

Canoe Robson Valley

September 17 – 19, 1999

Held in Valemount BC

Conference facilitation and report by: Andy Beesley

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Facilitators Summary

Rural Community Survival Conference

The main purpose of this conference was to bring in some experts in a variety of fields, all relating to economic development, to bring you the information that you need to consider when developing your own plans. The experts gave you a huge amount of knowledge and insight to consider as you now begin/continue the huge task of creating community goals and action plans to address your economic future. This entire report is written in point form for a specific reason: each point is a summary of what was being said, and is intended to be a permanent record of what transpired during the conference. The report does not include any of my (the facilitators) recommendations or interpretations; rather, I left those to the experts, and to the participants themselves. It will be important for you to carefully read through the bullet points and look at them like a toolbox filled with tools. You can pick out the relevant and interesting ones that you need at each point of your planning process. You will be able to use this report well into the future, as the tools and knowledge scattered throughout these notes relate to your immediate needs, your short term needs, and your longer term needs. The speaker's comments are paraphrased and arranged in the order that they were presented, and are often direct quotes from the speakers.

Main Themes of the Conference: Whole Group Consensus

Holding a whole group discussion, we came up with the following points that participants believed are essential messages emerging from this conference:

- ◆ The importance of having a community “image”: people buy stories, and we must have good stories for people to buy.
- ◆ We need to create, as a community, the overall image and then the strategy we wish to pursue.
- ◆ We need to ensure that we recognize the impacts the options will have on each of us, including socio, economic and environmental values.
- ◆ We need to define what we mean by our “community”. Is that Valemount, or the entire region? Perhaps we can have separate community identities, then create a valley wide identity.
- ◆ We must “plug the leaks” in our local economy.
- ◆ We must ensure we look after the businesses (and people) that we already have.
- ◆ We must work together to “change or die”.
- ◆ We must diversify our economy. We can do this by creating several specialties or “niches”.
- ◆ We must create a total package if we are to succeed. We need thorough planning.
- ◆ We must not fight each other with turf wars etc. We must work together.

Key action/strategy ideas from the Conference: Whole Group Consensus

Holding a whole group discussion, we came up with the following main points that participants believed we must focus on to “keep the ball rolling” from this conference:

- ◆ We need to create a vehicle/leadership to coordinate our efforts. The Town Council, Chamber of Commerce, and Economic Development Commission will take the lead role in this.
- ◆ We are asking these organizations to create venues for continued community input and participation in the development of plans. We need genuine two way communication to continue to happen.
- ◆ We would like the leaders to consider creating something like a “community survival committee”, consisting of interested community members. This committee is important to keep people involved in the process.
- ◆ We would like the leaders to create some timelines and measurable objectives, so we can all track what is happening.
- ◆ We would like to create linkages with businesses/Governments/organizations that are already specialists in economic development and change management. Many organizations already have experts on staff, who would willingly be part of the communities economic process.

Main Themes: Individual s comments

These were taken from the comment cards that each individual was invited to fill out during the entire conference. These were not discussed as a group, rather they are the points that each individual believed were the main themes emerging from this conference. These comments have been loosely organized into categories by the conference facilitator:

We must have community buy in:

- The longest journey begins with the first step
- Small communities grow and change, or die!
- We need community buy-in to achieve visitors increased length of stays
- Where is the broad-based community support? Will it fly?
- How do we get people in our communities to embrace change rather than fearing it, so we can move from the status-quo to economic diversification for our valley?
- If it is a good change, then the community will grow!
- We will have to overcome community indifference. Tourism service providers are us, and tourists are our livelihood. Some businesses in our area are not currently owned by “one of us”

Development needs to be planned:

- Development is going to happen whether or not we want it. The wise thing to do is to manage it for the benefit of the people of Valemount
- Establish policy that will guide the inevitability of growth with the increase of our popularity. Where will we put our new subdivisions, new commercial districts?
- Partition KinBasket Res. Provide for stable water levels. This will encourage waterfront development and a broader range of water-based activities, ice-based in winter. (fishing, boating competitions, etc.) We have no other still-water opportunities for tourism exploitation. This would benefit both tourists and residents
- Will economic development create more harm than good? What are the downsides? What will Valemount and region look like in 7 generations?
- Variety (diversity) provides a shock absorber to a community
- Don't forget that the most important resource is the human mind

Tourism is one of our potential strengths:

- We need to create “a really authentic Canadian experience in the mountains”
- Create a visitor centre, with large displays of local activities. Not just racks of brochures, but photos, videos, etc. We could also offer booking services and activity brokerage
- We need to figure out how to increase the length of stays. We need more to do for visitors!
- Make the town more inviting to stay, for example, log cabin siding on the downtown area. Let’s make us more unique
- Establish a theme for the whole community, particularly the business section. Perhaps a ‘building with wood’ or log store fronted businesses depicting a frontier town, or logging town theme
- We have WORLD CLASS WILDERNESS! Keeping incredible viewscapes and mountains and key wildlife species and spawning salmon and old growth forests and big trees = adventure/eco-tourism opportunities and continued water quality and recreation opportunities and a valuable legacy for our children’s children. Keep the big wilderness intact.
- Promote niche experience tourism
- Every product has a story, and tourists are looking for stories. We must provide a story for our visitors to tell

Local Businesses are important too!

- Support existing businesses
- Plug the leaks
- We need more reasonable local internet rates and services
- Develop a hi-tech training centre for industrial control systems
- Market globally, not locally
- Regionally specialize: “Eco-certify” all timber harvested in the Canoe-Robson valley. Create a label/brand and logo to identify the wood from here. (and sell the story behind the logo)
- Investigate value added

Strategies for Survival : Individual s comments

These were participants ideas for “strategies/action plans” taken from the comment cards that each individual was invited to fill out during the entire conference. These were not discussed as a group, rather they are the points that each individual believed were the main themes emerging from this conference. These comments have been loosely organized into categories by the conference facilitator:

A Valemount initiative or a Valley-Wide initiative???:

Park and back country gateway program should be developed on a valley-wide basis
 Joint venture packaging: 2 or more small communities within comfortable travelling distance joining together in packaging deals. (job creation possibilities as a transportation operator would be needed between adventures)
 Because of Mount Robson, we should include the whole Robson Valley
 We should not create a valley-wide initiative. Smaller is more focussed and more manageable

Create a Community image:

We need to build and sell a community image. We need to sell this image to our own community first.
 We need to identify what a quality tourism experience would be
 Find out what Valemount wants for itself
 Create a clear image of our village: our product, our market, our size etc.
 Identify our uniquenesses

