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New Ways to Engage for Rural Ontario

GUELPH, ON, May 11, 2021 – The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is preparing to provide more ways for rural communities and the ag-sector to connect to each other and access information about the issues that matter to them.

“Rural community businesses, organizations and municipalities will have a need to adapt and seize opportunities as Ontario changes in the next decade”, says Suzanne Trivers, ROI Board Chair. “We recognize that rural leaders can really benefit from a platform to share their best practices and learn from one another, access customized data, stay on top of issues and continuously improve their skills so they can respond confidently and collaboratively.”

ROI’s transformation project, funded through the Ontario government’s Grassroots Growth Initiative, identified tools to engage rural leaders so they can be better prepared to accelerate rural community development. “The Province recognizes that innovation and hard work by rural communities and the agri-food sector has provided stability for people during the pandemic.” comments Ernie Hardeman, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, “ROI’s new engagement platform will make it easier for effective leaders to innovate with objective information on trends, an exchange of good ideas and by building their skills and confidence to mobilize action around complex issues.”

ROI will be introducing on-line spaces for issues dialogues and case study workshops so that rural leaders with particular concerns and passions can connect, share success stories and choose solutions suitable for their own communities. “This project gave ROI the opportunity to investigate different course offerings, engagement software strategies and information delivery models.” says Norm Ragetlie, Executive Director of ROI. “We saw with our Covid 19 Rural Rebound initiative that posting stories to a website may be worthwhile but that people also want the opportunity to learn by connecting with peers and hearing from those in other sectors. We are enthusiastic about our new engagement platforms and know that it will evolve so that rural communities and the ag-sector have more capacity to accelerate good ideas that make rural Ontario thrive.”

The Rural Ontario Institute is a non-profit organization committed to developing leaders and facilitating collaboration on issues and opportunities facing rural and northern Ontario communities.

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