



COLUMBIA BASIN
RDI
RURAL DEVELOPMENT INSTITUTE

CONNECT • UNDERSTAND • MOBILIZE

Business Retention & Expansion: A Regional Approach to Economic Development

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Regional Innovation Chair



Agenda

- The Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute
- Business Retention & Expansion Overview
- Mock Interviews
- Small Group Scenarios
- Considering Implementation in Rural Communities

Regional Innovation Chair in Rural Economic Development

- \$1.5 million in matching funds from within the West Kootenay-Boundary
- 21 BC Research Chairs (Health-7, Technology-2, Enviro-3, Social-5, Economic-4)
- One of only 2 RICs located at a college
- Extensive affordable housing research in first 5 years

Selkirk College gratefully acknowledges the generous contributions and support of the following individuals and organizations:



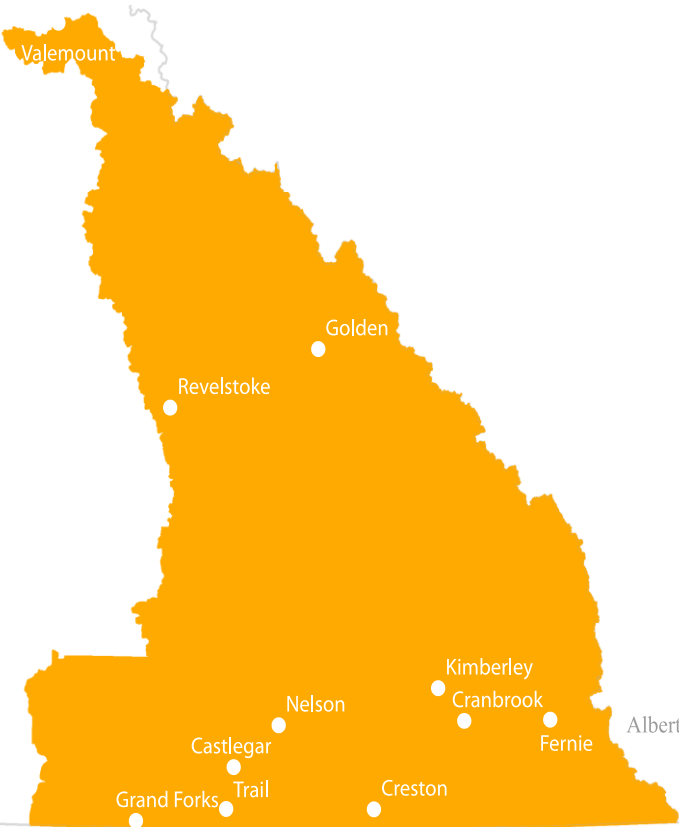
Ron Anderson

Christian Schadendorf





Columbia Basin Rural Development Institute



- **Multi-year partnership** to support informed decision-making
- The **only college-based 'rural' RDI** in Canada
- **Basin & Boundary catchment area**
- Research focus extends **beyond 'economic'**
- **Regional approach**, addressing identified regional sub-regional needs



