1995) [10,360]
19. Moose Jaw REDA - Moose Jaw region (28 March 1996) [42,936]
20. Great River Lakes REDA - Outlook region (8 April 1996) [9,150]
21. Border REDA - Macklin region (16 April 1996) [3,895]
22. Mainline REDA - Broadview/Whitewood region (10 December 1996) [12,388]
23. Yellowhead REDA - Langenburg region (4 June 1997) [11,656]
24. Cypress Hills REDA - Maple Creek region (1 April 1998) [13,000]
25. Regina REDA - Regina region (23 March 1998) [207,093]
26. Prairie to Pine REDA - St. Walburg region (12 May 1997) [12,035]
27. Big Gully REDA - Lloydminster/Maidstone region (22 April 1998) [28,071]
28. Battlefords REDA - North Battleford region (N/A) [N/A]

RELEVANT DEFINITIONS

The REDA program defined the following terms in *Information Kit: Regional Economic Development Authorities* (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a: 2).

- *Community Development* is a grassroots process by which residents and communities take responsibility for, organize, empower themselves, plan, and achieve sustainable development and a substantially self-directed future.

- *Community Economic Development* is a community development process that focuses on wealth and job creation, value-added activities, business development, and enhanced community viability.
- *Economic Development* is the process of utilizing and converting resources into wealth, jobs, and enhanced quality of life.
- *Job Creation* is the process of giving each business and development idea every realistic chance of success to move from the idea stage through to construction and operation.
- *Wealth Creation* is a job creation process that focuses on establishing value-added, processing, and manufacturing businesses.
- *Quality of Life* means maintaining and enhancing a person's life-style choices and career opportunities.

THE PRE-REDA ERA

Verne Walde, Economic and Co-operative Development Officer with Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development (SECD), was contacted to provide insight into the general history leading up to the REDA program. Walde has been present since REDA's inception in 1993, and assessed the efforts and programs of some REDAs.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN THE 1980S AND 1990S

The REDA program was started in response to a perceived need for Community Economic Development (CED). Before the 1980s, there was relatively minor CED activity within both Saskatchewan and Canada. In the 1980s, however, the following organizations were established to foster CED activity:

- 61 Community Economic Development Committees (CEDCs)
- 38 Rural Development Corporations (RDCs)
- Agriculture Development & Diversification comprised of 6 regional boards, 43 boards, and 298 committees
- 130 Community Tourism Committees (CTACs)
- 180 Community Bond Corporations (CBCs)
- 248 Small Business Loans Associations (SBLAs)
- 9 Regional Tourism Associations (RTAs)
- 8 Community Futures Committees (CFCs)
- 8 Business Development Centres (BDCS) (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b)

While these organizations helped foster CED, Walde believes that there was a feeling that there was not enough action on a “regional level.” There tended to be a heavier business focus on immediate locations rather than entire regions. Thus there was a need for a co-ordinating body to direct the efforts of various CED organizations and programs (Walde, 2001).

In 1992, the NDP government started *Partnership for Renewal: A Strategy for the Saskatchewan Economy*. The program began with seven months of consultation and culminated in a 10-year rolling plan that planned for reviews and actions to stimulate economic development. The partnership also called to “build on six sectors of economic strength and to redesign programs to target job growth” (Phillips, 1998: 46). The six areas of economic strength were identified as: business, farmers, labour, communities, the aboriginal community, and co-operatives.

The partnership recognizes Saskatchewan’s need to adapt to a changing world economy. Due to globalization, Saskatchewan finds traditional economic activity—agriculture and resource exports—less dependable for providing stable income. “This in turn is leading to declining employment in these foundation industries—the industries that have historically generated much of our employment and wealth” (Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade, 1992: 6). A decrease in these traditional areas has shifted skilled labour from a few sectors to multiple areas of employment. Economic growth clamours to such areas as new technologies related to agriculture and biotechnology, as well as telecommunications and information technology. The partnership strategy plans to shape Saskatchewan’s future around these new technologies, as well as core industries such as potash, oil, and uranium to diversify and intensify economic growth.

This strategy raises questions of what makes a healthy society. Economic growth is crucial for a growing community because it creates opportunities through jobs and resources. In Saskatchewan, greater job opportunity is at the forefront of current events due to an increase in the Aboriginal population. Large numbers of young Aboriginal people will need to acquire necessary workplace skills. Failing to recognize the importance of educating such a vital part of Saskatchewan’s future will further strain both economic conditions within the province and relations with a marginalized people. In this manner, the partnership recognizes a need for “special efforts to assist those who lack the training and abilities to be productive members of the workforce, or who face discrimination in the work force” (Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade, 1992: 6).

The partnership states that both short-term and long-term goals are crucial to maximize economic renewal. In particular, several principles helped guide the provincial government in developing policy and action (Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade, 1992: 7):

- working with economic development partners (business, labour, communities, Aboriginal groups, co-operatives, and farmers);
- encouraging regional and community-led solutions for economic renewal;
- working with business on market-led projects;
- focusing support to maximize employment opportunities; and
- establishing clear investment criteria to guide provincial economic development efforts.

