



Initiative on the New Economy

**Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places:
A Report for Usborne, Ontario**

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A project of the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation
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INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY - ABOUT THE PROJECT

The *Initiative on the New Economy* project of the Canadian Rural Revitalization 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.

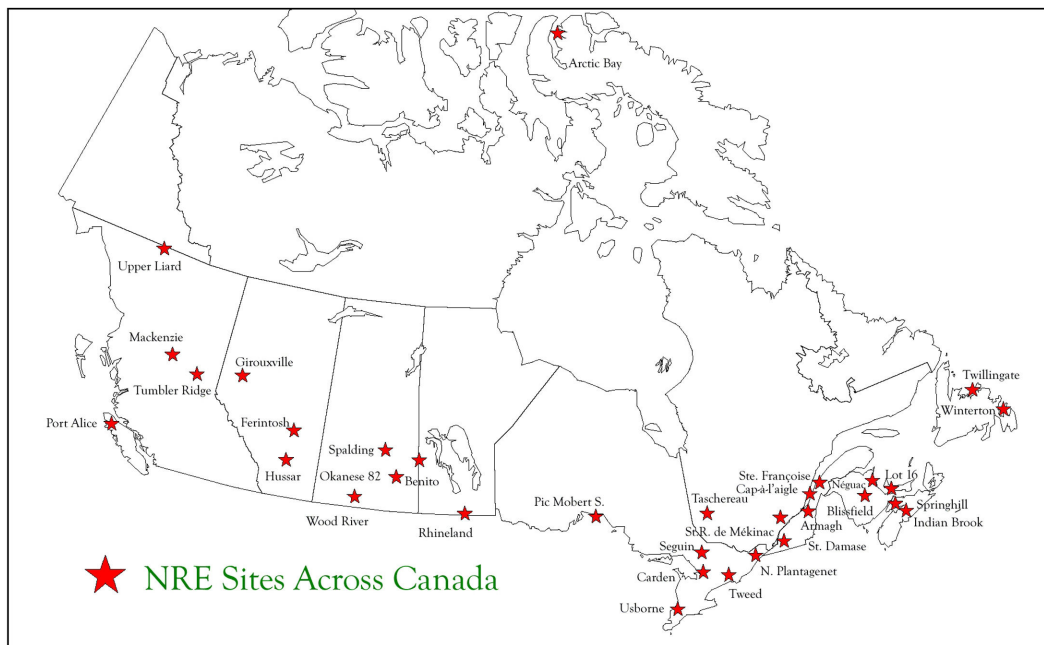
The Services Research theme conducted site profile surveys in the summer of 2005. This is the fourth survey conducted since 1998 with a goal to track services over time. Services play two key functions in building capacity. First, services help rural and small town places to cope with restructuring and transition as a result of economic downturns or plant closures. Job losses stemming from industrial restructuring or closure can place increased demands on local services for education and training, business development, 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.

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 seniors' centres can act as multi-functional facilities for the community where local volunteer groups, sporting clubs, local theatre, and others can do their work. 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 Usborne, Ontario with services available in other research sites across Canada, as well as with services available in other study sites within Ontario. In each of the tables in this report, the availability of services in Usborne is compared to the 24 sites surveyed across Canada and to the 5 study sites in Ontario.

Information for this report was collected in Usborne by: David Connell, Leigh Golden, and Ellen Wall.

ABOUT THE SERVICE INVENTORY

The Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation has been conducting research in 32 rural and small town sites from across Canada. These sites form a type of “rural observatory” in which aspects of the *Initiative on the New Economy* project may be examined. The sites participating in this project reflect the diversity of the Canadian landscape, and include forestry and mining towns, farming and fishing communities, and tourism towns. Furthermore, some of these places are located adjacent to metropolitan areas, while others are more isolated.



In the summer of 2005, researchers visited 24 sites across Canada to update a service provision inventory. This included 9 sites in Western Canada, 5 sites in Ontario, 4 sites in Québec, and 6 sites in Atlantic Canada. The population of these rural and small town places varies from 150 to 5,205 people.

