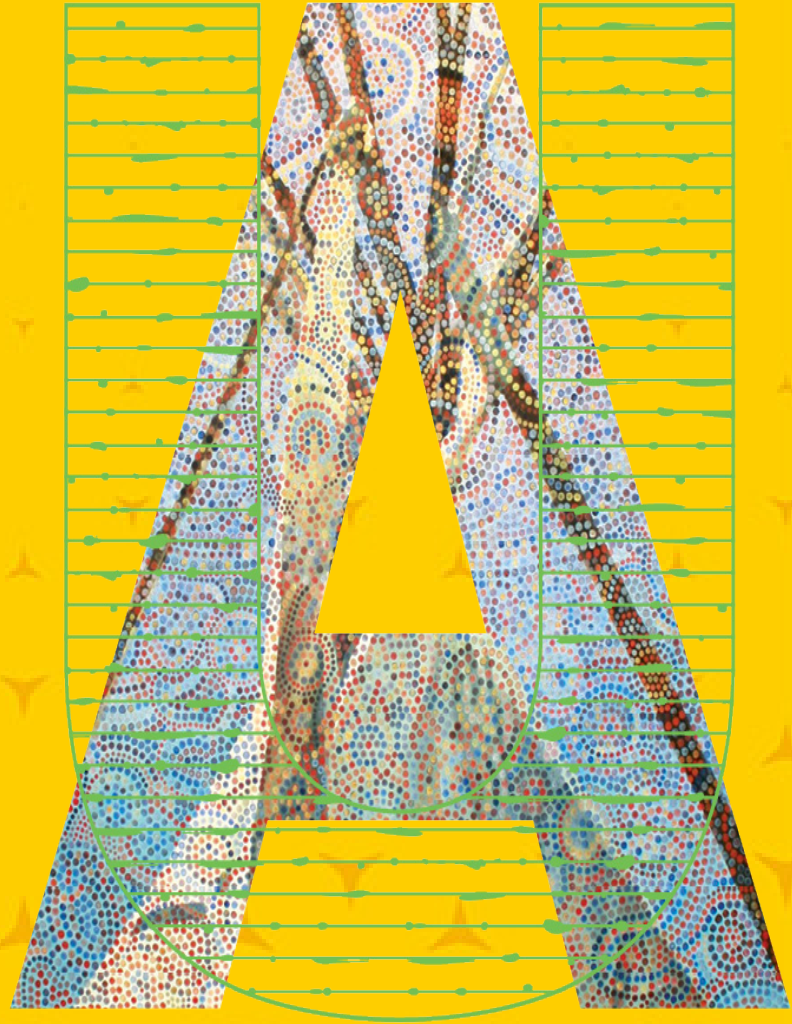





**UNIVERSITY
OF ALBERTA**



Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities

Annual Report | 2021-22



The University of Alberta, its buildings, labs, and research stations are primarily located on the traditional territory of Cree, Blackfoot, Métis, Nakota Sioux, Iroquois, Dene, and Ojibway/Saulteaux/Anishinaabe nations; lands that are now known as part of Treaties 6, 7, and 8 and homeland of the Métis.

The University of Alberta respects the sovereignty, lands, histories, languages, knowledge systems, and cultures of First Nations, Métis and Inuit nations.

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MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

The 2021/22 reporting year represents my first full year serving as Director of the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities. In many ways, it has been an absolute whirlwind, although largely a pleasurable one!

I have spent countless hours in zoom calls and on rural backroads, meeting so many folks who care deeply about rural Alberta. I have also dedicated considerable time to launching new rural-focussed research projects and, after two-plus years of Pandemic-induced pause on many of our activities, rebuilding our community outreach capacity. On both fronts, I'm confident that we have enjoyed several successes.



We are now engaged in a wide variety of new funded research projects ranging from studies designed to foster new forms of rural economic development, to exploring new avenues to address mental health issues in rural communities, to better understanding rural public opinion and public policy. Similarly, in terms of community outreach, a highlight was the launching of our first ever webinar series in the Spring of 2021, 'Rural Economic and Community Development in a Post-Pandemic Alberta', that included three well-attended presentations on topics of significance to rural communities. This was in addition to several other public presentations and media hits designed to further the reach of the ACSRC and ensure we continue to provide important, rigorous, and valuable information to rural Alberta communities.

I am also proud that the Centre was able to employ eight University of Alberta students as research assistants on various projects over the year, at being able to oversee three 'Rural Pathways' summer student interns who worked on important projects across rural Alberta, and that we had seven students from my 'Rural Politics and Community Development' class complete research projects for rural municipalities and organizations through Augustana's Community Service Learning program.