These principles were meant to shape strategy and provide the government with an objective framework to develop policy and action.

A five to ten year window was identified as the “time horizon ... to meet changing needs and conditions” (Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade, 1992: 7). The partnership states that the strategy has two purposes: “to provide a conceptual framework for focusing attention on economic priorities, and to provide a short-to-mid-term summary of key issues and action plans for renewing the Saskatchewan economy” (Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade, 1992: 7).

The partnership defines its vision as follows: “Saskatchewan in the year 2000 will be a province where business, co-operatives, working people, governments and communities have worked together to lead the province toward economic prosperity and security.” Additionally, it specifies three goals: “To create a positive environment for economic renewal; to secure and build on existing strengths and sustainable development; to seek full employment.” (Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade, 1992: 8).

The provincial government began consultations for *Partnership for Growth* in fall, 1995. The program started in February 1996 as the next step in a 10 year rolling plan, which was initiated by the *Partnership For Renewal*.

The *Partnership for Growth*'s goals were similar to those established by the *Partnership For Renewal*. These were: (1) cultivate a positive environment for economic growth; (2) build upon existing strengths and realize growth opportunities; and (3) develop partnerships and programs to seek full employment (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1996b). There were twenty-one objectives for the three goals. One year into the program, one objective was “completed,” sixteen were “on schedule,” and four were “progressing” (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1996a).

CONSULTATION'S IMPACT

CED activity increased substantially in Saskatchewan in the 1990s. Following the *Partnership for Renewal* document, the government identified a series of goals and objectives. One objective, to “build on the success of the co-operative strategic alliances,”

also underlined the REDA program's general principle (Saskatchewan Economic Diversification and Trade, 1992: 8).

Consultations for the *Partnership For Renewal* helped establish the REDA program. The fundamental notion underlying creation of the REDAs was that of community-driven regional economic partnerships. REDA was created to act as a "vehicle" for fostering a collective means of economic development in a "co-operative and co-ordinated manner" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c). Thus, CED would be carried out by local communities with a vested interest in economic development.

Such an approach was also practical from a geographical perspective. To foster CED on a regional level, there had to be a greater emphasis on collective interests and partnerships. Means of economic development varied depending on regional interests. It was practical to let the REDAs form their own partnerships and boundaries based on communities' needs and goals. Thus, boundaries and territories were (and continue to be) constantly shifting and changing due to a REDA's membership at any particular point.

When the *Partnership for Renewal* began, it entailed specific policy and actions key to establishing REDAs. The idea behind such a framework was entrenched in a belief that "Saskatchewan has a long tradition of people and organizations working together [and the program] calls for multi-level co-operation among government, community and individuals" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c).

By consulting with various communities and levels of government, the notion of REDAs was forged. REDAs were created with two main ideas in mind: "[F]irst, a plan for renewal must be set in place specific actions, accompanied by measures of success; and second, the provincial government, acting alone, cannot solve all of our economic problems" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c). In line with these themes, the REDA program was envisioned as a voluntary, co-operative grassroots movement. This was an essential premise of the REDAs due to a necessity for communities to foster unique economic development strategies based upon their distinct regional characteristics. Thus, the REDA mandate was to "enhance the economic life of the region and its residents through co-operation and collaboration, building on the strengths, resources and talents of partners and communities" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993: 1).

To understand REDAs' essence, it is important to define the key concepts involved: economic development; community development; and community economic development. Economic development is "the process of utilizing and converting resources into wealth, jobs and an enhanced quality of life" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c: 3).

The notion of community development, key to REDAs, is defined as a "grassroots process by which residents and communities become responsible for, organize for,

empower themselves, plan for and achieve sustainable social, economic and environmental development and a substantially self-directed future” (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c: 3). This definition is essential to REDA efforts due to its emphasis on community involvement in the development process.

Understanding both “economic development” and “community development” enables one to grasp every REDA’s specific objective: attainment and progression of community economic development. CED is defined as a “community development process, which focuses on wealth creation, job creation, value-added activities, business development and enhanced community viability” (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c: 3). CED is widely used by REDAs to refer to a holistic approach that fostered economic development through community-driven initiatives and programs.

All three definitions play an important role in identifying and defining REDAs’ larger objectives and goals. These three goals represent the few common threads that link otherwise unique REDAs to one another.

EMERGING PARTNERSHIPS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the 1990s, some of the most pressing issues facing the Saskatchewan economy were agricultural and rural restructuring. As the global marketplace continued to squeeze prices to a minimum, agriculture became a less viable option for those who subsisted on it. In 1992, agriculture contributed to approximately 40% of all rural employment (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c: 3). As agricultural jobs dwindled, it became more apparent that jobs in other industries and markets were needed to satisfy the migration of agricultural job seekers. This sense of urgency fuelled a need for communities to work together to develop their own economic means. Economic development was now thought of in different ways by the very people who needed it most. The prevailing wisdom is reflected in the following passage:

Regions made up of groups of communities can pool their limited resources and build on their strengths to create wealth and jobs and to attract new investment, rather than having individual communities and organizations attempt this on their own. (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c: 1).