Distribution and size of INE participating sites

SITES	POPULATION SIZE – 2001
Western Canada	
Tumbler Ridge, British Columbia	1,851
Mackenzie, British Columbia	5,205
Port Alice, British Columbia	1,126
Hussar, Alberta	181
Ferintosh, Alberta	150
Spalding, Saskatchewan	261
Wood River, Saskatchewan	370
Benito, Manitoba	415
Rhineland, Manitoba	4,183
Ontario	
Seguin, Ontario	3,698
Tweed, Ontario	1,540
North Plantagenet, Ontario	3,848
Carden, Ontario	888
Usborne, Ontario	1,490
Québec	
Taschereau, Québec	534
Cap-à-l'aigle, Québec	720
St. Damase, Québec	1,327
St. Françoise, Québec	453
Atlantic Canada	
Blissfield, New Brunswick	674
Neguac, New Brunswick	1,697
Lot 16, Prince Edward Island	688
Springhill, Nova Scotia	4,091
Twillingate, Newfoundland and Labrador	2,615
Winterton, Newfoundland and Labrador	560

Source: CRRF NRE 2005; Statistics Canada 2001.

Data were collected to examine the availability of a range of services including:

- | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| education | community |
| health | transportation |
| protection services | recreational |
| legal | basic Shopping |
| business services | commercial shopping |
| communication | economic development organizations |
| elderly and childcare | housing |
| government | |

AVAILABILITY

Copies of all service availability reports were distributed within the 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 Initiative of the New Economy website at: nre.concordia.ca.

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

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**INITIATIVE ON THE NEW ECONOMY
SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES: A REPORT FOR USBORNE,
ONTARIO**

Site Description – Usborne, Ontario

Usborne is a former township located on the southeastern corner of Huron County, bordered by Perth County to the east and Middlesex to the south. Highways 4 and 23 provide an efficient link between Usborne and the city of London, the core of which is about 40 kilometres to the south from Usborne's centre. In 2001, Usborne was amalgamated with the neighbouring Stephen Township and the Town of Exeter to form the Municipality of South Huron. The site's population in 2001 declined to 1490 (approximately 3 percent less than 1996).

Usborne is dominated by a commercial farm landscape which, in 1996, provided employment for 40% of the workforce. Most residents rely on the adjacent towns of Exeter and St. Mary's for basic services and various retail needs.

The population within Usborne is dispersed. There is no town or village. Two hamlets are located near the centre of the township, Elimville and Winchelsea. Both hamlets have a small number of dwellings. Kirkton and Woodham, both on the eastern boundary, are dissected by Highway 23. Half of each village is in Usborne, the other half is in neighbouring Perth County. A recreation centre is located in Kirkton.

There are two conservation areas in Usborne, both managed by the Ausable Bayfield Conservation Authority. One area is a pond created by a dam. The other area is a woodlot with walking trails.



POPULATION PROFILE - USBORNE, ONTARIO

The population of Usborne, Ontario declined from 1,535 residents in 1996 to 1,490 residents in 2001 (Statistics Canada 2001). Overall, it still has an older family oriented population. There is a large population of seniors in Usborne. This will have important implications for planning the delivery of a range of services, such as health services and social housing. The community also faces a challenge with youth out-migration.

Population	Site: Usborne		
	Total	Male	Female
Population in 2001	1490	780	710
Population in 1996	1535	770	770
1996 to 2001 population change (%)	-2.9	1.3	-7.8
Total - All persons	1,490	780	710
Age 0-4	60	25	30
Age 5-14	210	105	105
Age 15-19	135	65	65
Age 20-24	90	50	45
Age 25-44	385	215	175
Age 45-54	245	130	115
Age 55-64	180	95	90
Age 65-74	120	55	60
Age 75-84	60	30	30
Age 85 and over	10	5	5
Median age of the population	40.3	40.5	40.1

Source: Statistics Canada 2001.

SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES

Services play an important role in retaining and attracting residents and businesses. However, rural and small town places across Canada are experiencing tremendous change stemming from economic and social restructuring in an increasingly global economy. As a result, 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.