Every product we create and market sells a story:

Evaluate the potential for implementing certification of forest products from the Robson Valley. Develop the product(s) story based on standards of forest stewardship
 Develop an eco-interpretation centre
 Capitalize on the availability of the KinBasket Lake (reservoir) by keeping this end usable all year. Build a weir or ladder so that it is always available for boating, fishing, skating, cross country skiing, etc.
 We must create quality products

Internet:

Web site collaboration between related businesses: adventure companies, accommodation, food etc.
 Develop a valley wide e-commerce committee and web-site

We need expert help:

We must ensure our development is well planned – not just growthy for growth’s sake

We need a marketing expert, to coordinate tourism businesses marketing

Look at who and where we market our town, including Global and local possibilities

Do joint marketing for tourism businesses

Joint marketing of Valley businesses, as a gateway community

“Welcoming” training

We need assistance to get accommodation sector to see the value of extended stays

We need community awareness training

We need training/workshops to get rid of “turf wars” and to learn to work together

Local business:

A task force should be set up, comprised of one member each from Valemount EDC, McBride EDC, Dome Creek Community Association, Cres. Spur Community Association, Dunster Community Association, Tete Jaune Community Association. Their sole purpose should be to list all of the leaks in our Valley economy, so we can see what needs to be plugged. It could show us lots of potential for the creation of local jobs!

Develop the necessary infrastructure to be able to carry out our plans

Our community needs to have more wheelchair access

The Conference Speakers Summaries and notes

The conference facilitator made notes during each speech, and the following are summaries of the main points each speaker made. Some of the speakers provided copies of their presentation, and these are also included at the end of their summaries.

Jeannette Townsend, Mayor of Valemount

- Past goals for economic growth have been set in the past and have either been met, or are currently being worked on. Some of these goals include:
 - Hot springs
 - Establish a community plan to keep growing
 - Create a vibrant diversified economy
 - Make this area an eco-tourism destination
 - Create a local communications/technology society
 - Promote Valemount as an Inter-provincial gateway
 - Meet visitors needs
 - Enhance the quality of life for residents
 - Create an education culture
 - Improve the image of the community
 - Maintain a forest related workforce
- As these past goals have been identified and are being met and worked on, it's time for a new strategy to be developed. Valemount can be a "lemon or a Salmon". It would be better to be a Salmon: strong, goal oriented, and dealing successfully with obstacles to success.

Lois Boone, MLA

The government is very supportive of economic development ideas, but it is up to the local community(s) to come up with their own ideas and plans. The Government has more than just moral support, but also funding.

Dr. Robert Pfister: Strategies & Practices in Sustainable Economic Development

Dr. Pfister (Bob) shared some very interesting points on how to approach economic development. *Please refer to his notes on the following pages.* The main principles he spoke about were:

- Plug the leaks
- Support existing businesses
- Encourage new local enterprise
- New attractions and seasonal events

Community and Economic Development

**Principles and Practices:
Economic Renewal for
Resource-based communities**

State of the Art

What are the choices ?

Who should be involved?

Where to begin?

Are there Principles to follow ?

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Sustainable Economic Development

It is based on principles. They –

- Defines prosperity in terms of quality of life, community values, and the environment alongside the development of specific tourism businesses.
- Advocates long-term stewardship of community resources to ensure present actions don't erode the basis for future prosperity.
- Pursues self-reliance and a more democratic approach to decision-making, representing community-wide interests over those of an elite few
- Stresses diversity, resilience, and a conviction that many small efforts work better than a single one-size-fits-all solution.

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**SOME OF THE CHALLENGES
(Tourism Sector)**

- The land use planning process (LRMP's) often expect tourism stakeholders and outdoor enthusiasts to speak with one voice .
- Tourism attractions and backcountry products do not enjoy certainty of tenure on crown land.
- Major attractions may proceed in isolation from the other inter-related sectors (transportation, accommodation, services) upon which they depend.
- Rural communities are often unfamiliar with some of the planning tools and they face information gaps in the area of tourism planning.

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"I would like tourism be one part of the economic renewal strategy in my community. Can we succeed ?"

What Principles and Practices are guiding the process

How are the priorities set

Who is involved in the process

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Community Survey

The purpose of the 1998 Robson Valley survey of economic development together with the land and resource planning process was three-fold:

- Describe the expectations and aspirations of valley residents that participated in the economic renewal process;
- Compare those experiences against a set of principles that one would expect to guide a collaborative and sustainable approach to community and economic development;
- Look at a capacity building strategy for any community seeking to create a favorable climate for economic renewal ...particularly strategies involving tourism.

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First Step

The first step was to understand the views of residents and local businesses participating in one or more of the planning processes. Particular attention was given to the tourism sector in Robson Valley.

In order to contribute to the effort, it was necessary to listen to community participants concerning their experience with economic development strategies and tourism priorities.

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PREVIOUS RESEARCH SUGGESTS

- Residents and businesses alike need the opportunity to participate effectively in those decisions that guide their economic destiny.
- Local participation is a particularly vital success factor for communities choosing to diversify their economy in the service sector.
- Often it is the new, non-forest business that can have the greatest difficulty, surviving and getting established, by the very nature of not being seen as central to the existing economic structure of the community.

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PRINCIPLE: PARTICIPATORY

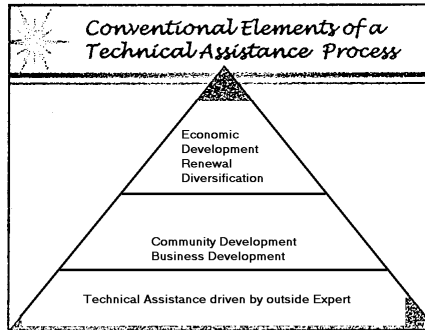
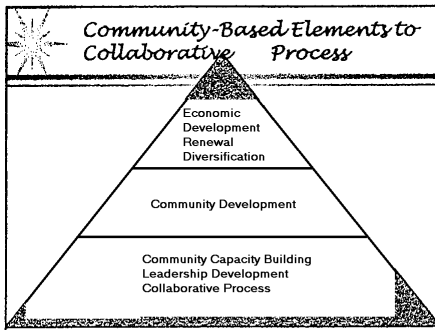
- > The literature stresses the importance of resident participation in the decision-making process associated with tourism development.
- > An wide array of stakeholders contribute to, or are affected by the tourism industry.
- > Traditionally, failure to address the needs of stakeholders has led to conflicts between organizations such as provincial government, private investors, and host communities.

