



Community,  
Health & Environment  
Research Centre

**Community, Health and Environment Research Centre**

**Understanding Industrial Development in Alberta's Rural Communities**

**Final Project Report  
CARCI Project No. AB/RES/006**

**February 27<sup>th</sup>, 2004**

Theresa Garvin and Jeff Masuda  
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences  
University of Alberta



## Table of Contents

Executive Summary .....	2
Budget and Financial Partners .....	8
Overall Project Results (Outcomes).....	11
Major Obstacles Encountered .....	17
Monitoring .....	20
Recommendations/Lessons Learned/Best Practices .....	23
References.....	26
Appendix A. Framework for community consultation .....	27
Appendix B: Community Advisory Committee .....	32
Appendix C: CAC Feedback .....	33
Appendix D: Financial Reporting .....	35

# Executive Summary

**Describe the following:**

## **1. Origin and purpose of the project**

This is a case study of the Alberta's Industrial Heartland (hereinafter referred to as the AIH). The research was carried out between May and December 2003 as part of a PhD dissertation project in the Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences at the University of Alberta. The AIH is both a major petrochemical centre and a series of policy initiatives undertaken by four municipal governments to facilitate increased industrial development in a rural region near Edmonton, Alberta. Within this region resides a mixed community of farmers, and rural country residents. During the development of the AIH which included a series of public consultations, a contentious debate took place over the potential impacts that more industry would have to the community. The goal of the project was **to promote positive relationships between citizens and government in communities facing industrial development.**

## **2. Proposed project and activities**

The project employed qualitative methodologies to investigate public debate surrounding conflicting attitudes and experiences of different stakeholders associated with the AIH. This included community members, local government officials, industry representatives, and the media. Methods included an analysis of local newspapers within the four municipalities, and two round of individual interviews plus a group interview with a cross-representative sample of AIH stakeholders. These methods uncovered both the public debate, and personal perspectives of stakeholders, and helped to resolve reasons for the conflict that occurred during and after the public consultation.

## **3. Anticipated results**

The main results of the project were reported in the CARCI Final Research Report (January, 2004). From these results, we have identified a series of practical implications and recommendations for community stakeholders. These recommendations provide these stakeholders with a framework upon which to identify and improve upon consultation opportunities. They centre on establishing positive relationships, negotiating effective processes, and working toward mutually agreeable outcomes of consultations.

## **4. Other aspects**

This project was intended to provide AIH stakeholders with a means to improve relationships during subsequent phases of planning and development in the region. We also anticipate uptake of the recommendations to other rural communities in Alberta, via dissemination through a community advisory committee.

# Project Description

## 1. Project Objectives

### a) What were the project objectives?

- The project's main goal was **to promote positive relationships between citizens and government in communities facing industrial development**. We have met this goal by completing the following four objectives that were outlined in the project proposal:
  1. To reconstruct the events associated with planning in a community undergoing industrial development. This will include a longitudinal review of local and provincial policies, reports, legal proceedings, newspaper coverage, and decision-making;
  2. To identify similarities and differences in viewpoints about industrial development between individuals and groups in a cross-section of the community. Key players in the case study will include landowners and residents, local government, business, and industrial organizations;
  3. To construct an improved framework for community consultation that may be used in communities facing future industrial development, with the intention of strengthening linkages in such communities; and
  4. To contribute to community capacity and trusting relationships among individuals and groups in the study community.

### b) Specify and provide details on how you met your objectives

- **Objective 1** (*Event Reconstruction*) was met through collection and review of background materials that was informed by a thorough review of policy documents (e.g. laws and regulations, area structure plans), public information flyers, and local newspapers. The timeline was then verified through data collected in the media review (newspaper analysis) and through events reported during the individual and group interviews.
- **Objective 2** (*Identification of similarities and differences in viewpoints*) was met through two rounds of individual interviews plus one group interview conducted with local stakeholders in the AIH. A cross-representative sample comprising community members, local government, industry, and the media ensured that diverse perspectives were collected.
- **Objective 3** (*Construction of a Framework*) was met via a series of recommendations for improved community consultation (Appendix A). The

recommendations are targeted toward both community members and consultation planners, representing an important contribution.

- **Objective 4** (*Building Trust and Community Capacity*) was met through procedures to (1) establish credibility and rapport with project participants; and (2) provide information to assist the community in participating in improved consultation processes. These were accomplished by ensuring multiple avenues for participant involvement and feedback as the project progressed, as well as cooperation and consultation with relevant stakeholders. A Community Advisory Committee (CAC) included representatives from community groups, industry, and organizations that serve rural communities in Alberta (Appendix B).

## **2. Implementation of project activities**

### **b) What activities have you undertaken?**

- The CARCI objective is to *enhance the viability of agricultural rural communities, particularly those communities undergoing change as a result of the agricultural sector*. Project activities were designed to meet this need by conducting research to help the community within the AIH to respond to changing local economic priorities. This project employed three data collection activities and two participant feedback/ consultation activities.

#### ***Data Collection Activities***

- **Policy document review.** Over 20 documents collected from government, industry, and legal sources provided information about the historical context, policy details, and public relations activities within the AIH region. This review helped to reconstruct a timeline of the development of the AIH between 1993 and 2001.
- **Media analysis.** The newspaper analysis collected 1103 articles obtained from three local newspapers (the *Fort Saskatchewan Record*, the *Sturgeon Creek Post*, and *Strathcona County This Week*). These publications were chosen based on accessibility of back-issues available at local museums, libraries, and newspaper offices. They provided a record of the public debate and controversy surrounding the AIH.
- **Initial interviews.** A total of 30 individual interviews were conducted between December, 2002 (including pilot interview) and December, 2003 with 33 community members (n=22), officials (n=8), and representatives from industry and media (n=3).
- **Follow-up interviews.** A total of 14 follow up interviews were conducted in November and December, 2003 with a sample of the initial 33 participants,

ensuring representation from rural community, local government, and industry stakeholders.

