



**Initiative on the New Economy**

**Service Provision in Rural and Small Town Places:  
A Report for Blissfield, New Brunswick**

**January 2006**



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

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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.

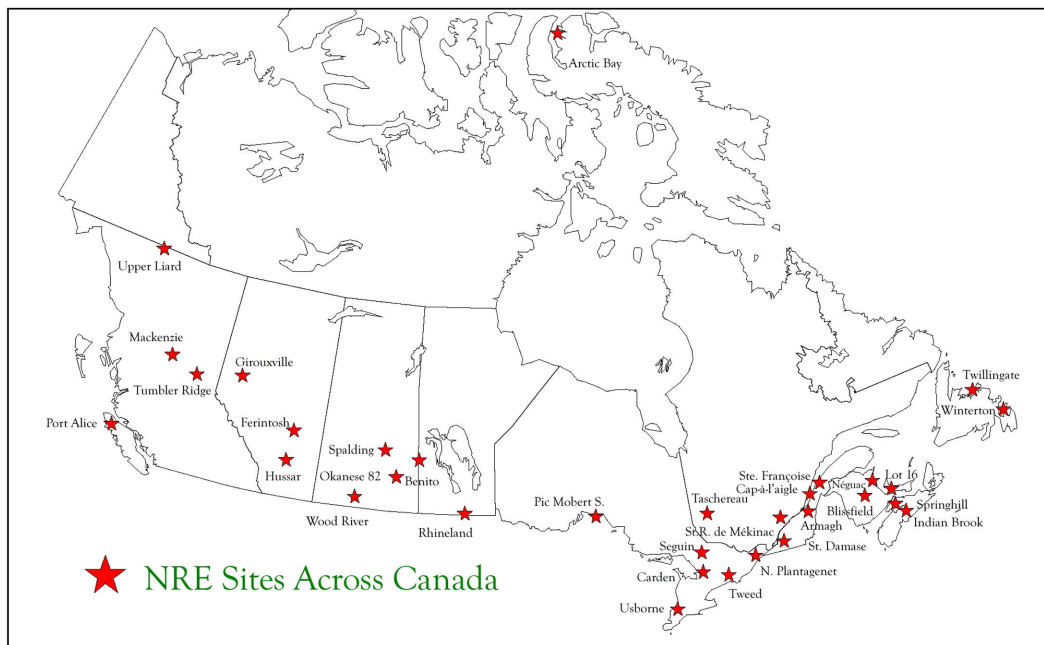
Second, services provide opportunities for building relationships, partnerships, and trust. Together, these can lead to new partnerships and innovative ways for delivering services where they might otherwise not exist. For example, schools or seniors' centres can act as multi-functional facilities for 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 Blissfield, New Brunswick 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 Blissfield is compared to the 24 sites surveyed across Canada and to the 6 study sites in Atlantic Canada.

Information for this report was collected in Blissfield by: Kim Edmonson and Tom Beckley.

## ABOUT THE SERVICE INVENTORY

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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
<b>Western Canada</b>	
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
<b>Ontario</b>	
Seguin, Ontario	3,698
Tweed, Ontario	1,540
North Plantagenet, Ontario	3,848
Carden, Ontario	888
Usborne, Ontario	1,490
<b>Québec</b>	
Taschereau, Québec	534
Cap-à-l'aigle, Québec	720
St. Damase, Québec	1,327
St. Françoise, Québec	453
<b>Atlantic Canada</b>	
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

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Copies of all service availability reports were distributed within the participating sites. Additionally, copies have been posted on the INE website ([nre.concordia.ca](http://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](http://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 BLISSFIELD, NEW  
BRUNSWICK**

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**Site Description – Blissfield, New Brunswick**

Blissfield is an unincorporated parish of approximately 1240 square kilometers in Northumberland County, NB. The parish is bisected by Rte. 8 Hwy and the southwest branch of the Miramichi River and is located approximately 65 km from Miramichi City, approximately 210 km from Moncton, and 105 km from Fredericton. There is no retail centre in Blissfield, but the village of Doaktown (incorporated in 1966), previously part of Blissfield Parish and surrounded on three sides by it, provides many services to Blissfield residents. Blissfield did not lose services when this incorporation took place, however the boundaries of Doaktown would suggest that the services always available there are now available in an “adjacent” community. The services have not moved, only the boundary lines.

