

**THE
Rural
Development
Conference 2006**

April 10–12, 2006
Blue Mountain Resort
Collingwood, ON
[http://
www.theruralconference.ca](http://www.theruralconference.ca)

Presented by:
AAFC (Rural Secretariat),
OMAFRA (Rural
Development Division)
& The Ontario Rural
Council

Rural Health Focus for February Forum

The issue of rural health care will be front and centre at the TORC February 2006 Forum, **Rural Health Works: Strengthening Rural Health Services through Local Economic Development Strategies.**

“Gaining better access to health care services throughout rural Ontario continues to be a challenge,” notes Jim Whaley, Chair of the TORC Rural Health Working Group, which has spearheaded the full day agenda. “This forum has been designed to help rural practitioners and stakeholders make better connects with the programs that do exist and are available to them. There is growing evi-

dence to suggest that the sustainability of rural communities lies in this ability to develop multi-stakeholder and multi-sectoral partnerships.”

The TORC Forum is slated for Thursday, February 9, 2006 in the Conference Centre at One Stone Road West in Guelph.

TORC Members are asked to note the Business Meeting typically held the morning of a TORC Forum, has been rescheduled in light of the full day agenda. The TORC Business Meeting will now take place on March 7, 2006.

For more info: mwalter@torc.on.ca

TORC E.D. Update

The TORC Board of Directors has struck a hiring committee to initiate the process of naming a new Executive Director to replace interim E.D. Joseph Dubonnet.

Soon after joining TORC last fall, Joseph stepped down as

Executive Director due to personal reasons.

The TORC hiring committee is currently reviewing the existing E.D. job description, and aims to launch a targeted executive search to fill the post in the near future.

THE
Rural
DEVELOPMENT
CONFERENCE
2006

**Community Building through Innovation:
*Celebrating Today's Rural***

April 10 - 12, 2006, Blue Mountain Resort, Collingwood, Ontario

Canada

THE ONTARIO RURAL COUNCIL

Ontario

Conference Gears Up with Launch of Website

TORC has been hard at work with our provincial and federal conference partners in establishing a remarkable agenda for the upcoming Rural Development Conference 2006 (April 10-12th) at Blue Mountain Resort in Collingwood.

And now our TORC network can see what we've been up to by visiting the new event website:

<http://www.theruralconference.ca>

Be sure to review the Program-at-a-Glance, take the time to identify possible Partnership opportunities and, of

course, register online to ensure your spot at *the rural development event of the year.*

TORC Members stand to benefit immensely from this multi-

sectoral conference agenda which approaches community building through the lens of innovation and from a broad per-

(continued on next page)

TORC Member Outreach

The TORC office will be sending out reminders this month to those TORC Members and Associate Members who have not yet responded to our annual membership invoices. Our strength as being the only organization to focus on *cross-sectoral* rural dialogue, collaboration and action relies on our *continued* and *collective* input. Now more than ever, we must look to the power of our networking potential to ensure that we all stay 'ahead of the wave'. Please contact our TORC office directly with any concerns/feedback.

Peter Kenyon Headlines Rural Development Conference 2006

continued from page 1

spective. All rural sectors are represented, among them: rural health, economic diversity in resource-based communities, local/regional tourism, agriculture in the new rural economy, rural-urban realities, economic immigration, community foundations and rural philanthropy, rural engagement in policy making, and the role of arts and culture in rural development.

The participation of keynote speaker Peter Kenyon of Australia has been a major draw for many since the conference was first announced last Fall. Peter

is an internationally-acclaimed social entrepreneur and community development enthusiast who has a reputation for leaving audiences pumped with possibilities for rural vitality.



Peter Kenyon

In keeping with the interactive mandate of this conference, Peter will open the two and a half day event sharing his inspirational insights, and then engage with us in a lively hour

of Table Talk discussion and dialogue where he will lend his ears as we share *our* stories and experiences.

Visitors to the event website will be able to experience the interactive **pre-conference online forum**, an opportunity to offer up their views and opinions in advance with results being tabulated as part of the conference proceedings. Once at the conference, participants can contribute to the on-site internet café, take in one of the mobile workshops, and get involved in the many networking oppor-

For more information: mwalter@torc.on.ca

Summit Update:

Ottawa and Durham-York Calling for Vision and Action

Response to two recent Summits based on the **TORC Rural-Urban Summit Model** has proved to be overwhelmingly positive. Task forces have been assigned to ensure the dialogue continues, with significant outcomes already realized in at least one of the regional events:



Following the municipally-sponsored Ottawa's Rural Summit, rural citizens and councilors formed The Rural Summit Task Force to set priorities and further examine recommendations coming from the hundreds of residents and business owners who attended the two-day event.

Of particular significance was the task force's input into the city's 2006 draft budget process, which has resulted in a final budget earmarking **\$1.9 million in new funds** to help implement rural priorities as identified by the group.

- the creation of a Rural Affairs Bureau that will report directly to the city manager and communicate with municipal, provincial and federal levels of government on rural issues
- improvement of the condition of rural roads, ditch inspection and maintenance programs
- increased access to broadband internet service
- education to better inform and equip city staff on rural issues
- investments in building stronger direct links to rural residents and business owners for greater overall influence in city policy and programs

The task force is expecting further announcements that will help implement the plan moving forward.



More than 150 people attended the Durham York Summit in late November, with strong representation from elected officials.

Education, vision and leadership were

cited as being the most desirable actions to come out of the one-day event. Participants called for increased education for: our youth on the importance of the rural-urban relationship and the interconnectivity of the two; our regional and provincial politicians so that they may become better equipped to represent rural concerns; our urban population so that they better understand the impacts of urban sprawl on our prime agricultural lands and work together to protect. A significant number of participants notably championed the concept of **compensation** to rural areas (farmers) for the provision of ecological services and overall contributions to the fabric of the province.

As a result of the strong feedback from participants, the Summit organizing committee has agreed to strike a steering committee to help determine a "regional direction" and work towards developing some of these action items moving forward. The steering committee will be comprised of original Summit organizers, as well as interested members of the community. The first meeting is slated for early March, 2006.

For more information, contact: mwalter@torc.on.ca