NOTE:

- In this analysis of service availability in NRE research sites, the term “local” refers to services that are available either within Usborne or within 30 minutes of Usborne’s boundary. It is thought that, on average, residents can get to these services by car/transportation in approximately 30 minutes or less.
- Tables presented contain two columns for comparison with Usborne. One is the percentage of NRE sites across Canada where the specific service is locally available, the other is the percentage of NRE sites in Ontario where the specific service is locally available.

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.

Educational services in sites across Canada have remained stable over the past two years (Table 1). The availability of educational services in Ontario resembles the national average. In fact, Ontario sites have experienced a growth in the availability of elementary schools since 2003. Residents of Usborne have access to all educational services locally.

Table 1: Availability of Education Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		<u>Usborne</u> 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Pre-school/kindergarten	95.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Elementary school	95.4	100.0	75.0	100.0	✓
High school	95.4	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
CEGEP/college	68.2	70.8	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Health Services

Health services play an important role in attracting new labour and retaining residents. 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 or 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.

Table 2: Availability of Health Infrastructure - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		<u>Usborne</u> 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Hospital	77.3	66.7	100.0	80.0	✓
Health centre/CLSC	90.9	95.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Medical clinic	90.9	90.9	100.0	100.0	✓
Blood/urine testing facility	95.5	91.6	100.0	100.0	✓
X-ray facility	95.5	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓
Baby delivery facility	63.6	54.2	100.0	80.0	✓
CT scan facility	45.5	45.8	50.0	60.0	✓
Nursing home	81.8	75.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Pharmacy	90.9	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Ambulance	90.9	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Emergency services	81.8	75.0	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Many health care facilities are available in most of the rural and small town places examined (Table 2). Although this has changed very little over the last two years, fewer sites across Canada have an x-ray facility. Sites in Ontario have access to more health care facilities compared to the national sample. Residents in Usborne continue to have access to all health care facilities locally, including a CT scan facility.

Table 3: Availability of Health Professionals - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Doctors	95.5	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Nurses	95.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Dentists	86.4	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Dental surgeons	45.5	33.3	75.0	80.0	✓
Optometrists	81.8	75.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Home care visits	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
VON	54.5	50.0	75.0	80.0	✓
Social workers	86.4	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Public health nurse	90.9	95.8	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

The availability of health care professionals is more limited in the rural and small town places examined (Table 3). In fact, there are fewer dental surgeons available in the sites across Canada compared to two years ago. Sites across Ontario have greater access to health care professionals than the majority of sites in the national sample. Usborne residents are able to access most of these health care services locally.

Table 4: Availability of Health Programs / Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Physiotherapy	86.4	75.0	100.0	80.0	✓
Speech therapy	81.8	62.5	100.0	80.0	✓
Occupational therapy	68.2	62.5	100.0	80.0	✓
Respite care	81.8	78.3	100.0	100.0	✓
Prenatal care programs	*	91.3	*	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

The availability of health care programs and services is also more limited in the sites examined across Canada (Table 4). Notably, fewer sites across Canada have access to physiotherapy and speech therapy compared to 2003 results. Health care services and programs are more widely available in sites across Ontario compared to the national sample. Usborne residents are able to access these specialized health care programs and services locally.

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 5: Availability of Protection Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Police (local/RCMP)	90.9	95.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Fire department	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
911 emergency line	86.4	87.5	75.0	100.0	✓
Neighbourhood watch	50.0	45.8	50.0	80.0	✓
Rural crime watch	45.5	45.8	100.0	60.0	✓
Victim's services – police based	*	62.5	*	80.0	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Protection services are less available than most other services (Table 5). This has changed very little since 2003. Fewer sites in Ontario have a rural crime watch compared to two years ago, although more of these sites have a 911 emergency line. While most protection services are available locally for Usborne residents, the closest police-based victim's services are more than 30 minutes away in Goderich.

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 such as preparation of wills or for purchasing real estate, or to have passports or affidavits signed. Legal services are available in most of the study sites across Canada (Table 6). In fact, all of the sites in Ontario offer these services locally, including Usborne.

