



Initiative on the New Economy

**Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places:
A Report for Springhill, Nova Scotia**

**David Bruce, Carla Stevens, and Lindsay Lyghtle
Rural and Small Town Programme
Mount Allison University
Sackville, New Brunswick**

Summer 2003



A project of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
Un projet de Fondation Canadienne sur la Restructuration Rurale

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page Number
Initiative on the New Economy - About the Project	2
About the Service Inventory	3
Availability	4
Site Description - Springhill, Nova Scotia	5
Population Profile - Springhill, Nova Scotia	6
Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places	7
General Overview of Service Availability for Springhill Residents	7
Education	8
Health	8
Protection Services	10
Legal Services	10
Financial Services	11
Communications	11
Elderly and Childcare Services	12
Government Services	12
Community Services	13
Transportation	14
Recreational Services	15
Shopping	16
Economic Development Organizations	17
Housing	18
Challenges and Opportunities for Springhill, Nova Scotia	18
Sources of Interest	19

INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY - ABOUT THE PROJECT

The *Initiative on the New Economy* project of the Canadian Rural and Restructuring Foundation works closely with residents, service providers, voluntary organizations, business members, and decision makers to identify factors that contribute to building capacity in rural and small town places across Canada. Capacity is the ability of people residing in a place to mobilize their assets and resources to cope with stress and transition, or to capitalize on opportunities. Such capacity is built from trust and relationships grounded in institutions, organizations, businesses, and services alike. The Initiative on the New Economy is built on four key themes to explore capacity including *local governance, communications, services, and the environment*. This report explores the relationship between services and capacity.

The Services Research Centre conducted site profile surveys in the summer of 2003. This is the third survey conducted since 1998 with a goal to track services over time. Services play two key functions in building capacity. First, services help rural and small town places to cope with restructuring and transition as a result of economic downturns or even plant closures. Job losses stemming from industrial restructuring or closure can place increased demands on local services for education and training, welfare, counselling, health care, and other support services. Without such services, residents would have to cope with the additional burden of having to leave their town to access assistance. Job and service losses present a significant challenge to rural and small town places working on revitalization.

Second, services provide opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust. Together, these can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. For example, schools or senior centres can act as multi-functional facilities for the community where local volunteer groups, sporting clubs, local theatre, and others can do their work in the absence of other facilities. Another example might be the way that post offices can act as a one stop shop for a range of government services. This report focuses on the current service provision levels in rural and small town Canada. In particular, this report will compare the availability of services in Springhill, Nova Scotia with services available in other research sites across Canada, as well as with services available in other study sites within Atlantic Canada. In each of these tables in this report, the availability of services in Springhill is compared to the 22 sites surveyed across Canada and to the 6 study sites in Atlantic Canada.

AVAILABILITY

Copies of all site reports on services availability were distributed within to participating sites. Additionally, copies have been posted on the INE website (nre.concordia.ca) and on Greg Halseth's website (<http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>).

Copies of the larger *Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Canada* report are available in a number of locations. At the University of Northern British Columbia, copies have been deposited at the Weller Library or can be accessed on Greg Halseth's website: <http://web.unbc.ca/geography/faculty/greg>. Copies are also available on the website of the Initiative of the New Economy at: nre.concordia.ca.

For further information about this report or other available reports on services, please contact Greg Halseth at:

Geography Program
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, B.C.
V2N 4Z9

Telephone: (250) 960-5826
E-mail: halseth@unbc.ca

For further information about other INE reports, please contact:

Bill Reimer
Initiative on the New Economy
Dep't of Sociology and Anthropology
1455 boul. de Maisonneuve O.
Concordia University
Montreal, Quebec
H3G 1M8

Telephone: (514) 848-2424
E-mail: reimer@vax2.concordia.ca
Website: <http://nre.concordia.ca>

David Bruce, Director
Rural and Small Town Programme
Mount Allison University
144 Main Street
Sackville, New Brunswick
E4L 1A7

Telephone: (506) 364-2395
E-mail : dwbruce@mta.ca
Website: <http://www.mta.ca/rstp/nre.html>

Booklet Contributors: David Bruce, Carla Stevens, Lindsay Lyghtle, Greg Halseth, Laura Ryser, Nora King, and Kelly Giesbrecht.

