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Rural areas in North falling behind: economics professor

By: Jonathan Migneault - Sudbury Northern Life | Apr 02, 2015 - 3:26 PM | 6

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Rural areas in Northern Ontario are falling behind larger urban areas, like Sudbury, when it comes to education and economic potential, says a Lakehead University economics professor. File photo.

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26% of adults from rural areas in northeastern Ontario don't have a high school diploma

Rural areas are the backbone of the north, but they are falling behind when it comes to education and economic potential, says Bakhtiar Moazzami, an economics professor at Lakehead University.

In a recent report for the Northern Policy Institute, Moazzami concluded that Northern Ontario's rural population is in decline, and due to less access to education, could miss out on future economic opportunities.

"By 2030, 80 per cent of jobs will require some kind of post-secondary education," Moazzami said.

But in northeastern Ontario, around 26 per cent of adults from rural areas don't have a high school diploma.

Without better access to education, he said, many people in rural areas won't benefit from any future wealth derived from natural resources near their communities.

Like most of the developed world, Northern Ontario has seen more urbanization, said Moazzami.

In 2001 the northeast's urban population was 361,435 and the rural population was 183,000.

In 2011, the urban population increased to 372,692, but the rural population declined to 178,000.

If the current trend continues – where the birthrates remain low and the

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northeast struggles to attract and retain immigrants – the urban population is expected to decline to 365,000 by 2025, and the rural population will fall more sharply to 157,000 by the same year.

But the connections between rural and urban communities in the northeast, said Moazzami, are at least stronger than in northwestern Ontario, where 15 per cent of rural communities are considered to be “very remote”, compared to three per cent in the northeast.

Stronger links between rural and urban communities in the northeast make it easier for rural communities to improve their “human capital”, which relates to the level of educational attainment by people living in a community, Moazzami said.



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Common Sense Indeed · 4 days ago

Well said, General...nailed it!, but the econ prof got thousands to come up with this gem...should've used the \$\$\$ to fund education in the north...

^ | v · Reply · Share



boozehound · 4 days ago

Tying in a high school diploma to a statistic is now pointless as you get one for just attending. A lot of rural communities had schools but the government chose to drop funding and then when busing became expensive they dropped that too. Everything is getting messed up these days, we don't want to invest in our youth or our rural/agricultural communities. That's fine if you want a bunch of brain dead city dwellers who can survive off what measly food supplies the mega corps manufacture but does nothing to enrichen or diversify our culture. Looks like the liberal plan is coming along well.

^ | v · Reply · Share



General Zod · 4 days ago

So the problem reported is rural folks don't go to school. Where the real problem is people living in chosen isolated areas don't have convenient access to education. And who's fault is that?

This is the same as people buying a home next to an airport, and complaining about the noise. - Bottom line is you move to where the services and needs are. We can't build schools, stores, etc.everywhere, or have chauffeur service to every home to bring you to town.

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maddog27271 → General Zod · 4 days ago

I like slipping into the economic fantasy world of these experts every now and then and imagining things like ... what happens when we spend billions to move train tracks away from houses, and then people build new houses near the new train tracks?

1 ^ | v · Reply · Share



frogman · 5 days ago

Too many un educated Quebecers moving in --- and voting NDP.

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Guest · 5 days ago

Yay, it's not David Robinson's opinion!

3 ^ | v · Reply · Share

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