Blissfield Parish is approximately 30 km wide along Rte. 8 Hwy, which cuts through its centre. This is significant as distance determines where residents of Blissfield go for certain services. Depending on where in the Parish one lives, it may be closer to travel to Fredericton or to Miramichi City for services unavailable in Doaktown.

The original settlers to Blissfield arrived with intentions of farming on the land grants they had received, but the landholders soon realized that the area was not as conducive to agriculture as they had hoped. Some settlers left the area, but many began to explore other options for income and cutting timber or fishing were logical choices. By the mid-1830’s, the timber trade was booming along the Miramichi and commercial agriculture had fallen off to subsistence level. The salmon fishery also grew steadily and most inhabitants gained livelihood from one or the other.

In 1972, the commercial fishery on the Miramichi River closed due to the dramatic decline in salmon populations in the river. In the aftermath of the fishery collapse, tourism started to take on greater significance for the citizens of Blissfield and Doaktown. The Miramichi River is now a worldwide attraction to recreational fishermen while canoeing, kayaking, hunting, and snowmobiling are becoming increasingly popular. Year-round outfitters in Blissfield and Doaktown provide a myriad of services for the outdoor adventurer.

According to Statistics Canada, the major employer in the Blissfield Parish today is resource-based industry (mainly forestry), with manufacturing and construction second, wholesale and retail trade third, and business services and other services ranking fourth. Irving purchased the Russell and Swim Mill in Doaktown in 1998, and opened the Irving Finger-Joint Pine Mill in 2000, also in Doaktown. These two facilities, along with Rojac Cedar Mill in Blissfield, are major employers for residents of Blissfield Parish. Although agriculture was the intent of the first settlers in the area, the only commercial farm in the parish today is that of George Green, established by George’s grandfather in 1880.



**“The Mighty Miramichi”**



**A Blissfield Bed and Breakfast**





## POPULATION PROFILE - BLISSFIELD, NEW BRUNSWICK

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The population of Blissfield, New Brunswick declined from 675 residents in 1996 to 636 residents in 2001, a 5.6% decrease (Statistics Canada 2001). While Blissfield has a family oriented population, it has a strong 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: Blissfield, NB		
	Total	Male	Female
Population, 1996	636	320	315
Population, 2001	674	350	325
Population change (%), 1996-2001	-5.6	-9.4	-3.2
0-4	20	5	15
5-14	70	35	40
15-19	50	30	25
20-24	30	20	15
25-44	155	70	80
45-54	120	65	55
55-64	65	25	35
65-74	75	40	30
75-84	35	15	25
85+	15	10	5
Total	636	320	315
Median age of the population	43.5	44.5	42.8

Source: Statistics Canada 2001.

## SERVICE PROVISION IN RURAL AND SMALL TOWN PLACES

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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.

### 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 - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Pre-school/kindergarten	50.0	62.5	33.3	66.7	X	✓
Elementary school	63.6	66.7	66.7	66.7	X	✓
High school	27.3	37.5	50.0	50.0	X	✓
CEGEP/college	18.2	16.7	33.3	33.3	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

With the exception of community colleges, educational services are available in more sites across Canada in 2005 compared to two years ago. A greater proportion of sites in Atlantic Canada offer a range of educational services when compared to the sites across Canada (Table 1). In particular, the Atlantic region has experienced a growth in the availability of pre-school / kindergartens since 2003. With the exception of community colleges, educational services are easily accessible for Blissfield residents in nearby Doaktown, a short 10 km commute.