Rather than look upon neighbouring communities and organizations as separate bodies with distinct characteristics and goals, clusters of regions were banding together under common interests. It was believed that a union of various organizations and communities with similar goals in an entity to represent their interests would have a greater chance of success than individual efforts. The logic held that there was far greater opportunity for attracting investment when majority interests focused on specific economic objectives.

From a stakeholder's point of view, it made sense to pool the risks involved in economic development with several other parties to dilute possible negative backlashes from failed efforts.

Perhaps the REDA program's most enticing factor was the community's direct participation. REDAs presented an opportunity for local people to become involved in local matters. After initial consultations, the public were given a chance to participate in the program. In this manner, communities were able to identify common interests and needs. This identification process acted as a means by which regions could form their own REDA with members who worked toward identified community objectives.

REGIONAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES

To better understand REDAs, their general components and policies are examined.

PURPOSE AND SEVEN CED SERVICES

According to government development documentation, a REDA's general purpose is "to enable community economic development (CED) groups: to co-ordinate; to consolidate and; to better provide their CED services and initiatives" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b). The seven CED services are: (1) co-ordination of services (interests, partners, plans, resources, and efforts); (2) organizational development and planning services; (3) education and training services; (4) information services; (5) research and development services; (6) promotion and marketing services; and (7) local initiatives and project management services (opportunity and identification, feasibility testing, and capitalization) (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993c).

REDA OBJECTIVES

"The REDA initiative is designed to assist communities in improving their opportunities, abilities, and economic development services to create jobs, wealth, and an enhanced quality of life." (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a). According to the program, there were several reasons for CED co-ordination, such as "limited resources; many CED groups; volunteer burnout; many singular efforts; others want to join efforts; gaps in CED service; duplication; and concerns with effectiveness, affordability, sustainability, and efficiency" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b).

REDA BENEFITS

Using the seven CED services outlined above, REDAs can provide other benefits. These include: (1) helping communities sustain CED activity; (2) helping CED groups provide services; (3) helping enhance a CED group's services; (4) helping provide CED services more effectively and in an affordable manner; (5) helping reduce program and initiative costs and burn out; (6) helping build on CED strategies; (7) promoting partnerships and

co-operation among a broader range of stakeholders; (8) helping achieve results; (9) helping streamline services; (10) helping achieve community viability and gain regional benefits; and (11) enabling partnerships with the province in planning, managing, and delivering CED and other programs and services (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b).

Existing CED organizations and stakeholders may also provide benefits. These include: providing better CED services; improving results; addressing community and regional priorities; maximizing trading area strengths; achieving co-operation; forming partnerships; sharing costs and resources; and helping each other through joint planning and initiatives, sharing, and collaboration.

ESTABLISHING A REDA

To begin the process, a region must first decide that it wishes to improve its residents' economic life through creation of a REDA. The establishment process may be initiated by "any regional and community economic development organization, municipality, stakeholder or partner" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a).

The initial step usually consists of inviting all of a region's CED organizations and stakeholders so as to represent all economic interests, provide a maximum mix of partners and interests, establish a viable trading area, and provide quality sustained service (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a). The organizations confer on important and pertinent CED issues, including strengths, weaknesses, capabilities, sustainability, problems, and other elements that affect a REDA's ability to function adequately.

The next step is to co-ordinate and share existing resources and programs. This is usually done by forming a steering committee that evaluates and recognizes a REDA's various options. The general options are as follows: keeping all CED groups and the REDA; eliminating all CED groups and have only a REDA; keeping some CED groups and/or eliminating others; and maintaining the status quo. Thus, flexibility of options is such that one REDA might be structured and operated in a manner quite different to that of other REDAs due to its unique interests and goals (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a).

The next step is to conduct a community analysis to assess and evaluate the strengths and duties of the individual CED organizations within the REDA membership. The basic information gathered for each REDA generally consists of its name, goal, sector and clients served, the seven CED services provided, as well as administration data, such as budget and operations (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b).

After the community analysis, a regional investigation is conducted. This analysis identifies and assesses all CED organizations within the region to understand common issues and opportunities, as well as duplicated services (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b). Community and regional analyses provide important information

and allow a REDA board to sufficiently evaluate options open to the organization.

While a REDA evaluates its options, it must also consider services that it wishes to provide. Such consideration becomes crucial, as this decision will shape a REDA's general nature. Thus, a REDA is at a point where it must identify, establish, and harmonize its components (vision, mission, clients, goal, objectives, services, representation system, partnerships, mix of interests, funding and commitments, work program, and staffing needs). This is vital to a REDA's success in terms of adequately providing future services. Once a REDA's internal values and goals are developed and in place, it can select an option by which to model itself (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b).

The next steps generally entail external manifestations, such as preparation of both bylaws and incorporation documents, while the final stage is comprised of formal approval and operation of the REDA (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b).

MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR A REDA

There is a considerable amount of freedom and flexibility under which a REDA may be created. However, there are also certain requirements. A REDA must: have a CED coordination role in a region; represent the broadest mix of stakeholders; be a legal entity that is also owned by legal entities; be supported by a formal partnership; encompass at least one viable, growing urban community and trading area; occupy an area equal to or greater than that of 12 to 15 rural municipalities; include the words "Regional Economic Development Authority" in its title; operate and be managed as a public service; strive to identify other relationships to other stakeholders; have a five-year commitment for sustainability; and prepare a strategic plan to establish a shared vision, goal, and services (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b).

REDA FUNDING AND COST SHARING

The REDA program was created with an idea that the organizations themselves would become self-sustaining entities. It was proposed that REDAs and the government would have a cost-sharing relationship in the program's early stages. Start up costs would be covered under a cost-sharing approach as a one-time government expense. There were certain guidelines that REDAs had to follow in order to take advantage of government funding. Funds accessed through cost-sharing had to be utilized exclusively to operate the REDA. Regional funding was also to be used exclusively for the REDA. It was also established that regional contributions were to be equally split between the province and the community. It should be noted that Regional Development Community (RDC) funding is recognized as regional contributions. Another constraint was that REDAs were unable to use capital received from funding to provide individual assistance to businesses in the form of grants (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a).

There were two means by which REDAs could apply for funding: two stage and one stage funding. Two stage funding consisted of a REDA incorporation stage and a

REDA first year start-up stage. The incorporation stage was based on an estimate that it cost approximately \$10,000 to incorporate. Thus the cost-sharing approach allowed for funding of up to 50% of costs, or a maximum of \$5,000, to establish a REDA. Activities regarded as necessary for incorporation and covered under funding included meetings and advertising, professional, legal, and incorporation fees. REDAs were to apply for this initial stage of the two stage funding after community and regional analysis was completed, the REDA was legally incorporated, and a REDA implementation strategy proposal was complete (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a).

The second stage estimated total costs for the first year at approximately \$40,000. Funding allowed for up to 50% of total costs, or a maximum of \$20,000, for expenses attributed to starting up a REDA in its first year. Activities and areas covered by funding included board member expenses (excluding salaries), office rental and equipment, communications, a formal five-year strategic plan, and professional staff. REDAs were expected to apply after organization incorporation, preparation of a first year REDA work program (including a five-year formal strategic plan), preparation of a first year budget, and formal commitment (in writing) of community stakeholder and partner REDA funding for the next five years (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a).

At both stages, a REDA was required to submit various documents to outline the organization's position, declare its goals, and legitimize its authenticity to non-founding stakeholders.

One stage funding used the same cost estimates for incorporation (\$10,000) and first year start-up (\$40,000), but instead of dividing the costs into two stages, they were pooled together. As in the two stage funding, similar documentation was required for the one stage funding to illustrate legitimate use of capital and future sustainability (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a).

Walde states that REDA policies have switched from the two funding options to just the one-stage funding alternative. Another important development has been a fading mentality that REDAs would become self-sustaining entities that received one-time financing. The funding protocol evolved into an annual cost-sharing allowance of up to \$60,000 from the provincial government for individual REDA projects (Walde, 2001). There is also an additional \$25,000 available for feasibility studies. The government will pay up to 75% of costs for particular REDA projects conducted by students (Wallace, 2001). Rather than becoming independent organizations, REDAs have become dependent on government financial aid.

While the notion of cost-sharing had its benefits, there were also drawbacks. The idea of core funding may have created a tendency for REDAs to focus on how to access this funding. This shifts the program's vision from CED projects and services to securing funding. Instead of projects driving a demand for funding, the funding creates a demand for projects. This mentality was a complete reversal of initial intents—the creation of

viable projects that address a region's needs followed by access to necessary funding (Walde, 2001).

RECOMMENDED LONG-TERM REDA GOALS

According to Saskatchewan Economic Development (SED), there are five general long-term goals that REDAs should strive to attain. The first is partnerships. REDA partnerships should include the broadest mix of members working toward CED. The second long-term goal is co-ordination. REDAs should co-ordinate efforts and activities among its partners "through dialogue, co-operation, planning, joint services and programming" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b). The third goal, stability, is sought through legal incorporation, ownership by founding partners, partnership support with non-founding organizations, and commitment on behalf of both the members and partners to sustain the REDA in the long-term. The fourth goal is service organization. REDAs should operate and be managed with an intention of "providing support to the region and the economic development partners located therein" (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b). The final long-term goal relates to service and representation. REDAs should serve and represent regions that contain multiple developing communities and trading areas (Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993b).

These long-term goals are perceived as important fundamentals for REDA creation. The importance of these goals is such that funding depends very much upon their presence. In particular, to become eligible for funding, a REDA must submit in writing how it has either achieved, or is working toward, the five long-term goals.

