



RURAL ONTARIO INSTITUTE

Vision, Voice and Leadership

“Building Vision, Voice and Leadership for a strong and vibrant rural Ontario”



2010 - 2011 ANNUAL REPORT



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Annual Report 2010-2011

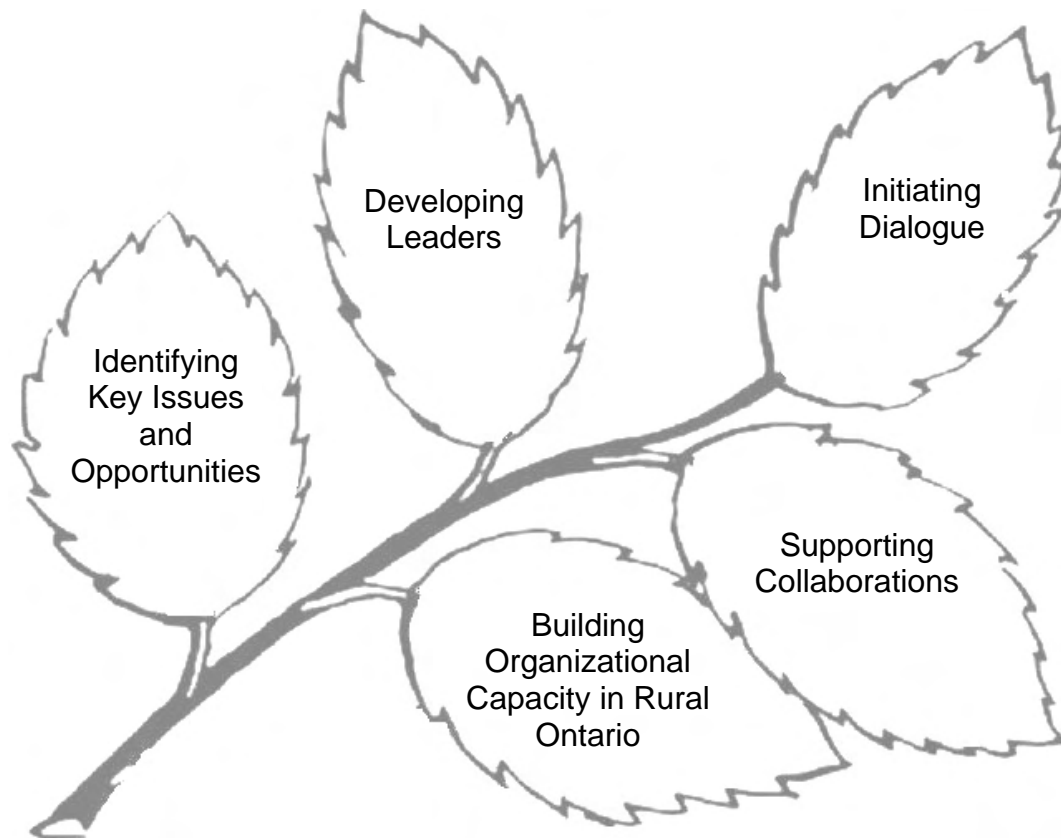
Officially launched on April 1, 2010, the vision of the **Rural Ontario Institute (ROI)** is: **Building Vision, Voice and Leadership for a strong and vibrant rural Ontario.**

To achieve this goal, ROI has a mission of: **Developing leaders, initiating dialogue, supporting collaboration and promoting action on issues and opportunities facing rural Ontario.**

The **Rural Ontario Institute** was created through the amalgamation of *The Centre for Rural Leadership (TCRL)* and *The Ontario Rural Council (TORC)* to ensure that rural contributes to a strong, healthy and vibrant Ontario.

Looking forward, the **Rural Ontario Institute** will embark on initiatives that build strong rural leaders and represent the critical rural voice on issues of importance to rural Ontario. This annual report contains a summary of the work undertaken over the past year.