I invite you to read, in more detail, about these and other endeavours undertaken by the ACSRC in the pages that follow. And, I'm happy to say, the upcoming year already promises to be even more exciting (and busy!). We are in the midst of launching new projects that will explore rural public opinion, investigate the potential for Dark-Sky tourism in rural communities, seek to understand trends in rural social service delivery, deepen our knowledge around rural-based green energy projects, and encourage place-based sustainability initiatives across rural municipalities. Please stay-tuned for further announcements on these projects and other future outreach activities!

Dr. Clark Banack
Director, ACSRC

ABOUT THE ACSRC

Established in 2008, the Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities (ACSRC) is a partnership between the Augustana Faculty and the Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sciences of the University of Alberta.

The ACSRC fills the gap for research and policy in rural areas by fostering constructive dialogue, promoting interdisciplinary and collaborative research, and developing partnerships between the University of Alberta and rural communities in Alberta and beyond.

Learn more about the ACSRC at acsrc.ca

ACSRC TEAM

In addition to the many student research assistants, we employed over the year, the ACSRC is pleased to count the following individuals as key participants in our work:

COORDINATOR

Kate McConnell, ACSRC & Special Initiatives Coordinator

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

Demetres P. Tryphonopoulos, PhD (Dean & Executive Officer, Augustana Campus)

Stanford Blade, PhD (Dean, Faculty of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences)

Debra Davidson, PhD (Professor, Faculty of Agricultural, Life & Environmental Sciences)

Rebecca Purc-Stephenson, PhD (Professor, Faculty of Psychology, Augustana Campus)

Brent Swallow, PhD (Professor, Faculty of Agriculture Life and Environmental Sciences)

Ian Wilson, PhD (Director of the Chester Ronning Centre, Assistant Professor, Religious Studies, Augustana Campus)

ADVISORY COUNCIL

Gerald Rhodes (Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties)

Cathy Goulet (Northern Alberta Development Council)

Arnold Hansen (Battle River Alliance for Economic Development)

Patricia MacQuarrie (City of Camrose)

2021-22 ACSRC PROJECTS

NEW PROJECTS

Innovative Local Co-operatives and Rural Development

Funding Source: Alberta Real Estate Foundation Investment Grant (\$59, 920)

Project Lead: Clark Banack

Role of ACSRC: Principal Investigator

Project Dates: January 2021 – November 2023

Funded by the Alberta Real Estate Foundation, the ACSRC is working on a research and outreach project that explores the potential inherent in new and innovative local co-operatives to act as significant stimulants in rural economic development and service delivery throughout the rural regions of the province.

Considering examples across North America and Europe, the overarching goal of this project is to answer the following questions:

- Which examples of successful rural co-operative models elsewhere are best positioned to be replicated in rural Alberta communities?
- What are the “best practices” associated with ensuring the success of these co-operatives?
- How can governments, local, provincial and federal, best support the establishment and growth of these local co-operatives in ways that ensures they generate good jobs and enhance service delivery in rural communities?

This project will culminate in October 2023, when we will host a two-day Conference on Co-operatives and Rural Economic Development in Alberta at the Augustana Campus of the University of Alberta in Camrose.

We will present our research findings and host presentations from a collection of Canadian and American academics and co-op developers who specialize in co-operatives and rural economic development. We will also host presentations from founders/members of select successful cooperatives from rural regions across North America.



ALBERTA
REAL ESTATE
FOUNDATION

The 'Co-operatives & Rural Economic Development' Conference will take place Oct 19-20, 2023 in Camrose, AB.

[Subscribe to our newsletter](#) for upcoming Conference updates.



Evaluating the Mental Health Benefits of Men's Sheds in Rural Alberta

Funding Source: University of Alberta KIAS Team Research Grant (\$6, 940)

Project Lead: Clark Banack

Role of ACSRC: Principal Investigator

Project Dates: January 2021 – March 2023

In collaboration with Dr. Kyle Whitfield (Associate Professor in the Faculty of Science- School of Urban and Regional Planning, University of Alberta) and Serena Isley (Master of Science program in Medicine at the University of Alberta and ACSRC Research Assistant), the ACSRC is completing a project that evaluates the mental health benefits of Men's Shed participation in Rural Alberta with an initial exploration of Sheds in Camrose and Cold Lake.

We anticipate releasing a public report and corresponding webinar in the late Fall of 2022.