RDI Goals



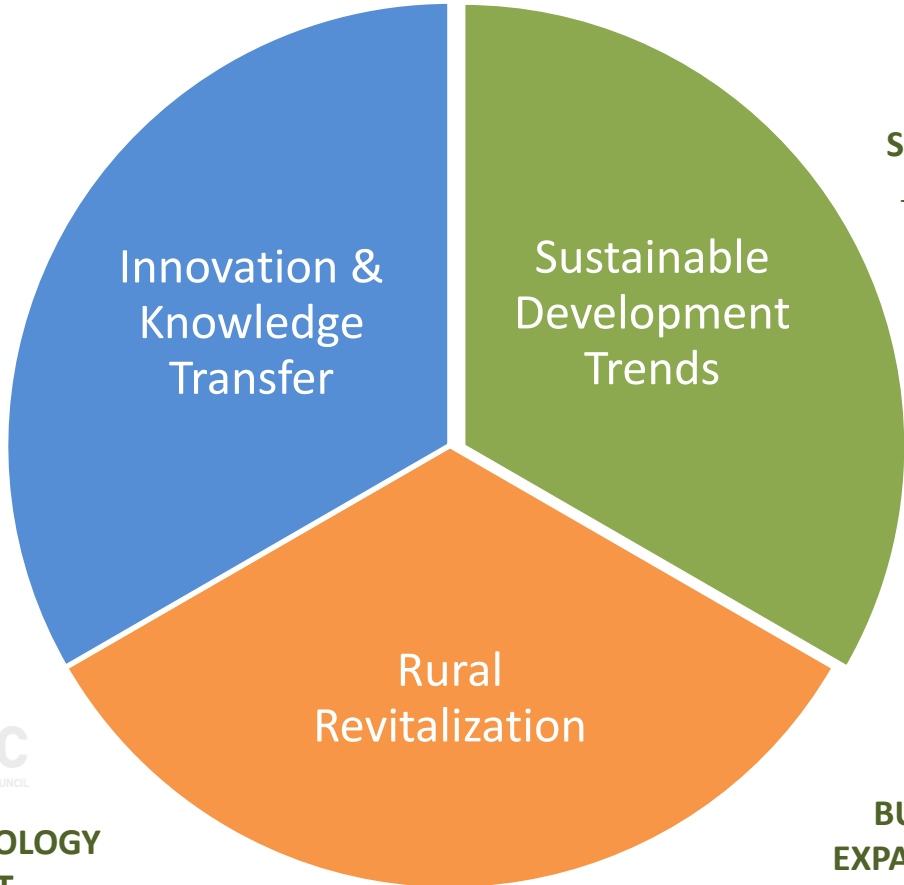
**SUPPORTING INFORMED DECISION-MAKING
THROUGH RELEVANT & TIMELY RESEARCH**

**PROMOTING INNOVATION & BEST
PRACTICE TOOLS**



**MOBILIZING KNOWLEDGE TO
SUPPORT RURAL REVITALIZATION**

Research Snap Shot



**REGIONAL
COLLABORATION &
DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES**



**CONNECTING WITH
PROVINCIAL & NATIONAL
NETWORKS**



**MANUFACTURING & TECHNOLOGY
SECTOR DEVELOPMENT**

 **RDI = RDI led initiative**



**STATE OF THE BASIN:
MONITORING
SUSTAINABILITY TRENDS**



**BASIN BOUNDARY
EMPLOYMENT LANDS**



**BUSINESS RETENTION &
EXPANSION REGIONAL PILOT**



PRODUCTIVITY INITIATIVE



What is Business Retention & Expansion (BR+E)

- **Ongoing cooperative effort** between business, local government, and support organizations
- Focused on **identifying and responding to the needs** of existing businesses
- Efforts are **focused on supporting retention & expansion** of businesses already in your community
- A highly **effective economic development approach**, especially in rural areas

Why is it important?

- **Fosters job growth** from within the community (up to 90% of new jobs come from existing businesses)
- Builds and strengthens **relationships with local businesses**
- Results in **targeted support to local businesses** and strengthens broader economic climate
- Research to support local and regional economic development **planning and collective action**

Business Retention & Expansion

THE REALITY IS BUSINESS PROSPECTING IS DOWN TO A TRICKLE

- Banks are not lending to Entrepreneurs
- The Canadian dollar is above par affecting our exporting capacity
- Large companies “if” expanding are investigating the global market
- “Vacant” Main street store fronts are becoming more visible

So what is left?

BUSINESS RETENTION

Business Retention & Expansion

OVERALL MESSAGING IS CHANGING

Company Perspective

In the past – companies had all the time in the world

Today – companies have “limited” time for ‘surveys’ or ‘visits

Companies have changed because of the need to “make every minute count to make money”!

