

**Report of the
Advisory Committee on
Francophone Affairs
Government of Saskatchewan**



January 2016

Francophone Immigration

Letter of Transmittal

Mr. Elhard:

It is my pleasure to present this report of the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs following our meeting which took place on April 17, 2015, in Regina.

Under the theme of Francophone immigration, we met with senior representatives from the Ministry of Economy and community organizations to discuss the development and delivery of French-language services and programs that would facilitate the recruitment, settlement and retention of Francophone immigrants.

We believe that the objectives of the Ministry and the Francophone community on this file are complementary. Saskatchewan is increasingly looking at immigration to fill its labour market needs and French-speaking newcomers are contributing to the vitality and revitalization of Francophone communities.

On behalf of members of our Committee, I am pleased to present to you today our recommendations in support of Francophone immigration.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'M. Dubé', is written over a faint, light blue circular watermark or stamp.

Michel Dubé
Chair of the Advisory Committee

January 2016

Executive Summary

Saskatchewan has seen its economy grow tremendously in the last ten years. The latest figures by Statistics Canada show that from 2004 to 2014, the province's GDP grew by 2.5 % per year on average.¹ To support economic growth, Saskatchewan increasingly relies on immigration to fill jobs in its tight labour market. Francophones in Saskatchewan have a shared interest in increasing immigration; Francophone immigration allows minority language communities to flourish and to be revitalized.

Immigration to Saskatchewan has been rising significantly in the last 10 years. From about 2,000 permanent residents in 2004, the province now welcomes approximately 11,000 permanent residents per year. Francophone immigration has witnessed increases during the given period but not at the same level, a situation that worries the Fransaskois community.

After meeting with the Ministry of the Economy in April 2015, the Advisory Committee believes that provincial population growth and labour market development goals are complementary to the Francophone community's interest in growing Saskatchewan's French-speaking population. The Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs has developed the following recommendations, which aim to address Saskatchewan's labour market needs in part by recruiting more French-speaking newcomers.

Recommendations:

1. That the Ministry increase its recruitment missions in French-speaking countries, with elected representatives taking part in future missions.
2. That the Ministry work with employers and the Francophone community to build a business case for the recruitment of foreign francophone workers. Champions of this business case would then present it to other employers.
3. That the Ministry work with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission, professional associations and French-speaking countries (e.g. France, Morocco, Mauritius) to improve international labour mobility, similar to the work done in Canada through the New West Partnership and the Agreement on Internal Trade.
4. That the Ministry work collaboratively with the Ministry of Advanced Education, and postsecondary institutions both in the province and across the country to encourage foreign francophone students to apply to the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP).

¹ Economic Overview Ministry of Economy : <http://economy.gov.sk.ca/economicoverview>



5. That the Ministry of Economy adopt the federal francophone immigration target of 4.4 per cent of total immigration and work with the federal government to find innovative measures to reach this target.
6. That the Ministry of Economy promote its new Express Entry subcategory under the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program in French-speaking countries to increase Francophone applications.
7. That the Ministry engage in regular consultations with Francophone immigration stakeholders to ensure Francophone newcomers have access to services equivalent to those received by other newcomers in Immigration Gateways.
8. That the Government of Saskatchewan increase French-language services in areas of essential services for Francophone newcomers, for example, the Ministry of Social Services and major Crown Corporations such as SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SGI and eHealth.
9. That the Ministry work with the federal government and other partners to open up more entry-level English as a second language classes for Francophone newcomers.

Growth projections in addition to a low birth rate and an aging population are expected to create further pressures on the labour markets of the country, especially in low unemployment provinces such as Saskatchewan. Immigration is increasingly essential in a growing economy and French-speaking newcomers are good candidates because:

- French is an official language of Canada;
- French is spoken in 70 countries with an average of 274 million speakers worldwide;
- Settlement and integration can be easier given that there are Francophone communities throughout the province.

Committee Mandate

In 2003, the Government of Saskatchewan adopted its French-language Services Policy. With this Policy, the Government of Saskatchewan committed to “enhancing services offered to the francophone community of Saskatchewan in support of the development and vitality of this community.”²

The Policy is organized according to three areas:

² Government of Saskatchewan French-language Services Policy :
<http://www.saskatchewan.ca/~media/files/executive%20council/bonjour/french%20language%20services%20policy.pdf>



1. Communication;
2. Development and delivery of services; and,
3. Consultation.

The mandate of the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs is to advise the Legislative Secretary through the review and analysis of programs and policies to guide the implementation of Saskatchewan's French-language Services Policy.

