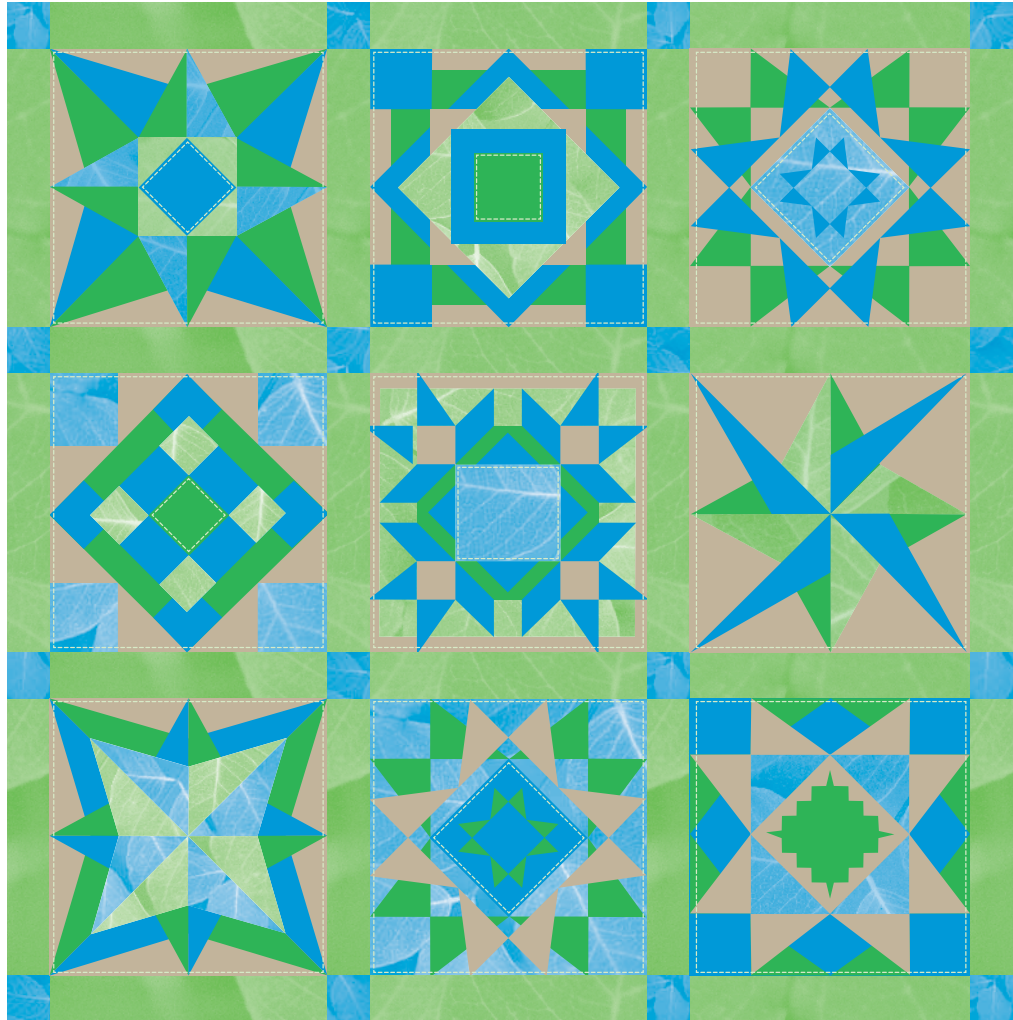


TORC



**THE ONTARIO RURAL COUNCIL (TORC) LEGACY
1998 - 2010**



*Dedicated to the
memory of*
PAT SMITH
TORC CHAIR, 2003-2005

For all of us who had the good fortune to know her, Pat Smith was a woman of conviction; a woman who embodied the virtues of family and community.

When Pat first joined TORC as a founding member rep for the Ontario Public School Boards Association (OPSBA) in 1998, she brought to our (round)table the valued and multiple perspectives of local, county and provincial volunteer. Her balanced and focused contributions were integral to the strength of TORC as a grassroots organization.

As a well-respected and entirely natural leader, Pat exuded clarity of thought, confidence, strength of character and, above all, an extraordinary dedication and passion for rural Ontario. These attributes served her well as an early member of TORC's Voluntary Sector Working Group, and served TORC well during her two-year designation as our organizational Chair.

More than just a force with which to be reckoned, Pat knew how to have fun and could inject a crowd with her eternal energy and optimism, once even breaking into song while opening

a TORC conference! Pat provided TORC with effective leadership when it was needed most and we, as members, will be forever grateful.

When Pat Smith passed away in January 2008, we lost not only an exceptional rural leader and valued volunteer...we lost a cherished friend.

This legacy document is dedicated to the memory of Pat Smith and all the volunteers who have, like Pat, shared a commitment to building strong rural communities and organizations.

ELINOR HUMPHRIES AND
MARY ROBERTSON LACROIX



MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR AND EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

VALERIE RYAN AND HAROLD FLAMING

It is with great pride that we release this legacy document highlighting the history, volunteer contribution and accomplishments of The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) over the course of the last 12 years. Through the focused and determined efforts of all, TORC has risen to the challenge, successfully emerging as a credible and valued 'voice' for rural Ontario interests and concerns.

