Reflections on Small & Rural Municipalities Dealing with Climate Change

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Technical Support partners with FCM
for the Partners for Climate Protection (PCP) Program

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Overview of Presentation

- Small, Rural & Significant -Population growth statistics
- Dwell on the Positive - What small & rural communities have going for them
- Capacity building solutions & illustrations
  - Networks
  - Partnerships
  - Participatory Approach

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Small, Rural & Significant

- The trend towards the urbanization of Canada is not as significant as you might think
- Canada is increasingly suburban
  - "peripheral municipalities" grew by 11 per cent from 2001 to 2006, compared with 4.2 per cent for central cities.
  - periphery grew by about 900,000, central cities by 500,000
- Rural growth often depends on proximity to urban centers
- 14 of the fastest growing small communities are located less than 50 kilometres from Montréal, Toronto or Vancouver
- In contrast, all of the 25 fastest-declining small towns and rural communities were located far from large urban centres. Most of them were located in the North
- Nearly 20% of Canadians (6.0 million people) live in rural areas

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What you've got going for you

"We are so small, how can we fail? We are more agile than larger communities, we have fewer mistakes to undo, solutions may be less complex, single projects can have a larger impact and, most important, our communities can become more engaged."

Bob Turner, Mayor of Bowen Island Municipality

- Sense of community
- Higher volunteerism rates
- Higher government participation rates, i.e. elections, public mtgs

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Networks

- Peers
- Expertise
- Resources & tools
- Events
- Best practices

- Examples:
  - Partners for Climate Protection
  - GTA Clean Air Council
  - New Brunswick Climate Change Hub
  - Strait-Highlands Regional Development Agency (S-HRDA)

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Community Partnerships

- Relationship of 2 or more parties with compatible goals
- Shared risk and benefit
- Contributions from all
- Shared authority, responsibility and accountability

- Examples:
  - EarthWise Thunder Bay
  - Town of Okotoks – Drake Landing Solar Community
  - District of Ucluelet – Official Community Plan

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Participatory Approach

- Stakeholders influence & share control over initiatives and decisions that affect them
- Enables decisions that reflect all aspects of community life including social, economic, environmental and political dimensions
- Can include lower (top-down), middle & higher (bottom-up) levels of public involvement

- Examples:
  - ecoPerth
  - Bowan Island – Strategic Action Workshop

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