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Research on the Collaborative Process

- Interviews were designed to assess whether or not
- > Process was inclusive of all stakeholders (it is a public and social good that is developed);
- > There was recognition of mutual and individual benefits of collective decisions;
- > Access to resources in the form of information, time, and money was adequate;
- > A shared vision statement existed

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HELPING TO STRENGTHEN RESOURCE-DEPENDENT COMMUNITIES

When communities are pushed to diversify and create a new economy, tourism has contributed substantially to the renewal of some British Columbia resource-dependent communities. For example:

- Kimberly adopted a Bavarian theme for its downtown to attract tourists.
- Chemainus has drawn on its heritage as a logging and lumber producing community to support its growing tourism sector.
- Nelson based its tourism appeal on an architectural heritage and links with education (Council of Tourism Associations, 1992).

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Principles for Economic Development

- > Plug the leaks
- > Support Existing Businesses
- > Encourage new local Enterprise
- > Attract compatible Businesses


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(1) Plug the leaks
"A Penny Saved is a Penny Earned"

- > The community bucket is certain to have some expenditure leaks; before you pour more money into a leaky bucket, a town should simply plug some of its leaks (import substitution).
- > While international commerce is as important part of community vitality, there are some services and products that probably can be supplied locally.
Examples: Tropic, Utah. (Bryce Canyon-Hike); Osage, Iowa. (Energy efficiency/Climate sensitive design)

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(2) Support Existing Businesses



The economic heart of a community is its small businesses; support them to become more efficient and successful and you'll increase jobs as well as strengthen the economy of your community.

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(3) Encourage New Local Resident Enterprises




- A town that is *plugging leaks* and *supporting existing businesses* is a great place to start a new one.
- You are creating an exciting business climate and a foundation for more businesses.
- Most importantly, *value-added* initiatives can apply to all business sectors -- agriculture, timber, tourism, and technology!

Target your new business partners

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(4) Recruit Compatible New Business



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Our Approach (1 of 2)

- 1) A review of relevant literature was undertaken. This review focused on the role of tourism development planning in forestry-dependent communities and resource dependent economies, the history of tourism planning in BC, and the principles of collaborative community-based tourism planning.
- 2) Interviews were conducted based upon the principles of a collaborative community planning process.
- 3) A list of individuals involved in the Robson Valley LRMP or economic development strategy was compiled.

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Our Approach (1 of 2)

- 4) A week prior to the interviews, letters were mailed to seventy-two (72) participants from one or more of the identified processes.
- 5) Of these seventy-two (72), nearly a dozen had moved out of the valley. Fifty were able to be contacted and interviewed by field researchers.
- 6) Based upon the responses of the participants, it was evident that two sectors were perhaps conspicuous by their absence in the planning activity. A subsequent survey was initiated to interview these two groups in order to discover some barriers or constraints to participation.

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Inventory the Outdoor/Adventure Tourism Opportunities

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Involve the Retail Sector

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Expand upon CURRENT EVENTS (Increase Length of Stay)

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Examine New Attractions & Seasonal Events

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PRINCIPLES FOR SUCCESS

- > Inclusive of all stakeholders (it is a public and social good that is developed);
- > Recognition of mutual and individual benefits of collective decisions;
- > Adequate access to resources in the form of information, time, and money;
- > formulation of a vision statement for tourism and the establishment of a collaborative organization to address outcomes of the process.

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Strategies for Sustainable Development

- Defines prosperity in terms of quality of life, community values, and the environment alongside the development of specific tourism businesses.
- Advocates long-term stewardship of community resources to ensure present actions don't erode the basis for future prosperity.
- Pursues self-reliance and a more democratic approach to decision-making, representing community-wide interests over those of an elite few
- Stresses diversity, resilience, and a conviction that many small efforts work better than a single one-size-fits-all solution.

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Fall 1999 Dunster Community Hall

Delivery workshops in Robson Valley which will --

- increase the capacity (knowledge and skills) of all community stakeholders to create a favorable climate for economic renewal and sustainable development.

>At a recent open house Robson Valley residents discussed, ranked and re-organized several choices of community-based workshops. The participants identified the sessions they wanted to participate in.

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Beyond the Green Horizon

Carefully developed tourism can provide real economic, environmental, and cultural benefits to the community. In turn, genuine community involvement can enrich the tourism experience and product.

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Tourism

- > Robson Valley Tourism Marketing Association
- > Promotion as a Gateway community
- > Team Yellowhead Membership
- > Affiliation with other Destination Marketing Associations



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Three Approaches to Development

Factor	Participatory	Technical Assistance	Conflict
Assumption	People have the right and ability to identify and solve collective problems	Science provides a means to solve problems	Power is the most basic of all resources
Core problem to be addressed	Capacity of people to take collective action	Capacity to harness science to solve human problems	Concentration of power in the hands of a few persons
Image of the individual	Inherently good, but goodness suppressed	System-defined Player of roles	Oppressed
Image of society	Chaotic	Bureaucratic organizations with authority figures	Groups struggle to maintain or see to their power base

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Dale McMann: Economic Diversification

- Change is constant. Change is here to stay. Therefore, we must adapt to change. To embrace diversification means we must embrace change. We can be proactive and help to create and deal with the change, or we can let the change be forced upon us. Diversification means reinventing your community, literally. This is your responsibility, not the Governments or anyone else's.
- How to achieve diversification: there is no one magic cure, however there are some commonalities:
 1. You need a clear understanding of your community, including strengths, weaknesses, hopes and goals.
 2. You need a strategic plan. Know what you are going to do, who is going to do it, how it's going to get done, and measurement.
 3. You need community buy-in to the process.
 4. You need to create a partnership, with all of the political and other organizations in your area. You cannot afford turf wars between the organizations.
 5. You need regional and provincial support.
 6. You need a commitment within your community to make the necessary changes. You need to create the facilities and ensure you have the right people in your community to address any community changes you will make.
 7. You need to be willing to make mid-course corrections. Something will always go awry, so admit your mistakes, and make the necessary changes.
 8. You need to make a long-term commitment to the efforts you are about to undertake. People will discourage you, and you will have roadblocks. People will resist change. You will be told that you are doing the wrong thing. You'll need to persevere.
- Diversification is not automatic, and it is not quick. But it will happen if you are committed to make it happen.
- In reality, none of us have a choice in the matter of diversification.