IT IS ALL ABOUT BUILDING RELATIONSHIPS

Business Retention & Expansion

Community Perspective

Companies must also be seen as to “giving value” to their community – building strong relationships

Community members are much more likely to work and support companies that give back

Business Retention & Expansion

REDISCOVERING BUSINESS RETENTION AND EXPANSION

Bigger is better – A “Regional” Approach

Branding – Build “Messaging”

Collaboration – Is “Key”

Workforce – Is the “Driver”

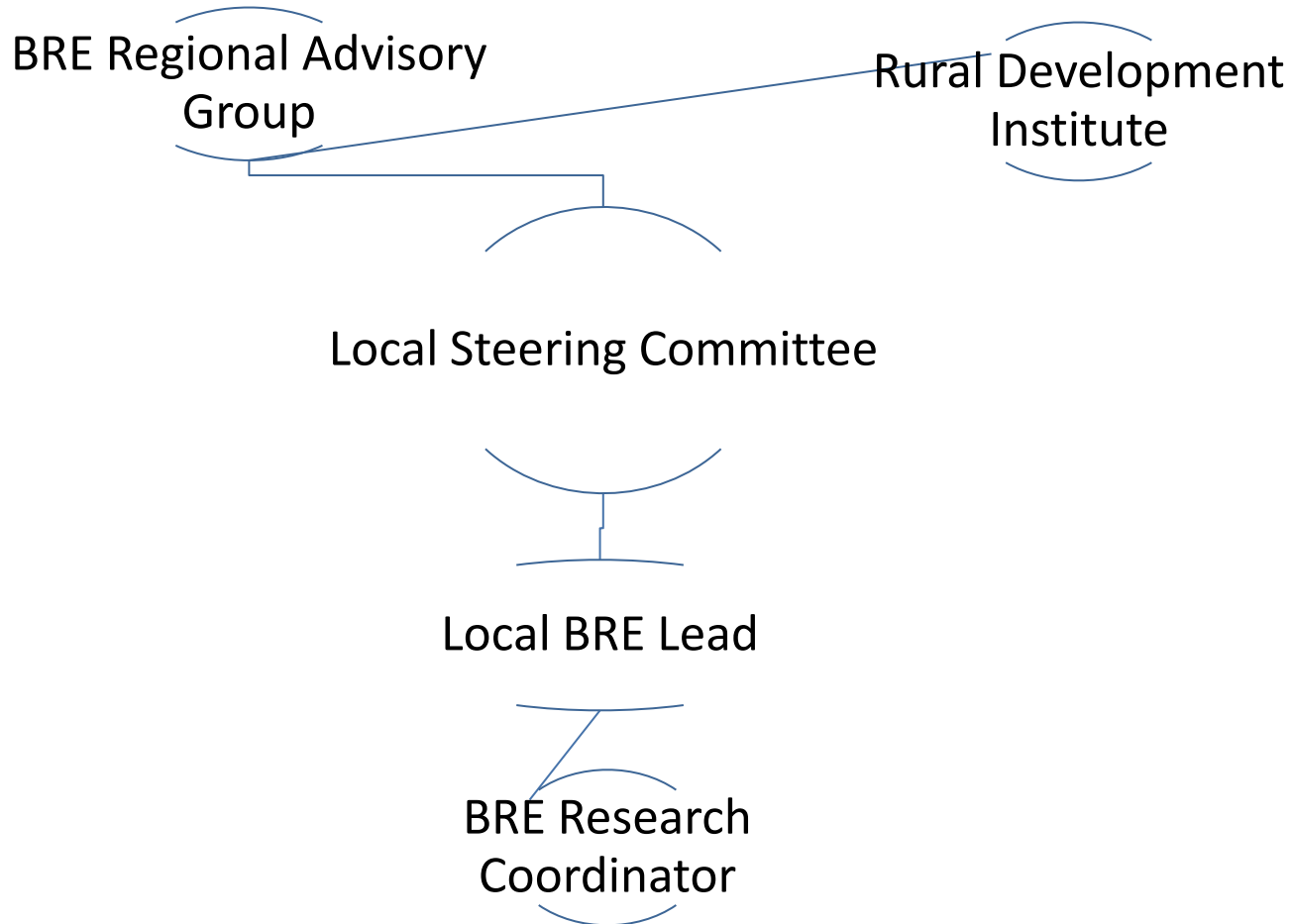
Business Retention & Expansion

**THE DAY AFTER YOU RECRUIT A NEW
COMPANY IS THE DAY YOU BEGIN YOUR
RETENTION**

A Regional, Research-Driven Approach

- Formation of an advisory group
- Best practice research & proposed regional model
- Development & refinement of:
 - training & support materials for BR+E researchers & community partners
 - implementation framework and related processes
 - analytic & reporting framework
 - metrics to measure local and regional impact
 - related indicators to link to State of the Basin initiative
- Brokering resources & training to support community-level implementation
- Provision of a standardized tool, analysis support & 'regional questions'
- Implementation in 2 communities & regional sector-specific BR+E

Proposed Roles



What does implementation involve?