## 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:				Blissfield: 2005	
	Canada		Atlantic		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	% Yes		% Yes			
2003	2005	2003	2005			
Hospital	18.2	12.5	33.3	33.3	X	X
Health centre/cCLSC	27.3	37.5	33.3	50.0	X	✓
Medical clinic	40.9	37.5	50.0	33.3	X	X
Blood/urine testing facility	36.4	41.7	50.0	50.0	X	✓
X-ray facility	22.7	20.8	33.3	33.3	X	✓
Baby delivery facility	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
CT scan facility	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Nursing home	13.6	16.7	33.3	33.3	X	✓
Pharmacy	40.9	37.5	66.7	66.7	X	✓
Ambulance	36.4	41.7	66.7	66.7	X	✓
Emergency services	18.2	16.7	33.3	33.3	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Health facilities are limited in most of the rural and small town places examined (Table 2). This has changed very little over the last two years. Of particular interest is that fewer than 40% of sites across Canada in 2005 have a health centre, hospital, or pharmacy. 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. At least half of the sites in Atlantic Canada have a health centre, a blood / urine testing facility, a pharmacy, and an ambulance. However, fewer sites in Atlantic Canada have a medical clinic compared to two years ago.

There have been some changes to the availability of health care facilities for Blissfield residents over the last two years. Crucial health facilities such as a hospital, a medical clinic, and emergency services are located only in Miramichi or Fredericton. However, a new health centre has opened in Doaktown with expanded services and facilities that include a blood/urine testing facility and x-ray facility, as well as one doctor and several nurses. As well, an expanded Pharmasave has recently been completed. Declines in service have been evidenced by a cut in ambulance service in the region. This has seen a reduction in the number of hours per day this service is accessible to 12 hours (with Boiestown receiving this service for the other 12 hours per day), and some ambulance service now coming from Blackville, approximately 30 km from Blissfield Parish.

**Table 3: Availability of Health Professionals - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Doctors	36.4	41.7	50.0	66.7	X	✓
Nurses	36.4	41.7	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Dentists	27.3	25.0	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Dental surgeons	9.1	8.3	16.7	16.7	X	X
Optometrists	18.2	16.7	33.3	33.3	X	X
Home care visits	54.5	70.8	50.0	66.7	X	✓
VON	13.6	20.8	50.0	50.0	X	X
Social workers	22.7	29.2	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Public health nurse	31.8	37.5	50.0	50.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

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 across Canada in 2005 (Table 3). Even those services considered as essential, such as doctors, are only available in just over 41% 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 the national results. Of interest, there have been no reductions in health care professionals in Atlantic communities over the last two years. In fact, more Atlantic sites have a doctor or home care visits compared to two years ago. With the exception of the Victorian Order of Services which provides visits once a month to Doaktown from Miramichi, Blissfield Parish has similar access to health professionals as the Atlantic Region, with most health professionals being available in nearby Doaktown. The new health centre in Doaktown includes a doctor, nurses, and a social worker.

**Table 4: Availability of Health Programs / Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Physiotherapy	22.7	25.0	33.3	33.3	X	✓
Speech therapy	31.8	25.0	50.0	33.3	X	X
Occupational therapy	13.6	17.4	33.3	33.3	X	X
Respite care	22.7	21.7	66.7	50.0	X	X
Prenatal care programs	*	39.1	*	50.0	X	✓

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 low in the sites examined across Canada. However, new services being tracked in 2005, including prenatal care programs, are more widely available (Table 4). Health care services and programs are more widely available in

Atlantic sites compared to the national sample. Although, there has been a decline in the presence of speech therapy and respite care in Atlantic sites since 2003. Blissfield Parish has experienced a slight decline in access to health services and programs. While none of the listed services are available within Blissfield Parish, three are available in nearby Doaktown. However, Doaktown recently lost speech therapy services, leaving this, as well as occupational therapy and respite care, being accessible only in Miramichi or Fredericton.