### ***Participant Feedback/Consultation Activities***

- **Group interview.** One group interview provided an opportunity for participants to reflect on the project results and to provide insights and recommendations for improved community consultation. The final interview, conducted in January, 2004, included seven participants representing the rural community, local government, and industry stakeholders.
  - **Community Advisory Committee meetings.** Three Community Advisory Council meetings with representatives of eight community based, government, and industry organizations helped to ensure that project activities remained relevant to stakeholders in the AIH and elsewhere in rural Alberta (see Appendix B).
  - **Ongoing communication.** Ongoing communication with the CAC via telephone, email, in-person presentations, and one round of individual feedback and consultation provided opportunities for members to check in on the progress of the project.
- c) **Describe how the project operated (e.g., how services were offered, delivered, received and by whom, processes used, etc.)**
- Fieldwork was undertaken primarily by Jeff Masuda, and project assistant, Leah Gold. Data collection took place during regularly scheduled day trips to the region between May, 2003 and January, 2004. Newspaper articles were collected from the Fort Saskatchewan Museum, the Fort Saskatchewan Library (microfiche), and the office of *Strathcona County This Week*. Interviews were conducted in participants' homes, offices, and local restaurants.
  - Data analysis occurred under the supervision of Theresa Garvin in the Community, Health and Environment Research Centre at the University of Alberta. Newspaper articles were entered into a computer database by manual keying of type of article, titles, authors, date, page number, and size. Interviews were transcribed and entered into a qualitative data analysis program (NVivo<sup>TM</sup>). The data were analyzed using standard qualitative techniques.
- d) **Are project activities consistent with the objectives of the project? Have you changed what you originally set out to do? Describe what changed and why?**
- All project activities were completed in accordance with the initial proposal. The following changes occurred over the course of the project:

- The timeframe of data collection shifted to a later start and end date due to late release of project funds.
- The initial proposal projected that 20 follow-up interviews would be required. Because of time restrictions and difficulty in reaching participants due to the time of year (i.e. pre-holidays) only 14 follow-up interviews were conducted. However, this was not considered to have significantly influenced the project results since all groups of stakeholders' perspectives were ascertained.
- Due to the compressed project timeline, the second Interim Report was rolled into the Final Research Report, delivered January 31, 2004.

**e) Provide evidence that activities met your community needs.**

- The project met community needs by providing an opportunity for diverse stakeholders to provide input to inform improved community consultation practices. CAC feedback provides evidence for the success of this strategy. CAC members who represented the perspectives of both proponents and critics of the AIH confirmed that this effort was achieved. Although the CAC represented diverse stakeholders with largely different views, together, they reported that the project would successfully accomplish the following:
  - Improved attitudes and increased flexibility of CAC members in their own work related to the AIH;
  - Optimism that the project would be important to ongoing efforts by community members and local governments to improve relationships among all stakeholders in the AIH;
  - Anticipation that the project results will be particularly valuable to future efforts at resolving tension and promoting positive relationships between local government and the community, and foresee widespread impact of the recommendations outlined in this report. The following feedback was given by participants during interviews:

Research as Advocacy

*I'm not one of those people who say, 'Oh, well, they've got 98 percent happy so to hell with the two percent.' No. We've got a two percent problem. I want to be involved, I can't wait to see this research. Perhaps this kind of research will inspire the appropriate levels to deal with it. So it doesn't happen again. (municipal official)*

Research as Reflection

*I just think that you've really made me think about lots of things that I probably wouldn't have thought as deeply about if you hadn't asked*

*me, and I think that's a good thing. Helps me to analyze my situation and my future, what I'm going to do now. (community member)*

Research as Legitimacy

*I really welcomed this study, and was very excited when the e-mail was forwarded to me. And perhaps just from the standpoint that as an industry representative, I think it's important for me to be able to give some legitimacy to the opinions of people that have been isolated by the process. Again, it may not change anything, but I think it is important for me to be able to say, 'you're a person, there's validity in where you're coming from'. (industry representative)*

- See also Appendix C for summaries of CAC member comments on the benefits and uses of the project results.



## Budget and Financial Partners

**1) What additional financial or in-kind contributions were received? Compare the initial approved and final budgets and outline what types of contributions were made by your partners (financial and in-kind).**

- Considerable in-kind contributions were made by the Community, Health and Environment Research Centre in support of this project. This primarily consisted of the use of state-of-the-art data collection, analysis and evaluation hardware and software was provided to field investigators and research assistants. The compressed timeline of the project meant that additional resources needed to be reallocated to this project. The estimated additional costs of this reallocation were absorbed by the CHE Research Centre.
- Additional matching contributions were made through support of office research expenses including long distance telephone calls, postage, brochure and report printing, web design and hosting fees, and travel and accommodation for communication of results. All future costs of communication of results (including ongoing community contact and future conference presentations) will continue to be covered by the CHE Research Centre, the University of Alberta, and outside granting agencies.
- The primary difference between the original breakdown of costs and activities was the reduction of CARCI contribution to the Brochure and Report printing. Due to cost overruns in Benefits and Field travel (approx \$1200), the bulk of the printing costs were covered by the CHE Research Centre.
- The original cost breakdown and actual cost breakdown are provided in the table on the following page. CARCI Final Financial Reporting and the Official University of Alberta Statement of Revenue and Expenditure for the CARCI portion of the contract are provided in Appendix D.

