

How important is the population growth of the Rainy River District? Is valuable enough to sell homebuilding lots for \$1.00 a lot as has McAdam New Brunswick? Is it worth \$10,000 as has Tulsa Oklahoma and the state of Vermont to attract persons who can work from home away from corporate offices in larger centers? We have traditionally shipped most of our brightest away for education with few returning because we lacked the jobs or the industries, but many of those jobs have changed.

McAdam has attracted interest from all provinces in Canada.

Harmon Minnesota offers cash rebates for new home construction. The rebates are between \$5-12,000 and have created new taxable building values of over \$1,000,000.

With student debt rising, small communities in Kansas are offering to assist graduates to pay down their debt by agreeing to move and work in rural communities. Perhaps it may be possible to persuade the provincial government to reward graduates in engineering, science, technology, arts and math with assistance to live in northern rural Ontario.

We are not like Russia or China that can dictate where people will live to maintain rural communities. We need to discover what we need to do to bring 30 new jobs to the district each year for the next 10 years.

We don't have lots to give away and we certainly don't have thousands to give to people to work remotely. The internet makes it possible for people with unique products to sell them from anywhere to anywhere in the world. It is a great opportunity for craft-based industries to locate anywhere and where better than the Rainy River district.

What assets do we have to attract millennials to the district? Do we know and understand their wants and expectations?

I would like to suggest that the Town of Fort Frances and district hold a millennial forum of young people who have returned to the district or remained in the district to discover:

- A. Why they chose to come and raise families here
- B. Why they remained in the district.
- C. What issues they have found to living here.
- D. What would make relocating here easier.
- E. How to attract people of different culture.
- F. What assets do we have (Inexpensive electricity? Aging population? Great internet? Inexpensive housing? Closeness to urban centres (Winnipeg, Thunder Bay, Duluth)?

This forum must include people from who perform different jobs and include peoples of indigenous culture. It can't be just Fort Frances centric but must include the district. We have a 15-year window of opportunity to grow the population of the area and expand the job and life opportunities.

How do we begin?

I would suggest that we develop a list of 20-30-40 somethings who have recently returned to the district. We begin identifying them and ask them to identify others who they know who have returned. When we have a group, we begin with a face to face discussions to seek answers to the questions above and have the participants ask other questions to gain a fuller understanding of the reasons people have chosen to return to the district or choose to immigrate to the district.

We also begin by asking those people if they know others who might be interested in returning to the district but have been discouraged from doing so. What causes that discouragement? How can the district overcome those barriers? What other services, facilities would make the decision to relocate to the district easier?

Canada will need to attract thousands of immigrants annually. What can we learn from other communities who have successfully integrated immigrants from Pakistan, India, Syria, Egypt, Lebanon, Iran, Jordan, Indonesia, the Philippine's, China, into their communities? Those immigrants will be valuable to the economy of Fort Frances and the district for years to come.