POTENTIAL REDA STAKEHOLDERS

There are a number of potential stakeholders eligible to become founding members or partners within a REDA. **Figure 2** lists the possible organizations that qualify for membership or partnership.

REDA EVALUATION AND ASSESSMENT

REDA assessment is an informal procedure at best. Walde states that there is currently no formal policy to legislate and dictate terms for assessing these economic development organizations (Walde, 2001). Perhaps the lack of a structured evaluation procedure is not so peculiar when considering the REDAs' informal nature.

Each and every individual organization has its own unique attributes and interests. As a result, goals and definition of success vary from one REDA to another. The evaluation process itself is flexible in considering the varying circumstances and interests of each organization. Thus, the assessment procedure appropriately adopts an informal and unstructured nature so as to evaluate each REDA in a manner that adequately assesses its capabilities.

There are some components of the evaluation procedure consistent with most REDAs. Generally, assessment occurs on an annual basis and is conducted by Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development (SECD). SECD utilizes a REDA's annual report and long-term strategic plan to make its evaluation of whether an organization is taking necessary steps to not only follow its long-term strategic plan, but achieve a certain level of success while doing so. Difficulty in evaluation lies in the absence of a concrete definition of "progress" or "success" for comparison of REDAs.

Figure 2. Potential REDA Stakeholders

- Local governments:
 - Rural municipalities
 - Cities
 - Towns
 - Villages
 - Resort villages
- Community futures committees
- Regional tourism associations
- Add boards
- Indian bands
- Tribal councils
- Other Aboriginal organizations
- Co-operatives
- Women's institutes
- Regional colleges
- Utility boards
- Boards of trade
- Rural development corporations
- Better business bureaus
- Individual businesses
- School board representatives
- Health board representatives
- Social service representatives
- Education institutions
- Labour organizations
- District planning commissions
- Community bond corporations
- Small business loans association
- Credit unions
- Financial institutions
- Chambers of Commerce

Source: Saskatchewan Economic Development, 1993a.

Lack of policy and structured definitions poses several problems. The first relates to the notion of success and who should define it. There are many different interpretations of CED because it "is both economic and social development" (Hammond Ketilson, 2001). Lou Hammond Ketilson also believes that an individual REDA's notion of CED may differ significantly from the government's perception of the term (Hammond Ketilson, 2001). This difference in perspective may not be important (depending upon the difference between the two parties), but it certainly makes assessment that much more unclear. Different notions of "progress" and "success" may only serve to cloud the evaluation procedure. Thus, it is crucial that each REDA work closely with SECD to create a long-term strategic plan that is both realistic and mutually respected by both parties.

Lack of a formal assessment procedure also makes it difficult to compare REDAs

to one another. The varying goals, interests, and success of organizations call for a flexible evaluation. The cost of such flexibility is a lack of standards against which the REDAs can be compared. As a result, individual REDAs are only adequately assessed when compared to their own long-term strategic goals.

EXAMPLES OF OTHER ORGANIZATIONS SIMILAR TO REDAS

COMMUNITY BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CBDCs)

CBDCs exist throughout the Maritimes, and share similar aims with REDAs. CBDCs “stimulate private sector employment in rural Atlantic Canada through business financing, counselling and advisory services to small businesses” (Community Business Development Corporations, n.d.). There are currently 41 CBDCs that work to “create jobs and help build a sustainable Atlantic economy” (Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre, n.d.). These organizations have partnerships with the Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) and HRDC, and aid small and medium-sized businesses. An important aspect of CBDCs is their independent board of directors that make decisions based on community needs (Community Business Development Corporations, n.d.). This board’s independent nature is similar to that of the REDA boards.

ATLANTIC CANADA OPPORTUNITIES AGENCY (ACOA)

Created by the federal government in 1986, ACOA wanted to effectively foster economic development in Atlantic Canada’s business community. The organization has the following mandate:

1. advocacy of Atlantic Canadian interests at the regional level,
2. coordination of federal programs and policies in the region,
3. the promotion of the cooperation among all participants in the region’s economy, and
4. the promotion of business actions that develop economic opportunities (Fairbairn, 1998).

ACOA primarily utilized entrepreneurial spirit by funding “business opportunities studies, new product and development process, capital investment, marketing initiatives, supplier development, and non-commercial organizations that provide specialized business services” (Fairbairn, 1998). There are also special programs to promote and fund efforts of female entrepreneurs.

COMMUNITY FUTURES DEVELOPMENT CORPORATIONS (CFDCs)

Created by the federal government in the mid-1980s, CFDCs aid rural communities in

the face of a transforming economic environment. There is a growing concern about the economic demise of rural communities. As such, CFDC's operate in many rural regions. In particular, "The goal of the programme is to reach certain communities outside metropolitan areas [such as] those that are going through an economic crisis and have a serious employment problem" (Fairbairn, 1998).

CFDCs' goals and objectives are derived from their strategic planning session: (1) to engage in active involvement with other CFDCs in Western Canada; (2) to develop strategic partnerships with other organizations; (3) to enable the member CFDCs to better serve their clients; and (4) to increase communication between the individual CFDCs of Saskatchewan (Pan Canadian Community Futures Network, n.d.).