Without a doubt, little could have been achieved without the committed vision of TORC by so many individuals and organizations who collectively paved the way towards the development of such a strong rural network. We wish to recognize and acknowledge the significant role of TORC's early visionaries, Board members, Working Group members, volunteers, rural stakeholders, funders and supporters who have each played a defining role in this incredible journey.



It is with a certain degree of sadness that TORC closes this chapter of its existence. Since its formation in 1998, TORC has played a pivotal role as a catalyst for dialogue, collaboration, action and advocacy on issues and opportunities facing rural Ontario. As TORC Past Chair Pat Smith so often said, "TORC is an ideal neutral facilitator that is able to set the table for effective dialogue on issues critical to rural Ontario. TORC is well-positioned to bring forward the collective voice on rural issues."

Through the engagement of its members, government and non-government representatives, volunteers and rural stakeholders, TORC has a track record of successfully facilitating critical networking and the articulation of the rural voice on issues as diverse as rural poverty, rural health, renewable energy and access to justice in rural and remote areas,

to name just a few. Most importantly, rural policy and decision-makers have, as participants and supporters of these events, had the opportunity to benefit from this input as it helped to inform their government policy moving forward.

Ontario is best served where urban and rural communities are strong, vibrant and healthy. TORC has always understood this concept and, in turn, built a foundation where the insights, collaborations, strengths and experiences of rural leaders, businesses and residents facilitates a greater understanding of rural issues and the achievement of this objective. It has been said that the "wisdom of the community exceeds the knowledge of the experts." This is certainly true when it comes to effective, community-based rural development.

Rest assured, the good work of TORC will continue! It will however now be enhanced through the organization's amalgamation with The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL) in the collective forming of the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI). The call continues in rural Ontario for effective leaders and an articulate voice through which to address the issues and challenges facing rural stakeholders.

Considerable progress has been made to date, but much still needs to be accomplished in the effort to build a strong rural Ontario! It is our every expectation that through the leadership of the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) Board of Directors and support staff, these objectives will be realized.

As TORC's final chapter comes to an end, we would be remiss not to acknowledge the substantial support of our longstanding funders - Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Rural Secretariat - as well as our numerous forum- and conference-sponsoring organizations/businesses. In particular, we'd like to extend a heartfelt thanks to our TORC membership of volunteers, without whose financial and participatory support, our numerous initiatives would never have come to fruition.

Finally, we would like to thank the past and present TORC Board members and support staff for their passion, dedication, time and insights into the work of TORC. These individuals have served rural Ontario well!

Sincerely submitted,
VALERIE RYAN
CHAIR, TORC

HAROLD FLAMING
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, TORC

TORC'S ORIGINAL VISION...

REFLECTING ON THE EARLY YEARS

MARY ROBERTSON LACROIX – FOUNDING EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I remember well the genesis of TORC. As with all innovations, TORC began with a handful of clear and creative thinkers who saw the need for a new kind of organization. Not one that represented a commodity or sector, but rather a broad-based network that addressed issues facing – perhaps threatening – rural communities and the rural way of life. Several years after TORC was established, it became clear that the intuition of its founding members was 'spot on'. The emerging dominance of cities in the new economy necessitated an intentional shift in thinking among rural communities. A sense of entitlement was being replaced by critical reflection on the role, as well as current and potential contributions of rural Ontario within the province and the nation as a whole.

Timing was everything. Both federal and provincial governments in Canada and the U.S. were recognizing rural as distinctive from agriculture, and were seeking ways to empower rural to take responsibility for a prosperous future. Others called it devolution. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food became the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada created the Rural Secretariat. New rural organizations were demanding recognition. In a sense,

the conditions of the day energized the rural development movement that TORC reflected. As TORC gained momentum, one founding member from the University of Guelph stated emphatically, **"I worked for 30 years to get rural on the radar screen, and all of a sudden everyone is interested in rural issues"**. **DR. TONY FULLER**, RETIRED, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH

The Foundation for Rural Living showed leadership in both articulating the need for this new 'institutional mechanism' and facilitating its formation. An exploratory meeting held in 1996 and attended by approximately 30 representatives with rural interests confirmed the need for, **"a small and articulate group to influence policy affecting rural communities"**.