Funded by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council - Initiative on the New Economy

**INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY
SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES: A REPORT FOR SPRINGHILL, N.S.**

Site Description – Springhill, NS

Springhill is located in the Northwestern portion of Nova Scotia, with a population of 4,091. It is 174 kilometres Northwest of Halifax and 88 kilometres east of Moncton, New Brunswick. Traditionally a mining community, Springhill has experienced its share of economic prosperity and tragedy. Since the coal mine disasters of the late 1950s which led to the eventual closure of the mines by the early 1970s, Springhill has concentrated its economic interests elsewhere including tourism, institutional services (community college, correctional facility) and manufacturing. The surrounding rural areas engage in dairy farming, producing blueberries, and exporting timber.

The main source of employment in the community is the penitentiary, however, few local people work there. Business development in Springhill is challenged by competition in Amherst, a much larger community only 20 kilometres away. However, one advantage offered by Springhill is its industrial park, which is served by geothermal energy. This form of energy costs significantly less and is more environmentally friendly.

Out-migration of youth, a rapidly aging population, high unemployment, and aging municipal infrastructure are problems in Springhill. The development of tourism is one key strategy for revitalization. Priding itself on a rich history filled with both tragedy and accomplishments, Springhill is the home of the Anne Murray Centre, the Miner's Museum, and several large cultural and music festivals.



POPULATION PROFILE - SPRINGHILL, NOVA SCOTIA

The population of Springhill, Nova Scotia declined from 4,193 residents in 1996 to 4,091 residents in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2001). While Springhill has a family oriented population, it has a large population of seniors as well. This will have important implications for planning the delivery of a variety of services, such as social services, health services, recreational services, and even housing.

Population	Site: Springhill, NS		
	Total	Male	Female
Population in 2001	4091	2045	2040
Population in 1996	4193	2095	2100
1996 to 2001 population change (%)	-2.4	-3	-3
Total - All persons	4095	2045	2040
Age 0-4	180	100	75
Age 5-14	485	245	240
Age 15-19	250	135	120
Age 20-24	240	140	100
Age 25-44	1120	620	505
Age 45-54	575	285	290
Age 55-64	430	215	210
Age 65-74	385	175	210
Age 75-84	320	110	210
Age 85 and over	115	30	85
Median age of the population	41.6	38.1	44.7

Source: Statistics Canada 2001.

Springhill's location in a relatively isolated and rural county makes it challenging in terms of population retention and attraction. The entire county has been experiencing a relatively long period of slow population decline, fuelled by concentration of services in larger centres, an aging population, and youth leaving to seek education and employment opportunities elsewhere.

SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES

Services play an important role in retaining and attracting residents and businesses as they enhance local quality of life. However, rural and small town across Canada are experiencing tremendous change stemming from economic and social restructuring in an increasing global economy. As a result of industrial restructuring, some small towns have been experiencing population declines. At the same time, federal and provincial government policies have been withdrawing some of the service infrastructure that can provide a foundation for revitalizing rural and small town places and assist residents to cope with stress. Some rural and small town places adjusted to transition through establishing innovative services or diversifying their local economies. These types of innovation suggest one way by which services help to build capacity within a place.

Services also help to build capacity by providing opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust, which subsequently can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. Together, services can help to enhance local quality of life and mitigate out-migration from rural and small town places.

General Overview of Service Availability for Springhill Residents

Over the years there has been a slow and steady change and decline in overall access to services for residents of Springhill. Springhill once had many more people, and has experienced a slow decline in population for years, contributing to a decrease in overall demand for a variety of public services and services from private enterprises. The most recent example of this was the closure of the FreshMart grocery store. The twinning of the Trans Canada Highway has improved travel conditions to both Amherst and Truro, and to points beyond, making it easier to obtain services in those locations. Government rationalization of public services, particularly in the past decade - largely with a concentration of these in Amherst to serve the needs of County residents - has meant a declining presence of government in Springhill. Taken together, these and other factors have had a snowball effect of declining access to services within the Town itself, and a declining population to sustain demand within the Town.

The tables that follow show a mixed bag of access to services: some services are still accessible within the Town, others are concentrated in Amherst, and still others at a further distance. While most services are accessible within a reasonable 30-minute drive of Springhill (mostly in Amherst) this reality presents problems for people on lower incomes and for those without their own means of transportation. One of the limitations of this report is that it does not provide information on the “quality” or “cost” of services. For example, while there is a new hospital in the region with first-class facilities, there are still challenges with attracting and retaining health care professionals in the region, thus reducing the overall quality of the services being offered. Another example would relate to public transportation. While there is regular bus service to other communities, it may not necessarily be affordable for those who require this service.