Dick Butler, Director of Tourism Policy and
Land Use Branch, Ministry of Small Business
Tourism and Culture

Dr. Bruce Fraser, Salasan & Associates

- Park & Back Country Gateways Communities is a pilot project that the Province is undertaking.
- It will provide communities chosen with support, to help those communities develop the networks they need to build connections and infrastructure to build their “gateways” concepts. They are going to select 3 communities who are geographically situated in appropriate areas, and who have the people who are committed to developing their activities further. Valemount seems like a likely candidate, and will likely be considered to be one of the pilot communities.
- It is specifically for businesses doing back-country/adventure/wilderness type of activities and will help to increase eco-tourism.
- Valemount seems as if it could benefit from intense collaboration among people doing similar businesses, so you can advertise, promote and sell yourselves as a very rich area for tourism. Valemount is invited to work with the Government to identify itself as being interested in this program.

David Baxter, Executive Director, Urban Futures Institute

Part 1: Demographics

For a complete look at all of the information David presented, please go to the websites:

www.urbanfutures.com “chart of the week”

www.landcentre.ubc.ca “publication summaries”

- Growth in itself is not a solution. The issue is change. Through change, growth will result, not the other way around
- There is no such thing as “eco-tourism” as a separate entity. There is tourism, and it is our job to break it down into specific areas that we want to specialize in. We need to find our “niche”.
- All of the world’s population growth is happening in urban areas. In rural areas, the population is shrinking.
- The markets that we need to focus on in BC are almost all from North America, Central America, and Asia. Europe’s population is declining and aging, therefore, you will need to continually keep up to date and increase your product’s quality if you want to keep repeat customers from Europe.
- Japan has no immigration, and their birthrates are way down. Therefore, their baby-boomer population is aging and there will not be enough younger people to financially support the aging population. Japan’s economy is not going to improve as their population begins to decline. As with Europe, we can attract young Japanese people, but as the young population is declining, we must continually improve our quality and ensure that our products are more attractive than other people’s.
- North America will see a decline over the next couple of decades of people aged 30 – 50. We will however see an increase in a younger population. USA’s population will grow by double the population of Canada in the fairly near future. If you are going to target a USA market, you must acknowledge that Spanish is the predominant second language.
- In Canada, 1 out of 4 people will be over the age of 60 in the near future. There is enormous potential in targeting the “older” population. One specific example could be to target Valemount as a seasonal destination for older people, understanding that they’ll probably live somewhere warmer during the winter. Another consideration is that funding from our Government is going to dry up, as the majority of Government resources will be put into health care (etc.) for our older population.
- Baby-boomers are people with similar ages to people like Mick Jagger, Tina Turner, Donovan, John Mellencamp, Lucien Bouchard, Cheech & Chong.
- There are two main markets to go after: one is the people between ages 35 – 40 years, and the other is the aging population...people between 55 – 60.
- If you are going to market towards “families”, you must understand that today’s parents are usually about a decade older than they used to be. These older parents

are more likely to look for restaurants, look for activities for their children that they won't necessarily join in on (e.g. water-sliding or "extreme" activities)

- If you wish to market towards the front edge baby boomers (ages 50 - 54), then you must begin marketing today to attract them in 5 years when they are retired. The number of people retiring each year will more than double by the year 2025.
- Communities that can "help" older people stay healthier and fitter will have a good competitive, marketable product. But you must also keep in mind that older people also require extra health care.
- Older people want affordable housing and a good social infrastructure. They want to settle in a place where they can "outlive their retirement savings". They also want to be close to their children. Smaller communities are usually more affordable, so the challenge is to provide the social infrastructure that will attract and satisfy them.
- Seniors will likely be two-tiered regarding their wealth: the "haves" and the "have-nots".
- Canada's immigration policy relates to our shrinking 'young-people' population. We tend to accept young people, as we must replace our shrinking young population if our economy will be able support the increasing older population. We can expect about 250 thousand or more young immigrants per year. Therefore, our 'young-people' population should even out and remain constant over the next decade.
- BC's overall population will grow by about 2 million people over the next 25 years. This is a conservative figure.
- The future demographics for the Valemount area are not certain at this point. The reason is that it is up to the local community to decide what sort of community you will shape, and whom you will attract (or repel) from your community.

David Baxter

Part 2: Amenity-Based vs. Resource-Extracting Communities

- An amenity region has an attractive environment, and has a large variety of services and products. They produce things such as services, experiences, stories, homes, tourism, etc. The biggest thing a thriving amenity region produces is stories. People are social beings, and we collect and tell stories. (E.g. “we discovered a beautiful town called Valemount..”) The better the stories, the better the marketing possibilities. This applies to tourism, products, services, etc.
- Rule for tourism: $6 + 8 + 10 = 24$. If someone does 6 hours of daytime activity, and sleeps for 8 hours, there are still 10 hours left over. If your facilities do not have something for them to do for those all-important 10 hours, then you will fail. These 10 hours are the most important aspect of successful tourism. You never want tourists to look at each other and say “now what do we do?” and have nothing else for them to do. You also need to let people know what there is to do.
- People who spend money as tourists want to buy “certainty and security”. They do not want ugly surprises. Your tourism should be like a cruise ship experience...people are welcomed, they know what’s going on and there are a lot of choices, and there is consistency on board in terms of high quality service etc.
- Today’s families are time starved. They want to purchase high quality services and high quality stories.
- To expand on the concept of people buying stories: the restaurants that charge \$100 for a meal and the restaurants that charge \$5 for a meal both pay the same amount for the food delivered to their establishment. The more expensive restaurants charge more because they are creating a “story”...such as exquisite décor, or exceptional service, or the food was highly decorated, etc. This is an example of “value added”.
- With a bigger demographic market, there will be new opportunities for niche markets. We can create value added niches for people coming into our communities, but we can also create niches for export.
- Diverse economies are easier to say than to create. You can only achieve a diverse economy if you have enough people to support it. It would probably be more realistic for Valemount to be a specialty community. You may then see diversity occur as a result of your successful specialty.
- Chasing “what’s hot” is fatal. A hot market is in instant demand, but as soon as the prices start to go up (which they will), then huge competition results, and prices will go way down again. Therefore chasing something like tourism just because everyone else is doing it is not necessarily healthy in the long run. It is a better idea to determine what you can do best (strengths), and develop that.
- The advantage you have in this community is the people in this community. You must find out what the strengths are of your people.
- Governments do not have the answers. The people that know the market the best are the people that work within their markets. Do not rely on Governments. Do not rely on people from outside your community for answers. Look within.