## 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:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	% Yes		% Yes			
2003	2005	2003	2005			
Police (local/RCMP)	22.7	33.3	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Fire department	68.2	79.2	66.7	66.7	X	✓
911 emergency line	86.4	83.3	66.7	66.7	✓	
Security services	4.5	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	X
Alarm services	22.7	37.5	0.0	50.0	X	X
Neighbourhood watch	31.8	29.2	33.3	0.0	X	X
Rural crime watch	13.6	16.7	16.7	0.0	X	X
Victim's services – police based	*	16.7	*	0.0	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

\* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Protection services are more available than most other services (Table 5). Most notably, fire departments and the 911 telephone number are available in more than half the sites across Canada. Since 2003, some sites across Canada appear to have recovered policing and fire department services. While policing and alarm services are more available in Atlantic sites than the national sample, fewer Atlantic sites have all of the other protection services. Blissfield is served by 6 police officers from the Doaktown regional RCMP branch and 14 volunteer members of the Doaktown Fire Department. In addition, two emergency lines are available which provide direct lines to Harvey Hospital and to Telecare, a line which provides direct access to a nurse. Other protection services are only accessible in larger centres more than 50 km from Blissfield Parish, although a member of Crime Stoppers does live in Blissfield and is active in crime prevention activities.

## 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.

**Table 6: Availability of Legal Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Lawyer	18.2	16.7	33.3	33.3	X	X
Notary	40.9	45.8	50.0	66.7	X	X
Court	18.2	12.5	33.3	16.7	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Overall, legal services are very limited in the study sites across Canada (Table 6). The availability of legal services in Atlantic sites is above the national sample. However, while more Atlantic sites have a notary public, fewer of these sites have a court when compared to 2003 results. This is the case for within Blissfield Parish as well. While a court is available on a rotating basis in nearby Doaktown (youth court every second Wednesday and regular court every Wednesday), lawyers and notaries are only available in Miramichi or Fredericton, more than 50 km away.

## 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.

In general, credit unions, ATMs, insurance offices, and accounting services are found in half the rural and small town sites across Canada (Table 7). The availability of these services has remained fairly stable over the last two years. In 2005, more Atlantic Canada sites offer banking, insurance, and accounting services compared to the national sample. Fewer Atlantic sites have an industrial park, micro-financing, and real estate. This is the case for Blissfield as well. Again, Doaktown provides the nearest bank, ATM machine, and insurance offices, while the nearest Credit Union is accessible in Blackville, approximately 30 km from Blissfield. Micro-financing, accounting, and real estate services are available only in Miramichi and Fredericton.

**Table 7: Availability of Financial / Business Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Banks	36.4	33.3	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Credit union/caisse populaire	50.0	50.0	33.3	33.3	X	✓
ATM	50.0	54.2	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Micro-financing	9.1	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	X
Insurance office	50.0	50.0	50.0	66.7	X	✓
Industrial park	22.7	20.8	16.7	16.7	X	✓
Real estate office	18.2	20.8	0.0	0.0	X	X
Accounting	50.0	50.0	66.7	66.7	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

## 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.

**Table 8: Availability of Communication Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Cell phone – analog	86.4	91.7	100.0	100.0	✓	
Cell phone – digital	40.9	83.3	33.3	83.3	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

Blissfield residents and businesses benefit from the availability of both analog and digital cell phone service (Table 8). Overall, analog cell phone service is widely available across the study sites in Canada. Approximately 83% of the sites in the national sample also enjoy digital cell phone service. All of the sites in Atlantic Canada offer analog cell phone service. The availability of digital cell phone services reflects the national average.

## 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.



An inventory of 24 sites across Canada indicates that while many are equipped to meet the needs of young families, others are not yet well equipped with seniors' care facilities (Table 9). In contrast to the national sample, sites in Atlantic Canada are less equipped to offer daycare services, although more of these sites have nursing homes for seniors than the national sample. When examining change in the availability of senior citizen's retirement homes, Atlantic sites have experienced a decline in availability. Blissfield follows similar trends in that a nursing home is available approximately 30 km away in Boiestown. However, neither daycares nor senior citizen's retirement homes are easily accessible as these can be found only in Miramichi and Fredericton.

**Table 9: Availability of Elderly and Daycare Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Daycare	45.5	54.2	33.3	33.3	X	X
Senior citizen's nursing home	18.2	20.8	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Senior citizen's retirement home	31.8	37.5	50.0	16.7	X	X

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.