Table 6: Availability of Legal Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Lawyer	77.3	70.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Notary	86.4	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Court	81.8	75.0	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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 local economy. Business members also play an important role in community development as they can provide leadership in, and support for, local volunteer groups. Small local businesses are also an important source for fundraising and sponsorship of specific local organizations or events.

Table 7: Availability of Financial / Business Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Banks	86.4	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Credit union/caisse populaire	95.5	91.7	100.0	100.0	✓
ATM	95.5	95.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Micro-financing	50.0	50.0	75.0	80.0	✓
Insurance office	68.2	95.8	75.0	100.0	✓
Industrial park	81.8	70.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Real estate office	81.8	75.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Accounting	90.9	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

In general, financial services are accessible in most of the rural and small town sites across Canada (Table 7). The availability of these services has remained fairly stable over the last two years. However, more sites in the national sample have local access to insurance services compared to 2003 results. More Ontario sites have access to financial services compared to the national sample. Usborne residents and business members may access all of these financial services locally.

Communications

Connectivity is crucial in the new economy. Communication services also allow residents to maintain contact with family and friends. With improved communication infrastructure, rural and small town places can improve local employment opportunities, and support business networks.

Usborne residents and businesses benefit from the availability of both analog and digital cell phone service (Table 8). Overall, analog and digital cell phone service is widely available across the study sites in Canada. The availability of digital cell phone service has increased from 63.6% of the sites in 2003 to 91.7% in 2005. All of the Ontario sites offer analog and digital cell phone service.

Table 8: Availability of Communication Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Cell phone – analog	95.5	91.7	100.0	100.0	✓
Cell phone – digital	63.6	91.7	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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.

Most of the rural and small town sites across Canada are equipped to meet the needs of young families or seniors locally (Table 9). This has changed very little over the last two years. All of the Ontario sites, including Usborne, continue to have access to daycare, nursing, and retirement homes locally.

Table 9: Availability of Elderly and Daycare Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Daycare	86.4	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Senior citizen's nursing home	86.4	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Senior citizen's retirement home	81.8	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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.

Most of the rural and small town sites examined across Canada have access to a range of government services (Table 10). Of particular concern to sites experiencing social and economic restructuring, though, is that fewer sites have Employment Insurance or social assistance offices

compared to two years ago. Consequently, during restructuring or plant closures, households experiencing stress will have to go outside the site for information and assistance.

Table 10: Availability of Government Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne
	% Yes		% Yes		2005
	2003	2005	2003	2005	
Employment Insurance	72.7	66.7	100.0	100.0	✓
Provincial auto license office	81.8	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓
Social assistance office	77.3	70.8	100.0	80.0	
Town hall	90.9	100.0	75.0	100.0	✓
Post office	95.5	100.0	75.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Most sites in Ontario have a range of government services to assist households experiencing economic and social change compared to the national sample. Since 2003, more sites in Ontario have local access to a town hall and a post office. While Usborne residents had local access to all government services in 2003, residents must now commute more than 30 minutes to the closest social assistance office in Goderich.

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 varies considerably (Table 11). Fewer sites across Canada have a clothing exchange depot compared to two years ago.

Overall, more sites in Ontario offer a range of community services when compared to the national sample. Many community services have become available in more Ontario sites compared to two years ago. For example, while half of these sites in Ontario had a youth drop-in centre, senior's drop-in centre, and a half-way house in 2003, all of these sites offer these services in 2005. Usborne residents have access to almost all of these services locally. However, the closest community-based victim's service is approximately 50 kilometres away in Goderich.

