ANNOUNCEMENTS & EVENTS

Pathways 2 Sustainability: Food, Fuel, and Finance
February 23-25, 2011 | Red Deer College

Participants will have an incredible opportunity to network and build relationships with 300 professionals from across Alberta focused on innovation and resilience for a sustainable Alberta. The Sustainability Showcase is a line up of 40 companies and organizations representing the industries of agriculture, energy, and community finance.

http://www.pathways2sustainability.ca

Big Sky Summit
April 4, 2011 | Shaw Conference Centre, Edmonton, AB

Big Sky Summit is a powerful one-day event that brings innovative Albertans together with a select group of renowned speakers to discuss the big possibilities for our province. Hosted by Rural Alberta Development Fund.

http://www.ruralalbertasfund.ca

Creating Rural Connections Conference 2011
April 12-14, 2011 | Mayfield Inn and Suites, Edmonton, AB

This is a must-attend conference linking rural communities with Alberta’s post-secondary institutions. It will feature a combination of keynote and concurrent presentations as well as interactive discussion groups, poster sessions, and networking opportunities. Hosted by the Alberta Rural Development Network.

http://www.ardn.ca

From Policy to Research and Back Again
1st Annual Rural Research Workshop
May 5, 2011 | Sussex Pavilion, 111 Sussex Drive, Ottawa ON

The RRW aims to foster networking among rural researchers and to provide a forum for research and policy discourse. Hosted by the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation (CRRF)

http://www.fcm.ca/english/View.asp?mp=788&x=1531

Summer Student Employment Opportunity

The ACSRC/LaB is gearing up for the Rural Capacity Internship program for the Summer of 2011! This program gives students the chance to live and work in a rural community in Alberta in the areas of capacity building and sustainability. If you are interested and would like more information on the program, please visit:

http://www.augustana.ualberta.ca/centres/acsrc/internship.html

Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities

http://www.augustana.ualberta.ca/centres/acsrc/

1st Annual Rural Research Workshop

The 1st Annual Rural Research Workshop (RRW) ‘From Policy to Research and Back Again’ will take place May 5, 2011 in Ottawa, Ontario. The RRW aims to foster networking among rural researchers and to provide a forum for rural research and policy discourse. In total, 25 research papers will be presented in eight (8) concurrent sessions and up to 13 posters will be displayed all day. Relevant topics include, but are not limited to: place-based policy, tourism support for rural community development; measuring social capital; planning for rural health; renewable energy technologies; food security in rural First Nation communities; e-governance and community decision-making; and changing paradigms in agricultural policy.

The Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) is proud to announce that its Director and RRW Steering Committee member, Dr. Lars Hallström, has received a Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant in the Aid to Research Workshops and Conferences in Canada category. These funds will be used to aid with event organization and presenter travel costs.

The opening keynote address “From Policy to Research and Back Again: Evidence from the South” will be made by Julio A. Berdegué, Principal Researcher at RIMISP-Latin American Center for Rural Development, and Coordinator of the IDRC-funded “Collaborative Program on Rural Territorial Dynamics in Latin America”.

For more information, visit:
http://www.fcm.ca/english/View.asp?mp=788&x=1531

Rural Sustainability Conference A Success

The ‘Taking the Next Steps: Sustainability Planning, Policy and Participation for Rural Canadian Communities’ conference (TTNS) brought together researchers and community representatives from across Canada to the University of Alberta’s Augustana Campus in Camrose, Alberta. From October 21-23, 2010 conference participants explored issues pertaining to rural sustainability.

Conference presenters consisted of pairings of academic researchers and community organization representatives. Presentations covered a variety of issues pertaining to rural sustainability, including food procurement, animal management, and aboriginal tourism.

TTNS provided Augustana with its first National event since the opening of the Forum. This spucious locale proved ideal for an event of this size.

The spirit of TTNS will live on through an interactive website, edited volume, and video podcasts.

This project was supported by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) via a Public Outreach Grant.

For more information, visit:
http://www.augustana.ualberta.ca/centres/acsrc/

Pictures from the event can be found inside this newsletter.
ACSRC Takes Part in Community Service-Learning Program

Thanks to partnerships with Augustana’s Learning and Beyond office (LaB), Dr. Glynnis Hood, and ‘Taking the Next Steps’ organizing committee members, Drs Lars Hallström & Glen Hvenegaard, the ACSRC hosted 8 Augustana Community Service Learning (CSL) students this Fall semester.

Community Service-Learning (CSL) encourages students to get out of the traditional university classroom and engage with the world in order to make connections between theory and practice. Commonly, students who are enrolled in a CSL class complete approximately 20 hours of service (volunteer work) that benefits the community—often with a non-profit organization. Students’ reflection on their community service is one of the “text books” of their CSL class.

Four students from Dr. Hood’s ENV 120 class aided in conference set-up, on-site registration, and tear down. Four students from Drs. Hallström & Hvenegaard’s ENV/POL 328 & 421 classes acted as concurrent panel room moderators/timekeepers/note-takers as part of their placement. In addition, they gave brief presentations during the conference’s last plenary session, hosted by Augustana’s Dean, Dr. Roger Epp. As well, they will produce final reports that will be posted on the TTNS website and distributed through the conference listserv.

Building Mental Health Crisis Response Capacity in Rural Alberta

The “Building Mental Health Crisis Response Capacity in Alberta” event held on November 8, 2010 in Viking, Alberta, brought together researchers from the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus, including Dr. Lars Hallström, Director of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, and Dr. Rebecca Purc-Stephenson, Professor of Psychology. The event also included representatives Colleen Vennard and Rhiannon Wegenast of the Canadian Mental Health Association for East Central Alberta, and representatives from the hospitals and health services units from a number of communities in the 14 counties that compose District 5 (Edmonton East).