**Table 1: Expected versus Actual Costs for CARCI AB/RES/006**

Activity	Original Estimated Cost	Original CARCI Cont'n	Actual Cost	Actual CARCI Cont'n	Comments
Meeting/communication fees	750	0	1300	0	Includes overruns in supplies, meetings & interviews
Office Expenses	2,200	0	2,560	0	Additional postage, long-distance expenses
Interview expenses	160	0	0	0	Rolled into meeting fees
Research Assistants	10,020	10,020	11,391.50	11,391.50	
Data Analysis/Transc'n	4320	4320	2947.25	2947.25	
Benefits for Transc'n	0	0	851.08	851.08	UofA requires benefits be paid to outside contractors, this was not anticipated.
Brochure/Report Printing	1500	1500	1750	211.77	Costs of printing covered by CHE to cover overruns in salaries and travel
Travel & Accommodation	3000	500	4300	908.82	Compressed timeline meant extra travel was required for data collection
Web design/hosting	860	500	860	500	
Facility Fee	22500	1500	25000	1500	
15% Univ Admin	2751	2751	2751	2750.27	
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$48,061.00</b>	<b>21,091.00</b>	<b>53,710.83</b>	<b>21,060.69</b>	CARCI contribution to final costs = 39%

**2) List all the partners involved in your project. What were their roles and responsibilities?**

- The primary financial partner for this project was the University of Alberta via the Community, Health and Environment Research Centre.

**3) What benefits/impacts resulted from working in partnership (please give a concrete examples).**

- The investigators were able to utilize existing research infrastructure at the CHE lab. This meant considerable flexibility granted in accessing needed data collection, transcription, and data analysis resources. Cost overruns were therefore accommodated and adapted into the existing research centre operations.
- Working in conjunction with community agencies (despite lack of concrete financial contributions) ensured that research results were rigorous and reliable.

**4) Will the project activities/partnerships continue beyond the end of the project's actual funding? Explain why or why not.**

- This project was conducted as part of the PhD Dissertation of Jeff Masuda. Jeff's research continues through the rest of this year, toward an expected completion date in December, 2004.
- The research team has offered to present project results and implications to local stakeholders, which is expected to occur until the end of 2004.
- One local newspaper editor has requested an interview about the project, which will be followed up on later this year. The article will be forwarded to CARCI upon publication.

## Overall Project Results (Outcomes)

**1) Did you achieve the intended results of your project as stipulated in the Contribution Agreement? Explain what other results were achieved and why? (If results are quantifiable, please give figures.)**

- The results of the project inform five areas that were outlined in the initial project proposal. Accordingly, the outcomes of the project:

1. Benefit multiple stakeholders:

- i. *The agricultural community.* The agricultural rural community benefited from the project in two ways. First, at least ten of the interview participants came from the agricultural community. Their perspectives were incorporated into the project results, and implications for the agricultural community have been addressed by the investigators. Second, four members of the CAC represented provincial agricultural organizations. These people will bring the project results and implications back to their stakeholders for dissemination to other agricultural communities around Alberta;
  - ii. *Local government and industry.* The four municipalities involved in the AIH, as well as existing industry in the region benefit from the recommendations for improved community consultation. These stakeholders are involved in community consultation on an ongoing basis, however, the effectiveness of such activities are rarely evaluated. The recommendations provided by this project will help to improve practice.
2. Meet CARCI's objective. The project improves local community capacity to respond to industrial development through improved management of relationships among community members, local governments, and industry stakeholders. The dissemination of project results and recommendations to other communities via the CAC helps to enhance the viability of rural communities throughout Alberta. With the knowledge gained from this project, communities may be better positioned to recognize and develop more effective consultation strategies, and to work with local planners and decision-makers to ensure that appropriate consultation takes place.
  3. Address issue of community/community involvement. The project identified a community that was affected by plans to promote large-scale industrial development. These plans affected the community through

proposed policies that would result in uncertainty around the future of their ability to reside and work within the AIH. The project emphasized community involvement through (1) participation of 20 community members in the study sample, and (2) representation of two AIH community members plus two representatives from other rural communities on the CAC.

4. Creates linkages with agriculture. The project was a case study of an agricultural community experiencing pressure to increase its capacity to contribute to the oil and gas-based provincial economy. Similar situations exist throughout the province, both within this sector (e.g. siting of sour gas facilities), and in other economic sectors (e.g. intensive livestock operations).
5. Addresses economic change in agriculture. The community residing in the AIH region has been adapting to major economic changes for the past half-century. Since the first plant opened in the 1950s, the agricultural community has had to cope with both increasing industrial presence on the rural landscape, as well as a burgeoning local non-agricultural population living in rural areas. This project has shown how these pressures have decreased the agricultural community's ability to respond to new developments, and have contributed to a declining rural agricultural population. On the positive side, the participation of farmers in the project speaks to their continued resiliency and desire to preserve the agricultural way of life in the region.

2) **What were the project's short-term outcomes/benefits? What are the indicators/measures?**

- The short-term outcome of the project is a series of recommendations on improved community consultation to local stakeholders (Appendix A). From the results, we have identified four critical areas that, if addressed in upcoming consultation activities, may lead to more effective and meaningful consultation and planning. From our analysis of successes and shortcomings of the AIH process, we provide specific implications for both community members and consultation planners.

1. **HISTORY** – It is critical to be sensitive to multiple perspectives is required by all stakeholders and to recognize that the rural community is diverse, and subject to multiple cultural and economic pressures resulting from changes taking place at broader levels.

*Consultation planners:* Recognize “who” the public is by investing time in gaining knowledge of the local population. Awareness of local demographics (e.g. age, occupation, length of residence) may help to reveal the different types of people occupying the area under

consideration. A diverse population adds a considerable degree of complication to consultation efforts, and the need for much more investment of both time and resources. More importantly, talking to community members with regular visits will provide critical information about their attitudes and experiences with the local landscape and helps to build more trusting relationships (see point #4).