Meeting Objective

On April 17, 2015, the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs met with a senior representative from the Ministry of Economy and community organizations to discuss the delivery and development of French-language services and programs that would facilitate the recruitment, retention and settlement of Francophone immigrants.

Following this meeting, the Advisory Committee on Francophone Affairs developed nine recommendations for consideration by the Legislative Secretary responsible for Francophone Affairs.



Context

Francophones have a long history in Saskatchewan going back to the fur trade and voyageurs era. They are an intrinsic part of the economic fabric of the province and have often been employed in areas of economic growth. Adding to the numerous francophone agricultural communities, francophones are often moving to Western Canada to work in the oil and gas, mines and construction industries, some of the most important drivers of the province's economy.

Immigration is a growing concern for francophone communities throughout the country. Francophones outside Quebec represent close to 5 per cent of the total Canadian population and immigration is essential to ensure the vitality and revitalization of their communities. At the moment, only about two per cent of newcomers can speak French³, a situation that is shrinking the demographic weight of francophone communities year after year.

The Committee studied immigration and interprovincial migration in 2010 but has decided to address the matter once more because of changing circumstances. It is worth noting that some recommendations from our 2010 report have been implemented, such as building a close relationship with Mauritius, which has resulted in an increase of Mauritian workers to Saskatchewan; between 2010-2014, 56 Mauritians immigrated to Saskatchewan, 21 of these being the Principal Applicant skilled workers.

An example of recent changes is the abolition of the federal Francophone Significant Benefit. The program, allowing for a quicker processing of Francophone temporary foreign workers, was abolished in September 2014. Approximately 100 skilled workers from countries including Tunisia, Morocco, Mauritius, France and Belgium used this program to enter other immigration processes such as the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP). The quick turnaround was seen as an advantage to employers in need of workers.

On January 2015, the federal government introduced its new economic immigration process, Express Entry, which aims to directly channel potential immigrants to jobs available in Canada. At the moment, it is unclear how beneficial the new program is for French-speaking newcomers or how it could be used to promote francophone immigration.

Provincial and federal authorities have had a number of discussions recently around advancing measures that will encourage the recruitment and retention of Francophone newcomers.

³ Statistics Canada *National Household Survey: Data Tables* : <https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/dp-pd/dt-td/Index-eng.cfm>



When we met with the Ministry, discussions focused on the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP) and more precisely on Advisory Committee suggestions for possible measures to increase the amount of francophone immigrants coming to Saskatchewan under the SINP. The Ministry emphasized that the SINP is an employer-driven program focused on recruiting workers for jobs and sought advice on how to convince employers of the value added proposition of bringing francophone employees to Saskatchewan.

The information provided by francophone organizations involved the delivery of French-language services to newcomers. Many pointed to a lack of resources to deliver services and were critical of federal immigration processes, seen as too complex and rigid.

Immigration is essential for economic growth

Saskatchewan increasingly needs immigrants to fill jobs in its tight labour market. Canada's projected growth and future retirements are expected to further exacerbate the situation. Data from the 2006 and 2011 Census show that immigration accounted for two thirds of the population growth in Canada during the given period. Moreover, Statistics Canada expects low fertility rates and population aging could result in immigration being the quasi sole driver of population growth within 20-30 years⁴.

Saskatchewan's immigrant population is growing rapidly; new permanent residents went from 1,943 in 2004 to 11,823 in 2014 as shown in figure 1.

During the same period, Francophone immigration has seen growth in terms of numbers, but a substantial drop in percentage from 6.2 per cent of total immigration in 2005 to 1.5 per cent in 2014.

