

# Creativity, Tourism and Economic Development in a Rural Context: The Case of Prince Edward County

Opportunities for Smaller Communities  
in Rural Ontario

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# The Current Economic Landscape of Rural Communities in North America

*Rural communities across North America face declining economic activity and a number of challenges in promoting continued economic development*

- Loss of Manufacturing
- Restructuring of the Agricultural Sector
- Loss of Young, Educated workers to large urban centers

# Tourism as an Economic Development Strategy in Rural Communities

*Rural communities have turned to Tourism as a way to promote job growth and counteract declining economic activity*

- Factors used in the promotion of Rural Tourism
  - Superb Quality of Place
  - Outdoor Recreational Activities
  - Local Festivals and Traditions
  - Local Cultural and Historical Activities

# Tourism: A Sustainable Approach for Rural Communities?

*Tourism often does not provide a sustainable solution to preventing economic decline as it is often destructive of local communities and does not provided sustainable jobs*

- Low-wage jobs
- Exploitation of the local community and local resources
- Negative impacts on local environment
- Highly unstable industry – subject to constant fluctuations

# Creative Class Theory and Economic Development Strategies

*Concentrations of the Creative Class help to attract industry investment and drive economic growth*

- Creative Class professionals are one of four occupation based employment categories defined by Richard Florida (2002)
  - Creative Class, Service Class, Working Class and Fishing, Farming and Forestry
- Creative Class professionals are attracted to places that offer:
  - Superb Quality of Place
  - Outdoor Recreational Activities
  - Local Festivals and Traditions
  - Local Cultural, Entertainment and Historical Activities

# Who Works in the Creative Class?

## Creative Class: *TAPE*

*T* = Technology and R&D Innovation

*A* = Arts and Culture

*P* = Professional and Managerial

*E* = Educating and Training

Creative Class workers include people employed in management and business finance, science and engineering, architecture and design, education, arts, music and entertainment.

# Cultivating the Creative Class in Rural Communities

*Creative Based Economic Development Strategies*

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*Tourism Based Economic Development Strategies*

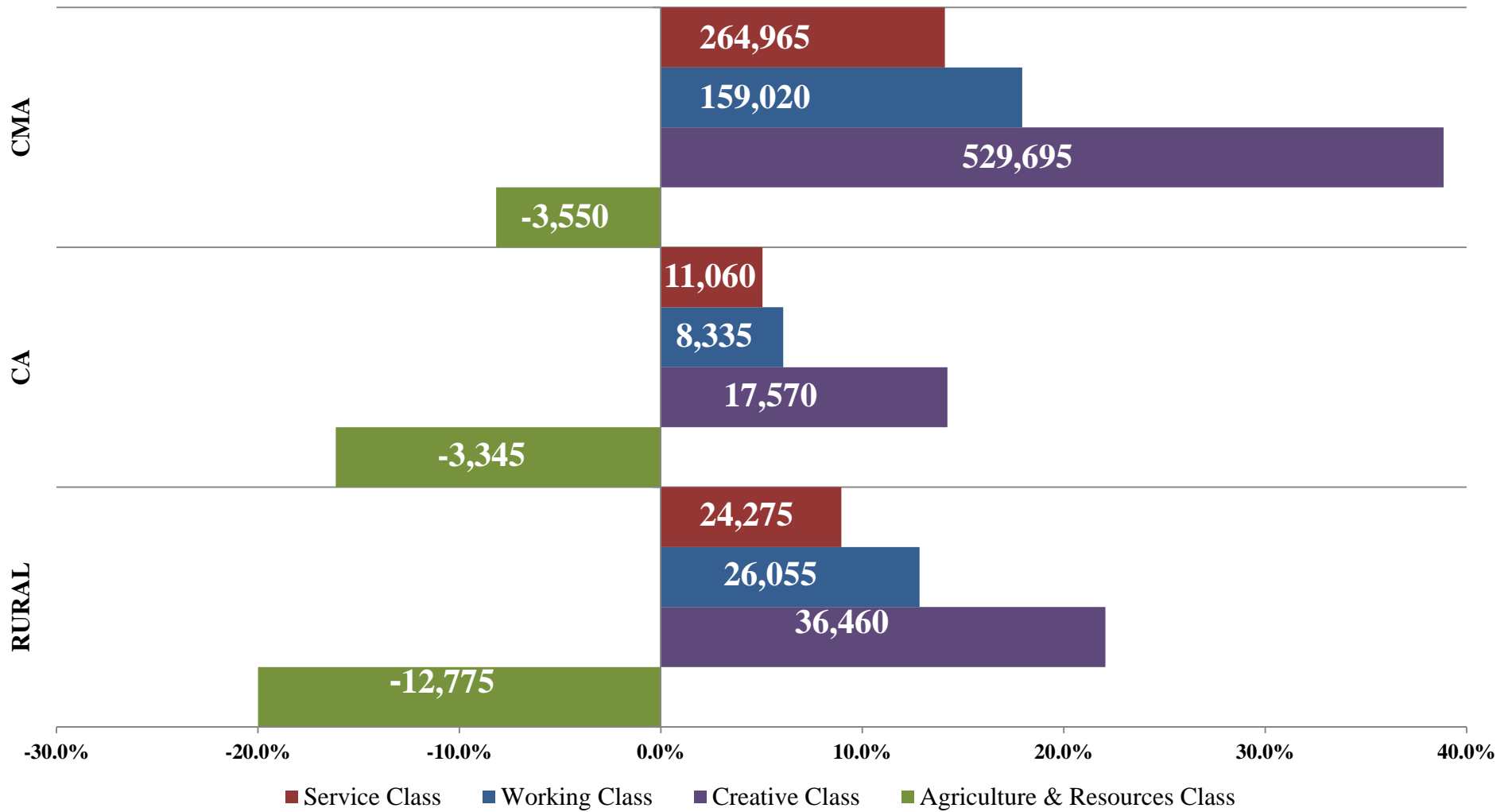
- Superb Quality of Place
- Outdoor Recreational Activities
- Local Festivals and Traditions
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# Cultivating the Creative Class in Rural Communities

