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***Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets reveal migration trends vary across the province**

Guelph, Ontario, October 27, 2015. A new set of two *Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets confirm that non-metropolitan census divisions have been experiencing net population loss due to migration collectively since 2006. But the data proves that rural trends vary across Ontario as some areas are growing.

“With few exceptions, internal migration is the most important driver of population growth or decline in rural places – not natural increase or international immigration,” says Norman Ragetlie, Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute.

In 2014, Ontario’s 27 rural counties collectively experienced a net population gain due to migration within the province; however this gain was offset by a larger net loss to other provinces. 52 per cent of rural counties experienced net migration gain in 2014.

“While the overall net result of internal migration may not appear very dramatic, what happens regionally is. We see significant patterns at the local level where some places lose one per cent of their population each year and others gain that much or more,” says Ragetlie.

The fact sheets also confirm that youth out-migration from rural places remains widespread across the province and the net gain among older youth does not balance the loss.

“Youth migration is a key demographic concern for many towns,” says Ragetlie. “We see mixed results at a county level, including among neighbouring counties, in the gain or loss of youth between the ages of 25 and 34. Community leaders should be interested in exploring whether there are local explanations for the outcomes.”

The census divisions of Muskoka, Oxford and Parry Sound experienced the most significant gains in older youth populations between 2009 and 2014. During the same period, Chatham-Kent, Haldimand-Norfolk, Huron, Lambton and Rainy River experienced the most significant losses.

Focus on Rural Ontario fact sheets are based on Statistics Canada data and are part of a three-year series that profile key facts and figures on rural socio-economic trends. All fact sheets are available for download online at www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/focus-on-rural-ontario.

The Rural Ontario Institute is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders, initiating dialogue, supporting collaboration and promoting action on issues and opportunities facing rural Ontario.

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