The rural and small town sites examined across Canada do not have access to many government services (Table 10). Of particular concern to sites experiencing social and economic restructuring is that none of the sites have Employment Insurance or social assistance offices. Consequently, during restructuring or plant closures, households experiencing stress will have to go outside the site for services for information and assistance.

In Atlantic Canada, more sites offer social assistance and employment insurance services 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. Although Blissfield has no government services within the Parish, it is reasonably well served by government services in nearby Doaktown which has both a post office and a provincial auto license office, as well as limited service from an Employment Insurance Office one day per week. For access to a social assistance office, residents must travel to either Miramichi or Fredericton.

**Table 10: Availability of Government Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Employment Insurance	4.5	4.2	16.7	16.7	X	✓
Provincial auto license office	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Social assistance office	22.7	16.7	33.3	33.3	X	X
Town hall	68.2	70.8	66.7	66.7	X	✓
Post office	81.8	83.3	66.7	66.7	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

## 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 11). While fewer sites across Canada have a second hand stores compared to two years ago, more sites in the national sample offer clothing depots and senior drop-in centres.

**Table 11: Availability of Community Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Food bank	31.8	25.0	50.0	16.7	X	✓
Clothing exchange/depot	18.2	29.2	16.7	33.3	X	✓
Second hand stores	40.9	29.2	50.0	33.3	X	✓
Youth drop-in centre	22.7	25.0	16.7	16.7	X	X
Women's drop-in centre	22.7	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	X
Senior's drop-in centre	31.8	41.7	16.7	16.7	X	X
Half-way house	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Women's resource centre	9.1	8.3	0.0	0.0	X	X
Women's safe house	*	8.3	*	0.0	X	X
Personal aid services	31.8	37.5	50.0	50.0	X	X
Victim's services						
– comm. based	*	25.0	*	16.7	X	X
Churches	*	95.8	*	100.0	✓	

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

\* Information was not collected for this service that year.

Overall, sites in Atlantic Canada did not have as many community services when compared to all the sites across Canada. In fact, the availability of food banks and second hand stores have declined in the Atlantic sites since 2003. At least half of these sites, though, have personal aid services and churches. The availability of personal aid services will be important during periods of social and economic change. Other than a church which is in operation with Blissfield Parish,

local residents are not well served with community services. With the recent closure of a youth centre due to a shortage of funding, nearby Doaktown now offers a food bank, clothing exchange or depots, and second-hand stores. Other community services are available only in Miramichi and Fredericton.

## 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 airport service. When compared to sites across Canada, more Atlantic sites offer passenger train services, helicopter ports, boat / ferry terminals, and taxi services. However, fewer Atlantic sites have inter-community bus service, freight train service, airports, gas stations, and automobile repair shops. While most of these transportation services have remained stable over the last two years, fewer sites in Atlantic Canada now have inter-community bus service. Blissfield Parish has access to a gas station and automobile repair services, as well an inter-community bus station, in nearby Doaktown. However, residents must travel to either Miramichi or Fredericton for most of the other transportation services. However, the closest boat or ferry terminal services are available only in Saint John, 300 km away.

**Table 12: Availability of Transport Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Local bus transit	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Inter-community bus station	31.8	29.2	33.3	16.7	X	✓
Train – passenger	4.5	4.2	16.7	16.7	X	X
Train – freight	36.4	29.2	16.7	16.7	X	X
Airport	18.2	16.7	0.0	0.0	X	X
Helicopter port	22.7	25.0	16.7	33.3	X	X
Boat/ferry terminal	18.2	25.0	50.0	50.0	X	X
Taxi	27.3	25.0	33.3	33.3	X	X
Gas station	86.4	87.5	66.7	66.7	X	✓
Automobile repair	63.6	70.8	50.0	50.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

## Recreation Services

When examining all of the sites, recreational services showed the greatest range of availability compared to any other service category (Table 13). 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 foster a sense of community. Across Canada, most sites are also able to offer either an indoor skating rink or a community gym. Recreational services less frequently available across Canada included fitness facilities, such as athletic clubs and swimming pools, as well as entertainment features such as cinemas. Since 2003, live theatre and tennis courts are found in more sites in the national sample. Declines in recreational services between 2003 and 2005 in the national sample included outdoor municipal swimming pools and skiing trails.