*While Creative Class economic development strategies are applicable within rural communities, there are several important caveats that differentiate such strategies from those applied in an urban centre*

- Targeted populations are creative professionals over 30 that are starting young families or are mid-life career changers
- Schools, infrastructure and doctors offices are just as important as are local amenities that attract creative workers
- Creative Class may not impact local growth if it is employed in large public organizations – universities, medical complexes, or government research institutions

# Job Growth in Ontario for selected Classes, 1996-2006



# The Case of Prince Edward County: A Creative Rural Economy

*Prince Edward County has established a creative based rural economy driven by a wine making industry, specialty agricultural products and its location in a very scenic part of Eastern Ontario*

- Strengths

- Educated Workforce; Innovative Spirit; Superb Regional Amenities; Cultural and Environmental Sustainability; and an Economic Development Strategy that considers the creative economy

- Weaknesses

- Difficulty in recognizing assets and weaknesses; Limited Connectivity and Natural Resource Complacency

# Strategies for Identifying Creative based Economic Development Opportunities

*Rural communities need to be both responsive and adaptive to both planned and unplanned events in order to realize the potential of opportunities that emerge*

- Blue Ocean Strategies / Undiscovered opportunities
- Integrative and Creative Based Thinking
- Community Capacity Building

# Rural Economic Development Strategies

- Think Big
- Look Big
- Use a Shotgun, not a rifle
- Luck

# Resources

- *Canada's Creative Corridor: Connecting Creative Urban & Rural Economies within Eastern Ontario and the Mega Region* by Millier Dickinson Blais, AuthentiCity, Dr. Greg Spencer, and the Martin Prosperity Institute (2009).
- *Creativity, Tourism and Economic Development in a Rural Context: the case of Prince Edward County* by Kevin Stolarick, Mark Denstedt, Betsy Donald and Greg Spencer.
- *Growing the Creative-Rural Economy in Prince Edward County* by the Queen's University Department of Geography (2008).
- *From Kraft to Craft: Innovation and Creativity in Ontario's Food Economy* by Betsy Donald (2009).
- *Innovation and Creativity on the Periphery: Challenges and Opportunities in Northern Ontario* by Heather Hall & Betsy Donald (2009).