ELBERT VAN DONKERSGOED, RETIRED, CHRISTIAN FARMERS FEDERATION OF ONTARIO
An invitation to key rural organizations to join a steering committee to shape this new mechanism was responded to with enthusiasm. This group of passionate rural leaders shared a common vision for what this new organization could accomplish. With support of the provincial and federal governments, the organization was launched in 1998. At a funding announcement event, one of these founding directors spoke with tears in her eyes, **"I can't believe this is finally happening – this is like a dream"**. **CAROL ROCK**, RETIRED, WOMEN AND RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

The mandate of The Ontario Rural Council was to act as a catalyst for rural dialogue, collaboration and action. The goal was a prosperous rural Ontario. Prosperity would be achieved by strengthening rural communities and organizations so they could adapt to change and maximize opportunities for growth and development. "TORC" was a fitting acronym because of the connotation associated with 'torque' – a force of motion and change. At an early planning workshop when the name for the new organization was being considered, one participant stood up in front of the group, stated the name, and then proceeded to spin around while exclaiming, **"toorrqqueel"** **JIM MAHONE**, UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH. TORC was a vehicle of change – a vehicle to coordinate and strengthen rural voices at a time when rural was accused of being competitive and fragmented. Many rural voices made it difficult for policy and decision-makers to get an accurate read on rural issues and feedback on proposed solutions. Members of TORC were committed to finding a process that would provide synergy through collaboration, consolidating rural voices without undermining the authority and voice of individual member organizations.



MARY ROBERTSON LACROIX
at the first TORC conference,
Rural Ontario '98, in
Collingwood.

Over the years, a TORC event has always represented a trusted forum for open dialogue and sharing information about issues and opportunities in rural Ontario.

How would TORC accomplish its goals? Activities focused on public education, research, consultation and communication.

TORC acted as an education and information hub for rural Ontario. The original half day forum events tracked current issues and opportunities. They were held three times a year in locations throughout the province. Along with an annual conference, the forums were intended to provide an objective examination of current issues. By providing differing perspectives to an issue, rural people gained a deeper understanding and were thus better equipped to address issues through informed individual or collaborative actions. Active involvement in formal research initiatives was primarily in conjunction with the Sustainable Rural Communities Program, a shared program of the University of Guelph and Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs. The goal for TORC was to always 'stay ahead of the wave'; anticipate issues and influence policy *before* issues turned into problems. The challenge rested in how to develop a proactive approach rather than simply reacting to problems after the fact. Additionally, TORC stressed the need for decision-makers to apply a 'rural lens' to policies and programs within both the private and public sectors.

TORC built upon the principle of synergy by providing opportunities for members to come together to tackle issues and opportunities that were too great for any one group to address. This was accomplished through the formation of Working Groups. Initially, Working Groups formed around economic development, infrastructure, volunteerism, youth and health. Ad hoc groups also formed as the need arose and addressed issues such as rural childcare, rural education, and even a campaign to champion all things rural. It was through the Working Groups that collaborative-based action projects emerged. During the first few years, each Working Group undertook a significant policy-to-community province-wide initiative: The Data Services Improvement Program, in partnership with Bell Canada, Ontario Telecommunications Association and Province of Ontario, not only extended services to rural people but attracted several thousand rural residents to community workshops related to telecom applications; Valuing the Rural Volunteer Project and the Rural Health Strategy provided practical toolkits for rural communities; and the Ontario Rural Capacity Assessment Project and Rural Online Communications project experimented with innovative, partnership-based electronic communication vehicles.

"TORC was designed to be a safe forum for debate. Many of the early sessions were set up to bring both sides together in order to bridge information and understanding. There were some in farm organizations who were nervous of this approach. There was a fear that TORC would become a separate and distinct voice for rural Ontario that would be different from the voices of the established farm community. This did not happen. As TORC evolved it focused on providing accurate information on issues. There were still conflicting views on the road forward for rural Ontario but these were tempered with a better understanding of the issues and a willingness to seek compromise. In addition to agriculturally-focused issues, TORC also had influence on a changing vision for health care, daycare, community use of government buildings and internet access for rural Ontario communities.

I am pleased to see that TORC is still evolving. The link with The Centre for Rural Leadership is a natural fit. The future leaders being nurtured by the Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) will benefit from lessons learned at TORC. Rural has changed. Primary agriculture, small manufacturing and residential growth are all part of the new rural Ontario. Each of these activities will generate differing views of what is needed for community survival. The safe forum for discussion established by TORC is still needed. Without understanding, information and compromise, groups will become polarized. ROI will have a role in ensuring that this does not happen."

RON BONNETT,
FORMER OFA REPRESENTATIVE TO TORC,
1ST VICE-PRESIDENT,
CANADIAN FEDERATION OF AGRICULTURE



TORC'S ORIGINAL VISION... REFLECTING ON THE EARLY YEARS

CONTINUED...

TORC was structured to reflect the rural community itself. The Council was a *network* – an organization of organizations. In keeping with the original vision of a relatively small and articulate group, membership was targeted at 30-40 groups. The challenge was to maintain a balance of members across the sectors: social and human services, economic development and infrastructure, environment, and government. Decisions were consensus-based with all provincial and federal representatives sitting as non-voting members. While free to participate fully in Council deliberations, government representatives were not asked to compromise their neutrality by registering a vote on any particular issue.

TORC members were asked to sign an agreement upon joining TORC. This agreement spelled out expectations of membership such as a commitment to a culture of openness and trust, to bringing resources to the table, and to regular participation. It was felt that in order for the Council to be effective, it was imperative that representatives were senior members of the organization, thus highly informed about issues and in a position to make decisions on behalf of their organization.