⁴ Population growth: Migratory increase overtakes natural increase : <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/11-630-x/11-630-x2014001-eng.htm>



Figure 1
Saskatchewan Permanent Residents 2004-2014: Knowledge of Official Languages

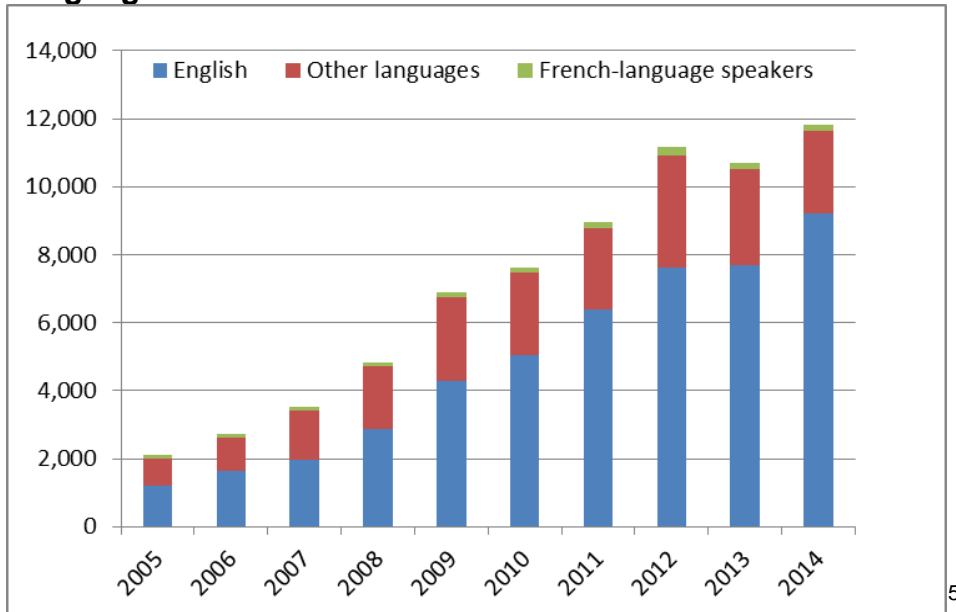
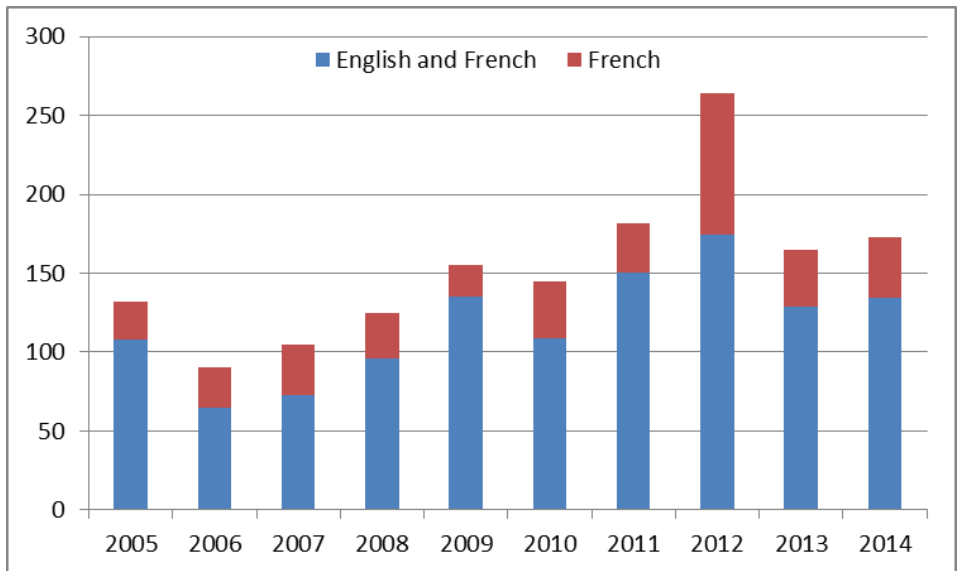


Figure 2
Saskatchewan Bilingual and French-speaking Permanent Residents 2004-2014



⁵ The *French-language speakers* category includes bilingual speakers. Created with data from: <http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2014/permanent/13.asp>

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The situation is not exclusive to Saskatchewan; governments across Canada are struggling to bring their Francophone immigration numbers up. Provincial and territorial governments recently made a call for action at the last Ministerial Conference on the Canadian Francophonie in June 2015 and called on the Government of Canada to take concrete actions in order to reach its Francophone immigration target (4.4 percent of total immigration outside Quebec by 2023⁷).

Who exactly are Francophone newcomers?

A Francophone newcomer is an immigrant fluent in the French language. These newcomers come from a variety of cultural and ethnic backgrounds. Increasingly, Francophone newcomers are multilingual and French is not necessarily their first language⁸.

