



Steps to Leadership

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Funding Ensures Development of New Rural Leaders

(Guelph, ON – June 18, 2008) – The recent \$1.1 million Government of Canada funding announcement for the development of new rural leadership programs in Ontario just got a step closer to reality with the release of specific details that will form the framework for the work to be done.

Under the banner “Steps to Leadership”, four key organizations will spearhead the initiative: The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL), 4-H Ontario, The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) and Foundation for Rural Living (FRL). Working together, the organizations will direct, develop and implement the new programming aimed at significantly boosting leadership skills and capacity for agricultural and rural organizations/communities across Ontario.

Plans call for eight specific initiatives, each reinforcing the learnings of the other. They include a series of leadership-building activities to be offered on an annual basis and four new resource tools, all aimed at complementing the overall program:

Annual Leadership-Building Activities:

1. Step Up to Leadership – a leadership program directed at senior youth ages 18 to 25. Three programs will be offered each year across Ontario and will be a natural step after 4-H club involvement.
2. Leading Edge: First Steps – a four to six month ‘local’ leadership program directed at current and emerging adult leaders who want to focus their efforts at the local community level. Six programs will be offered annually across Ontario.
3. Leading Edge: Next Steps – similar to the First Steps program but focused on leadership at a more regional or provincial level. Three programs will be run each year.
4. Leading Edge Summit – “A Provincial Perspective” – an annual multi-day leadership conference directed at youth and adults. Three of these conferences will be held over the duration of the project in 2010, 2011 and 2012.

In addition, four new resource tools will also be offered:

1. Electronic Leadership Newsletter – focused on leadership theory and practice and directed at agriculture, agri-food and rural organizations across Ontario.
2. Travel/Tuition Assistance – financial assistance for individuals across rural Ontario who wish to access leadership development opportunities.
3. Speakers’ Network – Development of a leadership speaker’s network providing agriculture, agri-food and rural organizations with access to a range of affordable speakers with experience on a variety of leadership topics and issues.
4. Leadership Track Events – Financial support on an annual basis to provide new leadership programming at current or new conferences/workshops organized by 4-H Ontario, the OAC Student Leadership Conference, TORC and Foundation for Rural Living.



Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada

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Rob Black, Executive Director of The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL), estimates as a result of this funding, more than 1,000 individuals over the next five years will have had the opportunity to participate in the leadership programs.

“Our graduates will be more confident, better able to solve issues, and have a much better ability to communicate and work as team members,” says Black.

Having these four key leadership organizations pooling their expertise will benefit rural Ontario communities as well as the agri-food and rural sectors,” states Kim Turnbull, chair of the Agricultural Adaptation Council, a non-profit, grass roots coalition of 71 agricultural, agribusiness and rural organizations. “Together they will develop new programming and resources which not only address the gaps in current programming, but are also affordable and accessible to current and emerging rural leaders.”

The first new workshop, “Step Up to Leadership”, will be offered to youth ages 18 to 25, beginning this fall. More details will be available as plans get underway.

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For more information:

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Backgrounder on the Four Collaborating Organizations

4-H Ontario

The 4-H Ontario program builds leaders. Through a network of 1600 volunteers, and a dedicated staff over 6200 youth, ages 10-21 years, are provided with ``Learn To Do By Doing`` experiential opportunities to develop their competence, confidence, connection, character and caring skills. With projects encompassing all aspects of agriculture, food, health and the environment, 4-H community programs set the stage for members to access advanced leadership development opportunities at the regional, provincial, national and international levels.

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The Ontario Rural Council (TORC)

As a catalyst for rural dialogue, collaboration and advocacy, TORC is dedicated to drawing the ‘collective’ rural voice for the purposes of influencing provincial policy, programs and research development. TORC was formed in 1998 as a member-driven, non-profit organization and remains committed to encouraging effective partnerships for progress, intent on ensuring the concerns and input of our rural stakeholders are heard by policy- and decision-makers working towards a more vibrant Ontario.

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Foundation for Rural Living

- The Foundation for Rural Living (FRL), founded in 1979, advances the rural nonprofit and voluntary sector and builds sustainable capacity to enhance the quality of life of rural citizens. FRL is engaged in a comprehensive and integrated strategy consisting of the following initiatives:
- Rural-Based Research - To improve the understanding of the rural charitable sector
- Building Vital Rural Communities - To build sustainable capacity in rural nonprofit and voluntary organizations
- Celebrating Excellence – To foster quality and celebrate and model rural innovation
- Investing in Rural - To increase philanthropy and community support for worthy charitable programs

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The Centre for Rural Leadership

The mission of The Centre for Rural Leadership is..."To develop and support current and emerging leaders through a continuum of programs and resources to strengthen and diversify rural communities and the bio-resource sector." This mission supports the organization's vision of a world of..."Dynamic leaders for today and tomorrow."

Along with the flagship program, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, The Centre for Rural Leadership offers programming to assist and support current and emerging leaders and organizations across Ontario's agriculture, agri-food and rural sectors to move forward and grow.

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