***Community members:*** Diverse experiences and relationships with the local landscape can result in different and often competing perspectives in consultation. Successes and difficulties experienced by the Heartland Citizen's Coalition shows that consensus building and communication among different groups is critical. A coordinated approach may help to ensure that the entire community is represented in consultation, and that conflicting viewpoints and recommendations are worked through effectively.

2. **PROCESS** – A clear understanding of all stakeholder expectations is needed to ensure that the community has the opportunity to participate effectively. Such strategies may help to prevent participation fatigue.

***Consultation planners:*** Establish clear terms of reference with community participants at the outset of consultation so that they can be sure what is expected to happen during consultation, and the expected outcomes. Revisit these terms of reference often. Also, it is important to define what limitations are in place during consultation, so that community members are not led to believe that they have influence in areas that are not on the table.

***Community members:*** Request that the role, level of input, and influence on decision-making be made clear at the outset of consultation. If consultation does not meet community expectations, point out to planners not only faults, but recommendations for alternative approaches.

3. **OUTCOMES** – Results showed that community members felt that their concerns remained largely unresolved after the consultation phase of the AIH was complete. Consultations should ideally conclude so that all stakeholders are satisfied with the outcomes. Although complete consensus is rarely achievable, the community may be more receptive to decisions if consultations have enough room for flexibility and more consideration of interim strategies.

***Consultation planners:*** Avoid an “information deficit” mindset when approaching community consultation. Ensure that it is clear that proposed plans are being offered to the community for their consideration, and not just for their information. Be aware that the community may interpret draft plans as decisions already made without their input or consent;

**Community members:** Ensure that consultation planners explore all viable alternatives in their proposed policies, and that these alternatives are presented to you in a fair and unbiased manner. Recognize that there are boundaries to alternatives, and that there are certain expectations and limitations imposed on local governments by higher authorities (e.g. provincial government directives).

4. **RELATIONSHIPS** – A high level of mistrust among government, industry, and the community was felt by all participants at the start of the project. By the end of the project participants recognized the sources of this mistrust and identified strategies to improve relationships. Stakeholders need to consider better management of relationships as a means to prevent disagreement from devolving into conflict.

**Consultation planners:** Recognize that there is an inherent level of mistrust in governments, and that this mistrust must be dealt with, not ignored. Understand that trust is not something to be “built” from the public, but negotiated *with* them. In doing so, it is important to be reflexive about your own attitudes and biases against people who oppose your plans.

**Community members:** Attempt to suspend judgment of consultation planners and officials until such time that they fail to work within an equitable framework of consultation. If there are problems with consultation, identify specifically where and with whom complaints lie, rather than painting all people with the same brush.

3) **What were the project’s long-term outcomes/benefits? What evidence is there to suggest that your project will continue to affect your community members? What are the indicators/measures?**

- **Outcomes.** The recommendations made by this project are intended to provide a means for the people living in the AIH to engage in effective consultation with local governments over the long term sustainability of the rural community. The AIH began as a process to modify area structure plans and land use bylaws. It is now a plan to attract large-scale industrial investment in the region. As such, its successful implementation will require a high degree of dialogue with the community in order to ensure that their interests are met. The project made it clear that prior consultations did not achieve the desired results, and the recommendations help stakeholders find effective solutions to the current problems in order to improve relationships.
- **Benefits.** The results benefit both the AIH community and rural communities in other areas of Alberta. Lessons learned and best practices have been recorded in the AIH, and may be applicable in other contexts where communities face

development decisions. CAC members will help to disseminate the results and recommendations of this project to a broader audience representing Alberta's rural communities.

- **Evidence.** Evidence that the project succeeded in its objectives can be found in the positive reaction given to researchers by participants and the CAC.
- **Indicators.** Indicators of success include the feedback letters provided by the community advisory committee (Appendix B).

**4) How did project participants benefit from this project? (Increased knowledge, new skills, etc.)**

During both follow-up and group interviews, participants reflected on their involvement in the project. In addition, CAC members provided comments to the research team on the benefits of project. According to this feedback, the project:

- **Changed perspectives.** Both interview participants and CAC members reported that their involvement in the project has helped them to think about their problems in ways they had not done before. This reflexivity helped them to deal with uncertainty and anxiety over their current situation, and future plans.
- **Created new knowledge.** The project created new knowledge about effective community consultation. Both CAC members and participants reported that their involvement in the project better equips them to engage in improved consultation in upcoming development activities.
- **Influenced positive personal change.** Interview participants reported gratitude that “something is being done” to learn from the AIH consultation and development process. They also reported decreased anxiety since having the opportunity to reflect on and share their experiences.
- **Built capacity.** The research results and feedback from the CAC have helped the research team to formulate a series of concrete recommendations in the form of a checklist for improved consultation (Appendix B). This checklist can be used by both community members and consultation planners to identify areas where potential conflict may occur as a result of miscommunication, unmet expectations, or other process related issues.

**THIS IS INNOVATIVE IN THE FOLLOWING WAYS:**

- The recommendations provide a framework that is **SHARED** by consultation planners and the community – most consultation principles only deal with strategies for companies/government to plan consultation for their own purposes. One example that is commonly used by companies in Alberta is the Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers (1997) *Guide for Effective Involvement*.



- Having a common checklist of participation principles helps to ensure that all parties have similar expectations and find common ground upon which to base consultations.

**5) Summarize public reaction to this project (Please attach any materials - press clips, photographs, letters received, generated by, or as a result of, this project that have not yet been sent to Rural Secretariat).**

- Coverage of the project is expected in local newspapers in 2004. These will be forwarded to CARCI at the time they are published.
- Additional media coverage and public outreach opportunities are continuing to be sought. Examples will be provided to the Secretariat as they take place.