Building a business case for the recruitment of Francophone newcomers

Recommendation # 1

That the Ministry increase its recruitment missions in French-speaking countries, with elected representatives taking part in future missions.

According to the *Organisation internationale de la Francophonie*, French is spoken in more than 70 countries with about 274 million speakers⁹. Given the growing need for skilled workers and the importance of linguistic duality in Canada, the Ministry should increase its recruitment efforts in French-speaking countries and regions. The Mauritius mission in 2010 serves as an example that targeting francophone markets is both advantageous for the francophone community in Saskatchewan and the larger labour market needs of the province.

Having elected officials join recruitment missions can give further importance to recruitment efforts, including media coverage and enhanced interest from both employers and immigration candidates.

⁷ 4.4 per cent represents the demographic weight of francophone communities living outside Quebec.

⁸ While the definition chosen by the committee is broader than the one used by CIC, it reflects the inclusive view of the Fransaskois community as expressed in the Report of the inclusivity of the Fransaskois community: <http://www.fransaskois.sk.ca/uploads/files/general/23//de-la-minorit-la-citoyennet.pdf>

⁹ Organisation internationale de la Francophonie: <http://www.francophonie.org/-Qu-est-ce-que-la-Francophonie-.html>



Recommendation # 2

That the Ministry work with employers and the Francophone community to build a business case for the recruitment of foreign francophone workers. Champions of this business case would then present it to employers.

Saskatchewan employers may be under the impression that recruiting a francophone newcomer is a risk because of the language barrier. There are success stories of employers recruiting Francophones in Saskatchewan. Having employers present these stories to other employers will create awareness of the quality of the francophone workforce and the ease in which they acclimate to their new environment. It would give an incentive to employers to participate in recruitment missions in French-speaking countries such as Destination Canada.

The Committee invites the Ministry to communicate with the *Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise* and the *Conseil économique et coopératif de la Saskatchewan* in order to establish practical means for this course of action.

Recommendation # 3

That the Ministry work with the Saskatchewan Apprenticeship and Trades Certification Commission, professional associations and French-speaking countries (i.e. France, Morocco, Mauritius) to improve labour mobility, similar to the work done in Canada through the New West Partnership and the Agreement on Internal Trade.

Naturally, it is easier for employers to recruit from countries where certification recognition and immigration processes are simple and fast. Labour mobility agreements between France and Quebec serve as an example of an efficient system. To date, 20 professions such as dentistry and medicine and 48 trades such as plumbing and welding are covered by these agreements in the province of Quebec. Improving labour mobility regulations with Francophone countries will encourage employers to recruit more francophones.

To lay the ground work for this initiative, the Committee proposes the Ministry start a Pilot project with industry players, certification agencies and francophone organizations in order to look at in-demand sectors of the economy and identify possible pools of workforce in French-speaking countries.



Using existing programs to encourage Francophone immigration

Recommendation # 4

That the Ministry work collaboratively with the Ministry of Advanced Education, and postsecondary institutions both in the province and across the country to encourage foreign francophone students to apply to the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program (SINP).

International students are good candidates for immigration for two reasons: they are skilled and they are integrated. The Saskatchewan Experience subcategory of the SINP has a yearly limit of 1,000 student applications. French-language promotion and advertisement in universities and colleges can help the province to retain those Francophone students who wish to stay in Saskatchewan.

Recommendation # 5

That the Ministry of Economy adopt the federal francophone immigration target of 4.4 per cent of total immigration and work with the federal government to find innovative measures to reach this target.

Francophone immigration is important for the vitality of minority language communities. In Saskatchewan, under the current trend, about 1.8 per cent of newcomers can speak French¹⁰.

The federal government has a Francophone target of 4.4 per cent of total immigration outside Quebec. However, since it was proposed in 2003 by the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee, this target has been pushed forward from 2008 to 2023¹¹.

The committee believes Saskatchewan should aim for the federal government's target in order to maintain the current balance which is roughly 5 per cent of the province's residents (about 50, 000 people speak French). The committee also feels it is a realistic goal as we have already seen Francophone immigration at levels as high as 6.2 per cent in the province (2005).