From the beginning, TORC was an electronic-based group. Perhaps because of the promise of emerging technologies to overcome the challenges of distance, the Council was eager to be an early adopter and embrace the use of electronic communications. The intent was to model the use of these technologies for others. At TORC's first annual conference for instance, real time, two-way interactive video conferencing linked international conference speakers in Guelph with the TORC conference delegates in Collingwood. At the time, this was considered to be an extraordinary accomplishment.

The energy was high during the early years. Success beget success as new projects presented themselves and partnership opportunities grew with TORC's credibility and recognition – even in the international arena. The Council's strength was resident in the flexible nature of the organization and the visionary leaders it attracted to its management team. This was a learning organization. We were striving for excellence. There was continual reflection upon the goals, processes, outcomes and required changes to maintain effectiveness and relevance. It was also an innovative organization acting as a rural hub or cluster that brought together creative thinkers from across diverse sectors to plan for change.



THE HONOURABLE LYLE VANCLIEF,
then Minister of Agriculture and
Agri-Food Canada (middle) joins
an inaugural gathering of TORC
members in 1998.

"Over the years, TORC truly achieved the goals of its founding members. It constantly served as a forum for dialogue while pushing a mandate of cooperation, communication and coordination amongst its members, all for the benefit of rural Ontario. For me, TORC was an example of what can be achieved when volunteers, agencies and both the provincial and federal governments work together. I think everyone who participated or contributed to TORC came away the better for their engagement."

DR. WAYNE CALDWELL,
UNIVERSITY OF GUELPH,
PAST CHAIR, TORC (2000-2003)



TORC Board of Directors (2009-2010), along
with TORC staffer Michele Hill (2nd from left).

"I am always excited by the linkages and connections TORC creates for rural Ontario – raising awareness increases rural engagement and rural vitality."

TOM PROUT,
CONSERVATION ONTARIO,
PAST CHAIR, TORC (2006-2007)

"What originally attracted me to TORC was a group of dedicated volunteers who were passionate about all things 'rural' and who were prepared to speak up and take action on key issues important to rural communities. This passion for rural, like the Olympic flame, is the 'torch' that TORC passes on to the new Rural Ontario Institute."

JIM WHALEY,
RURAL HEALTH CONSULTANT,
PAST CHAIR, TORC (2007-2009)

TORC BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND SUPPORT STAFF 1998-2010

Over the years, the TORC Board of Directors, support and special projects staff have contributed significantly to the success of TORC. This dedication of staff and volunteers is gratefully acknowledged.

PAST BOARD CHAIRS 1998-2010

Jack Hagarty 1998-1999
Wayne Caldwell 2000-2003
Pat Smith 2003-2005
Al Lauzon 2005-2006
Tom Prout 2006-2007
Jim Whaley 2007-2009
Val Ryan 2009-2010

TORC SUPPORT STAFF 1998-2010

Mary Robertson Lacroix, Executive Director, 1998-2001
Cathie Brown, Executive Director, 2002-2005
Harold Flaming, Executive Director, 2006-2010
Michele Hill, Administrative Assistant, 2000-2010
Christine Dixon, Communications and Project Coordinator, 2000-2004
Lisa Thompson, Communications and Project Coordinator, 2003-2004
Michele Walter, Communications and Project Coordinator, 2004-2008

TORC MEMBERSHIP 1998-2010

From the beginning, The Ontario Rural Council has been a member-driven, multi-sector provincial organization carrying a mandate to facilitate the 'collective voice' on issues facing rural Ontario. Without question, the membership of TORC has been our strength and organizational 'backbone'.

TORC originally envisioned its 40-seat membership as representing provincial organizations in the following sectors:

**Economic & Infrastructure
Resource & Environmental
Community & Human Services
Government
Individual and Regional Members**

In 2007, TORC expanded its membership scope which facilitated the addition of a number of provincial, regional and community organizations, bringing total membership to 52 seats around the TORC roundtable. For many, the rise in membership reflected the resonance with which TORC consistently brought to the forefront the issues and opportunities in today's rural Ontario, providing the collective voice that speaks to the social, business, environmental, political and healthcare interests of our rural communities.

MAJOR TORC INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

In the interests of fulfilling TORC's mandate as a catalyst for rural dialogue and collaboration, the TORC calendar over a 12-year span was geared towards hosting public events to bring together diverse voices from rural to learn, discuss and share information on a host of pertinent issues. Whether it be in the form of a conference, forum, summit, roundtable discussion or workshop; whether it be a half day, full day or three-day duration, a TORC event consistently held the same objective: building awareness of rural issues, sharing best practices and helping to inform and influence rural policy, program and research development.

The outcomes of each TORC event would be captured and chronicled, in later years in the form of THE TORC REPORT, which highlighted 'what we heard' from our participants and then offered it up within the context of the day, being sure to include Key Recommendations for Action to relevant stakeholders. These reports were then circulated to pertinent policy and decision-makers, TORC members, rural stakeholders and non-profit organizations.

And what were the results?