## Major Obstacles Encountered

**1) Describe problems encountered during the course of the project? Who raised them? What were the causes? What impact did they have? What corrective action was taken to remedy the situation?**

- The first major problem encountered during the project was the late release of funding as a result of the long negotiations between the University and Ottawa. A delayed time frame meant much fieldwork could not be started until well into the summer and that less time was available between the data collection phases of the project. Most importantly, the time between the initial and follow-up interviews and group interview meant rigorous data analysis was a greater challenge and increased resources had to be allocated. For example, between completion of follow-up interviews in December, and the group interview in January, investigators conducted data analysis and were writing the final report concurrently.
- The second major problem had to do with expectations of stakeholders. While the objectives and goals were openly discussed by all participating individuals and organizations, the highly polarized nature of the community meant that key individuals and organizations were hoping that research results might justify their pre-existing positions and activities.

*Community Expectations.* At the outset of the project, community members were optimistic that an independent research team would be providing a rigorous and unbiased evaluation of their circumstances in relation to their perceived marginalization in AIH development and consultation. As the project progressed, some community members became concerned that the emerging results were not what they had anticipated hearing. They were reluctant to accept any critique made about the legitimacy of the positions taken by some community members.

*Government/Industry Expectations.* In a similar manner, AIH industry and government stakeholders expressed some concern about the project, worrying that it would result in a biased view in favour of community concerns. They were concerned that other perspectives (e.g. from industry, business, government) would not be included. Researchers worked diligently to ensure that all 'voices' in the AIH were heard and that many different perspectives were represented. However, as with the community members, industry and government stakeholders were disappointed that the research results did not legitimize pre-existing positions and activities.

- In summary, a few community members and industrial/governmental participants reported being unsatisfied with some research results because the results did not legitimize pre-existing polarized positions. Many participants did, however, report great satisfaction with the gains made through the project, primarily with the

increase in communication and the understandings developed between various stakeholders and participants.

**2) Is anything hindered through working in a partnership? (Provide concrete examples.)**

- Effective communication is most important consideration when working with the diverse partners. It is extremely difficult to arrange common times and locations for people who are in different life situations. For example, in our project, CAC members comprised both people who participated as part of their regular work (i.e. daytime availability), and people who participated out of personal concern (i.e. uncertain availability). In addition, participants lived great distances apart, with two living in the AIH, three in Edmonton, and the rest in other areas of Alberta. In this project, these barriers were overcome by (1) providing alternative day/evening meeting times (in the end, all participants preferred daytime meetings), (2) maximizing the use of email/fax; (3) alternating meeting locations in Edmonton and Fort Saskatchewan; and (4) providing teleconferencing services for those unavailable to attend in-person.
- In the beginning, we were concerned that the diverse backgrounds of the CAC members may cause polarization in discussions. However, this concern was quickly allayed by the professionalism that all members brought to the table at meetings. All members were sympathetic to the points of view of others, and while disagreements were often left unresolved, the overall level of enthusiasm did not decline considerably.

**3) What were the unintended and/or negative outcomes of the research?**

- There was a high degree of risk that the project would alienate either community members or government stakeholders who were party to emerging results. The highly volatile and polarized environment of the AIH meant that researchers had to be extremely cautious in data collection, analysis, and reporting to ensure that findings were robust and that recommendations could be backed by the data. However, despite these difficulties, we are confident that the results will be well-received by most stakeholders.
- We also point out again the considerable energy that was invested into allaying concerns by all groups involved in the project that the research may be biased against certain positions. Achieving a level of trust from disparate groups that have been polarized in public debate was extremely difficult to achieve. One cannot assume that academic credentials and independent funding sources will suffice to convince of the research to people whose work or lives are invested in the contentious debate. Only through ongoing dialogue and maximum flexibility can positive contributions and outcomes be achieved.

**4) Regarding lessons learned, what would your recommended do's and don'ts be to anyone else undertaking this type of project?**

**Do's**

- Do ensure that you obtain widespread support for the project from diverse stakeholders.
- Do be realistic about the time required to collect data from rural communities. People who work in agriculture have severe restrictions on their time at certain points of the year (e.g. harvest season).
- Do ensure to engage the *whole* rural community, recognizing that people in different places may have unique perspectives.
- Do have an advisory committee comprised of diverse stakeholders who have interest in the research project.
- Do ensure that the CAC is informed at the outset of the project about their role (what involvement they can expect to have and expect *not* to have).

**Don'ts**

- Don't use funding from any sources that may be perceived to have biased interest in the project outcomes.
- Don't distribute early drafts of written materials. In an environment of mistrust, individuals and groups may be quick to react to early ideas that have not been fully worked out.

## Monitoring

### 1) Who are the recipients of your project/services?

Project results and reports are being distributed to the following groups:

- The eight members of the CAC plus other organizations who supported or expressed interest in the project, including:
  - Alberta Canola Producers Commission
  - Alberta Cattle Commission
  - Alberta Economic Development (Province of Alberta)
  - Alberta Environmental Law Association
  - Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association
  - Alberta Surface Rights Federation
  - BP
  - Dow Chemical
  - Heartland Citizens' Coalition
  - Alberta Potato Producers Association
  - Peace River Organic Producers Association
- The 33 participants of the individual and group interviews.
- The four municipal governments of the AIH (Lamont County, Sturgeon County, Strathcona County, City of Fort Saskatchewan) and the provincial government (e.g. Alberta Agriculture, the Alberta Energy and Utilities Board, the Natural Resources Conservation Board).

### 2) How are the recipients informed about the project? (referrals, ads, print, radio, TV, etc)

- A final letter of appreciation will be sent to all project participants. The letter will include a project brochure with contact information and a link to the project website [www.ualberta.ca/eas/carci/index.htm](http://www.ualberta.ca/eas/carci/index.htm). This site is currently under final development.
- The project website will contain a summary of the research as well as reports, publications, and relevant links.
- Community participants without access to the internet may request print versions of all materials.
- The editor of a local newspaper has requested an interview with project investigators.