**Table 13: Availability of Recreation Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within the Site	Within 30 Minutes
	2003	2005	2003	2005		
Curling rink	31.8	37.5	0.0	0.0	X	✓
Bowling lanes	22.7	20.8	33.3	33.3	X	X
Indoor municipal swimming pool	13.6	12.5	16.7	16.7	X	X
Outdoor municipal swimming pool	18.2	8.3	16.7	0.0	X	X
Indoor municipal skating rink	50.0	54.2	33.3	50.0	X	✓
Outdoor municipal skating rink	31.8	33.3	33.3	16.7	X	X
Community playing field	81.8	79.2	66.7	66.7	X	✓
Community gym	50.0	50.0	50.0	33.3	X	✓
Community centre	81.8	75.0	83.3	66.7	X	X
Private athletic club	13.6	15.0	33.3	20.0	X	✓
Municipal athletic club	18.2	16.7	0.0	16.7	X	X
Theatre (live performance)	13.6	33.3	33.3	33.3	X	X
Cinema (movie theatre)	4.5	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Museum	36.4	41.7	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Library	77.3	79.2	66.7	66.7	X	✓
Municipal parks	77.3	79.2	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Provincial parks	22.7	16.7	16.7	16.7	X	X
Tennis courts	31.8	45.8	33.3	33.3	X	X
Skiing trails	50.0	37.5	66.7	50.0	✓	
Hiking trails	63.6	62.5	83.3	83.3	✓	
Golf courses	36.4	37.5	33.3	16.7	X	✓
Campgrounds	68.2	66.7	66.7	50.0	X	✓

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

In 2005, a greater proportion of sites in Atlantic Canada offer recreational amenities such as bowling lanes, museums, and skiing and hiking trails when compared with sites across Canada in 2005. However, some recreational services, such as a curling rink, outdoor municipal swimming pool, and movie cinema, are not available in any of these sites. This is the case for Blissfield residents as well, who have access to the skiing and hiking trails of the Trans Canada Trail within

the Parish, and who are able to access fairly easily other recreational amenities in either nearby Doaktown, Blackville, or Boiestown such as golf courses, campgrounds, municipal parks, a library (through the Doaktown High School), museums, a private athletic club, a community gym, community playing fields, a curling rink, and an indoor skating rink. Recreational amenities such as municipal swimming pools, bowling lanes, live performance theatres, tennis courts, provincial parks, and movie cinemas are not readily accessible.

## 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:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Grocery store	68.2	70.8	66.7	66.7	X	✓
Farmer's market	13.6	25.0	16.7	33.3	X	X
Liquor store	54.5	62.5	50.0	50.0	X	✓
Bakery	27.3	37.5	50.0	50.0	X	X

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, basic shopping services have been increasing in the 24 sites examined in the national inventory. However, a lower proportion of sites in Atlantic Canada have a liquor store. Instead, a greater proportion of these sites have a bakery. For more specialized shopping, Blissfield residents may travel nearby to Doaktown or beyond 30 minutes to Miramichi or Fredericton.

## 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 only approximately 20% 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. On the other hand, more sites in the national sample offer financial and business consulting services compared to two years ago.

**Table 15: Availability of Economic / Development Organizations - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Business Dev. Bank of Canada	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Community Business Dev. Ctrs.	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Chamber of Commerce	18.2	20.8	16.7	16.7	X	X
Local bus. dev. corp.	18.2	8.3	0.0	0.0	X	X
Economic/community trust	4.5	4.2	0.0	0.0	X	X
Career training/placmt. program	13.6	12.5	0.0	0.0	X	X
Financial/business consulting	27.3	37.5	33.3	33.3	X	X
Real estate boards	0.0	0.0	0.0	0.0	X	X
Tourism associations	27.3	12.5	50.0	33.3	X	X
Rotary clubs	18.2	12.5	16.7	16.7	X	X
Retraining programs – general	*	8.3	*	33.3	X	X
Retraining programs – women	*	0.0	*	0.0	X	X
Women’s leadership groups	*	41.7	*	50.0	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

\* Information was not collected for this service that year.

