

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets show rural income levels and trends**

Guelph, Ontario, December 18, 2015. Rural family income levels have been increasing faster than inflation over the long term but remain 15 per cent lower than levels in metropolitan Ontario, according to new *Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets.

“The rural income story is one of both good and bad news since over the last 5 years that rise has flattened out,” says Norman Ragetlie, Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute.

Despite the income gap between metropolitan and non-metropolitan areas, the share of non-metropolitan individuals living in low income families is lower than among metropolitan families if the income threshold is adjusted for a lower cost of rural living.

“Tracking income levels is important because it is directly linked to household spending which is a key driver of economic growth or lack thereof,” says Ragetlie. “Those who have been paying attention to income inequality concerns will likely be interested in seeing the information on rural inequality which is less than in Ontario's largest urban centres.”

Focus on Rural Ontario fact sheets are based on Statistics Canada data and are provided by the Rural Ontario Institute to build understanding of key rural socio-economic trends. All fact sheets are available for download online at www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/focus-on-rural-ontario.aspx.

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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