- You must create a “brand image”, and the image must be the right one for the market. (Think of Banff, Victoria, Jasper, Moose Jaw, etc....they all have an instant image that comes to your mind) Valemount already has an image in people’s minds that have been here. You need to be aware of what your image is, and if necessary, create a new one, or market your current one if it’s effective.
- If you want people to know about your community, you have to make sure they can find out about you.
- The next century will be the century of water. We already know that fossil fuels will run out in the next century. The world’s supply of water is fixed, and only 3% of the water is fresh, and only a small amount of that is accessible. Therefore, water will be a huge part of our focus during the next century, as we seem to be on the verge of running out of fresh water. Canada has the world’s largest supply of fresh water on a per capita basis out of any of the major industrialized countries.

Ross Cloutier: Tourism

Please refer to his notes on the pages following his summary notes

- There is a big difference between “adventure” and “tourism”. Adventure means there is some risk involved. It is challenging for people, and people could get hurt. Some people are attracted to this risk. (In many cases, when a company has had a tourist die, their business increases the next year!) There are varying degrees of “adventure”, all the way from ‘hard’ which indicates a need for some skills, physical fitness, and risk, to ‘soft’ adventures, which include non-technical lower risk activities.
- ‘hard’ adventures are niche marketing, whereas ‘soft’ adventures are more broad based marketing.
- The term “eco-tourism” is often mis-used. Eco-tourism’s roots are based on conservation. We need to ensure we understand the difference between adventure tourism and eco-tourism.
- Adventure tourism is becoming very common and socialized in North America. This is not the case in Europe, as they have been doing adventure type of activities for many years, and the risk involved has become normal in their society. In the past in Canada, tour guides used to do adventure activities for a hobby. Today, they are looking at adventure activities as a career choice, not just a fun and exciting past-time.
- Valemount adventure/tourism businesses are not competing with other regional businesses. You are competing with the world. People interested in this type of activity will travel the entire world looking for adventure. Your product must be able to compete on an international level, and be attractive enough to make world travellers pick your community over others.
- Small adventure businesses have been the norm in the past (average yearly revenue of \$90,000). These small companies are becoming extinct. The trend is for small companies to amalgamate, to cut down on certain costs, and as a result everyone makes much more money. The future successful companies will be larger, more professional, bigger profits, and able to compete on an international level. There may still be small businesses, however, this is not the trend of the future.
- Smaller businesses are all competing with each other, therefore driving the prices down. In general, income from adventure tourism is way below market value in comparison to other countries.
- If you want to attract a travel wholesaler to send people to your business, you will have to be fairly big (e.g. well established, with \$300,000 yearly income or more) in order to be attractive to them. As they only make a small percentage of your business income, the smaller businesses are not attractive to them.
- Cash flow problems are one of the biggest issues for small businesses trying to expand. The way to overcome cash flow problems is by seeking investors, amalgamating with other companies, and creating new partnerships etc.
- Government is becoming very involved in adventure tourism, including the need to pay fees, have certain standards (e.g. training/certificates etc.), and other regulations. You can expect to pay about 5% of your gross in fees etc. In the future, you will pay much more.

- Valemount has to decide whether it will develop a product, then market it and hope people come; or, you can find out what the market wants, and then develop the product (and infrastructure etc.)
- Valemount also has to decide what kind of image it wants to build: how do we want people to see us? How do people perceive us, and how will we respond to that perception? You also have to ensure you don't exaggerate what you can offer, as you must not disappoint tourists...rather, you must meet and exceed their expectations.
- Tourism of any kind is only one type of business to help your community. You must diversify your economy for success, as it's dangerous to put all of your eggs in one basket due to world economic trends etc.

Adventure/Eco Tourism

- Tourism Sectors*
- | | |
|------------------------|--------------------------|
| <u>1. Travel Trade</u> | <u>2. Attractions</u> |
| • Travel agencies | • Parks |
| • Tour wholesalers | • Museums |
| • Tour operators | • Galleries |
| • Tour guides | • Cultural attractions |
| | • Industrial attractions |

- Tourism Sectors*
- | | |
|------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| <u>3. Events & Conferences</u> | <u>4. Tourism Services</u> |
| • Festivals | • Reservations services |
| • Special events | • Advertising services |
| • Conferences | • Information centers |
| • Meetings | • Suppliers |
| • Trade shows | • Trade press |

- Tourism Sectors*
- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| <u>5. Accommodation</u> | <u>6. Food & Beverage</u> |
| • Hotels | • Restaurants |
| • Motels | • Food outlets |
| • Resorts | • Pubs |
| • Campgrounds | • Coffee shops |
| • B & B | |
| • Hostels | |
| • Time-shares | |

- Tourism Sectors*
- | | |
|--------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| <u>7. Transportation</u> | <u>8. Adventure & Recreation</u> |
| • Air carriers | • Skiing |
| • Motor coaches | • Fishing |
| • Railways | • Golf/tennis |
| • Cruise lines | • Boating |
| • Recreation vehicles | • Hiking |
| • Charters | • Wildlife viewing |
| | • Adventure tourism |
| | • Ecotourism |

- The Terms*
- Adventure tourism
 - Ecotourism
 - Nature tourism
 - Cultural travel
 - Responsible travel
 - Ethical travel
 - Alternative travel

www.courtesy.com/epg/epg13/epg13.html

Adventure Travel

• **Defined:**
 Leisure activity that takes in an unusual, exotic, remote or wilderness destination and is associated with high levels of involvement and activity by the participants, most of it outdoors. Adventure travel may include high-risk (hard) or low-risk (soft) activities.

Adventure Tourism

- **"Hard" Adventure**
 - Technical in nature
 - Strenuous
 - Potential for harm
- **"Soft" Adventure**
 - Non-technical in nature
 - Non-strenuous
 - Low risk
 - High interpretive component
 - Broader based market

Ecotourism

• **Definition**
 A form of tourism inspired primarily by the natural history of an area, including its indigenous cultures. The ecotourist practices a non-consumptive use of wildlife and natural resources and contributes to the visited area through labor or financial means aimed at directly benefiting the site and economic well-being of the local residents.

Ecotourism

• **Definition (continued)**
 The visit should strengthen the ecotourist's appreciation and dedication to conservation issues. Ecotourism implies a managed approach by the host region to use proceeds of the enterprise to fund the area's land management as well as community development.

