



For Immediate Release

Rob Black named CEO of the new Rural Ontario Institute

Guelph, ON [April 1, 2010] – Accomplished leader and rural Ontario advocate Rob Black has been named as the chief executive officer (CEO) of the new Rural Ontario Institute. Well-known in the agricultural industry, Black will lead the new not-for-profit organization that officially began operations today, April 1, 2010.

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) formed through the amalgamation of The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL) and The Ontario Rural Council (TORC), with a mandate to provide stronger support for key issues facing rural Ontario. ROI's new offices are located at Gencor, just north of Guelph.

“It’s an extremely interesting time to be leading a new provincial rural organization,” says Black. “Rural Ontario needs a strong organization to support and provide leadership development and be an effective voice for the far reaching issues facing rural Ontario. And ROI is well positioned to deliver the resources, training and leadership to strengthen the communities that have always been the heart of rural Ontario.”

Born and raised on a mixed farm in rural Ontario, Black brings 25 years of experience in agricultural organizations to ROI. An accomplished speaker, trainer and workshop leader, Black’s professional positions include executive director of TCRL, general manager of the former Ontario Soybean Growers, executive director of 4-H Ontario, and more than 15 years with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs in a variety of frontline and management positions.

ROI will be governed by a 12-member volunteer board lead by Chair Jim Whaley, Linwood, and supported by Vice Chair Rob Hannam, Guelph; Treasurer Rob Hall, Waterloo; and Secretary Julie Cayley, Barrie. ROI directors are: Craig Desjardins, Picton; Christine Dukelow, Beaverton; Dr. Rob Gordon, Guelph; Janet Horner, Shelburne; Scott Merrifield, Sudbury; Stig Puschel, Sudbury; Tom Prout, Exeter; and Chris White, Rockwood.

“It’s really an honour for me to serve as ROI’s first Board Chair and I am so impressed with the calibre of board members we have been able to attract to the new ROI board,” says Board Chair Jim Whaley, who is an independent health consultant, specializing in rural health services. “I am excited about the programs and services that ROI has inherited from its predecessor organizations as well as its potential for launching new initiatives that will strengthen rural Ontario.”

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a not-for-profit organization formed in 2010 through the amalgamation of The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL) and The Ontario Rural Council (TORC). Governed by a 12-member volunteer board, ROI has a mandate to provide stronger support for key issues facing rural Ontario. The Institute delivers leadership training (including the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program), a mechanism to engage rural and multi-sector stakeholders for the purposes of informing and influencing rural policy development, and third-party program delivery.

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