- **Project Planning and Business Survey (3 months)**
 - Orientation, Project Committee, Research Design, Interviewer Recruitment & Training, Business Visits, Review and Report Red Flag Issues
- **Immediate Follow-Up (RIGHT AWAY!)**
 - Immediate response to Red Flags
- **Data Analysis and Recommendations (1 month)**
 - Data entry, Analysis, Report, Disseminate
- **Prioritizing, Planning and Implementation (1 month, ongoing)**
 - Prioritize recommendations, Form Working Groups for Prioritized Actions, Implement Actions, Monitor Progress, Follow-up Meetings

Why is the RDI involved?

- Opportunity to standardize data collection and analysis across communities – allows for regional & sector specific analysis
- Need to provide research support in terms of design, collection and analysis
- Opportunity to provide communities with tools to support successful implementation and follow up
- Opportunity to connect to available resources and broker necessary partnerships

What resources are needed?

- Some \$ to support **follow up actions** to help successful 'follow-up'
- Some \$ or in-kind contributions to cover **administrative costs** (office space, phone, postage, photo copying, room rental, etc.)
- **Human resources** – researcher / coordinator, project committee to support implementation & follow up, other support organizations

What resources are available in our region?

- **Training, tools** (manual, readiness checklist) **and research support** from Rural Development Institute
- **Lessons learned and implementation advice** from the RDI and other BR+E communities across the region
- **Access to BC Business Counts Provincial Program**, regional license funded by CBT
- **Implementation & Follow-up support** from economic development and educational organizations (Community Futures, Selkirk College)

What results can be expected?

- An **improved understanding of the needs** of and **collective challenges** of your local business community
- **Research** in place that best positions you to **respond to business** needs and **informs economic development planning** and action
- **Improved cooperation** between key stakeholders (businesses, Chamber, EDC, local government, support organizations)
- **Connection to regional research, plans** and related strategic actions

Mock Interviews

- Ask every question exactly as worded
- Listen carefully & never suggest responses
- Do not take offense to opinions & do not promise any solutions
- Probe — ask related questions and converse (ie. if a business has a complaint about a local service, find out how this is affecting the business)

Mock Interviews

- Do not press for a response (if the person is reluctant to respond, he or she may wish to “skip it.”)
- Do not disagree with the business owner — listen. If someone goes off on a tangent, listen and then mention that you are recording his or her concerns
- Follow the survey carefully—ask all questions, make sure responses add up to 100 percent, follow instructions in the survey
- Review the survey to be sure that it is complete

Mock Interviews

Consider a business in your community that is either experiencing challenges or is experiencing an opportunity for growth

Small Group Scenarios

- Small Town Retailer
 - Light Industrial Manufacturer
 - Large Format Moving to Medium Density
-
- Family Owned Shop in Small Town
 - Social Enterprise
 - Largest Tourism Partner Might Shut Down

How do we know if we are BR+E ready?

- Do we have a core group who understand BR+E and will commit the time to champion local implementation? (including CF, local government, Chamber, EDO or ED group)
- Do we have an established volunteer base with the ability, willingness and time to be active participants in the process?
- Do we have adequate financial resources to carry out a BR+E?
- Are we committed to follow-up on recommended actions and links to planning?

What challenges might we face?

- Limited time of organizers and businesses
- Participation of businesses
- Knowing who / where all the businesses are
- Ensuring strong methodology and data collection
- Referring follow-up action to someone not directly involved in the process
- Long term commitment

What are the critical ingredients to success?

- Strong & committed local **leadership**
- **Partnerships** – need support of local businesses, Chamber, EDC and local government
- Ensure BR+E **readiness**
- Human & financial **resources** are in place
- **Champions**
- Short-term **success**
- **Commitment** over the long-term (business appreciation events, follow up, ongoing technical assistance)

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