Table 11: Availability of Community Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Usborne 2005
	Canada		Ontario		
	% Yes		% Yes		
	2003	2005	2003	2005	
Food bank	77.3	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Clothing exchange/depot	59.1	75.0	75.0	100.0	✓
Second hand stores	81.8	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Youth drop-in centre	68.2	66.7	50.0	100.0	✓
Women's drop-in centre	50.0	45.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Senior's drop-in centre	68.2	66.7	50.0	100.0	✓
Half-way house	36.4	29.2	50.0	100.0	✓
Women's resource centre	54.5	58.3	75.0	100.0	✓
Women's safe house	*	58.3	*	100.0	✓
Personal aid services	90.9	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Victim's services					
– comm. based	*	58.3	*	80.0	
Churches	*	100.0	*	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

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 places. 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, 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 12). Other transportation services are less frequently available, most notably local transit service, passenger rail service, and boat / ferry services. In fact, while half of the sites in the national sample had passenger rail services in 2003, only 29.2% continue to offer this service in 2005.

When compared to sites across Canada, more Ontario sites have local access to a range of transportation services. While more sites in Ontario have access to local bus transit services and boat / ferry terminals compared to two years ago, fewer Ontario sites continue to have local access to an airport. Usborne residents have local access to almost all of these transportation services.

Table 12: Availability of Transport Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				<u>Usborne</u> 2005
	Canada		Ontario		
	% Yes		% Yes		
	2003	2005	2003	2005	
Local bus transit	18.2	20.8	25.0	80.0	✓
Inter-community bus station	81.8	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Train – passenger	50.0	29.2	100.0	80.0	✓
Train – freight	68.2	62.5	75.0	80.0	✓
Airport	50.0	50.0	100.0	60.0	✓
Helicopter port	59.1	58.3	100.0	80.0	✓
Boat/ferry terminal	50.0	41.7	50.0	80.0	
Taxi	81.8	75.0	100.0	80.0	✓
Gas station	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Automobile repair	95.5	95.8	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Recreation Services

Recreational services are available locally in most sites across Canada (Table 13). This bodes well for the retention and attraction of residents, as well as the overall quality of life of these places. Recreational services that are available locally in all sites across Canada include an indoor municipal skating rink, community playing field, library, municipal parks, and campgrounds. While some recreational amenities, such as an indoor municipal skating rink and municipal athletic club, have increased since 2003, the availability of outdoor municipal skating rinks and a movie theatre have declined over the last two years.

In 2005, more sites in Ontario offered a range of recreational amenities. In particular, there has been an increased in the availability of an outdoor municipal skating rink and a private athletic club in these sites. Usborne residents benefit from the local availability of almost all of these recreational amenities. The closest museum for Usborne residents is located in Goderich.

Table 13: Availability of Recreation Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Curling rink	86.4	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓
Bowling lanes	72.7	70.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Indoor municipal swimming pool	68.2	66.7	75.0	100.0	✓
Outdoor municipal swimming pool	63.6	58.3	75.0	100.0	✓
Indoor municipal skating rink	72.7	100.0	75.0	100.0	✓
Outdoor municipal skating rink	72.7	62.5	25.0	100.0	✓
Community playing field	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Community gym	87.5	95.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Community centre	95.5	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Private athletic club	68.2	60.0	50.0	100.0	✓
Municipal athletic club	63.6	75.0	50.0	60.0	✓
Theatre (live performance)	68.2	70.8	100.0	80.0	✓
Cinema (movie theatre)	72.7	62.5	100.0	80.0	✓
Museum	86.4	79.2	100.0	60.0	
Library	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Municipal parks	95.5	100.0	75.0	100.0	✓
Provincial parks	50.0	58.3	75.0	80.0	✓
Tennis courts	86.4	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Skiing trails	81.8	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Hiking trails	90.9	95.8	100.0	100.0	✓
Golf courses	81.8	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓
Campgrounds	95.5	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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 14: Availability of Basic Shopping Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Grocery store	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Farmer's market	68.2	66.7	100.0	100.0	✓
Liquor store	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Bakery	90.9	87.5	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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, such as grocery stores (Table 14). In fact, all of the sites in Ontario, including Usborne, offer these services locally.

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 a more limited range of economic development organizations and programs in these sites compared to other types of services, 70.8% of the sites across Canada have a Chamber of Commerce (Table 15). As these organizations are comprised of local business individuals, they are important sources to draw upon during economic and social change. More sites across Canada also have a Community Futures Development Corporation and a Rotary club compared to two years ago. Fewer sites, though, have a tourism association.

