



*For Immediate Release*

**Minister Mitchell announces \$200,000 transition investment  
to Rural Ontario Institute**

**Guelph, ON [February 26, 2010]** – A provincial government investment will help the new Rural Ontario Institute make a strong, smooth transition from the amalgamation of The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL) and The Ontario Rural Council (TORC). Grants totaling \$200,000 were announced by the Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, Carol Mitchell, in Toronto on February 23, 2010.

“We’re absolutely thrilled with this new funding and sincerely thank Minister Mitchell for delivering the great news,” says Rob Black, executive director of The Centre for Rural Leadership. “This type of financial support is a great endorsement by the provincial government of the important role the new organization will play in the health of rural Ontario. We look forward to developing a close working relationship with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.”

This provincial announcement includes \$160,000 for the transition to the Rural Ontario Institute, and an additional \$40,000 investment in the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program – a program of The Centre for Rural Leadership that will continue under the Rural Ontario Institute.

“For many years, the two organizations have been catalysts for leadership and progress in rural Ontario,” said Minister Mitchell. “Now that they have decided to join together, the positive effect of their work will be even greater, and we are pleased to continue supporting the newly amalgamated Institute.”

The Rural Ontario Institute will officially begin operations on April 1, 2010 with a mandate to provide rural leadership development and a mechanism to engage rural and multi-sector stakeholders for the purposes of informing and influencing rural policy development. Three core services will be provided – leadership training, stakeholder engagement and third-party program delivery.

“These resources will ensure the Rural Ontario Institute has a tremendously strong start, right out of the gate,” says Harold Flaming, executive director of The Ontario Rural Council. “We expect initiatives focusing on stakeholder engagement covering a wide range of emerging rural issues and opportunities to benefit from this critical investment in the Rural Ontario Institute. Partnerships with universities and other organizations will be enhanced as a means of more effectively articulating the rural voice on issues impacting rural Ontario.”

The Rural Ontario Institute will soon be announcing its 12-member board of directors, CEO and staff members.

The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL) offers programming to develop and support current and emerging leaders through a continuum of programs and resources to strengthen and diversify rural communities and the bioresource sector. Programs include the long-running Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) and the Steps to Leadership series, launched in 2008. TCRL also supports and delivers a variety of personal and organization development training workshops.

The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) was formed in 1998 as a member driven, multi sector provincial rural organization with a mandate to act as a catalyst for rural dialogue, collaboration and advocacy. As a vehicle for rural engagement, TORC offers a vital venue for the province's collective rural voice. It is the aim of TORC to broaden the understanding of the rural perspective and work toward ensuring the collective rural voice is heard by the province's policy and decision makers.

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