

# N R E

## THE NEW RURAL ECONOMY

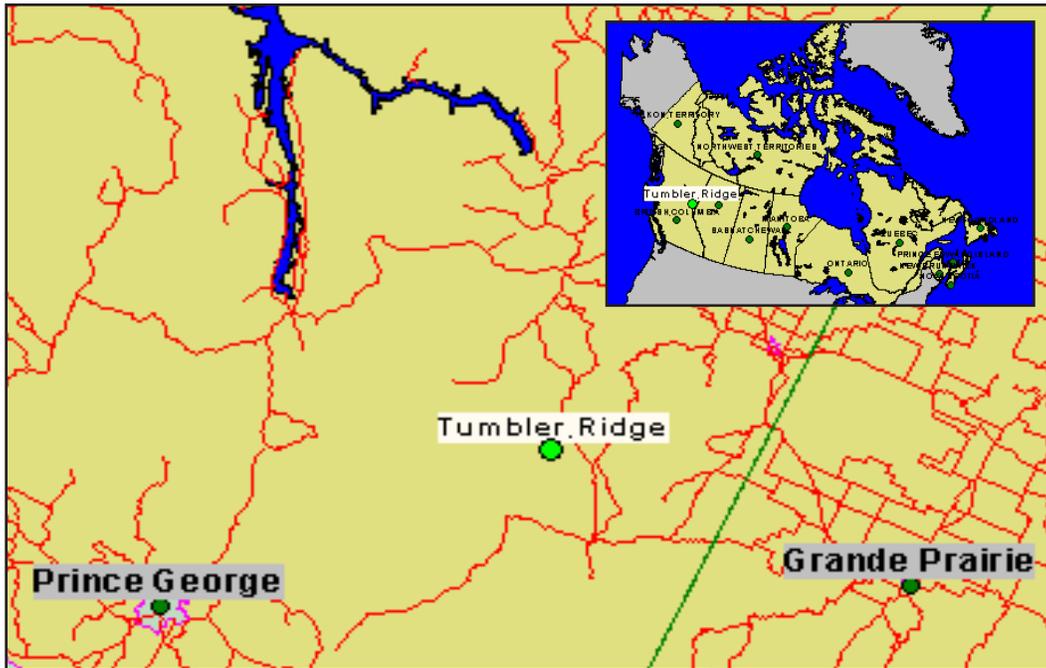


### Site 28: Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia

The community of Tumbler Ridge is British Columbia's newest town, founded in association with the province's last resource development "mega-project". Located on the eastern foothills of the Rocky Mountains in Northeastern BC, planning for Tumbler Ridge and the area's coal mine developments began in 1975. The local economy was originally developed around two open pit coal mines, Quintette and Bull-moose, whose markets were Japanese steel mills.

The Provincial Government, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs, managed the design and development of the community. Extensive efforts were put into the design, layout, and servicing of the town site. The community opened in 1986. While projections exceeded 10, 500 people, the 1991 population was 4, 500 and the 1996 population was 3, 775.

Although diversification of the local economy was part of the concept plans for the community, Tumbler Ridge faces some challenges. For example, it is not on a "thru" highway, as road access comes via separate roads from either Dawson Creek or Chetwynd. Recently established Provincial Parks and Protected Areas, together with extensive snowmobile, cross-country skiing, and hiking trails, offer possibilities for tourism development. A local firm was recently granted a short term timber license to develop a value added wood products mill. In 1999, the Quintette coal mine closed. As a result, the town has undertaken a wide range of diversification activities which have included eliminating the town's debt, securing services funding from the Provincial Government, re-selling most of the houses owned by the coal mines, and supporting new economic ventures.



Maps courtesy of Statistics Canada, Geography Division, 2000

<i>Characteristics in 1996</i>	<i>Tumbler</i>	<i>B.C.</i>	<i>Canada</i>
Population	3 775	3 724 500	28 846 761
1991 to 1996 population change (%)	-18.8	13.5	5.7
% of population ages 15 and over	71.1	80.2	79.5
Unemployment rate	4.8	9.6	10.1
Participation rate	77.4	66.4	65.5
% Primary industry	56.3	5.7	5.6
% Secondary industry	3.4	17.9	20
% Tertiary industry	40.5	76.4	74.4
Average number of persons in married or common-law families	3.4	3.1	3.1
Average number of persons in lone-parent families	2.7	2.6	2.6

Source: Statistics Canada

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