Mental health crisis response is often an area in rural Alberta that is lacking in resources and funding. Because many rural areas cannot sustain an emergency response team, the individuals with a mental health crisis are often brought to locations in a community that are not trained to handle the situation. Police officers, nurses, and hospitals are often overwhelmed with cases of mental health crises and do not have sufficient knowledge or training on how to help, or who to call for help. By connecting with community members from District 5 that are affected by the lack of capacity in regards to mental health crisis response capacity in rural areas, the CMHA and the University were able to gain insight into the issues surrounding the mental health crisis response problem in order to begin to assess and design a rural Albertan Mental Health Crisis Response program.

TTNS in Photos | Oct. 21-23, 2010

Dr. Roger Epp, Dean, University of Alberta - Augustana Campus

Mr. Bruce Cutknife

Plenary Session: (L-R) Kerry Prosper, Kelly Munkittrick, Karen Neville

Kerry Prosper, “Seeking Netukulimk: The Mi’kmaw Moose Management Initiative

http://www.augustana.ualberta.ca/centres/acsrc/TakingtheNextSteps
The Rural Capacity Internship provided me with a chance to expand my horizons into an area that I had never worked in before, and provided me with valuable, lifelong knowledge and connections.

The second phase of the program will start in May 2011.

Rural Capacity Intern Program

The University of Alberta's Augustana Campus based Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities and Learning and Beyond office have partnered to establish the ACSRC Rural Capacity Intern Program. The first phase of this program ran during the summer of 2010 and provided 3 Augustana students with the opportunity to live and work with rural communities in East Central Alberta. One of the interns, Shay Barker, shares her thoughts on a summer working in and with Rural Alberta.

I was selected to work with the Wainwright and District Family and Community Services (FCSS) office under the supervision of the Executive Director, Cathy Charlton. Alternatively, my counterparts were stationed in Hardisty and Heisler under the supervision of the Community Administrative Officers (CAO) of their respective communities.

My position required careful thought and consideration as to the social needs of my respective community. From the beginning I understood that youth programming was an area that was lacking attention in the community (and in the surrounding district villages), so I spent my summer with a great team of people creating, organizing, and executing several daylong youth events. An example of an event that was held was “Ride Out the Summer,” hosted at Wainwright Skate Park. It included a DJ that came in from Lloydminster, employees from a skateboard shop in Lloydminster, as well as a hip hop dance instructor from Wainwright, and a graffiti session. The event was a way to publicize the need for long-term youth programming in every community and provide the local youth with something positive and productive to do for a day. The turnout proves the need for long-term, well funded youth programs, with over fifty attendees, along with parents, and community members (including members of Town Council).

In sum, the past few months have proven fruitful, & we continue to see many opportunities before us!

Lars K. Hallström, PhD
Director, ACSRC

Message from the Director

Well, they do say that time flies when you are having fun! It seems like only the other day that I wrote a small piece for the inaugural newsletter of the ACSRC, and yet here I am again, being reminded by my staff that it is, in fact, time to do so again. I think the fact that time has passed so quickly is truly indicative of how busy the past several months have been, and how many opportunities (and challenges) there are within the rural sustainability context in Alberta.

There have been numerous high-lites and successes over the past few months – first among these being the very well received (and attended) “Taking the Next Steps” Conference held in October, 2010. This conference, which was funded by a large SSHRC grant under the Environmental Outreach Program, brought together researchers and community members from across the country to present, share and discuss the challenges, opportunities and success stories created by post-secondary and rural community collaboration. We were very fortunate to be supported by not only the staff of the ACSRC, but also a number of community service learning students who provided invaluable assistance in the hosting, panels and knowledge exchange activities of the conference.

These students were: Kershia Naidoo, Nafisa Rahman, Nils Lokken, Nhil Kur, Naomi Finseth, Jacqueline Klug, Danielle Sehn, and Francine Thibodeau.

Attendees of the conference were all very complimentary, and many were quite taken with Camrose, the Campus, and the new Forum in particular. It was very gratifying to see so many people engaging with each other, both informally and within the sessions, and to hear comments like “That was one of the best panels I’ve ever seen” and “When will you be hosting the next one?” I was particularly pleased to hear great feedback on the food and services provided by the Cafeteria and TLS – many participants were pleasantly surprised to find that our foods are sourced locally, and that we were able to obtain such a diversity of foods, and of such fine quality, from the surrounding area.

As we have started out first round of post-conference evaluations, the positive messages we received during the conference are being supported by the evaluation results:

73% of respondents have indicated that TTNS has enhanced their research while 68% have indicated that TTNS has made a significant contribution to their research, organization, &/or community. From one respondent, “During the econference I participated in several discussions which have led to collaboration or will result in collaboration in the near future, enhancing capacity and research ability for my organization.”

In addition to the organizing and hosting of the conference, the ACSRC has engaged in a number of other activities:

- Building Mental Health Crisis Response Event (Nov. 8, 2010)
- CFI Application (proposed Integrated Sustainability Sciences Research Centre at Miquelon Lake)
- Rural Alberta Deliberates on Climate Change Event (planning on-going)
- Alberta Tourism Parks and Recreation Memorandum of Understanding

In sum, the past few months have proven fruitful, & we continue to see many opportunities before us!

Lars K. Hallström, PhD
Director, ACSRC