The Rural Ontario Institute's mission is guided by five strategic elements:



Board of Directors



JIM WHALEY
(Chair)
Wasaga Beach, ON



ROB HANNAM
(Vice Chair)
Guelph, ON



JULIE CAYLEY*
(Secretary)
Barrie, ON



ROB HALL*
(Treasurer)
Waterloo, ON



CRAIG DESJARDINS
Picton, ON



CHRISTINE DUKELOW
Beaverton, ON



Dr. ROB GORDON
Guelph, ON



JANET HORNER
Shelburne, ON



SCOTT MERRIFIELD
Sudbury, ON



TOM PROUT
Exeter, ON



STIG PUSCHEL
Sudbury, ON



CHRIS WHITE
Rockwood, ON

Staff



ROB BLACK
Chief Executive
Officer



ALICIA EVANS
Project Manager
Leadership Programs



MICHELE HILL
Office Manager



KATHIE MACDONALD
Communications Manager/
AALP Coordinator



DENISE MOUTER
Administrative
Assistant



NORMAN RAGETLIE
Director, Policy and
Stakeholder
Engagement



RICK UPFOLD
AALP Curriculum
Advisor

AALP Advisory Committee

- **Dan Wright***, (Chair), Monsanto Canada Inc. & AALP Class 10
- **Steve Cooper***, (Vice Chair), Coopers Goat and Veggy Farm & AALP Class 11
- **Rick Upfold**, Curriculum Advisor
- **Sara Avoledo***, Office of Research, University of Guelph & AALP Class 12
- **John Clement**, Christian Farmers Federation of Ontario
- **Helma Geerts***, OMAFRA & AALP Class 10
- **Kevin Laidley**, OMAFRA
- **Brad Lichty***, AGDATA Ltd. & AALP Class 12
- **Bruce Read***, Elanco Animal Health & AALP Class 11
- **Teresa Van Raay***, Van Raay Farms & AALP Class 9
- **Rob Black**, ROI Chief Executive Officer
- **Kathie MacDonald**, ROI Communications Manager/AALP Coordinator

**indicates AALP graduate*

Message from the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Ministry of Agriculture,
Food and Rural Affairs

Office of the Minister
77 Grenville Street, 11th Floor
Toronto, Ontario M5S 1B3
Tel: (416) 326-3074
Fax: (416) 326-3083

Ministère de l'Agriculture,
de l'Alimentation et
des Affaires rurales

Bureau de la ministre
77, rue Grenville, 11^e étage
Toronto (Ontario) M5S 1B3
Tél.: (416) 326-3074
Télééc.: (416) 326-3083



A Message from the Honourable Carol Mitchell

On behalf of the government of Ontario it is a pleasure to contribute to the Rural Ontario Institute's first Annual Report for 2010–11.

This year marks the first anniversary of the amalgamation of The Centre for Rural Leadership and The Ontario Rural Council in April 2010.

I commend the Rural Ontario Institute's board members and staff for their hard work, dedication and exemplary representation of rural stakeholders across the province. Your results are a great example of what can be achieved by working in collaboration with agri-food and rural organizations. As you continue to build on your past achievements, your vision for rural development and strong rural leadership is something to be proud of.

I applaud the Rural Ontario Institute for the successful completion of Class 13 of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) in March 2011. Through AALP, Steps to Leadership and other initiatives, you continue to deliver meaningful, life-long learning opportunities and educational programs for tomorrow's leaders.

I am pleased that under our recent agreement our government will be contributing an additional \$250,000 towards your leadership skills and organizational development work.

Please accept my best wishes for continued success in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Carol Mitchell".

Carol Mitchell
Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs

Message from the Dean, OAC - University of Guelph



ONTARIO AGRICULTURAL COLLEGE
OFFICE OF THE DEAN

May 30, 2011

Rob Black
Chief Executive Officer
Rural Ontario Institute
5653 Highway #6 N, RR 5
Guelph, ON N1H 6J2

Dear Rob,

It is truly a thrill for the Ontario Agricultural College (OAC) of the University of Guelph to extend our congratulations to the Rural Ontario Institute on completing a highly productive initial year.

The OAC is proud to play a part in supporting the innovative programs, networks and activities that embody what ROI is truly all about. The vital role in preparing our future leaders to better take advantage of opportunities and more effectively manage challenges in agriculture and our rural communities is more important than ever before.

We wish you all the best in 2011-2012 and look forward to our continued partnership.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Rob Gordon".

Robert Gordon, PhD
Dean
Ontario Agricultural College
University of Guelph



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www.oac.uoguelph.ca

Message from the Ontario Federation of Agriculture



Ontario Federation of Agriculture

Ontario AgriCentre
100 Stone Road West, Suite 206, Guelph, Ontario N1G 5L3
Tel: (519) 821-8883 • Fax: (519) 821-8810 • www.ofa.on.ca

May 17, 2011

Mr. Jim Whaley, Chair
Rural Ontario Institute
5653 Highway #6 N. RR#5
Guelph, ON
N1H 6J2

Dear Jim:

On behalf of the Ontario Federation of Agriculture I congratulate you, your Board and staff at the ROI on your first year of connecting leaders to rural issues and rural issues to leaders.

