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***Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets highlight employment trends**

Guelph, Ontario, November 12, 2015. A new set of *Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets indicate that the economy in non-metropolitan areas of Ontario provides over 1.2 million jobs. While this level of employment tracks no higher than in 2003 and lower than the peak in 2008, there has been a recent increase in employment rates.

Norman Ragetlie, Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement, Rural Ontario Institute, says “the overall steady number of jobs combined with the current slightly higher rates of employment suggests that the number of people in the core work force in non-metropolitan Ontario has declined”.

The new fact sheets also point to the persistence of historic differences between urban and rural economies such as more seasonality in non-metropolitan employment than in metropolitan areas. Males and females in non-metropolitan Ontario have lower and higher employment rates compared to their metropolitan counterparts, respectively.

Analysis by sector reveals a high share of employment in each of the goods-producing sectors in non-metropolitan areas compared to the province as a whole. “The prospects of the relatively large manufacturing and construction sectors will have significant impacts on future employment in non-metropolitan economies,” says Ragetlie. Specialized rural-based industries such as agriculture are also reflected in the sectoral fact sheet data but the health and social services sector is the single largest employment sector in non-metropolitan Ontario.

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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