Educational Services

Educational institutions are playing a changing role in maintaining quality of life in rural and small town places. Schools have provided other amenities through their libraries, theatres, and art galleries in places that would otherwise not have access to such services. They have also played a larger economic development role. Community colleges can provide skilled and professional workers, act as a broker of services, and act as a repository of information. They can also design programs and services that are relevant and respond to the changing labour market conditions of small places.

Table 1: Availability of Education Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Pre-school/kindergarten	50.0%	33.3%	✓	
Elementary school	63.6%	66.7%	✓	
High school	27.3%	50.0%	✓	
CEGEP / College	18.2%	33.3%	✓	
Continuing Education	27.3%	50.0%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

While pre-school and kindergarten services are less frequently available in Atlantic sites, other educational services, such as high schools and post secondary facilities, exist in more of these sites when compared to the sites across Canada (Table 1). Generally speaking, Springhill has very good access to educational services, which is excellent for a small town.

Health Services

Health services play an important role in attracting new labour and retaining residents. However, during times of economic and social restructuring, closures in hospitals and the centralization of physical and mental health services can be difficult on the elderly and the poor who do not have access to a vehicle and who live in a place with limited transportation services. However, it is not just the utility of health services that is of concern, but also the potential loss of health care jobs that can lead to a further decline in the local economy and population.

Health facilities are limited in most of the rural and small town places examined (Table 2a). Of particular interest is that fewer than 40% of sites have a health centre, hospital, or pharmacy, and just over one-third of the sites across Canada have ambulance services. This carries important implications for residents commuting for medical emergencies or health care reasons. Sites in Atlantic Canada are better equipped with health care services when compared with the national sample. The majority of sites in Atlantic Canada have a pharmacy and an ambulance, and half the sites have a medical clinic or a blood / urine testing facility. Despite changes to All Saints Hospital, Springhill residents still have very good access to health services, especially with the recent opening of the facility near Amherst.

Table 2a: Availability of Health Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Hospital	18.2%	33.3%	✓	
Health centre / CLSC	27.3%	33.3%	✓	
Medical clinic	40.9%	50.0%	✓	
Blood / urine testing facility	36.4%	50.0%	✓	
X-ray facility	22.7%	33.3%	✓	
Baby delivery facility	4.5%	0.0%	X	✓
CT scan facility	0.0%	0.0%	X	✓
Pharmacy	40.9%	66.7%	✓	
Ambulance	36.4%	66.7%	✓	
Emergency services	18.2%	33.3%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

The availability of health care professionals is also limited in small places. In fact, only home care visits are available in more than half of the sites. Even those services deemed as essential, such as doctors, are only available in just over 35% of the sites across Canada. With the exception of home care visits, health care professionals are available in a higher proportion of Atlantic sites when compared to sites across Canada. There are still challenges associated with doctor recruitment and retention, which makes it difficult to find a new family doctor and to ensure access to speciality care and various types of surgeries.

Table 2b: Availability of Health Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Doctors	36.4%	50.0%	✓	
Nurses	36.4%	50.0%	✓	
Dentists	27.3%	50.0%	✓	
Dental surgeons	9.1%	16.7%	✓	
Optometrists	18.2%	33.3%	✓	
Home care visits	54.5%	50.0%	✓	
VON	13.6%	50.0%	✓	
Social workers	22.7%	50.0%	✓	
Public health nurse	31.8%	50.0%	✓	
Physiotherapy	22.7%	33.3%	✓	
Speech therapy	31.8%	50.0%	✓	
Occupational therapy	13.6%	33.3%	✓	
Respite care	22.7%	66.7%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Protection Services

Protection services contribute to community capacity in a number of ways. For example, volunteer fire departments and various crime watch programs provide opportunities for community involvement and interaction, both of which can build trust and leadership.

Table 3: Availability of Protection Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Police (Local / RCMP)	22.7%	50.0%	✓	
Fire department	68.2%	66.7%	✓	
911 emergency line	86.4%	66.7%	✓	
Neighbourhood Watch	31.8%	33.3%	✓	
Rural Crime Watch	13.6%	16.7%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Protection services are more available than most other service areas (Table 3). Most notably, fire departments and 911 are in more than half the sites across Canada. Local police or RCMP services are limited in these sites across Canada overall. While policing services and rural crime watch are more available in Atlantic sites than the national sample, fewer Atlantic sites have 911. The availability of fire departments and neighbourhood crime watch services in Atlantic Canada closely resembles the national average. Springhill's Fire Department was reported as one of the best in Nova Scotia and is highly valued by the local residents. Recent changes to the local Police Commission should result in improved services and harmonious relations with those it serves.