The OFA was proud to be a founding member of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program and is committed to its partnership with the new Rural Ontario Institute.

Never before has the Rural Ontario Institute mandate been more important. Rural leadership development, engaging rural stakeholders, delivering community engagement strategies and informing decision makers on rural issues are critical and necessary functions in our new society. The ROI has demonstrated its capacity to deliver now and in the future.

The OFA fully recognizes the need for leadership capacity building and advocacy on rural issues. We look forward to working closely with the ROI in the years to come to ensure farming and rural Ontario achieves its full potential.

Thanks again for your excellent work and we wish you many more years of continued success.

Sincerely,

Bette Jean Crews,
President

Message from the Chair and the Chief Executive Officer

In wrapping up the first year of the new Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) this annual report provides the perfect opportunity to recognize the milestones that have been accomplished in the past 12 months and to acknowledge the significant efforts and support provided by many along the way.

April 1, 2010 saw the beginning of the new Rural Ontario Institute, an organization dedicated to developing leaders, initiating dialogue, supporting collaboration and promoting action on issues and opportunities facing rural Ontario. Our vision – Building Vision, Voice and Leadership for a strong and vibrant rural Ontario provided the momentum for all of us, board and staff, to move forward... and move forward we did!

On June 1st close to 100 friends and supporters joined the board and staff at the ROI office. With the ribbon and cake cutting complete and good wishes received from many from across rural Ontario, the work of ROI was officially launched. Within the remaining pages of this report you will learn of the many activities of our organization over the 2010/ 2011 fiscal year. These include programming under our Steps to Leadership initiative, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP), stakeholder engagement opportunities, communications activities and our new and expanded website at www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca.

As you can appreciate financial sustainability is critical to the organization. Our thanks to the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs and our many program partners, sponsors and friends who have financially supported the organization and our programs over the past fiscal year. Their ongoing support and contributions, financial and otherwise, certainly do contribute to, and support our programming activities throughout the year.

We value the opportunity to work with a tremendous group of dedicated individuals on the Board of Directors and as staff of the organization. These people have put in significant time and effort to ensure a successful first year. Our sincere thanks to each of them! In addition, we regularly interact with committee members, stakeholders, program participants and alumni who remain dedicated and committed to ensuring vibrancy in rural Ontario. Thank you to all for your ongoing commitment to the Rural Ontario Institute.

At the outset of this year there was excitement in the air about the new Rural Ontario Institute. Over 12 months much was accomplished at the board and staff levels, and in our programming endeavours. At the same time, there remains much to be done to ensure a strong and vibrant rural Ontario in to the future. We remain excited about, and committed to, this new organization and its progressive mission and mandate. We are confident that going forward the organization will continue to accomplish great things for rural Ontario.



Jim Whaley
Chair
Rural Ontario Institute



Rob Black
Chief Executive Officer
Rural Ontario Institute

Auditors' Report



Chartered Accountants
and Business Advisors

People Count.

INDEPENDENT AUDITOR'S REPORT

To the Board of Directors of: Rural Ontario Institute

Report on the Financial Statements

We have audited the accompanying financial statements of the Rural Ontario Institute, which comprise the statement of financial position as at March 31, 2011 and the statements of operations and changes in net assets - general fund and operations and changes in net assets - restricted funds for the year then ended, and a summary of significant accounting policies and other explanatory information.

Management's Responsibility for the Financial Statements

Management is responsible for the preparation and fair presentation of these financial statements in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles and for such internal control as management determines is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

Auditor's Responsibility

Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit. We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we comply with ethical requirements and plan and perform the audit to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements are free from material misstatement.

An audit involves performing procedures to obtain audit evidence about the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. The procedures selected depend on the auditor's judgment, including the assessment of the risks of material misstatement of the financial statements, whether due to fraud or error. In making those risk assessments, the auditor considers internal control relevant to the entity's preparation and fair presentation of the financial statements in order to design audit procedures that are appropriate in the circumstances, but not for the purpose of expressing an opinion on the effectiveness of the entity's internal control. An audit also includes evaluating the appropriateness of accounting policies used and the reasonableness of accounting estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall presentation of the financial statements.