Neoliberalism and the Rural Populist Project

Funding Source: SSHRC Insight Development Grant (\$66, 050)

Project Lead: Dr. Lars Hallstrom (University of Lethbridge)

Role of ACSRC: Research Partner

Project Dates: May 2021 – April 2024

Working in collaboration with Dr. Lars Hallstrom (Director, Prentice Institute, University of Lethbridge), this project examines the resurgence of populism in Canada (but also internationally) from a primarily theoretical, rather than socioeconomic, standpoint, in an effort to understand not only the changing political landscape of rural communities in Canada, but in particular the ways in which the broader developmental and political trajectories of neoliberalism have contributed to that landscape, the politics of resentment, and the emergence of pronounced anti-government sentiment from communities and sectors (agricultural and conventional energy) that have historically been deeply reliant upon public sectors spending, policy and support.

NEW PROJECTS - CONT'D

Mobilizing Knowledge for Co-operative Energy Success

Funding Source: University of Alberta – University of Sheffield Seed Grant Program (\$25, 000)

Project Lead: Dr. John Parkins (University of Alberta)

Role of ACSRC: Research Partner

Project Dates: January 2022 – March 2023

In collaboration with Dr. John Parkins (Professor, Department Chair, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sci - Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology), and a team of scholars from the University of Sheffield in the United Kingdom, the ACSRC is working on a project on Green Energy Co-operatives in rural regions with a focus on

1. how knowledge is gained and how it enables the community to act, and
2. how energy cooperatives realize their motivations and work towards transforming energy practices.

Understanding Barriers - Canadian Map of Language Attitudes

Funding Source: University of Alberta KIAS Cluster Grant (\$60, 000)

Project Lead: Dr. Juhani Jarvikivi (University of Alberta)

Role of ACSRC: Collaborator

Project Dates: January 2022 – January 2024

The ACSRC is happy to bring a “rural” voice to a new multi-disciplinary project led by Dr. Juhani Jarvikivi (Professor, Faculty of Arts - Linguistics Dept) that explores the question:

How can better understanding factors driving these attitudes contribute to a fairer society?

The aim of this project is to create equitable, real-world informed research into language attitudes in Canada by building a citizen science (CS) network, a network of experts, and a technological infrastructure, the Canadian Map of Language Attitudes and Use, that will support engagement and inclusion of speakers from diverse regions and backgrounds as both research creators and beneficiaries.

Supporting the Mental Health of Alberta Farmers

Funding Source: Minister of Agriculture, Forestry, and Rural Economic Development

Project Lead: Dr. Rebecca Purc-Stephenson (University of Alberta)

Role of ACSRC: Collaborator

Project Dates: October 2022 - December 2024

The project involves establishing the Alberta Farm Mental Health Network, AgKnow, that connects people working in healthcare, the agricultural industry, and researchers to bridge communication gaps, optimize services, and to stimulate research on farmers in Alberta.

Dr. Purc-Stephenson, Professor of Psychology and a Research Associate of the ACSRC, is leading the research branch of the initiative that involves investigating the factors impacting mental health and well-being among farmers, as well as ways to build their resilience to the ongoing stressors.

Read more about this project [here](#)



COMPLETED PROJECTS

Building Inclusive Communities in Rural Alberta

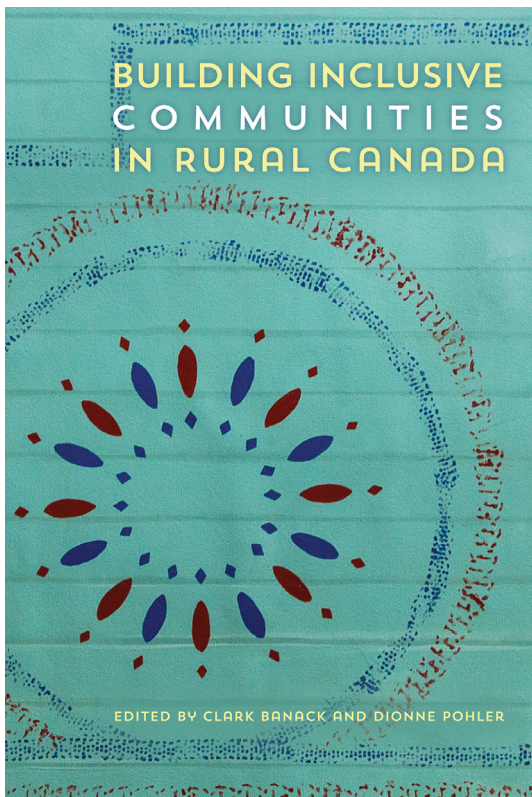
Funding Sources: Government of Alberta Anti-Racism Community Grant (\$25,000) Canada Summer Jobs Program (\$6,300), University of Alberta SIG Grant (\$5,000), Federation for the Humanities and Social Sciences Scholarly Publications Program (\$8,000)