Economic development organizations and programs are more widely available in the Ontario sites compared to the national sample. In particular, there has been an increased in the number of Ontario sites that have a Chamber of Commerce, local business development corporation, economic / community trust, real estate board, and Rotary clubs. Usborne residents have access to all the listed economic development organizations and programs locally.

Table 15: Availability of Economic / Development Organizations - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				
	Canada		Ontario		Usborne 2005
	% Yes		% Yes		
2003	2005	2003	2005		
Business Dev. Bank of Canada	13.6	8.3	25.0	20.0	✓
Community Futures Dev. Corp.	27.3	45.8	50.0	60.0	✓
Chamber of Commerce	59.1	70.8	50.0	100.0	✓
Local bus. dev. corp.	54.5	62.5	25.0	80.0	✓
Economic/community trust	31.8	33.3	0.0	80.0	✓
Career training/placmt. program	77.3	66.7	100.0	100.0	✓
Financial/business consulting	77.3	75.0	100.0	100.0	✓
Real estate boards	45.5	45.8	75.0	100.0	✓
Tourism associations	77.3	62.5	100.0	100.0	✓
Rotary clubs	40.9	50.0	50.0	100.0	✓
Retraining programs – general	*	62.5	*	100.0	✓
Retraining programs – women	*	37.5	*	80.0	✓
Women’s leadership groups	*	70.8	*	80.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Housing

Housing has been used as an incentive to attract residents to rural and small town places. However, lack of housing options as a population changes, or ages, can be a problem and 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 16: Availability of Social Housing Services - 2005

Services	NRE Sites:				Usborne 2005
	Canada		Ontario		
	<u>% Yes</u> 2003	<u>% Yes</u> 2005	<u>% Yes</u> 2003	<u>% Yes</u> 2005	
Co-op housing	72.7	45.8	100.0	80.0	✓
Rent supplement units	77.3	66.7	100.0	100.0	✓
Asstd./sub. housing – seniors	72.7	83.3	100.0	100.0	✓
Asstd./sub. housing – families	90.9	79.2	100.0	100.0	✓
Asstd./sub. housing – singles	72.7	58.3	100.0	100.0	✓
Asstd./sub. housing - disabled/special needs	63.6	66.7	100.0	100.0	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

There have been some important changes to social housing over the last two years (Table 16). There has been an increase in the availability of assisted or subsidized housing for seniors from 72.7% of the sites across Canada in 2003 to 83.3% in 2005. The availability of most other forms of social housing, though, declined over the last two years. Social housing options are more widely available in Ontario sites, including Usborne.

Challenges and Opportunities for Usborne, Ontario

Even though there are limited services in Usborne specifically, its residents and businesses have access to most of the services needed within the amalgamated municipality of South Huron. In fact, within this amalgamated municipality, Usborne is very close to Exeter, which is where most of these services are located. Furthermore, there are other communities nearby, such as Hensell or Seaforth, which can offer Usborne residents a choice of services. Although residents have to drive (or receive a ride) to obtain these services, they are close by - perhaps much more accessible than they are for many citizens living in other parts of rural and small town Canada. Services that are not available within 30 minutes include police-based and community-based victim's services, as well as a social assistance office, which are located 50 kilometres away in Goderich.

Conditions in the Canadian and Ontario agri-food sector are important factors influencing the farm economy in Usborne. The past few years have presented many challenges from drought, border closings, high dollar value, and low commodity prices. However, the farming community in Usborne remains highly resilient to these stresses and appears to be managing well. As in many Canadian rural agricultural regions, Usborne's farmers and their families continue to use off-farm income to meet household needs while facing challenges from a steadily aging population. As the demographics change, it will be important to maintain health services for the amalgamated municipality. Furthermore, there are concerns about youth out-migration. Young people leave the community to pursue educational and employment opportunities elsewhere and

cannot always find future careers back “at home”. To retain residents and businesses, the South Huron municipality is looking at a number of initiatives to improve high speed Internet, as well as the provision of daycare, senior centres, and recreational amenities.

SOURCES OF INTEREST

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