We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained in our audit is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our qualified audit opinion.

Qualified Opinion

In common with many non-profit organizations, the Rural Ontario Institute derives revenue from the general public in the form of donations, memberships, programming and other fees, the completeness of which is not susceptible to satisfactory audit verification. Accordingly, our verification of these revenues was limited to the amounts recorded in the records of the Rural Ontario Institute and we were not able to determine whether any adjustments might be necessary to excess of revenue over expenditures, assets and fund balances.

In our opinion, except for the effect of the adjustments, if any, which we might have determined to be necessary had we been able to satisfy ourselves concerning the completeness of the revenue sources referred to in the preceding paragraph, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the Institute as at March 31, 2011 and the results of its operations and the changes in its financial position for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Guelph, Ontario
June 1, 2011

RLB LLP
Chartered Accountants
Licensed Public Accountants

Financials

Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets – General Fund For the Year Ended March 31, 2011

2011

REVENUE

Donations	\$16,788
Tuition	130,600
Fundraising	17,014
Interest Income	4,772
Sponsorships	134,873
Grants & Contributions	714,809
Training & Business Development	37,253
Other Income	3,854
	<u>1,059,963</u>

EXPENSES

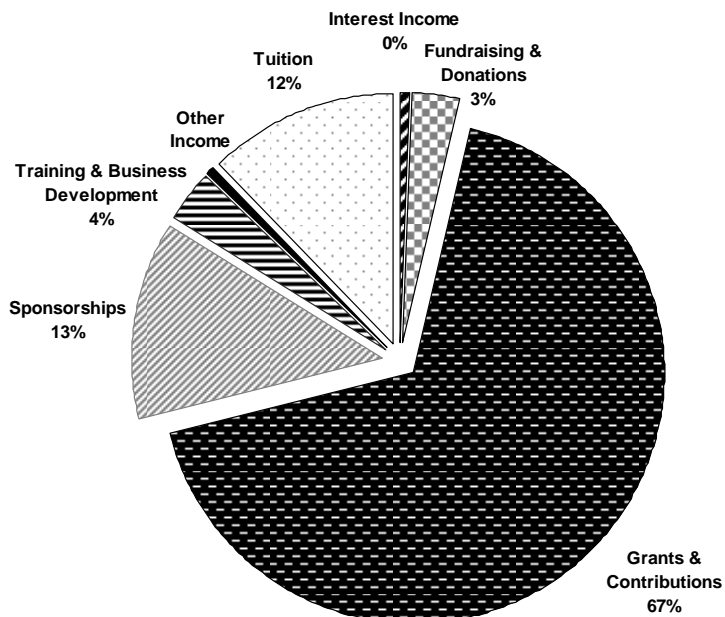
Accommodation & Meals	118,413
Amortization	7,157
Communications & Marketing	36,959
Contract/Professional Services	223,605
Financial Services	1,946
Information Technology	13,772
Operations	74,289
Professional Development	10,190
Salaries & Benefits	462,973
Travel	158,776
	<u>1,108,080</u>

Deficiency of Revenue over expenses for the year	(48,117)
Transfer from Restricted Funds (statement 3) (note 5)	15,840

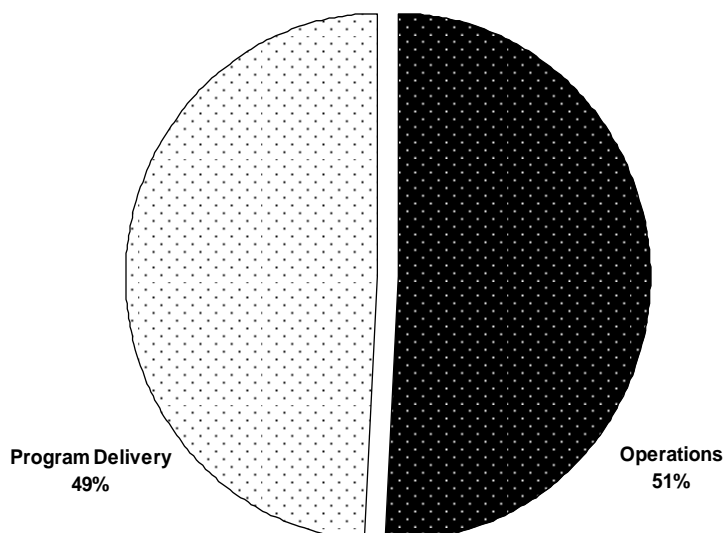
Net Change in Assets for the year	(32,277)
Net Assets, contributed by TCRL*	185,675
Net Assets, contributed by TORC*	43,333
Net Assets, end of year	<u>\$196,731</u>