Project Lead: Clark Banack

Role of ACSRC: Principal Investigator

Project Dates: January 2019 – May 2022

This project, led by Dr. Banack and initially funded by an Alberta Government Anti- Racism Community Grant, involved both a research and community outreach component. The research component utilized an ethnographic approach designed to better understand how and why citizens form the political preferences that they hold, especially with respect to their views toward racialized and religious minority communities and Indigenous Peoples. This project involved the researcher’s immersion into 23 regularly occurring conversational “coffee groups” across 16 rural Alberta communities (Camrose, Tofield, Wetaskiwin, Vegreville, Round Hill, Killam, Sundre, Carstairs, Drayton Valley, Barrhead, Westlock, Fort McLeod, Pincher Creek, Picture Butte, Vulcan, Kingman). Initial results of this research were presented at the Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Sustainable Communities Conference in St. John’s, NL, in October 2019 and an academic journal article further elaborating on these results was published in the spring of 2021. A second article has been compiled for an edited volume entitled *Building Inclusive Communities in Rural Canada*, that will be published by the University of Alberta Press in January 2023 and is currently available for pre-order.



With respect to community outreach activities, an initial “community conversation” on the topic of cultural diversity in rural Alberta, devised largely from the findings that emerged out of the ethnographic research described above, entitled “Hello Neighbour!” was delivered in Viking in the Fall of 2019. Additional events were scheduled throughout March and April, 2020 in Camrose, Tofield, Camrose County, and Flagstaff County, before being cancelled due to the pandemic. In lieu of these in-person events, the ACSRC published an online video resource for rural communities: [WATCH](#)

Finally, in September 2021, the ACSRC hosted a public webinar roundtable entitled: “The Work of Neighbours: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations in Rural Alberta” that featured a conversation by Dr. Roger Epp, Dr. Patricia Makokis, and Dr. Dwayne Donald, moderated by Dr. Clark Banack.

RURAL ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT IN A POST-PANDEMIC ALBERTA WEBINAR SERIES

In 2021, the ACSRC presented its first webinar series, **Rural Economic and Community Development in a Post-Pandemic Alberta**.

Each of the three, one-hour presentations focussed on topics of significance to rural communities.



Old Solutions for New Problems: Why Alberta's Small Towns Need to Consider Cooperatives

May 12, 2021

Presenter: Kyle White, Governance and Education Lead, Co-operatives First

[WATCH](#)

Advancing local renewable energy in Alberta: Insights from a survey of municipal leaders and rural landowners

May 20, 2021

Presenters: John Parkins, Professor, Department Chair & Sonak Patel Grad Research Asst Fellowship, Faculty of Agricultural, Life and Environmental Sci - Resource Economics & Environmental Sociology, University of Alberta

[WATCH](#)

The Challenge of Social Cohesion in Post-Pandemic Rural Development

June 3, 2021

Presenter: Clark Banack, PhD, Director, Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities, Adjunct Professor, Political Studies, U of A Augustana Campus

[WATCH](#)



OTHER PUBLIC WEBINARS

Roger Epp, Patricia Makokis, Dwayne Donald, and Clark Banack, "The Work of Neighbours: Reimagining Indigenous-Settler Relations in Rural Alberta," University of Alberta Alumni Week Webinar, September 29, 2021.

Clark Banack, Sandra Rein, and Shauna Wilton, "We have to Vote Again? Unpacking the Municipal Elections and Provincial Referenda," University of Alberta- Augustana Campus Lunch and Learn Webinar Series, October 7, 2021.

PUBLIC PRESENTATIONS

Clark Banack, "Thinking About Social Cohesion in Rural Development," Community Planning Association of Alberta Annual Conference, Online, May 2021.

Clark Banack, "The Covid-19 Pandemic and Levels of Social Cohesion in Rural Communities: Letter-to-the-Editor Forums as a Window into Community Discord," Canadian Rural Revitalization Foundation Sustainable Communities Conference, Online September 2021.

MEDIA

Clark Banack was invited to discuss rural issues on CBC radio on three different occasions over the year and discussed rural public opinion on Real Talk with Ryan Jespersen on June 11, 2021.