Having a target will enable all interested parties to track progress and adopt strategic actions. The recommendations found in this report would help the province to reach this objective. For example, existing programs such as Express

¹⁰ 2010-2014 average of French-speaking newcomers (including bilingual newcomers) :
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/statistics/facts2014/permanent/13.asp>

¹¹ Strategic Framework to Foster Immigration to Francophone Minority Communities:
<http://www.cic.gc.ca/english/resources/publications/settlement/framework-minorities.asp>



Entry and the Saskatchewan Provincial Nominee Program could serve as a vehicle to increase Francophone Immigration.

Recommendation # 6

That the Ministry of Economy promote its new Express Entry subcategory under the Saskatchewan Immigrant Nominee Program in French-speaking countries to increase Francophone applications.

For 2016, the Government of Saskatchewan reached its threshold of 500 applications under the SINP Saskatchewan Entry Express subcategory. This category, which does not require a job offer, allows the Ministry to put more emphasis on other important factors for successful integration such as education, work experience, language ability, family ties and adaptability.

Promoting the category in French-speaking countries would increase the number of Francophone applicants for permanent residency and represents a clear opportunity for the Ministry to increase Francophone immigration. Applying the target of 4.4 per cent of total immigration to this program would represent 22 of the 500 total applications.

The Government of New Brunswick's recent experience shows that this approach is possible. The province recently announced it was using the new Express Entry program to bump up its Francophone immigration numbers. Out of 425 people who were invited to apply for immigration under the category in 2015, 20 per cent were Francophones¹². New Brunswick selects candidates from the Entry Express category through a point system very similar to the one used in Saskatchewan.

Ensuring a successful immigration

Recommendation # 7

That the Ministry engage in regular consultations with Francophone immigration stakeholders to ensure Francophone newcomers have access to services equivalent to those received by other newcomers in Immigration Gateways.

Given that Immigration programs and regulations are often subject to changes, it is important that the Ministry consults on a regular basis with Francophone immigration stakeholders. Such consultations ensure that Francophone

¹² Acadie nouvelle - Immigration: plus de 20% de francophones grâce à Entrée express : <http://www.acadienouvelle.com/actualites/2015/07/14/immigration-plus-de-20-de-francophones-grace-a-entree-express/?pgnc=1>



newcomers are not at a disadvantage compared to Anglophone newcomers in terms of procedural barriers and quality of services. The Ministry should also make sure the *Assemblée communautaire* francosaskoise (ACF) is given the same information and tools as Immigration Gateways to ensure they can provide the same level of services.

The Committee believes consultations with Francophone organizations and specifically the *ACF* would be beneficial prior to changes to immigration legislation and regulations.

Recommendation # 8

That the Government of Saskatchewan increase French-language services in areas of essential services for Francophone newcomers, for example, the Ministry of Social Services and major Crown Corporations such as SaskPower, SaskEnergy, SaskTel, SGI and eHealth.

Francophone newcomers can face communication barriers with government organizations dealing with basic and immediate needs such as social assistance, gas, power, health card registration, etc. These organizations should ensure French-speaking newcomers are provided with the necessary information to use these services. This can be done in different ways, including:

- Direct interaction with French-speaking staff;
- Providing documents and registration forms in French;
- Advertisement and public campaigns.

French-language services in these areas are important because of the level of interaction with the public and the fact that sensitive information is being shared.

Recommendation # 9

That the Ministry work with the federal government and other partners to open up more entry-level English as a second language (ESL) classes for Francophone newcomers.

English language skills are critical to the integration of Francophone newcomers. After consultations with immigration stakeholders, it is generally believed that there are not enough entry-level ESL classes and that wait times are too long. There are also concerns that, in order to free up spots, newcomers are being bumped up to more advanced classes even if their language skills are not satisfactory.



The Ministry finances approximately 20 per cent of ESL classes offered to newcomers, with most new residents taking federally funded classes through the Language Instruction for Newcomers in Canada (LINC) program. With the rise of immigration in Saskatchewan over the last ten years, the number of newcomers requiring ESL classes has risen dramatically. The Ministry should work with Francophone education institutions and other partners to offer ESL classes designed for French-speaking newcomers. The benefit of working with Francophone education institutions is that having a French-speaking instructor can accelerate learning for Francophone newcomers.

Conclusion

The Committee believes that it is increasingly necessary for the province to continue to be proactive in terms of economic immigration by bringing in the skilled workforce needed. However, more focus should be put on French-speaking countries during recruitment efforts.