The thirteen different CFDC regions in Saskatchewan make up the membership of the Community Futures Partners of Saskatchewan (CFPS). The CFPS addresses five major areas of concern for its members: to "foster increased communication between CFDC offices"; "represent each CFDC in a common voice"; "advocate the benefits of the Community Futures program to both public organizations and government agencies"; "continue education and training of CFDC staff to improve client services"; and "negotiate with prospective associate organizations on behalf of the member CFDCs" (Pan Canadian Community Futures Network, n.d.).

SELECTED LITERATURE REVIEW

Conte, Andrew. (1996). "Saskatchewan's REDAs: Bottom-Up Economic Development." *Government Finance Review*, 12 (4):44.

Conte examined the general structure and purpose of non-profit corporations owned by community economic development organizations. The article stated that there was an obvious need for co-ordination because "often agencies in neighbouring towns compete with each other or duplicate functions that could be shared." Thus, the REDA program acts as a model for grassroots community level planning.

Conte stated that a particular advantage of REDAs was "having local people with the knowledge of local resources and local opportunities [who are] getting themselves motivated for their own self interest." The article also outlined five primary roles for CED organizations: forming partnerships between CEDs, public-sector agencies, and private-sector leaders; coordinating stakeholders' actions to avoid unnecessary duplication; stabilizing a region's economic development activities by making CEDs more efficient; ensuring service delivery of basic economic development functions; and encouraging regional activities.

REDAs, however, must also address seven economic development functions (coordination; organizational development and planning; education and training;

information dissemination; research and development; promotion and marketing; and local project initiative management) as outlined by the province or face a possible penalty, such as reduced or eliminated funding.

The Saskatoon REDA (SREDA) conducts retention efforts by surveying existing businesses to determine whether they are at risk of closure or ready for expansion. SREDA also tried to present Saskatoon as “a business-friendly city” by recruiting business from eastern Canada.

Arthur, Jeff. (1998). “Whole-Hog Career Training.” *Saskatchewan Business*, 19(2) March/April.

Arthur’s article focused on the Carlton Trail REDA’s (CTREDA) aid toward Saskatchewan’s hog producing industry. CTREDA decided to help alleviate a shortage of labour in the hog industry by creating a training program in conjunction with HRDC and SIAST.

The training program is 25 weeks long and for people between ages 18 and 29 years. Intensive screening ensures that those selected are committed to a career in the hog industry. After screening, “a four-week section on skills ranging from computer training to first aid certification leads into pork production technical training.” Classes are held three days a week, while barn sessions are held two days a week.

CTREDA chief executive officer Don Flannigan said, “We think the access we have to the various programs out there is one of our strengths ... it enhances our ability to deliver an employable workforce and means we can provide significant job opportunities.” It costs an estimated \$3,000 to \$4,000 to train a student, but the program provides the industry with enthusiastic workers and trainees with good jobs.

“Quebec Leader Cool Towards Saskatchewan Plan to Lure Business To Prairies.” (1996). *Canadian Press Newswire*, 5 January.

This article focused on efforts of Saskatchewan business leaders to recruit Quebec firms. These efforts would appear to contradict “the idea that Canadians love Quebec and want Canada to be one strong nation.” The constitutional debate was being used as an excuse for Quebec firms to move to other provinces to run their businesses. This sent mixed messages to Quebecers.

Jim Yuel of SREDA admitted that the uncertainty over Quebec’s future in Canada may have been helping other provinces’ recruiting campaigns: “It’s a simple, harsh reality that people go with their business and their money where they feel comfortably secure with it.” Such business raiding was nothing new. Alberta spent \$300,000 on literature in order to promote the “Alberta Advantage of low taxes and a skilled workforce to businesses interested in relocating.” Corporate raiding may have been a reality, but

Prime Minister Jean Chretien believed that it could hurt national unity while accomplishing very little economically in the long-term.

“Recruiting Mission A Success, Say Saskatchewan Businessmen of Trip to Quebec.” (1996). *Canadian Press Newswire*, 25 January.

This article discussed efforts of Saskatchewan leaders to recruit Quebec businesses. SREDA said that the mission to lure Quebec businesses had already been successful. Yuel stated that, “the businesses we’re meeting with are not curiosity seekers. These businesses are dead serious about meeting with us.” Yuel believed that recruitment would help Saskatchewan in the long run. Yuel also said that the mission had “created an awareness not only here (in Montreal) but all across Canada, of the aggressive business attitude of Saskatoon.” Yuel added, “There’s a new sense that Saskatoon is attractive to business, that Saskatoon has something [businesses in other regions] weren’t aware of.” SREDA stated that the companies wanted to hold follow-up meetings.

“Encouraging Quebecers to Leave: Corporate Raiders From Saskatoon Go Hunting in Montreal.” (1996). *British Columbia Report*, 7(24).