- Enhanced new networks and partnerships developed to responsibly and effectively address specific rural issues
- TORC members invited to participate on funding and decision-making boards and panels related to rural development
- TORC as an organization emerging as a trusted and well-respected 'voice' for rural and an effective facilitator for rural dialogue

"During the months leading up to the finalization and promulgation of the Clean Water Act, a piece of legislation viewed with skepticism among many in the rural parts of Ontario, TORC was very helpful in facilitating a frank and open dialogue between the government as a representative of all Ontarians, and key members of the rural community. In the case of the CWA, as we move forward over the next couple of years to develop plans to protect rural (and urban) there will be an ongoing need for a dialogue as participants who are familiar with the threats to water sources begin to develop and debate the "fixes" that may have implications for rural communities."

IAN SMITH
DIRECTOR, SOURCE PROTECTION
PROGRAMS BRANCH,
ONTARIO MINISTRY OF
THE ENVIRONMENT

These TORC public events did not happen without first a tremendous planning effort by a host of hands from TORC Working Group members, volunteers and project Steering Committee representatives. Each is to be commended for their countless hours of assistance.

From the participant side, more than 6,300 people have been engaged in some 68 TORC event initiatives over the last 12 years. Providing much-appreciated financial assistance for these events were a total of 180 sponsoring partners, many of them consistent supporters of TORC, no matter the wide range of issues explored at our forums and conferences. They shared the TORC vision and are greatly acknowledged for their commitment to it!

JIM WHALEY, Past TORC Chair
addresses a TORC Forum.



JIM NUBEL, TORC Board Member
and Treasurer.



"The Ontario Sustainable Energy Association (OSEA) had the pleasure of collaborating with TORC in 2007 on a renewable energy forum in Stratford (ON). The event was an incredible success with farmers and rural landowners from around the province packing the facility to capacity to learn about opportunities in the field of sustainable energy. TORC and OSEA attracted local and international experts to speak, providing background on the full range of sustainable energy options, and insights into best practices around ownership structures, siting considerations and leasing models. It is safe to say the forum was a landmark event helping lay the foundation of public understanding and support that provided OSEA and its allies with grassroots champions ready to push the province's leaders for a Green Energy and Green Economy Act. I have no doubt that TORC in its new incarnation will continue to be an excellent ally working with OSEA to empower every Ontarian to become a green energy entrepreneur."

KRIS STEVENS
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR,
ONTARIO SUSTAINABLE
ENERGY ASSOCIATION

TORC Members **CATHY LANG** and **VAL RYAN**.



CONFERENCES

- "Rural Ontario '98: Harnessing Energies of Change", Collingwood, ON
- "Rural Ontario '99: Pioneering the Future", Collingwood, ON
- "Rural Ontario 2000: What's in it for You?", Collingwood, ON
- "Rural Ontario 2001: Nobody Does it Better", Alliston, ON
- "Rural Ontario 2002: Weaving Together", Alliston, ON
- "Rural Ontario 2003: Making the Connection", Huntsville, ON
- "Rural Ontario 2004: Leading through Change", London, ON
- "Community Building through Innovation: Celebrating Today's Rural", Collingwood, ON 2006
- "Leading the Rural Renaissance", Ottawa, ON 2008

FORUM EVENTS

Rural Education
The Future of Rural Schools, 1998

Rural Strategies, Research and Models
"Rural Models that Work: Transforming Challenges into Opportunities",
July 1998, Stratford, ON

"Putting Research to Work in Rural Communities: Implications and Applications",
July 1999, Sudbury, ON

"Aligning Efforts toward a Rural Strategy: Federal, Provincial and The Ontario Rural Council in Collaboration",
April 1999, Peterborough, ON

"Understanding Partnerships: Building Successful and Sustainable Collaborations",
January 1999, Guelph, ON

Leadership & Innovation

"The Leadership Challenge: Is Rural Ontario Ready for the 21st Century?",
January 2002, Guelph, ON

"Innovative Directions for a New Rural Ontario",
February 2005, Guelph, ON

Land Use & Urban - Rural

"Common Causes: Creating a New Rural-Urban Partnership",
April 2002, Whitby, ON

"Trading Spaces: Working through Complex Land Use Issues in Ontario",
April 2003, Brockville, ON

First Nations

"Trade and Tradition: A Dialogue with First Nations",
June 2004, Rama, ON

MAJOR TORC INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CONTINUED...

TORC Past Chairs **TOM PROUT** (left) and **JIM WHALEY** (right).



"As part of TORC's Rural Youth Working Group, I had the pleasure of working on a team to address rural youth issues, including youth out-migration and the organization of local Youth Councils. This was a great example of an innovative and collaborative project that resulted in the creation of a practical Rural Youth Council Toolkit. The partnership with TORC and The Centre for Rural Leadership has allowed the Northumberland Community Futures Development Corporation to be selected as one of the initial sites for the Step Up to Leadership program."

