

N R E

THE NEW RURAL ECONOMY



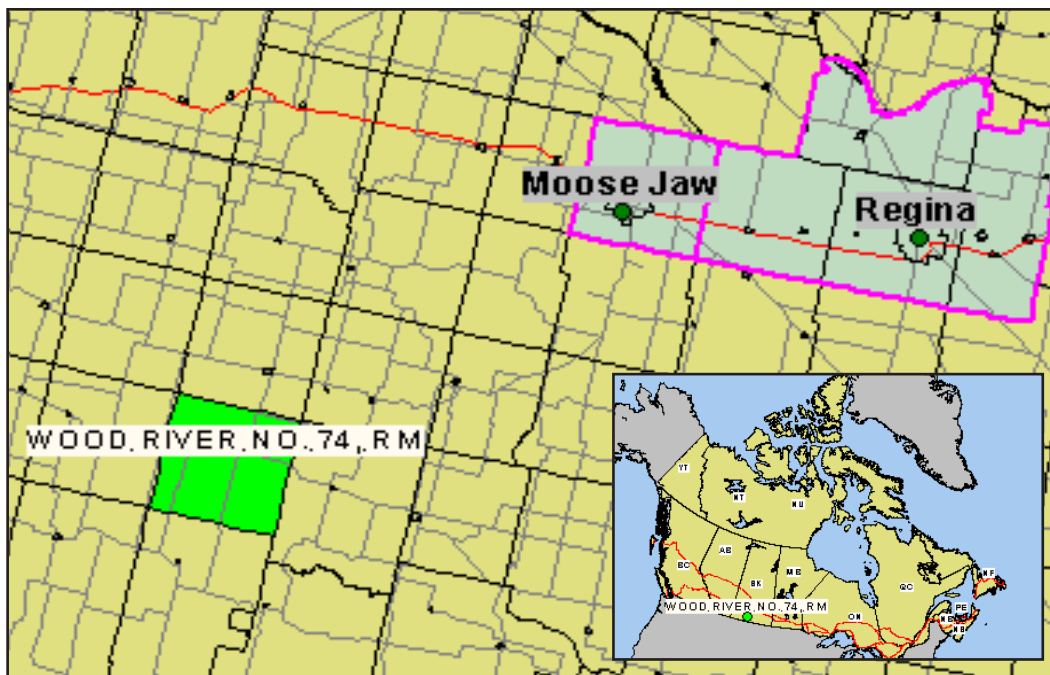
Site 24: Wood River, Saskatchewan

The Rural Municipality of Wood River is a farming region with a population of approximately 986 people. Located on the rolling plains of South central Saskatchewan, it lies 140 km Southeast of Moose Jaw, the closest adjacent large urban center. Although the Wood River area was claimed to be “unsuitable for agriculture” by British explorer John Palliser in 1857, residents in the Northern part of the municipality have survived through grain production. In the South, most of the livelihood comes from either ranching or mixed farming.

The towns of LaFleche and Woodrow are located in the Rural Municipality of Wood River. The town of Woodrow has declined to a

population of only 17 people. The neighbouring town of LaFleche (population 532) serves as the economic and social center for the region. LaFleche provides Wood River R.M. residents with commercial services, health services, schools and emergency services. A new 16-bed hospital facility was constructed in LaFleche in 1990 and the community is now fighting to keep that facility open.

Closure of the town’s elevators and rail line abandonment add to the frustration of the community. LaFleche has seen some successful local initiatives in small service sector business development and home based businesses. La Fleche was the location of the first rural credit union in Saskatchewan.



Maps courtesy of Statistics Canada, Geography Division, 2000

<i>Characteristics in 1996</i>	<i>Wood R.</i>	<i>Saskatchewan</i>	<i>Canada</i>
Population	437	990 237	28 846 761
1991 to 1996 population change (%)	-10.3	0.1	5.7
% of population ages 15 and over	81.6	76.9	79.5
Unemployment rate	3.5	7.2	10.1
Participation rate	80.6	67.3	65.5
% Primary industry	62.5	18.8	5.6
% Secondary industry	5.4	11.3	20
% Tertiary industry	32.1	69.9	74.4
Average number of persons in married or common-law families	3.2	3.2	3.1
Average number of persons in lone-parent families	0	2.7	2.6

Source: Statistics Canada

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