Net Assets comprised of:	
Net invested in capital assets (note 4)	17,013
Unrestricted net assets	179,718
	<u>\$ 196,731</u>

Revenue FY 2010-2011



Expenses FY 2010-2011



*TCRL – The Centre for Rural Leadership

*TORC – The Ontario Rural Council

See accompanying notes

**Statement of Operations and Changes in Net Assets – Restricted Funds
For the Year Ended March 31, 2011**

	Leadership Legacy Fund	W.G. Weston Foundation Fund	K. McKinnon Memorial Fund	Wm. A. Stewart Endowment Fund	2011 Total
REVENUE					
Investment Income	\$2,137	\$6,368	\$2,131	\$8,852	\$19,488
Transfer to General Fund (note 5)	(1,923)	(4,458)	(1,492)	(7,967)	(15,840)
Changes in Net Assets for the year	214	1,910	639	885	3,648
Net Assets, contributed by TCRL*	63,580	189,470	63,393	263,357	579,800
Net Assets, end of year	\$63,794	\$191,380	\$64,032	\$264,242	583,448

**Statement of Financial Position
As at March 31, 2011**

Assets	GENERAL	RESTRICTED (note 5)	TOTAL 2011
CURRENT			
Cash	\$ 90,722	\$ 0	\$ 90,722
Short Term Investments	62,881	583,448	646,329
Accounts Receivable	41,586	0	41,586
Grant Receivable	44,175	0	44,175
Prepaid Expenses	10,508	0	10,508
	249,872	583,448	833,320
CAPITAL (note 4)	17,013	0	17,013
	\$266,885	\$583,448	\$850,333
Liabilities			
CURRENT			
Accounts Payable and Accrued Liabilities	\$67,262	\$ 0	\$67,262
Deferred Income	2,892	0	2,892
	\$70,154	\$ 0	\$70,154
Net Assets			
Assets Invested in Capital Assets (statement 2)	17,013	0	17,013
Unrestricted Net Assets (statement 2)	179,718	0	179,718
Restricted Net Assets (statement 3)	0	583,448	583,448
	196,731	583,448	780,179
	\$266,885	\$583,448	\$850,333

See accompanying notes

Notes to the Financial Statements

1. NATURE OF BUSINESS

Rural Ontario Institute ("The Institute") is a registered charitable organization dedicated to building vision, voice and leadership for a strong and vibrant rural Ontario.

The Institute is a not for profit organization under the Income Tax Act and, accordingly, is exempt from income tax under Section 149(1)(e) of the Income Tax Act. On April 1, 2010, The Centre for Rural Leadership and The Ontario Rural Council amalgamated to form the Rural Ontario Institute.

2. SUMMARY OF SIGNIFICANT ACCOUNTING POLICIES

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles and include the following significant accounting policies:

(a) BASIS OF ACCOUNTING

The Institute follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions.

General Fund

The General Fund reports unrestricted resources available for The Institute's general operating activities.

Restricted Funds

The Restricted Funds report resources that are to be held as endowments. Restricted funds are comprised of the Leadership Legacy Fund, the Wm. A. Stewart Endowment Fund, the W. G. Weston Foundation Fund and the K. McKinnon Memorial Fund. These funds are to be invested, in trust, for The Institute, with investment income to be used to support the organization. A minimum of 10% of the total annual income of the Wm. A. Stewart Endowment Fund, 10% of the total annual income of the Leadership Legacy Fund and 30% of the total annual income of the W. G. Weston Foundation Fund and the K. McKinnon Memorial Fund must be reinvested under the conditions of the funds.

(b) INVESTMENTS

Investments classified as held-for-trading are recorded at fair value.

(c) CAPITAL ASSETS

Amortization is taken on assets at the following rates:

Computer equipment	- 3 years straight line basis
Website	- 4 years straight line basis
Furniture and equipment	- 20% declining balance basis

Amortization is taken at 50% of the above rates in the year of addition.