JAMIE SIMMONS
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT MANAGER,
NORTHUMBERLAND COMMUNITY FUTURES
DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION

Rural Health

- "Who Cares for Rural Health?", July 2000, North Bay, ON
- "Recruit, Retain and Rethink: Improving the State of Rural Health", January 2003, Guelph, ON
- "LHINs and the Future of Rural Health: What can Our Communities Expect?", September 2006, Sudbury, ON
- "Rethinking Rural Health Care; Innovations Making a Difference", November 2009, Stratford, ON
- "Transforming Northern Health: Innovations Making a Difference", March 2010, Sault Ste. Marie, ON

Economic Development

- "Challenges and Opportunities in Economic Diversification: The Eastern Ontario Experience", April 2000, Morrisburg, ON
- "Fostering Entrepreneurship in Rural Ontario: Exploring New and Existing Approaches for the Enhanced Support of Our Rural Entrepreneurs", June 2007, Guelph, ON
- "Economies in Transition: Leveraging Cultural Assets for Prosperity", November 2008 and March 2009, Brockville, Chatham-Kent and Muskoka, ON

Environment

- "A Focus on the Changing Face of Energy: Impacts and Opportunities for Rural Communities", January 2000, Guelph, ON
- "Water Quality in Rural Ontario", January 2001, Guelph, ON
- "Energy Alternates and Alternatives: Responding to the Current Energy Climate in Rural Ontario", April 2004, Peterborough, ON
- "Global Influences, Local Responses: Positioning for Change in Ontario's Resource Sector", June 2003, North Bay, ON
- "Environmental Services: Making the Links between Rural and Urban", April 2005, Cambridge, ON
- "Source Water Protection / The Clean Water Act: How Do We Build Capacity?", June 2006, Peterborough, ON
- "Exploring Ownership Options for Farmers, Rural Landowners and Rural Communities: A Discussion Paper on Renewable Energy in Rural Ontario", November 2007, Stratford, ON
- "Capturing Local Food Opportunities: A Discussion on the Challenges and Opportunities Related to Supplying Ontario-Grown Produce and Products to Retail Stores", December 2007, Port Perry and Milton, ON



"TORC has had an important role to play in facilitating and engaging rural stakeholders on a number of critical emerging rural issues such as broadband in rural and remote areas. The community broadband forum events held in several rural Ontario communities in 2007 helped to address a number of issues, challenges and opportunities related to broadband in rural Ontario. TORC was a strong advocate for the needs of rural communities and their work in this regard contributed to the development, funding and success of broadband programs in Ontario."

BARBARA SWARTZENTRUBER
MANAGER, BROADBAND PROGRAMS,
ONTARIO MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
FOOD AND RURAL AFFAIRS

"When the City of Ottawa held the inaugural Rural Summit in 2005, one of the keys to success was involving the right stakeholders on the steering committee. TORC, represented by Jim Nübel, was one of the important contributors that helped the City of Ottawa effectively engage rural residents, business people and farmers and set priorities for real change in rural Ottawa."

"Since the 2005 Rural Summit, the City has delivered on numerous initiatives that were identified as rural priorities. These include delivery of broadband to 100% of our rural areas, the creation of a Rural Affairs Office and realigning decision-making on rural issues by empowering the Agriculture and Rural Affairs Committee."

DERRICK MOODIE
MANAGER, DEVELOPMENT REVIEW -
RURAL SERVICES,
CITY OF OTTAWA



Youth and building awareness among our young people as to their role in the future of rural Ontario was a recurring theme for TORC over the years.

Demographics and Rural Youth

- "Rural Youth: Leaving, Staying or Returning", July 2001, Dorset, ON
- "Changing Rural Demographics", April 2001, Merrickville, ON
- "When 1 + 1 = 3: Building the Culture for Innovation in Ontario", July 2002, New Liskeard, ON
- "Vital Communities: Giving Voice to Youth: Making the Links between Youth and Leadership for a Stronger Rural Ontario", June 2005, Guelph, ON
- "Rural Youth: Leading Today, Tomorrow and Beyond", March 2007, Belleville, ON

Broadband

- "Envisioning a Future with Broadband across Rural Ontario", March 2007, Brockville and Ingersoll, ON

ROUNDTABLE / WORKSHOP EVENTS

- "Beyond Freefall: Halting Rural Poverty", Response to Standing Committee on Agriculture and Forestry", January 2007
- "Connecting Across Language and Distance: Linguistic and Rural Access to Justice", September 2008
- "Building a Common Message: Moving the Ecological Goods and Services Agenda Forward", January 2010

TORC SUMMITS

- Chatham-Kent Rural Summit, April 2004
- Durham/York Rural Urban Summit, November 2005
- Ottawa Rural Summit, November 2005
- Rural Poverty, January 2007, Guelph

MAJOR TORC INITIATIVES & ACCOMPLISHMENTS

CONTINUED...

"Ducks Unlimited Canada has been a proud member and partner in TORC. TORC's position as the neutral catalyst bringing like- and non-like-minded organizations together to discuss such timely and critical rural environmental topics as source water protection planning and, most recently, ecological goods and services in Ontario. This has been invaluable to organizations like ours. TORC has enabled the formation of an innovative network of farm organizations, conservation NGOs, academia and government that will make great strides in novel emerging partnerships towards achieving a sustainable healthy rural Ontario"

JULIE CAYLEY,
MANAGER, GOVERNMENT RELATIONS,
DUCKS UNLIMITED CANADA

"The Law Foundation of Ontario is grateful to TORC for organizing a roundtable on access to justice in rural and remote communities. This was an extremely helpful and informative session because TORC was able to assemble a broad range of individuals from different organizations and geographic regions of the province."