- Brochures will be made available to the public at County and City administration buildings.

**3) How did you monitor your service delivery and what have you learned?**

- CAC members provided feedback on interim reports and project activities
- Uptake of project results and recommendations will be monitored by the interest shown in the project by local stakeholders. By providing contact information in the brochure, we expect to receive feedback from people inquiring about further information and requests for discussions and/or presentations in the months following the project.

**4) How did you monitor or modify the project operations on an ongoing basis?**

- Project operations were monitored on a continual basis via regular communication between the field investigators (Jeff Masuda, Leah Gold) and the supervisory investigator (Theresa Garvin).

**5) What type of reports did you receive and provide over the course of your project? Who was the intended audience and what was the purpose of the reports?**

The following documents are to be available on the project website:

- ***Minutes from three committee meetings.*** These helped to ensure that the CAC was kept informed about project activities.
- ***Interim report.*** This document was submitted to CARCI and shared with the CAC. The purpose of this report was to present early results and identify minor modifications to upcoming activities. The CAC was given the opportunity to respond to preliminary interpretations of the results and provide feedback in the light of their local expertise and context.
- ***Final research report.*** This document was submitted to CARCI and shared with the CAC. The purpose of this report was to provide a detailed summary of the results of the newspaper and interview analyses. (Note: the Second Interim Report was rolled into the Final Research Report, as approved by CARCI).
- ***Final project report.*** The present report will be submitted to CARCI at the end of February, 2004 and posted on the website.

**6) How did you communicate the outcomes to the recipients of your program/services (print, news releases, radio, TV, etc.)**

- Reports were shared with the CAC who were invited to provide feedback.

- Community members, local stakeholders, and representatives of organizations serving rural communities will be sent the brochure and access to project website.
- CAC members may request presentations to their organizations following the completion of the project.
- Project results have been, or will be disseminated to the following academic audiences:

### **2003**

- Jeff Masuda and Theresa Garvin. *Local Geographies of Risk: A case study of industrial development in Alberta's rural landscape*. Presentation at the Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting. Victoria, BC, May, 2003.
- Jeff Masuda and Theresa Garvin. *Situating Risk Conflict: Industrial development in Alberta's rural landscape*. Poster presentation at the Society for Risk Analysis Conference. Baltimore, MD, December, 2003 (paid through independent international travel grant. The academic paper associated with this presentation received "Best Paper" award.)

### **2004**

- Jeff Masuda and Theresa Garvin. *Technological Risk: Probability Or Experience? A Case Study Of Industrial Development In Alberta's Rural Landscape*. Poster presentation at the Advances in Qualitative Methods, the Fifth International Interdisciplinary Conference, Edmonton, Alberta, January 2004.
- Presentation planned for the Canadian Association of Geographers Annual Meeting, Moncton, New Brunswick, May 2004. (Future costs covered by CHE Research Centre and not included in existing budget)
- Presentation planned for the Society for Risk Analysis Annual Meeting, Palm Springs, California, December 2004 (Future costs to be covered through independent travel grant and not included in existing budget)

## **Recommendations/Lessons Learned/Best Practices**

### **1) What has made your project unique and can it be replicated? (Please explain why/why not?)**

- The project used standard qualitative techniques to identify the attitudes, experiences, and viewpoints of stakeholders living or working in the AIH. As such, future case studies can use similar techniques in other contexts where contentious community consultation has occurred. However, it is important to recognize that the results of this project are not generalizable or directly applicable to other rural communities in Alberta. Qualitative research intentionally sets out to create contextual knowledge. Recording the lived experience of people in their natural context provides insight to inform local practices. Such insights may be similar or different in other localities, depending on how their social, cultural, economic, and political profile compares to the AIH.

### **2) What actions or measures would you recommend to prevent problems/obstacles during the course of your project and how would you recommend remedying them?**

- Securing broad support for the project from diverse stakeholders mitigates allegations of bias. Obtain letters of support from organizations that have credibility among all groups of people involved in the issue at-hand.
- Having sensitivity to time requirements and limitations of people's busy lives can enhance your credibility and rapport with participants. Ensure that the project timeline incorporates these factors from the outset. We should note that the eight-month timeframe imposed by the grant were insufficient to gain sufficient knowledge about and rapport with the community while carrying on with research activities.
- In cases where a community feels it has been disserved by their government, and in situations where officials are delegitimizing community concern as minority interest groups, it is imperative to ensure that ALL possible groups are represented. This is achieved by understanding the local geography of the case study, including land ownership, demographics, governance structures, and economic climate.
- A community advisory committee is an invaluable resource to gain credibility with the community. However, it is important to ensure that the CAC is informed at the outset of the project about their role (what involvement they can expect to have and expect *not* to have) to minimize misunderstandings.



**3) What advice would you give to others if they want to replicate your project?**

- Invest heavily in background research and the input of as many key informants as possible before carrying out the research. Identify all relevant sources of information that may be helpful in understanding the issues at-stake with the community.
- Be flexible with project goals and objectives. Negotiate these carefully with the local community before proceeding with research.
- Understand that differences in local social, cultural, economic, and political context means that the research will proceed differently in each case.

**4) What lessons have you learned from the development and implementation of your project?**

- Working with local stakeholders requires a high degree of flexibility on the part of researchers - different groups of people have constraints around time and availability.
- It is critical to maintain “vested neutrality” in working with polarized communities – while being sympathetic to improving local conditions as a whole, it is important to continuously reflect on personal biases that may influence one’s sensitivity to certain groups.
- Certain stakeholders may perceive that the project can threaten progress that they have made in working with the community. Some may even fear personal implications (e.g. job loss or reprimand). In most cases, reassurance about the project objectives may help to ease such concerns, however, some people may choose to limit their participation or outright reject any involvement in the project.