(d) IMPAIRMENT OF LONG LIVED ASSETS

Long lived assets are tested for recoverability whenever events or changes in circumstances indicate that their carrying amount may not be recoverable. An impairment loss is recognized when the carrying value exceeds the total undiscounted cash flows expected from their use and eventual disposition. The amount of the impairment loss is determined as the excess of the carrying value of the asset over its fair value.

(e) REVENUE RECOGNITION

Rural Ontario Institute follows the restricted fund method of accounting for contributions. Restricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund in the year in which the related expenses are incurred. Unrestricted contributions are recognized as revenue of the appropriate fund when received or receivable if the amount can be reasonably estimated and collection is reasonably assured.

Contributions related to donated items are recorded at the amount of the proceeds from the sale of these items.

Investment income is recognized when earned.

(f) USE OF ESTIMATES

The preparation of financial statements in conformity with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles requires management to make estimates and assumptions that affect the reported amounts of assets and liabilities, the disclosure of contingent assets and liabilities at the date of the financial statements and the reported amounts of revenues and expenses during the year. Significant areas requiring the use of management estimates and assumptions relate to prepaid expenses, useful life of capital assets and accrued charges. Actual results could differ from those estimates.

Notes to the Financial Statements

3. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Credit Risk Management

The organization's financial instruments consist of cash, investments, accounts receivable, grants receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities and deferred income. Unless otherwise noted, it is management's opinion that the organization is not exposed to significant interest, currency, credit or liquidity risks arising from these financial instruments.

Fair value of financial assets and financial liabilities

The carrying values of cash, investments, accounts receivable, grants receivable, accounts payable and accrued liabilities, and deferred income approximate their fair value due to the relatively short periods to maturity of these items.

4. CAPITAL ASSETS

	Cost	Accumulated Amortization	Net 2011
Computer equipment	\$ 9,961	\$ 3,320	\$ 6,641
Website	12,100	3,626	8,474
Furniture and equipment	<u>2,109</u>	<u>211</u>	<u>1,898</u>
	<u>\$24,170</u>	<u>\$ 7,157</u>	<u>\$17,013</u>

5. TRANSFERS

The allowable portion of investment income in each restricted fund has been transferred to the general fund as per the guidelines in the restricted funds.

6. STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS

The statement of cash flows has not been prepared because it would not provide any additional useful information for users of the financial statements.

7. CAPITAL DISCLOSURES

Rural Ontario Institute defines capital as its unrestricted net assets of \$179,718. The Institute's objective when managing capital is to safeguard The Institute's ability to continue as a going concern and to hold sufficient unrestricted net assets to enable it to withstand negative unexpected financial events in order to maintain stability in the financial structure.

The Institute seeks to maintain sufficient liquidity to enable it to meet its obligations as they become due. The Institute holds investments to ensure sufficient liquidity. The Institute manages the capital structure and makes adjustments to it in light of changes in economic conditions. In order to maintain or adjust the capital structure, The Institute may redeem investments or increase fundraising activities.

The Institute is not subject to externally imposed capital requirements.

Endowments

The *Rural Ontario Institute* is very appreciative of all endowments and gifts which have been received and that continue to grow and provide interest income to assist in financing the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) and fostering and growing the leadership qualities needed in rural Ontario.

Ken McKinnon Memorial Fund

The Ken McKinnon Memorial Fund is a tribute to Ken McKinnon's leadership and service to Canadian agriculture, and a commitment to excellence in the agricultural leaders of tomorrow. During his 21 year tenure at the Ontario Milk Marketing Board, Ken played an integral role in leading the changes that revolutionized milk production, pricing and marketing in Ontario, and throughout Canada.

Through donations from families, individuals, businesses and organizations, the Ken McKinnon Memorial Fund fosters the leadership qualities needed in rural Ontario in the years ahead.

William A. Stewart Endowment

The William A. Stewart Endowment was initiated in 1991 by the Agricultural Leadership Trust as a tribute to the late Ontario Minister of Agriculture and Food, the Honourable William A. Stewart. The goal recognizes and honours his legacy of public service, community involvement and leadership.

As part of each AALP class the William A. Stewart Lecture & Reception is held every other year. This prestigious event provides an opportunity for public involvement, as well as a forum for the development of the leadership qualities exemplified by the work of William A. Stewart.

George Dmetriuc Memorial Fund

The George Dmetriuc Memorial Fund was established by the Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board as part of the William A. Stewart Endowment in 1993. The fund exemplifies the spirit of George Dmetriuc as a leader in Ontario agriculture.