> 900 Businesses

- Water Related	
• Powersail cruising	168
• Wildlife viewing	50
• Scuba diving	69
• Kayaking	57
• River rafting	53
- Land Related	
• Trail riding	52
• Hut to hut	23
• Guide outfitters	255
• Bike Hike	45
• Heli-ski/snowcat	24
• Others	95

Adventure/Eco Tourism Trends

- "Socialization" of adventure
- Product internationalization
- Hotel and resort programming
- Distribution through retailers
- Small business pressures
- Mergers and buy-outs
- Land use access regulations
- Increased profitability
- Risk management/legal concern

*Adventure/Eco Tourism
Issues*

- Too rapid growth
- High-risk image
- Seasonality of employment
- Operator turnover restrictions
- Yields and margins
- Management expertise
- Workforce training
- Safety and liability
- Investor access
- Land-base access

*Adventure/Eco Tourism
Future*

- Government intervention
- Higher land access costs
- Environmental (product) deterioration
- International competition
- Employment opportunities
- Business interests take precedence over lifestyle
- Mainstream economic driver

*Adventure/eco Tourism
in Valemount*

- Develop community support
- Assess infrastructure
- Create skilled worker base
- Identify market and product possibilities
- Develop product
- Joint venture packaging
- Identify marketing channels
- Joint venture marketing
- Create clear product image
- Provide high quality products

EXPLORNOGRAPHY

- THE VICARIOUS
THRILL OF
EXPLORING WHEN
THERE IS NOTHING
LEFT TO EXPLORE

John Backhouse, Northern Development Commissioner

- His role is to act as an advocate for Northern BC, to identify opportunities for economic development, and to support business and organizations.
- Is using a “bottom-up” approach, and is seeking input from everyone involved in economic development. He’s held forums in all 3 regions of Northern BC, including Valemount.
- Every community and every region is different and has different needs.
- He has developed a list of issues and priorities in the North, and has assigned staff (policy analysts) to each of the 3 regions. These staff will get to know each region’s specific issues and priorities. They will then try and link up these priorities with other regions and ultimately to Northern BC as a whole.
- As an advocate, there are some difficulties still to overcome with Government, as they are still a long distance from our communities, and don’t always realize that our needs are different from the lower mainland’s. However, John has had some success in working with Victoria, and they have listened and indicate they will continue to listen and make a commitment to the North.
- It is very important that communities such as Valemount develop their own plans. The Northern Development Commission office can help support the plans, but they cannot create them.

Value-Added Manufacturing, Wood Products (Panel presentation)

John Brink: President Brink Forest Products

- Industry is in a position of being less than competitive at present for a variety of reasons including high stumpage rates, high fees, low markets, etc. There have been closures, and more are likely to come. We've also seen mergers and restructuring of companies.
- The fibre we have in BC is of the highest quality and biggest diversity of anywhere in the world. We also have the best accessibility of our products to markets in other countries. We also have a ready and willing workforce. We have all of the requirements to be successful.
- In order to be competitive, we need to have large companies. But we also need small primaries (such as a mill that produces specialty products), value added companies to compliment the major or medium sized companies. A specific niche will be certified production (e.g. Forest Stewardship Council).
- Local associations could reach out to other associations and eventually the larger Provincial ones, in order to collaborate and work together in order to maximize your effectiveness (and business!)
- More opportunities than ever in BC for value added wood products.

Jim Engleson: General Manager, PG Region for Canfor

- Any value added business you wish to undertake must be:
 - Well thought out
 - Profitable
 - Have a good marketing plan
 - Have a good source of raw material
- Value added should really be called "margin valued". This is when the value added is truly greater than the cost of producing the item. Some businesses have failed as they "don't know when to stop touching the wood", and their costs have been greater than the amount they can charge for the item.
- Many previous business ventures were losing money, as the products they produced were not well thought out, researched, or strategically planned.
- When you are putting together a business plan, make sure it is built around a concept that does not rely on logs. Don't count on the profit of log sales as a part of your business success. Log sales are only a bonus if you are lucky enough!
 - Start with a market plan: make sure someone is out there who wants to buy what you produce, the stability of the market, etc.

- Look at the raw material required. How readily available is it, how much will it cost (and are costs volatile or stable), what's the quality, etc.?
- Manufacturing facilities: spend as little capital as you can. When times get tough, the low cost producer is usually the one who survives.
- What if #\$\$ happens? What if major markets go down? What if my targets are not met? What if the USA/Canada relationship changes? You must be able to plan for risk management.
- Establish a line of credit, to deal with things like delays, non-payment, and seasonal work. Cash flow is the lifeline of your business.

Albert Smith: President of SKD Enterprises

- Understand extremely clearly what your market base is. Know what your products are, and what they could be.
- There are many associations you can tap into for advice and guidance. (E.g. BC Woods Specialty group; Abbotsford Skills Centre; Wood Enterprise Centre in Quesnel; Science Council of BC; BC Advanced Systems Institute; just to name a few)
- Ensure you have a good supply of fibre, and consider quality, species, size, etc. (Also consider that one person's garbage is another person's treasure. This applies to fibre)
- It's easy to erase with an eraser, but it's hard to erase with a cutting torch. Make sure you have an excellent business plan.
- Financial institutions give you funding based on your equity, not on your great idea.
- The winners of tomorrow will deal proactively with chaos and will look at chaos per se as the source of market advantage, not as a problem to be got around (Tom Peters)
- You are welcome to contact Albert to discuss any of this with him. Phone (250) 564-4861.

Rosaline Ferré: Coordinator, Wood WORKS

- Woodworks is about creating a new wood culture: to increase the use of wood in industry and manufacturing, as well as in building homes.
- Using wood in commercial construction is good for the environment. It's the most environmentally friendly building material. Secondly, it's good for the economy.
- Wood use is sustainable.
- Components of Wood WORKS are to:
 - Promote the use of wood
 - Ensure professionals have the skills and training needed to work with wood effectively
 - To build a level playing field. To find out who makes the decisions about building materials, and specifically to ensure that wood must be considered for all Provincial construction and used where cost competitive. (The BC Government has adopted this policy, and the Municipalities and Regional districts are also being asked to adopt this policy)
- There have been some bumps along the way:
 - Resistance to change
 - Lack of knowledge, skills and confidence
 - Tendency to view design as a cost to be cut
 - The need for more building systems
- Wood WORKS will continue to expand in Northern BC, as well as immediately expanding the project to the Okanogan region, with a goal of gradually expand to all areas of BC.
- Main message/goal is: "BC builds with wood, and the world builds with BC wood".