**5) What, if anything, would you do differently next time?**

- More resources could have been targeted toward determining the population being studied. Estimates of the AIH population by local key informants were unreliable, ranging from 80 to 300 people. Census divisions could not be used since they did not correspond to the AIH boundary. Therefore, a geographically robust determination of relevant stakeholders within the AIH would have required contacting all households via door-to-door solicitation.
- Negotiation with funders for more time to complete the project may have eased pressures in completing the data collection, analysis, and reporting within the obligated timeframe.

**I HEREBY STATE THAT THIS IS A TRUE AND ACCURATE ACCOUNT OF THE PROJECT.**

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**Theresa Garvin**  
**Director – Community, Health & Environment Research Centre**  
**Assistant Professor – Human Geography**  
**Department of Earth & Atmospheric Sciences**  
**ESB 1- 26, University of Alberta**  
**Edmonton, AB T6G 2E3**

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**Name:** Theresa Garvin

**Date** February 27, 2004

**Please note: As part of the project evaluation your assistance is appreciated in circulating and responding to the Stakeholder Questionnaire.**

**Note:** The information that you provide is collected for the purpose of the administration of the Canadian Agricultural Rural Communities Initiative. The information collected will be subject to the Access to Information Act.

## References

- Canadian Association of Petroleum Producers. (1997). Guide for Effective Public Involvement. CAPP Pub. #1997-0005.
- Fiorino, D.J. (1990). Citizen participation and environmental risk: A survey of institutional mechanisms. Science, Technology, and Human Values, 15, 2, 226-243.
- Laird, F. N. (1993). Participatory analysis, democracy, and technological decision making. Science, Technology, and Human Values, 18, 3, 341-362.
- Overdeest, C. (2000). Participatory democracy, representative democracy, and the nature of diffuse and concentrated interests: A case study of public involvement on a National Forest District. Society and Natural Resources, 13, 685-696.
- Santos, S. L. and Chess, C. (2003). Evaluating citizen advisory boards: The importance of theory and participant-based criteria and practical implications. Risk Analysis, 23, 2, 269-279.

## Appendix A. Framework for community consultation

This framework provides stakeholders involved in community consultation with common terms of reference upon which to negotiate effective dialogue. It is meant to be employed at the outset of negotiations leading toward consultation. Both community members and consultation planners should use the framework to ensure that adequate steps are being taken to ensure that a positive process is employed. The framework should be revisited frequently over the course of, and following consultations to ensure that all stakeholders are satisfied with the process and outcomes.

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### 1. History

Community	Consultation Planner	<u><i>Identifying stakeholders</i></u>  <i>Problem: Communities that are diverse in social, cultural, and economic backgrounds are often treated as a single homogeneous “public”</i>  <i>Solution: Provide resources to understand “who” the community is</i>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are adequate measures being taken to define the community?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are diverse groups willing to engage in consultation?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>What</i> issues do these stakeholders bring to the planning/policy arena and what are their ramifications for local development?

## 2. Process

Community	Consultation Planner	<p><b><u>Pre-planning</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Problem: Community consultation often occurs ad hoc, with no sensitivity to past processes that may affect current planning</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Solution: Identify past successes and failures and learn lessons from them</i></b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What are past successes of public involvement in this community, and how can we build upon them?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	What are past failures of public involvement in this community, and how can we prevent or mitigate them?

Community	Consultation Planner	<p><b><u>Mechanisms for creating opportunities for effective public participation</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Problem: The public perceives involvement processes as “token” in order to meet regulatory requirement</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Solution: Create avenues for effective participation at the outset of development proceedings</i></b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Decide, <i>with</i> appropriate stakeholders, what level of public involvement is necessary (by regulation) and appropriate
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>What options are available to select from (for examples, see Fiorino, 1990?) examples include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. public hearings</li> <li>ii. information flyers</li> <li>iii. open houses</li> <li>iv. negotiated rule making</li> <li>v. citizen advisory panels</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>What are the advantages and potential threats of each option?</p> <p>Expectations – consensus on expected level and type of involvement, including what NOT to expect.</p>

Community	Consultation Planner	<p><u><b>Mechanisms for compensating the public for their efforts</b></u></p> <p><b>Problem:</b> <i>Participatory processes can lead to considerable strains on the personal lives of private citizens, thus inhibiting effective involvement</i></p> <p><b>Solution:</b> <i>Identify meaningful strategies to support the public in their involvement</i></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Once relevant stakeholders are identified, how can they be included in decision-making?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. What obstacles exist that may prevent stakeholder involvement? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Economic</li> <li>-Geographic</li> <li>-Political (power)</li> </ul> </li> <li>ii. What means can be established to overcome these obstacles and ensure meaningful participation of stakeholders?</li> <li>iii. If stakeholders oppose certain aspects of development, how will they be dealt with?</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>What <b>mechanisms</b> will be incorporated into the consultation process that can ensure satisfactory input from stakeholders?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provide complete and understandable information to all stakeholders</li> <li>ii. Positions on decision-making committees</li> </ul>
		<p>How can interested people be compensated for their time and energy?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Monetary incentive</li> <li>ii. Public recognition</li> </ul>

### 3. Outcomes

<b>Community</b>	<b>Consultation Planner</b>	<p><b><u>Mechanisms for ensuring mutually acceptable consultation outcomes</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Problem: Problems encountered during consultation that remain unresolved will continue to hinder positive relationships and mutually agreeable outcomes</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Solution: Ensure that all possible courses of action in planning are given adequate and equitable consideration</i></b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are consultation planners working within a collaborative framework (i.e. beyond the “information deficit” model?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Are community members adequately informed about the means by which their feedback will be incorporated into decision-making?

