

been dissipating slowly since the 1970s and now most earth science organizations support outreach, but do not fund it well. During the modern period of re-development of earth science outreach, programs have grown through locally based organizations and individuals. The programs are analogous to cottage industries, which are characterized by small scale production of high quality, hand-made products with limited production and only local distribution. The level of earth science outreach has increased dramatically over the past 35 years. Thousands of teachers have taken EdGEO workshops. Many have perused geoscape posters and brochures, and watched television programs to learn more about earth sciences. Many have visited museums, science centres, parks and geoheritage sites or attended public lectures to learn about earth science. Increasingly, we develop projects that involve the whole community from scientific, cultural and economic viewpoints; a wonderful example is the Community Mapping Program conducted in N.W.T. But the fact remains that few Canadians understand the significance of earth science for their everyday lives. They fail to understand where all their stuff comes from and they remain largely unaware of Earth processes that affect them. Based mainly on volunteer effort, the Canadian geoscience community is trying to reverse this situation. Most programs originate locally and are completed at low cost. This local approach means that many excellent products are not widely available because of a lack of national distribution. Experience is not well shared and efforts are not coordinated nationally. There is no funded, active national inventory of resources for Earth science outreach. Is geoscience outreach to remain a cottage industry forever or can it aspire to operating nationally? These are questions we must ask of the main institutions: geological surveys, societies, universities, science centres and resource industries. People need to know about the Earth to be responsible citizens of the planet, yet earth science is barely taught in schools. If our profession is to rejuvenate and gain influence in society, we have to attract new people. Therefore, young people have to be aware of it. These requirements argue for a national approach to earth science outreach. The International Year of Planet Earth affords an opportunity to leave a national legacy of earth science outreach and we need to embrace it strongly and make it work.

**Earth science outreach in Canada:
Cottage industry or national program?**

GODFREY S. NOWLAN

*Geological Survey of Canada Calgary, 3303 – 33rd St. N.W.,
Calgary, AB, T2L 2A7 Canada <gnowlan@NRCan.gc.ca>*

Science outreach in Canada has gone through many phases. In the late 19th Century, science was of great interest to educated people. However in the early 20th century science became more exclusive and public accessibility declined. By the mid 20th century there was peer sneer in the science community for those who undertook outreach activities. This attitude has