Dr. Banack was also quoted in the following news articles:

Country Guide Magazine: "[Talking to your kids about Race.](#)"

Country Guide Magazine: "Being Good Neighbours"

The Western Producer: "Election: Continuation of Liberals Ag Plan"

St. Alberta Gazette: "[Equalization question may stump voters, expert says.](#)"

ACADEMIC PUBLICATIONS

Clark Banack, "Ethnography and Political Opinion: Identity, Alienation, and Anti-Establishmentarianism in Rural Alberta," Canadian Journal of Political Science, 54 (1), 1-22, 2021.

[READ](#)

This article was awarded the Canadian Political Science Associations' John McMenemy Prize as the best article published in the Canadian Journal of Policial Science in 2021.

Clark Banack. "The Covid-19 Pandemic and Social Cohesion in Rural Canadian Communities: Letter-to-the-Editor Forums as a Window into Community Discord," Journal of Rural Development, 16(4), 1-26, 2021

[READ](#)

Clark Banack. "Rural Identity in an Urban Canada: Minority Rights for Agrarian Communities?" American Review of Canadian Studies, 51 (4), 2021.

POPULAR PUBLICATIONS

Clark Banack, "Rural Resentment: No Party is Looking out for Rural Albertans," in Alberta Views, June 2021.

[READ](#)

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THE MAGAZINE FOR ENGAGED CITIZENS

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SEARCH...



AGRICULTURE

Rural Resentment

No party is looking out for rural Albertans.

RURAL PATHWAYS SUMMER INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

The ACSRC oversees the Rural Pathways Summer Internship Program at Augustana Campus.

Established with a generous gift from an alumnus, this competitive program provides compensation to rural and Indigenous students to complete career-related internships with organizations in their home (or similar) communities over the summer. Program placements are as diverse as our students and their communities, with students posting about their placements on our Pathways blog throughout each summer.

After a 2-year Pandemic-induced hiatus, we were pleased to welcome three new Pathways Student Internships to the program in 2022.

Summer Intern for WSP Golder - Alternative Soil Fertilizers and Housing in Maskwacis, and Caribou Habitat Restoration in Northern Alberta



Josie in a helicopter doing caribou habitat restoration planning in Conklin, AB

"I am going into the fourth year of my Bachelor of Science degree at the University of Alberta Augustana.

I grew up on an organic farm near Morinville, Alberta, and chose to study Environmental Science because I wanted to make a difference in how humans impact the environment.

I chose to study outdoor education for my minor so that I could enjoy what I am passionate about. I believe people need to experience some connection to nature in order to feel motivated to protect it. Environmental science is "how" things work and outdoor education is "why" it matters to me."

-Josie Middleton

Town of Provost - Water Use Public Awareness Project

"I am a senior student attending the University of Alberta, Augustana Campus. As I love and am passionate about science, I am currently a doublemajor in biology and chemistry.

The rural community that I chose was Provost Alberta. I was born in Provost and have lots of family members living in this community.

The project that I pursued was creating an awareness campaign surrounding water. More specifically, I compiled and presented information on the importance of water, its properties, the hidden cost behind water (water footprint), the water table, groundwater and its contamination, the treatment of water (general and local), its conservation and sustainability, as well as some worst-case scenarios like the 2000 Walkerton E. coli outbreak, how you can limit your consumption and more."

-Damien Reiter



Drumheller Chamber of Commerce - Connect Small Businesses with Tourists via Website & Social



Veronica in front of the Drumheller Chamber of Commerce

"I am 4th year student studying Economics and Global Development Studies and currently living in Drumheller.

This summer, I worked with the Drumheller Chamber of Commerce, an organization focused on promoting a vibrant and diverse local business community. My overall focus was to integrate community members with local merchandisers and allow them to interact differently with other members.

How I achieved this was through interviewing Chamber members and asking about the background of their business and their experiences as owners. Then, I posted them on the Chamber's website and their social media accounts as featured member profiles."

Program placements are as diverse as our students and their communities.

Learn more about our students' experiences on their Pathways blog

augustanapathways.wordpress.com

ACSRC FINANCIAL SUMMARY YEAR END MAR 31 2022

	2022
Revenue	
External Funding Received	101, 240.40
U of A Funding Received	23, 506.74
	124, 747.14
Expense	
Program	34, 305.79
General Administration*	3, 316.09
	37, 621.88
	87, 089.26

* ACSRC Director Salary is included in the U of A - Social Science Department budget.



UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

ALBERTA CENTRE FOR SUSTAINABLE RURAL COMMUNITIES

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