Legal Services

Legal services are another example of specialized services that are often not found in rural areas. The absence of legal services has important implications as residents must commute to go to court, to access legal services to prepare wills or purchase real estate, or have passports or affidavits signed.

Table 4: Availability of Legal Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Lawyer	18.2%	33.3%	✓	
Notary	40.9%	50.0%	✓	
Court	18.2%	33.3%	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Overall, legal services are very limited in the INE sites across Canada (Table 4). The availability of legal services in Atlantic sites is above the national sample.

Financial Services

Businesses also play a role in providing a range of activities that enhance the quality of life of a place, as well as the viability and stability of the place. Business members also play an important role in community development as they can provide leadership in volunteer groups either as members or in a leadership role. Small local businesses are also an important source for fundraisers and sponsor specific local organizations or events.

Table 5: Availability of Business Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Banks	36.4%	50.0%	✓	
Credit Union / Caisse Populaire	50.0%	33.3%	X	✓
ATM	50.0%	50.0%	✓	
Micro-financing	9.1%	0.0%	X	✓
Insurance office	50.0%	50.0%	✓	
Industrial park	22.7%	16.7%	✓	
Real estate	18.2%	0.0%	X	✓
Accounting	45.5%	66.7%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Overall, credit unions, ATMs, and insurance offices are found in half the sites across Canada (Table 5). In Atlantic Canada, more sites offer banking and accounting services. The availability of ATMs and insurance offices closely reflected the national average. Fewer Atlantic sites have an industrial park, micro-financing, and real estate. Springhill is a relatively well off town in terms of business services. However, those residents who may be interested in using a credit union as an option to major banks, have to look to Amherst.

Communications

Connectivity is crucial in the new economy. Communication services also allow residents to maintain contact with family and friends. With improved communication infrastructure, such as telephone services, Internet, and cell phone service, rural and small town places can attract businesses that no longer have to be located in cities, and they can improve local employment opportunities. They can also use communications services to support business networks.

Overall, analog cell phone service is widely available across the INE sites in Canada (Table 6). Almost 41% of the sites also enjoy digital cell phone service. Slightly fewer sites in Atlantic Canada have digital cell phone service when compared to all the sites across Canada. Although, all of the sites in Atlantic Canada offer analog cell phone service.

Table 6: Availability of Communication Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Cell phone – analog	86.4%	100.0%	✓	
Cell phone – digital	40.9%	33.3%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Elderly and Childcare Services

Childcare services provide an important part of the educational and care services in rural and small town places. Childcare also provides men and women with children an opportunity to participate in the labour force. Other services of importance are seniors' services including nursing homes and retirement homes. These services are particularly important given the aging of the Canadian population and that many rural and small town places are not yet well equipped to deal with seniors' needs.

Table 7: Availability of Child and Elderly Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Daycare	45.5%	33.3%	✓	
Senior citizen's nursing home	18.2%	50.0%	✓	
Senior citizen's retirement home	31.8%	50.0%	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

An inventory of 22 sites across Canada indicates that many are not equipped to meet the needs of young families or seniors (Table 7). In particular, sites in Atlantic Canada are less equipped to offer daycare services, although these sites have more services to meet the needs of seniors than the national sample.

Government Services

Town halls and post offices are the most frequently available government services in rural and small town places. Post offices not only provide a service and identity, but also opportunities for routine social interaction to build relationships. Other government services play an important role in community capacity by providing a local source of expertise and knowledge upon which the community can draw.

The rural and small town sites examined across Canada do not have access to many government services (Table 8). Of particular concern to sites experiencing social and economic restructuring is that none of the sites have HRDC or Employment Insurance offices. Furthermore, few sites have social assistance offices. Consequently, during economic and industrial restructuring or

plant closures, households experiencing stress will have to go outside the site for services to help them cope.