Doug Taylor: Exporting

- In this country we are very good at education, Government, tourism, technology (hard and soft), resource technology, and culture.
- In this country we are bad at promoting ourselves, marketing, follow-up, follow through, and understanding how the world works.
- Where we sell: USA, Asia, South America, Mexico, Europe, and Eastern Europe. People do like to deal with us, as they perceive us as likable and honest.
- Why export? It creates long term growth and jobs, diversifies your firm, and gives you access to new ideas, products and resources. And it's fun! Valemount does not compete with McBride or any other local community. Valemount competes with the world.
- Some basic facts about exporting: it's competitive; it's costly; it's time consuming; it demands commitment; and it can be difficult.
- Some of the good aspects of exporting: you can increase new markets, increase new ideas, increase your income, and increase your long-term viability.
- Some of the bad aspects of exporting: you may forget your home market; you can lose good deals; you may not be comfortable adapting to different cultures; and you may not appreciate the large amount of travel.
- Some of the ugly aspects of exporting: it's very expensive (although if you are doing a good job you'll also make a lot of money); it's very time consuming; there is a chance for failure.
- Who can export? Virtually anyone with a legitimate product or service.
- Some examples of what you can export are: tourism; crafts; software; and resource technology.
- What you need for success: you need commitment, but you also need a good domestic track record. You can't expect to sell something abroad if you can't prove that you can sell it in your own company. The other things you need are the necessary resources. Some other things you need for success are perseverance, patience, common sense, and a lot of energy.
- Some other things you need are: extensive research, thorough planning, and thorough preparation. A little luck never hurts!
- Some of the export issues to consider are: trade agreements; financing (consider that other currencies can fluctuate considerably); Government regulations; and competition.
- Critical first steps:
 - Marketing research: unless you know your market, you will fail. Market research is worth every hour and each dollar you spend on it, as long as it is done properly.
 - Produce marketing material: you can't sell an idea, concept or vision unless you have something tangible to put into people's hands. Use brochures, advertising and the Internet. Make it professional and consistent.
 - Pick an entry strategy: use agents/distributors; licensing/franchising; joint ventures; direct investment; alliances/consortium; and piggyback.

- Marketing (it is all about marketing!): “if you build it, they will not come, unless you tell them about it”.
- Where you can turn for help: Use your Government (such as the Economic Development office, Industry Canada, Department of Foreign affairs, National Research Council, Export Development Corporation, PG export Development Centre); find out about your industry; attend trade shows; use the Internet; and get professional help.
- Some good ideas: put money into sales, get friendly with your banker, ISO Certification, make sure you can deliver, and look professional.
- Some things they don't tell you about the export business: success takes longer than anticipated, it usually costs more than you figured, business trips are not holidays, immigration is looking for you, schedules rarely work, and you will forget something.
- Community strategy: get a resource person (such as Doug Taylor!), qualify companies, pick success's not failures, invest resources, and get on with it!

Ray Rasker: From Resource-Extraction to Amenity-Driven Growth...the Good, the Bad, and the Ugly

- There is an ever-increasing demand for services in the United States job market. This trend has been growing steadily and consistently. For example, only a very small percentage of the cost of an automobile goes towards the raw materials needed to make that car. The rest of the costs are all in “services” towards designing, making and selling that car. Making a bicycle needs a wide variety of “services” in order to design, manage, market and manufacture the bicycle.
- Today the costs of making most products is about 25% raw materials, and the rest into “services”.
- The trend of future professions is all in the “brain power” areas, such as technicians, developers, designers, etc.
- Another trend is in the aging population. Older people are going to require huge additional services, including health care and recreational activities.
- Therefore, some lessons are:
 - It’s a global economy
 - Money is footloose
 - Services account for the bulk of the work being done
- In the 1950’s, manufacturing consisted of raw materials going in one end of the factory, and the product coming out of the other. Blue-collar workers did the work, and some managers did the design and other services.
- In the 1990’s, companies may be managed by people in different geographical locations. Some of the manufacturing is done in a variety of places. Service providers are contracted out in a variety of locations. The final product rolls out in one particular location. In other words, the assembly line is now a “scattered global assembly line”.
- Economic development is often characterized as being ‘mining, logging, ranching’, versus tourism. In reality, industries are holding their own at a consistent rate, however, the bulk of growth in the last 2 decades has all been in the service sectors (e.g. hotels, amusement parks, engineering, management services, legal services, hospital/health services, etc.)
- By diversifying your community, you can create a wealth of opportunities in the development of services, and thus an increased economy.
- One of the problems with this “new economy” is that it leaves a lot of people behind. Perhaps they don’t have the skills or attitudes necessary, and they may end up feeling angry and looking for someone to blame. This is where some of the “conspiracy theories” may come from.
- Communities need to protect their natural resources...to take the growth and steer it in a proactive way, or let it grow over us.

Grace Casselman: E-Commerce

- E-Business is more than just buying and selling the internet, it's about improving the experience for the customer.
- You can use e-commerce to help connect your communities, including business ventures.
- The number of domain names (internet sites) has almost doubled in the last two years. The Internet is expanding in a huge way!
- Internet sales are supposed to reach about 1 Trillion dollars in the near future. They are already at 75 billion (yearly, US dollars).
- In Canada, by 2003, Internet sales are expected to grow to 80 Billion dollars. They are currently at about 10 billion dollars.
- Half of the websites are marketing to consumers. A lot of sales are also business selling to other businesses.
- 46% of Internet users are female. 60% of the web is in English.
- People are still nervous about shopping on line. However, it's in reality more dangerous to pay a restaurant bill by credit card. It's also true that as the Internet gets more popular, criminals will get more sophisticated and interested in how to rip you off! There are ways to overcome this, with "secure links" similar to what banks and reputable web sites use. You can tell if your site is secure if there is a little key or lock symbol on the corner of your screen. If the lock is open, or the key is broken, it's not a secure site.
- A personality type of person who uses the internet, according to some research, is:
 - "actualizers": 12% of the overall population, but 70% of Internet users are actualizers. They are factual, not afraid of technology. They are 'take charge' people, and they demand many options and choices.
 - You can take a personality test yourself by looking up "future.sri.com".
- The Internet gives you the opportunity to "track" the people visiting your site. You can find out what sorts of information they clicked on, whether they looked up prices, and even get them to fill out information on themselves via surveys. You can also leave your email address and ask for customer's feedback.
- The biggest advantage to putting something online is that you are improving communication between your customers or the people you deal with
- If you begin to advertise on the Web, you have to make sure that you can supply what you are offering. For instance, you may receive an "order" from another country. Can you deliver??
- Web site costs are extremely variable. Some sites are about \$45 a month or less to run. Other companies pay many thousands of dollars to have sites designed, hosted, etc. Some considerations are:
 - Web site design/development
 - Hosting: who will host the site
 - Search engines: having your site registered with a search engine (for a fee)
 - Domain name: the name of your site...ranges from inexpensive (including the hosts name as well as yours) all the way to expensive (just your own name)