This article focused on the recruiting campaign in Quebec. Radio stations in Quebec denounced SREDA’s Yuel (board chairman) and Jim Hyshka (economic development director) as “corporate raiders” from the West. Such a recruitment drive, Jean-Louis Herivault, Quebec’s Vancouver-based representative to Western Canada, said, “undermines the credibility of the people saying they want to build a better Canada, build an understanding.” A letter to the Saskatoon StarPhoenix editor asked, “Do the people of Saskatoon, who have always been seen as unselfish and caring, really want SREDA representing them in Quebec?”

Jim Hyshka retaliated, stating, “We didn’t create Quebec’s political problems. ... Businesses move for economic reasons and political instability is only one factor in a businessman’s analysis.” Trying to quell the tense mood, Yuel emphasized the notion of business expansion rather than business transfers: “In some cases their local markets [of Quebec firms] are saturated and it’s the only way they can grow.” Hyshka also said that they were planning recruitment trips to Ontario and the mid-western United States to seek out similarly saturated markets.

Target companies included “agri-food and livestock processors, biotech companies, information processors, and some ag-implement manufacturing companies.” Saskatoon had much to offer business through a lower cost of living than the bigger urban centres, a higher education average than the national level among adults (13% and 10%, respectively), and cheaper manufacturing labour.

Burton, Randy. (1997). "Employers Look East To Fill the Shortage of Trades Workers." *Canadian Press Newswire*, N 26.

Burton examined the low national unemployment level rate. In particular, he stated, "equipment manufacturers are having difficulty finding enough workers to meet growing demand during an upswing in the manufacturing sector." Burton also pointed out that Alberta was drawing labour away from Saskatchewan. The article illustrated how the problem was not that there was insufficient employment opportunities, but that there was not enough labour to satisfy local demand.

Bonnie Lloyd of CTREDA went on a recruitment drive in New Brunswick and Newfoundland, where unemployment ran as high as 30% in some areas. Of 115 people interviewed, approximately 70% were interested in employment in Saskatchewan. In addition to this campaign drive, SREDA and HRDC were set to announce a partnership focused on "recruiting skilled tradespeople from the East."

The problems of maintaining migrant workers were not easily solved, for "it can be a struggle to keep them." Problems arose due to costly training expenses and culture shock. Thus, companies tried to relocate both the worker and their families to limit the initial shock as much as possible.

"Saskatoon Lands direcTel Call Centre." (2000). *Saskatchewan Business*, 21(3) May.

This article focused on the joint effort between SREDA, the City of Saskatoon, and the Saskatchewan government to establish a new call centre. DirecTel, a North Dakota-based teleservices business, was looking to establish a call centre in Saskatoon. It was agreed that Saskatoon was the best choice for the new centre because it "provided an ample qualified labor force." Most of the competition for the call centre came from within the province itself. Patrick Connor stated, "I actually reviewed six communities from within Saskatchewan. ... And quite frankly all of them would have been ideal candidates. But Saskatoon really shone in that it could really provide a qualified labor force." Connor also stated that "another key to Saskatchewan and Saskatoon in particular, was the co-operative efforts that the Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development Department along with the SREDA organization, and their ability to coordinate activities to suit our needs."

The call centre was expected to provide 225 full-time jobs. Approximately 500 people seeking employment attended an informative session hosted by direcTel.

"EDAC 2000: the Annual Guide to Economic Development." (2000). *Canadian Business*, 73(17): 129-138.

The guide explored the effectiveness of economic development for smaller cities that need to attract business. The economic development process begins long before economic development organizations attract business to their regions. There is a need to work

with existing local businesses to build a cohesive business community to impress potential startups. The guide states of these economic development organizations:

They seek to build clusters of similar enterprises to achieve critical mass. They incubate their startups and feed their entrepreneurs a rich diet of information, contacts and alliances. They try to linkup with nearby cities or regions to pool their attractions and resources.

The guide used examples of Moncton, New Brunswick, North Bay, Ontario, and Swift Current, Saskatchewan as cities that used their advantages, such as standard of living and lower operating costs, to attract business to regions otherwise considered less glamorous. REDAs were also referred to in terms of resources that could be tapped into by new businesses.

To summarize the guide's main point, the following passage is appropriate:

Driven by the same factors and using many of the same tools, it [economic development] is constantly growing in numerous different local directions. It's as if a hundred different evolutionary experiments were to occur at once, except different versions may succeed in each location due to local conditions.

Phillips, Peter W.B. (1998). "Whither Saskatchewan? A Look At Economic Policies 1975-2000." *Canadian Business Economics*, 6(4) November.

Phillips examined the various economic policies that the Saskatchewan government had implemented within the last 25 years. He argued that there have been four types of economic policy: (1) macroeconomic stabilization (fiscal or monetary policy); (2) export promotion (targeted trade policy tools); (3) investment policy (subsidies and taxes); and (4) innovation policy (entrepreneurial growth).