The province is growing rapidly and the provincial government estimates approximately 95,000 job openings over the next five years due to economic expansion and attrition (primarily replacement of retiring workers). Employment is an essential element to successful immigration, but it is not exclusive. Newcomers arriving in the province will have different needs and providing them with services in a language they know will contribute to their integration. As government services provided to Francophone newcomers are not the sole responsibility of the ministry of the Economy, every organization shares the responsibility to integrate and accommodate.

Next meetings

Members of the Committee meet approximately three times a year. The next meeting is scheduled for November 2015.

It is the Committee's intent to produce a similar report following each theme meeting with recommendations for the Legislative Secretary responsible for Francophone Affairs.



**OFFICE OF THE PROVINCIAL SECRETARY
ADVISORY COMMITTEE ON FRANCOPHONE AFFAIRS
LIST OF APPOINTED CANDIDATES**

Michel Dubé (Chair), Prince Albert

Mr. Michel Dubé was born in Duck Lake, Saskatchewan. He has been involved with the Fransaskois community for a long time, notably in community development and education. He was a member of the board of the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise (ACF) from 1999 to 2010, first as community representative from the Prince Albert district and then as president from 2006 to 2010. He is currently the president of the Société canadienne-française de Prince Albert.

Mr. Dubé has been a journalist, consultant and entrepreneur. He has owned several businesses including a produce farm and a fishing lodge. He is now owner of a small store featuring local goods and operates a bison farm north of Prince Albert.

Élizabeth Perrault, Bellevue

Ms. Élizabeth Perreault and her husband own and operate a farm near Bellevue. Ms. Perreault has volunteered within many organizations in her community, including the local Francophone association and the Francophone school in her area. She has represented the St-Isidore school district (Bellevue) on the Conseil scolaire fransaskois since 2008.

Martin Prince, Delmas

Mr. Martin Prince is one of the owners of Prince Valley Farm Ltd., a family farm operation. He has a BA in political science and history from the University of Ottawa and a Bachelor of Science (agriculture business and food management) from the University of Alberta. He sat on the Provincial Youth Advisory Committee between 2001 and 2003. Mr. Prince volunteers with his local parish, the Francophone community centre and Francophone school. He and his wife have four children.

Luc Leblanc, Regina

Mr. Luc Leblanc was raised in New Brunswick where he earned a diploma in sheet metal fabrication and later earned his Red Seal Journey Person Certification. He is currently the president of Luxury Mechanical/LMC Projects, a business specialized in residential mechanical ventilation systems. As a volunteer, he sits on the board of directors at Centre éducatif Gard'Amis (a Francophone daycare) and is a ringette coach. Mr. Leblanc and his wife have worked with youth facing substance abuse issues. He is a regular speaker at Portage Atlantic Adolescent Substance Abuse Rehabilitation Program Center and its parent support program.



Jean Nepo Murwanashyaka, Regina

Mr. Jean Nepo Murwanashyaka has lived in several countries and in several regions of Canada before settling in Saskatoon. Working with a firm of engineers in the mining sector, he has developed knowledge and expertise in project management, process engineering and problem analysis. Mr. Murwanashyaka is also very active in the French-speaking African community of Saskatoon

Guylaine Patenaude, Saskatoon

Ms. Guylaine Patenaude was born in Manitoba but moved to Saskatchewan at a very early age. She worked for more than 10 years with the Association jeunesse fransaskoise (youth organization) and just recently received her certification in special events coordination. In 2010, she was awarded the Prix Jeune femme remarquable du Canada by the Alliance des femmes de la francophonie canadienne (alliance of Canadian Francophone women).

Joanne Perreault, Hoey

Ms. Joanne Perreault has worked for more than 10 years with the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise, several years of which as deputy director. Living in Hoey, Ms. Perreault is self-employed, providing consultation and coordination services, and continues to be involved with the Fransaskois community.

Françoise Sigur-Cloutier, Regina

Originally from France and established in Saskatchewan for more than twenty years, Ms. Sigur-Cloutier has worked within the Francophone community both at the provincial and national levels. Having completed postsecondary studies in philosophy and education, she has also studied in the area of administration. Ms. Sigur-Cloutier worked as director of communications for Radio-Canada and is presently employed as a consultant. Ms. Sigur-Cloutier is president of the Assemblée communautaire fransaskoise.