- Hardware/software needed to run your site
- Skilled people
- Fulfillment: can you deliver what you are selling
- Marketing of your site: you need to put your web site address on cards, letterhead, pens, brochures, voice mail, links from other web sites, etc.
- Training of you and your staff
- Regular maintenance of the site
- Banks may be hesitant to set up accounts with you for your Internet site. They may require a percentage of your Internet sales income (e.g. 2.4% of your gross). There are also up front fees to pay, etc. One option is to try and get several different organizations in your community to offer package web services.
- It costs 10 times more to attract a new customer than it does to sell something to a repeat customer. Therefore you should put extra efforts into getting customers to come back to your site.
- A good web site:
 - Looks professional
 - Is easy to navigate
 - Has company product information
 - Has phone numbers and address's very easily found
 - Has security features
 - Has customer testimonials

Michael Goldberg: How to Market your Business and Community

- Global demographics are changing dramatically. Immigration and demographics are totally linked, and we must be aware of the latest trends before attempting to market.
- Births minus deaths is not the deciding factor of demographics in Valemount, rather, it's more to do with how many people are leaving, and how many people are coming into this community.
- The global economy acts like a tidal wave. The money flows in when something is popular/hot, but inevitably flows out when something else becomes more popular/hot. If you diversify your economy, you can reduce the risk of being at the whim of this tidal wave.
- We need to create visions for the regional economy...look at new ideas, metaphors, themes and strategies. The resource economy of the past will not carry us indefinitely. The new resource of the future is the resource of the mind.
- In short, we need to diversify, specifically from resources to knowledge based goods and services, and from the USA to a more global market place.
- We can define income as: consumption (spending by households), plus investment (for future production) plus Government spending, plus exports. Then we have to take away imports. This is what income is.
 - For example, you can increase consumption by “plugging the leaks” (doing more locally), or by increasing the population (consumers), or by restoring consumer confidence (to get them to spend now instead of saving for a rainy day).
 - You can increase investment by creating more infrastructure (e.g. expand the airport, etc.)
 - You can increase Government spending by asking the government for handouts. Some examples are: highways, new programs, etc.
 - You can increase exports, for example, by getting more tourists to stop and spend money.
- “Agglomeration”: if you put two shoe stores next to each other, the two stores will do better business than if you put the two shoe stores apart from each other. This is the principle behind shopping centres, and in fact Cities. Valemount is partly doing this by offering several businesses for accommodation, several restaurants, several services stations, several businesses. You may wish to build on this theme to increase your economy.
- One practical way to examine new economic possibilities is to do the “Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats” exercise. Find out where you sit as a community. Find out what your weaknesses are, and turn those weaknesses into opportunities. (E.g. a weakness could be ‘isolation’, but the opportunity then becomes wilderness experiences for tourists)
- We then need to define a “niche” way to “brand” our products/services. (E.g. there are lots of cars, but each company defines it's niche, and identifies that niche with a brand name)

- Then you need to sell people on the value of your brand. (Example: two suitcases may be identical in quality, but one brand may cost 10 times more because they have sold people on the value of their brand)
- “Value added” is asking the customer “what do you want?”, then give them what they want for an increased cost (that the market will bear). We’ve got to do the same thing with all of our local products here.
- Two examples of high-end “niche” markets in BC are Hot House Tomatoes, and the BC Wine industry. Both of these producers are doing extremely well with their brands (and making a lot of money) as they have virtually been forced into creating a more specialized and high quality product, that consumers want.
- Those communities that are waiting for the good old days to return (such as log prices going back up/pulp prices improving) will be dead, as the old boom towns continuing to boom and old economies are basically already dead.
- There are many examples of moving from a resource based to a knowledge based economy: universities sell their products world wide; tourism can be increased (Whistler was created out of an old garbage dump); health care can be sold; and knowledge based goods such as fuel cells, video games, anti-cancer drugs.
- Locally, we can brand some traditional items such as “green lumber”, “green hydro”, etc.
- Other ideas are to do some joint marketing with other regional rural centres. You could put on conferences and tie them in with your wilderness tourism.
- One advantage to Valemount seems to be that you haven’t been doing a lot of blaming about your economy. You haven’t blamed Asia, the Government, or anyone else. Instead, you are just interested in looking at what opportunities you have to improve your economy.
- Success can be more dangerous than failure. If you fail, you start asking a lot of questions and figure out how to recover. If you succeed, you may become smug and arrogant and stop asking questions and re-evaluating yourselves. It’s also important to put limits on your “success”, in other words, how much would you want Valemount to grow, and what restrictions would you want to put on that.
- Re: marketing Valemount as a tourist destination. Before marketing, you have to define what you are. What’s your vision? You also need to have some sort of uniqueness. A formula is VRIO:
 - Is your product valuable
 - Is your product rare (if the answers to the first two questions are no, then you don’t need to go any further with that idea!)
 - Is your product imitable, in which case it’s value may not be as great as you think it is
 - Do you have ownership of your product...can you lever it into other areas

Once you have answered these questions, then you can begin to define what your business is, and which areas we want to pursue.

- Before marketing Valemount as anything, your first step needs to be some sort of community meetings to define what you want to be as a community. One small suggestion is to hire an artist to come up with actual pictures to describe

how you want the community to look. Another idea is to do some market research into what kinds of people do certain types of activities (such as extreme snowmobiling). This would help you to define what you want to create out of your community. (Including what kinds of limits you want to create)

- Another exercise is to do a “benefit/cost” analysis. For example, what are the benefits of creating a major ski hill? What are the costs of that? This exercise may help you decide how much of new “future” products you may want to create.
- It may be safer to create several smaller developments as opposed to one giant one. In other words, don’t put all of your eggs into one basket.
- Don’t forget that as you create new “things”, you also have to have the skilled labour force to support them. Remember that all new products are mostly created and run with “knowledge based labour”.