The article briefly examined the 1980s and 1990s, as well as PC and NDP governments and their philosophies at the time. Regarding macroeconomic stabilization policies, Phillips stated that, over the long-run, these policies largely failed because their "effect on real personal disposable income was clearly negative [and] it is not clear the fiscal stimulus sustained total employment at rates above what would otherwise have occurred."

Phillips also noted export promotion policies were not producing any sustainable benefits as they did little to create a competitive environment. Investment was often crowded out due to the government policy of promoting domestic content. "Since trade barriers have begun to fall, several 'infant industry' firms have found they were not mature enough to compete with out-of-province suppliers ... which suggests this policy is not sustainable in a world of increasingly open markets."

Phillips believed that investment policies had been half-hearted attempts at best.

The reason for this was that the “government’s strategy of trying to balance between business interests and other groups has made it harder to achieve a pro-growth orientation.”

Philips stated that innovation policy had yet to be determined as beneficial. He admitted that the notion of innovation was all too important within this global economy. However, Phillips said that the government’s particular policy shift embracing innovation had not yet proven to be successful or unsuccessful.

ADDITIONAL RESEARCH

A number of areas may be considered for further research related to this preliminary report. Continued exploration into the REDA evaluation process may prove helpful to determine the most effective methods for evaluating their success and improving the program. Additional research in the area of provincial CED programs across Canada would also be useful. Although no program, at the time that this report was written, appeared to be similar in structure, there were examples of other provincial programs that attempted to address the unique local requirements of community economic development programs, albeit with more governmental input and community accountability requirements. More research into these programs, particularly those initiated since the establishment of Saskatchewan’s REDA program in 1993, may prove helpful.

CONCLUSION

The Saskatchewan government’s creation of the Regional Economic Development Authorities initiative offers a unique structure for community economic development in Canada. This program emphasized the importance of local, self-defined partnerships and community control, which, in turn, is expected to produce community development projects that are highly relevant and successful. While the program laid out guidelines for communities to develop REDAs, it has maintained sufficient flexibility, enabling communities to build on the successes of existing local development projects and to incorporate the work of existing organizations. While these factors have allowed for the development of potentially responsive economic development programs at the local level, this same self-defined structure has made it difficult to evaluate REDAs in any comprehensive manner. Reporting requirements for REDAs have been limited and the government has not attempted to measure and evaluate success for these regions in any ongoing, structured way. In some ways, the continued existence of the REDA form of CED attests to a degree of success, but what might actually be taking place in terms of on-the-ground success is difficult to measure without some sort of standardized approach. REDAs’ informal structure and region-by-region uniqueness may also result in variations of how such comparable standards measure and define success.

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Appendix A. REDA Internet Resources

Canada/Nova Scotia Business Service Centre.

<http://www.cbsc.org/ns/english/>

Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs).

<http://www.cbdc.ca/English/emain.html>

Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs) and Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) Community Business Development Corporations (CBDCs).

<http://www.acoa.ca/e/financial/community.shtml>

Cornerstone Regional Economic Development Authority.

<http://www.creda.sk.ca/>

Government of Saskatchewan. Community Regional Economic Development Organizations (CREDOs).

<http://norsask.kcdc.sk.ca/dev/index.php>

Government of Saskatchewan. News Release on Prairie to Pine REDA.

<http://www.gov.sk.ca/newsrel/1998/12/11-923.html>

Government of Canada. Pan Canadian Community Futures Network.

<http://www.communityfutures.ca/>

Government of Saskatchewan. Partnership For Prosperity.

<http://www.saskprosperity.sk.ca/>

Government of Saskatchewan. Report Card on Partnership For Growth.

<http://www.saskprosperity.sk.ca/PFGReportCard.PDF>

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development, Government of Saskatchewan. General map of REDAs.

[http://www.gov.sk.ca/econdev/programs_services/regional_economic_development_authorities_\(redas\)/complete_reda_map.html](http://www.gov.sk.ca/econdev/programs_services/regional_economic_development_authorities_(redas)/complete_reda_map.html)

Saskatchewan Economic and Co-operative Development, Government of Saskatchewan. List and Links to individual REDA websites.

[http://www.gov.sk.ca/econdev/programs_services/regional_economic_development_authorities_\(redas\)/](http://www.gov.sk.ca/econdev/programs_services/regional_economic_development_authorities_(redas)/)

TradeMark Properties Inc. List of economic development web sites.

http://www.trademarkproperties.com/economic_development_sites.htm

University of Waterloo. Master's program in Local Economic Development.

<http://www.fes.uwaterloo.ca/LED/>

CUISR Resource Centre
University of Saskatchewan
289 John Mitchell Building
118 Science Place
Saskatoon SK S7N 5E2 Canada
Phone: 306-966-2121
Facsimile: 306-966-2122
E-mail: cuisr.oncampus@usask.ca



CUISR Web site:
<http://www.usask.ca/cuisr/>

CUISR Community Liaison Office
St. Paul's Hospital Residence
230 Avenue R South
Saskatoon SK S7M 2Z1 Canada
Phone: 306-978-8320
Facsimile: 306-655-4956
E-mail: cuisr.liaison@usask.ca