#### 4. Relationships (building positive attitudes and trust)

Community	Consultation Planner	<p><b><u>Mechanisms for establishing effective routes of communication</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Problem: Consultation often occurs in a formalized, professional, and often conflict-oriented discourse</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Solution: Establish personal relationships prior to, and during consultation</i></b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have efforts been made by all parties to engage in effective dialogue?

Community	Consultation Planner	<p><b><u>Mechanisms for establishing relationships and trust</u></b></p> <p><b><i>Problem: There is a considerable degree of mistrust between government and the community</i></b></p> <p><b><i>Solution: Recognize that trust is a two-way phenomenon – identify areas of mistrust, and establish relationships to resolve them</i></b></p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	If trusting relationships are already in place, how can they be maintained?
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>If trust has been compromised, how can it be regained?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. Provide an open and mediated dialogue between partners</li> <li>ii. Identify areas where the public mistrusts authorities (e.g. keeping promises, adequate time for review of information)</li> </ul>
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Have areas where authorities mistrust the public (e.g. self versus community interests) been identified?



## Appendix B: Community Advisory Committee

### Membership

Murray Kerik	Director, Zone 7	Alberta Cattle Commission
Ward Toma	General Manager	Alberta Canola Producers Commission
Yvonne Sinkewich	Contact Person	Peace River Organic Producers Association
Duane Yaworksi	Executive Secretary	Alberta Surface Rights Federation
Anne Brown	Contact Person	Heartland Citizens' Coalition
Larry Wall	Executive Director	Alberta's Industrial Heartland Association
Barb Korol	Director of Public Relations	Dow Chemical
Brad Trefan	Senior Director, Industry Development Branch	Alberta Economic Development, Government of Alberta

### Activities

Date/Location	Participants	Purpose
<b>03 April 2003</b> University of Alberta	Anne Brown* Murray Kerik* Jeff Masuda Yvonne Sinkewich* Larry Wall	Introductions Project overview CAC roles and responsibilities Further CAC recruitment
<b>11 July 2003</b> University of Alberta	Anne Brown* Leah Gold (Project Manager) Barb Korol Jeff Masuda Ward Toma* Larry Wall Duane Yaworski*	Introductions of new members Project activities to-date and preliminary results CARCI Interim report #1 Planning for follow-up interviews
<b>19 December 2003</b> Dow Chemical, Fort Saskatchewan	Barb Korol (with Wil Vandeborn, Director, Dow Chemical Government Affairs) Jeff Masuda Brad Trefan Larry Wall Duane Yaworski	Project activities to-date CARCI final research report (initial draft) Planning for group interview Planning for dissemination
<b>28 January – 27 February 2003</b> City Hall, Fort Saskatchewan	Electronic and in-person dialogue with committee members	CARCI final research report and final project report Project benefits to CAC Planning for dissemination

\*Participated via teleconference

## **Appendix C: CAC Feedback**

(note: most CAC members were not able to provide their final comments by the time this report was submitted. A follow-up addendum will be provided to CARCI once additional feedback has been received)



#170, 14315 – 118 Ave  
Edmonton AB T5L 4S6  
780-454-0844  
Fax: 780-451-6933

Jeff Masuda  
Department of Earth and Atmospheric Sciences  
University of Alberta

**RE: Understanding Industrial Development in Alberta's Rural Communities**

The Alberta Canola Producers Commission (ACPC) represents the canola growers of Alberta. Thus the stakeholder base of the ACPC is entirely rural, and issues around development are increasing in many communities. Learning how development processes have been done in the past will help canola growers in such developments in the future.

Secondly, the ACPC as an organization conducts both information dissemination activities and consultation activities with growers, the general public and related industry stakeholders. Some of the lessons learned from this case study will aid the ACPC in developing future communications activities.

Regards;

Ward Toma, P.Ag.  
General Manager  
Alberta Canola Producers

## **Appendix D: Financial Reporting**

# FINANCIAL FINAL REPORT

**PROPONENT :**

**PROJECT TITLE:**

Understanding Industrial Development in Rural  
Agricultural Communities

**PROJECT NUMBER :** AB/RES/0006

## INCOMES

	INITIAL	FINAL	DIFFERENCE	COMMENTS
CARCI Contribution	21,091.00	21,060.69	30.31	
CHE Matching & In Kind	26,970.00	32,650.14	-5680.14	Cost overruns in transportation/travel, facility costs, and office/operating expenses covered by CHE. These were primarily in-kind and did not influence project outcomes.
	0	0	0	
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>48,061</b>	<b>53,710.83</b>	<b>-5649.83</b>	

## EXPENSES

	INITIAL	FINAL	DIFFERENCE	COMMENTS
Meeting/communication fees	750	1300.00	-550	Additional communication and meeting fees were incurred through compressed timeline and the challenges of contacting participants over the summer
Office Expenses	2,200	2,560.00	-360	
Interview Expenses	160	0	160	Costs rolled into office & meeting expenses
Research Assistants	10020	11391.50	-1371.5	
Data Analysis/Trans	4,320	2,947.25	1372.75	
Benefits for Trans'n	0	851.08	-851.08	This expense was unanticipated
Printing	1,500	1,750.00	-250	
Travel & Accom	3,000	4,300.00	-1,300	Compressed timeline meant increased travel to research site was required for data collection
Web Design/hosting	860	860.00	0	
Facility Fee	22,500	25,000	-2,500	Compressed timeline meant additional resources at CHE had to be reallocated from other projects. This included field research equipment, computers, and workstations.
15% Univ Admin Charge	2751	2751.00	0	
<b>TOTAL :</b>	<b>48,061</b>	<b>53,710.83</b>	<b>-5,649.83</b>	Project overrun costs absorbed by CHE Research Centre

**Prepared by :** Theresa Garvin \_\_\_\_\_

**Date :** February 27, 2004 \_\_\_\_\_