Table 8: Availability of Government Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Human Resources Dev. Canada	0.0%	0.0%	X	✓
Employment Insurance	4.5%	16.7%	X	✓
Provincial Auto License Office	18.2%	0.0%	X	✓
Social Assistance Office	22.7%	33.3%	X	✓
Town hall	68.2%	66.7%	✓	
Post office	81.8%	66.7%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

In Atlantic Canada, more sites offer social assistance and employment insurance services to provide assistance to households experiencing economic and social restructuring. However, fewer sites have other government service offices such as a post office, and none have a provincial auto license office. Springhill used to have government services offered from its municipal/provincial building. However, with the restructuring of government services, these are now normally available in Amherst, or in some cases via 1-800 or Internet services, although they tend to be less convenient for those who prefer face to face contact, or for those who have transportation limitations.

Community Services

Community services can provide an important foundation from which to build relationships, and can be important sources to draw upon during times of economic and social stress. The availability of community services in rural and small town places varied considerably (Table 9).

Table 9: Availability of Community Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Food bank	31.8%	50.0%	✓	
Clothing exchange / depot	18.2%	16.7%	✓	
Second hand stores	40.9%	50.0%	✓	
Youth drop-in centre	22.7%	16.7%	✓	
Women's drop-in centre	22.7%	0.0%	X	✓
Senior's drop-in centre	31.8%	16.7%	✓	
Half-way house	4.5%	0.0%	X	✓
Women's resource centre	9.1%	0.0%	X	✓
Personal aid services	31.8%	50.0%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Overall, sites in Atlantic Canada did not have as many community services when compared to all the sites across Canada. Food banks, second hand stores, and personal aid services, though, are available in half of the sites in Atlantic Canada. The availability of a food bank and personal aid services will be important services to have during social and economic restructuring periods. The town of Springhill is quite well served by its local community groups. Services for women and a half way house are in nearby Amherst. There is likely not enough demand, nor public and community resources available, to warrant such services in Springhill.

Transportation

Transportation infrastructure can have important implications not only for attracting economic activity to a place, but also for enhancing the quality of life of vulnerable groups in rural and small town. Transportation services, especially freight services, can play an important role in attracting industry by providing additional options to export products. However, without adequate, affordable transportation options, mobility can be difficult for women, seniors, or those with disabilities to move within the community and to access services in adjacent centres. Being mobile enables citizens to have access to services, to be involved in the community, and to develop local friendship ties and support networks, and to experience social activities.

The higher availability of gas stations and automobile repair services in these places reflects Canada's general reliance on the automobile (Table 10). Other transportation services are less frequently available, most notably local transit service, passenger rail service, boat / ferry services, and airport service.

Table 10: Availability of Transport Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Local bus transit	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Inter-community bus station	31.8%	33.3%	✓	
Train – passenger	4.5%	16.7%	✓	
Train – freight	36.4%	16.7%	✓	
Airport	18.2%	0.0%	X	X
Helicopter port	22.7%	16.7%	X	✓
Boat / ferry terminal	13.6%	16.7%	X	X
Taxi	27.3%	33.3%	✓	
Gas station	86.4%	66.7%	✓	
Automobile repair	63.6%	50.0%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

When compared to sites across Canada, more sites in Atlantic Canada have inter-community bus service, passenger train service, boating or ferry services, and taxi services. However, fewer Atlantic sites have freight, airport and helicopter services, gas stations, and automobile repair shops. Transportation services within Springhill are reasonably good. Although the airports are located in Moncton and Halifax, they are still within a reasonable travel distance.

Recreation Services

When examining all of the sites, recreational services showed the greatest range of availability compared to any other service category (Table 11). This bodes well for the retention and attraction of residents, as well as the overall quality of life of these places. More notable recreational services available include community playing fields, community centres, libraries, municipal parks, hiking trails, and campgrounds. Many of these services can be important places where events can be held to foster a sense of community.

Across Canada, most sites are able to offer either an indoor skating rink or an outdoor skating rink. Recreational services less frequently available across Canada included fitness facilities, such as athletic clubs, as well as entertainment features such as live theatre or cinemas.