ELIZABETH GOLDBERG,
CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER,
THE LAW FOUNDATION OF ONTARIO

PAT SMITH, WAYNE CALDWELL and **MARY ROBERTSON LACROIX**
at the July 2000 Forum in North Bay, ON.



CONTRACTS / PROJECTS

Rural Campaign – "What Makes it Rural?"
Booklet

Innovative Rural Communities

Rural Research Inventory

The Rural Dialogue
Data Services Improvement Program:
"Connecting Rural Ontario"

Valuing the Rural Volunteer Tool Kit

Rural Health Strategy: A Community
Planning Guide

Ontario Rural Capacity Assessment Project

Rural Online Communications Project

Community Broadband Tool Kit, 2007 (editing and project management)

Rural Youth Council Tool Kit, 2008

"Identifying Rural Research Priorities through Community Engagement",
2010 (Partnership with Dr. Wayne Caldwell, School of Environmental
Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph, and Dr. Yolande
Chan, The Monieson Centre, Queen's University)

RURAL TASK FORCES

Rural Youth Taskforce, 1999

Agricultural Stakeholders Taskforce, 1999

Rural Child Care and Early Childhood Education Task Force, 2001

The Task Force on Rural Leadership, 2001



"The value of TORC for Bell Canada was clear: We needed to understand telecom issues from a rural perspective and to get support for our efforts to enhance services for rural Ontario. I was the rural advocate within the corporation. My ability to influence senior management was directly related to my membership in TORC",

RAY LACROIX,
DEPUTY DIRECTOR,
GOVERNMENT RELATIONS,
BELL CANADA (RETIRED)

"As the voice of rural communities in Ontario, TORC has been an invaluable partner for community-based research at The Monieson Centre, Queen's University. A critical aspect of our work, including the Knowledge Impact in Society project in Eastern Ontario and the Rural Research Priorities project in Southwestern Ontario, involves ensuring that academic research addresses community needs. With TORC's support, Monieson Centre research has been placed in the hands of rural practitioners and policy and decision-makers. Local community development needs and research priorities have been highlighted. TORC has served as a catalyst for researcher engagement with communities across Ontario. At the Centre, we look forward to partnering with the new Rural Ontario Institute. We have every expectation that the leadership in provincial rural policy and program development will continue"

DR. YOLANDE CHAN,
DIRECTOR, THE MONIESON CENTRE,
QUEEN'S UNIVERSITY

HAROLD FLAMING making a TORC
submission to the Steering Committee
on Bill 43, the Clean Water Act.



SUBMISSIONS

A key mandate of TORC over the years has been to help inform and influence rural policy, program and research development. In keeping with this deliverable, TORC staff made a number of submissions to key federal and provincial committees and hearings. These submissions effectively articulated the 'rural voice' as it pertained to the issue at hand:

Submission to - Premier's Task Force on Rural Economic Renewal (2000)

Submission to Standing Committee on Social Policy: Bill 43 – The Clean Water Act (2006)

Submission to Minister of Finance – 2007 Provincial Budget

Naming of TORC Chair Dr. A. Lauzon – Chair, Provincial Drinking Water Panel (2006)

Submission to Minister of Finance – 2008 Provincial Budget
Submission to Senate Committee on Agriculture and Forestry, "Beyond Freefall: The Challenge of Rural Poverty" (2008)

Submission to Rural and Northern Health Care Panel (2009), TORC Response to Underserviced Area Program Review

Submission to Ontario Progressive Conservative Party Annual Convention (2009) – "Rural Issues and Opportunities"

Submission to ROMA (2010) – Rural Health Issues, Challenges and Opportunities

MAJOR FUNDERS

Over the years, significant funding support has been extended to TORC by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada (Rural Secretariat). In turn, our engagement with rural Ontario stakeholders allowed both the federal and provincial governments to better understand rural issues, challenges and opportunities as seen through a grassroots rural lens. TORC is exceedingly grateful for the degree and consistency of funding support provided by both the federal and provincial governments. We value the working relationships honed over the years, and the extent to which TORC remained a significant priority amidst ministerial changes.

Ministry of Agriculture,
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A Message from the Honourable Carol Mitchell

It gives me great pleasure to offer this salute to The Ontario Rural Council (TORC) on behalf of the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs.

From its formation in 1998, TORC has served its members and Ontario's rural communities well by being a catalyst for dialogue, collaboration and advocacy. Through its broad representation of rural stakeholders, TORC has provided government ministries with a credible rural voice that has informed a variety of policies, programs and research.

Thanks in large measure to many highly dedicated board members and volunteers, TORC evolved over its 12-year history into an effective conduit between government and community representatives.