While economic development organizations are not widely available in the Atlantic sites, more Atlantic sites have tourism associations, general retraining programs, and women’s leadership groups compared to the national sample. Blissfield Parish is not well served with economic development organizations. Aside from the Miramichi River Valley Tourism Association, which operates out of Miramichi but holds some of its meetings in the Doaktown area, there are no other economic development associations nearby. In terms of retraining opportunities, Horizon Training from Miramichi does occasionally offer training courses in Doaktown depending on demand.

## 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.

Although, social housing does not appear to be widely available in sites across Canada, there have been some important changes (Table 16). Most notably, there has been an increase in the availability of assisted or subsidized housing for seniors from approximately 32% of the sites across Canada in 2003 to 50% in 2005. In Atlantic Canada, fewer sites have assisted / subsidized housing for seniors. Instead, a greater proportion of the Atlantic sites are able to offer all other types of social housing when compared with the national sample. Notably, half of the sites in Atlantic Canada have assisted or subsidized housing for families. This is the case for Blissfield residents as well who are able to access assisted or subsidized housing for low income seniors and low income families in nearby Doaktown.

**Table 16: Availability of Social Housing Services - 2005**

Services	NRE Sites:				Blissfield:	
	Canada		Atlantic		2005	
	% Yes		% Yes		Within	Within
	2003	2005	2003	2005	the Site	30 Minutes
Co-op housing	13.6	8.3	0.0	16.7	X	X
Rent supplement units	22.7	20.8	33.3	33.3	X	X
Asstd./sub. housing – seniors	31.8	50.0	33.3	33.3	X	✓
Asstd./sub. housing – families	31.8	29.2	66.7	50.0	X	✓
Asstd.sub. housing – singles	9.1	12.5	0.0	16.7	X	X
Asstd./sub. housing - disabled special needs	13.6	12.5	16.7	16.7	X	X

Source: CRRF NRE 2003, 2005 Site Profiles.

### **Challenges and Opportunities for Blissfield, New Brunswick**

Boundary changes have been an issue for Blissfield Parish in the past and may be again in the future. In the past, boundary changes removed the village of Doaktown from Blissfield Parish, thus altering on paper where services were available from within the site, to an ‘adjacent’ community. The services have not moved, only the boundary lines. This has left Blissfield with no retail centre, however, the village of Doaktown adequately provides a range of services for residents, particularly with respect to educational services, health services, protection services, financial and business services, and basic shopping services. The New Brunswick Department of Environment and Local Government is continuing to look at plans to further amalgamate rural areas and apply a more ‘even’ tax rate across rural/urban communities. This may have implications for future boundary changes within Blissfield Parish as well as the provision of services locally.

Blissfield Parish has remained fairly stable over the past 5 year period in terms of access to services. While there have been some cuts in services, other areas have experienced increases in services. For example, health services have been improved through the opening of a new health centre in Doaktown with expanded services and facilities, as well as an expanded pharmacy. However, other health services have declined in the area with a loss of 24 hour ambulance service that must now be shared equally with Boiestown, and the loss of a speech therapist.

Some challenges with implications for the retention of Blissfield residents relate to the needs of youth and seniors. The loss of Doaktown’s heavily used youth drop-in centre, due to a shortage of funding, leaves youth with few recreational options. As well, access to health, recreation, and housing options are very limited for elderly residents. There is no close access to nursing homes, hospitals, medical clinics, dental surgeons, optometrists, hospital emergency services, respite care, retirement homes, seniors’ drop in centres, or assisted/subsidized housing for persons with disabilities or special needs. Coupled with a lack of transportation services, these gaps in service may have huge implications for the retention of older residents.

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