Table 11: Availability of Recreation Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Curling rink	31.8%	0.0%	X	✓
Bowling lanes	22.7%	33.3%	✓	
Indoor municipal swimming pool	13.6%	16.7%	X	✓
Outdoor municipal swimming pool	18.2%	16.7%	X	✓
Indoor municipal skating rink	50.0%	33.3%	X	✓
Outdoor municipal skating rink	31.8%	33.3%	X	✓
Community playing field	81.8%	66.7%	✓	
Community gym	50.0%	50.0%	X	✓
Community centre	81.8%	83.3%	✓	
Private athletic club	13.6%	20.0%	✓	
Municipal athletic club	18.2%	0.0%	X	✓
Theatre (live performance)	13.6%	33.3%	X	✓
Cinema (movie theatre)	4.5%	0.0%	X	✓
Museum	36.4%	50.0%	✓	
Library	77.3%	66.7%	✓	
Municipal parks	77.3%	50.0%	✓	
Provincial parks	22.7%	16.7%	X	✓
Tennis courts	31.8%	33.3%	✓	
Skiing trails	50.0%	66.7%	✓	
Hiking trails	63.6%	83.3%	✓	
Golf courses	36.4%	33.3%	✓	
Campgrounds	68.2%	66.7%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

A greater proportion of sites in Atlantic Canada offer recreational amenities such as bowling lanes, private athletic clubs, theatres, museums, and skiing and hiking trails when compared with sites across Canada. However, some recreational services, such as a curling rink, municipal athletic club, and movie cinema, are not available in any of these sites. Springhill has much to offer its residents, and this will be enhanced with the completion of the civic centre. Additional recreation services can be accessed in Amherst, and the town is also located near Ski Wentworth.

Shopping

Shopping services contribute to the success of the local economy, and are considered to be an important gauge of economic health of rural and small town places. Shopping is also an important recreational activity and provides opportunities for social interaction. Low levels of shopping services can lead to out-of-town shopping and perhaps even out-migration.

Table 12: Availability of Basic Shopping Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Grocery store	68.2%	66.7%	✓	
Farmer's market	13.6%	16.7%	X	✓
Liquor store	54.5%	50.0%	✓	
Bakery	27.3%	50.0%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

The service inventory indicates that most sites across Canada are able to offer shopping services that residents would need to access on a more frequent basis, notably grocery stores (Table 12). However, a lower proportion of sites in Atlantic Canada have a grocery store and a liquor store. Instead, a greater proportion of these sites have a farmer's market or a bakery.

Table 13: Availability of Commercial Shopping Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Minimum Convenience Centre	86.4%	66.7%	✓	
Full Convenience Centre	36.4%	50.0%	✓	
Partial Shopping Centre	18.2%	16.7%	X	✓
Complete Shopping Centre	0.0%	0.0%	X	✓
Secondary Wholesale Retail Ctr	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Primary Wholesale Retail Centre	0.0%	0.0%	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Most of the sites across Canada are minimum convenience service centres (Table 13). These places generally offer a hardware store, a drug store, a bank, and two other convenience functions such as a variety store. About one-third of the sites filled the function of a full convenience centre. These places offer all the services of a minimum convenience centre, plus a laundry or dry cleaning store, jewelry, appliances, or furniture, clothing, lumber, building materials, shoes, garden supplies, and a motel or hotel. Finally, just under 20% of the sites fulfilled the role of a

partial shopping centre. These towns carry all the services of a full convenience centre plus some specialty services such as a camera shop, a floral store, radio or television store, or women's accessories.

Sites in Atlantic Canada are more likely to have a full convenience centre when compared with sites across Canada. Springhill residents have good access to Amherst for most of their shopping needs that cannot be met in town. The range of selection there has increases over time due to the construction of the new Wal Mart and Superstore. Moncton, NB is also reasonably close for occasional trips.

Economic Development Organizations

Economic development organizations can play an important role in promoting the community to attract not only additional businesses, but also to attract a wider population base. While there is not a wide range of economic development organizations in these sites, it is particularly critical to note that there are only approximately 20% of the sites across Canada with local business development corporations and rotary clubs (Table 14). As these organizations are comprised of local business individuals, they are important sources to draw upon during economic and social restructuring.

Table 14: Availability of Economic / Development Organizations - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Community Business Dev. Ctrs	0.0%	0.0%	X	✓
Fed / Prov Econ. Dev. Agencies	0.0%	0.0%	X	✓
Chamber of Commerce	18.2%	16.7%	✓	
Local Business Dev. Corporation	18.2%	0.0%	X	X
Economic / Community Trust	4.5%	0.0%	X	X
Career Training / Placement	13.6%	0.0%	X	✓
Financial / Business Consulting	27.3%	33.3%	✓	
Real Estate Boards	0.0%	0.0%	X	X
Tourism Associations	27.3%	50.0%	X	✓
Rotary clubs	18.2%	16.7%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

The availability of the rotary club and Chamber of Commerce in Atlantic sites closely reflected the national sample. However, Atlantic sites have more financial / business consulting services and tourism associations. Springhill has access to a critical mass of economic development agencies. CREDA and the Cumberland Business Development Corporation provide services across the county, including Springhill. The town of Springhill has also been active in regional groups like the Central Nova Tourism Association (CNTA).