On April 1, 2010, TORC joined forces with The Centre for Rural Leadership to form the Rural Ontario Institute. I know that the new organization will continue to excel in raising the profile of rural issues and the rural viewpoint. I look forward to working with the new Board of Directors.

Carol Mitchell
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs



Ministry Headquarters: 1 Stone Road West, Guelph, Ontario N1G 4Y2
Bureau principal du ministère: 1 Stone Road West, Guelph (Ontario) N1G 4Y2

Pick Ontario Freshness
Cueillez la fraîcheur de l'Ontario



"Canada's Rural Partnership is pleased to be one of the key partners of The Ontario Rural Council. Working with this organization for the past 10 years, TORC has been more than just a vehicle for rural engagement; TORC has been vital to Ontario's collective rural voice in relaying information to all levels of government policy and decision-makers."

DONNA MITCHELL,
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR
RURAL AND CO-OPERATIVE SECRETARIAT,
AGRICULTURE AND AGRI-FOOD CANADA

TRANSITION TO RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE (ROI)

Looking forward, the merging of TORC with The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL) into the new Rural Ontario Institute is a natural evolution, one that has created a renewed sense of purpose and excitement, and one that will continue to benefit rural Ontario but from a refreshed vantage point. The ROI is poised to leverage the strengths of both TCRL and TORC to more effectively support the development of a strong rural Ontario.



"Rural Ontario needs to have a unified voice if it is going to be equal to the larger urban voice. The amalgamation of TCRL and TORC into the newly-created Rural Ontario Institute will begin this process."

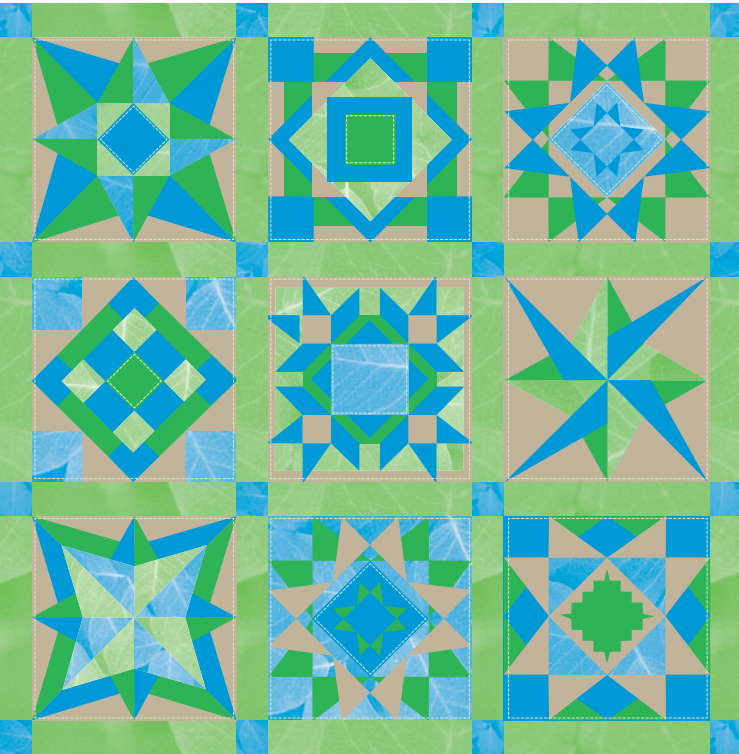
CHRIS WHITE,
CHAIR, RURAL ONTARIO MUNICIPAL ASSOCIATION (ROMA),
TORC BOARD MEMBER AND
RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE BOARD MEMBER

"Ultimately the strength of our rural communities comes from citizens who accept leadership roles and strive to make a difference, and the networks and partnerships that they build to advance their cause. The new Rural Ontario Institute offers an opportunity for these men and women to hone their leadership skills and to understand more fully the complexity of the issues facing their communities. It also provides a platform where leaders can connect with others to share their passion and insights, strategies and ideas and to take action."

I am excited and energized by the possibilities the Rural Ontario Institute offers leaders throughout rural Ontario and beyond!"

CHRISTINE DUKELOW,
FORMER ASSISTANT DEPUTY MINISTER,
RURAL DEVELOPMENT DIVISION, OMAFRA;
TORC BOARD MEMBER AND
RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE BOARD MEMBER

TORC



TORC VISION

A relevant, collaborative rural voice that contributes to a vibrant Ontario

TORC MISSION STATEMENT

TORC increases the understanding of rural Ontario and influences policy, program and research development by acting as a catalyst for dialogue, collaboration, action and advocacy

TORC STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

Identify emerging issues, challenges and opportunities to enhance the understanding of rural Ontario

Foster dialogue and communication that influences rural policy, programs and research development

Establish TORC as a respected source and broker of information on emerging issues and opportunities affecting rural Ontario



For further information on TORC or any of its past member initiatives, please contact:

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The patchwork quilt is a symbol of community effort, contribution, passion and determination. It requires the hands of many and the commitment of all, but the fruits of its labour reap a true and lasting reminder of what can be achieved from the humble beginnings of one small patch.