Housing

A new category added to the service inventory in 2003 was housing. Housing has been used as an incentive to attract residents to rural and small town places. However, lack of housing options is a problem in rural and small town places that can lead to out-migration. Housing options can improve the quality of life of residents, especially the more vulnerable citizens, including senior citizens or those with disabilities.

Table 15: Availability of Social Housing Services - 2003

Services	NRE Sites:		Springhill:	
	Canada % Yes	Atlantic % Yes	Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
Co-op Housing	13.6%	0.0%	X	✓
Rent Supplement Units	22.7%	33.3%	✓	
Subsidized Housing - Seniors	31.8%	33.3%	✓	
Subsidized Housing - Families	31.8%	66.7%	✓	
Subsidized Housing - Single People	9.1%	0.0%	X	✓
Subsidized Housing - Special Needs	13.6%	16.7%	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003 Site Profile.

Although, initially, social housing does not appear to be widely available in sites across Canada, there are strong regional differences (Table 15). In fact, while Atlantic sites do not have co-op housing or assisted / subsidized housing for single individuals, a greater proportion of the sites are able to offer all other types of social housing when compared with the national sample. Furthermore, more than half of the sites in Atlantic Canada have assisted or subsidized housing for families. With a new affordable housing program soon to be launched by the province (cost-shared with the federal government) Springhill should identify its needs and encourage local developers to consider building new affordable housing.

Challenges and Opportunities for Springhill, Nova Scotia

Looking ahead to the near future, one of the challenges for Springhill is to maintain access to the services that are already present within the town. The ability to attract new residents is another challenge, given the fact the town is in a relatively isolated part of the province. However, there are several opportunities to act on, including the potential to new attract residents with the completion of the new civic centre/lifestyle centre. In addition, the town (working in partnership with CREDA and the province) can leverage the advantages offered by its geothermal industrial park to attract new businesses into the town.

SOURCES OF INTEREST

Books

Bruce, D. and G. Lister. 2003. *Opportunities and Actions in the New Rural Economy*. Pictou, Nova Scotia: Advocate Printing.

Ilbery, B. 1998. *The Geography of Rural Change*. Essex: Longman Ltd.

Halseth, G. and R. Halseth. Forthcoming. *Building for Success*. Brandon, Manitoba: Rural Development Institute and Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation.

Halseth, G. and L. Sullivan. 2003. *Building Community in an Instant Town: A Social Geography of Mackenzie and Tumbler Ridge, B.C.* Prince George, B.C.: University of Northern British Columbia.

McLaren, L. 2002. *Information and Communication Technologies in Rural Canada*. Rural and Small Town Canada Analysis Bulletin. Vol. 3. No. 5. Catalogue no. 21-006-XIE. 1-26.

Pierce, J. and A. Dale. 1999. *Communities, Development, and Sustainability across Canada*. Vancouver: UBC Press.

CRRF Reports

These reports are accessible through the project website of the Initiative on the New Economy: nre.concordia.ca.

Bruce, D. 2003. *Connecting to the Connecting Canadians Agenda: Rural Internet Use for Government Information*. Sackville, New Brunswick: Mount Allison University. Draft Working Paper: <http://www.mta.ca/rstp>.

Bruce, D. and L. Lyghtle. 2003. *Internet Use for Health Information Among Rural Canadians*. Sackville, New Brunswick: Mount Allison University. Draft Working Paper: <http://www.mta.ca/rstp>.

Bruce, D. 2001. *The Role of Small Businesses and Cooperative Businesses in Community Economic Development*. IWG Final Report. Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation.

Emke, I. 2001. *Community Newspapers and Community Identity*. Québec City: Canadian Sociology and Anthropology Association Annual Meetings. Unpublished presentation.

Reimer, B. 1999. *Voluntary Organizations in Rural Canada: Final Report*. Montréal: Canadian Rural Restructuring Foundation, Concordia University.

Internet Sources

Center of the Study of Rural America. Federal Reserve Bank of Kansas City.
www.kc.frb.org.

New Rural Economy. nre.concordia.ca.

Statistics Canada. <http://www.statcan.ca>.