The Ontario Wheat Producers' Marketing Board, other commodity organizations and friends and associates of George Dmetriuc provided this fund in recognition of the leadership that George contributed to Ontario agriculture, particularly in his capacity as a director and then chairman of the Ontario Wheat Board (1984 to 1992).

W. Garfield Weston Endowment

The W. Garfield Weston Foundation originated in 1959, and is named in honour of Willard Garfield Weston, a Canadian who established successful business enterprises throughout Canada and in many parts of the world. The W. Garfield Weston Foundation's mandate states that grants are to be given for projects in Canada for the benefit of Canadians. The foundation currently directs its funds primarily to two areas: scholarships and land conservation.

Through the generosity of the Foundation, the endowment was established on receipt of an initial contribution in 1994, followed by additional funding in 1995 and 1996.

To learn more about supporting the organization or our programs through endowments and bequests in the future, please contact the Rural Ontario Institute at 519-826-4204.

AALP Sponsors & Program Highlights

Sponsorship support is a long-standing tradition for the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP), and support from founding partners, agricultural businesses and industry organizations remains very strong. We are pleased to recognize the investment by each of our partners over the past year.

A full listing of our 2010-2011 sponsors and donors is included in this annual report.

Patrons \$50,000 and up



Champions \$10,000 to \$24,999



Leaders \$5,000 to \$9,999



Builders \$2,500 to \$4,999



Program Highlights

The 8 female and 21 male participants of Class 13 completed their seminar series and travel study tours and graduated in April 2011. During the second half of their 19 month program they participated in a number of leadership development seminars, learning opportunities and travelled on their North American and International Study Tours.

In particular they:

- Spent time learning about Canadian and US farm policy, political issues and governments in both countries during their North American Study Tour through Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York and Washington DC
- Joined forces on a couple of occasions with participants from other agricultural leadership programs including: New York LEAD; Iowa LEAD; Pennsylvania RULE
- Completed their Issues Analysis Projects by working in groups as consultants with a number of rural and agricultural organizations
- Gained an overview of agricultural production and practices as well as an in-depth understanding of agri-business, social, political and environmental issues in Guatemala and Belize
- Better defined their commitment to making a difference through leadership involvement as a result of their participation in AALP

Special Events & Fundraising

We have always enjoyed tremendous support from graduates and industry stakeholders through our special fundraising events. Highlights from 2010 - 2011 included:

2011 William A. Stewart Lecture and Reception

Retired General Rick Hillier, former Chief of the Defence Staff, Canada's highest ranking position in the Canadian Forces, was the keynote speaker at the William A. Stewart Public Lecture & Reception in support of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP), on March 31, 2011. This bi-annual fund and friend raising event realized a profit of just over \$18,000 in support of AALP.

Presenting Sponsor:
TD Canada Trust

Additional Sponsors:
Monsanto Canada Inc.
AdFarm
Gay Lea Foods Cooperative Ltd.
Miller Thomson LLP
Ontario Mutuals
Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited

AALP Class 13 Fun'draising Curling Bonspiel

Twelve teams came out to support AALP on Friday March 25, 2011 at the Paris Curling Club for Class 13's second fun'draising curling bonspiel. During this one day event, over \$1,300 was raised in support of AALP, thanks to the efforts of Class 13 and this event's supporters.

AALP Founding Partners

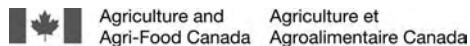


Steps to Leadership Highlights

Steps to Leadership is a collaborative initiative of the



Funding for this project is provided in part by



Additional sponsorship provided by:

Economic Development Corporation of Wawa

Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited

Program Highlights

This past year has been a busy one for the Steps to Leadership program. We spent quite a bit of time in the north working with our two community partners – the Thunder Bay Federation of Agriculture in Thunder Bay and the Economic Development Corporation of Wawa in Wawa. The three Steps to Leadership programs were delivered successfully to community residents in both of these regions ranging in age from 15 to 75 years, all from a variety backgrounds and with a variety of leadership experiences. Looking ahead, we will be working with the communities of Muskoka, Grey Highlands, and Stormont, Dundas and Glengarry into 2011.

Leading Edge Summit

The first annual Leading Edge Summit was held in October of 2010 and focused on innovating for positive change in rural Ontario. Sixty five participants from various rural and agricultural communities and organizations in Ontario attended the 2 day conference and took part in a variety of interactive workshops. Each of the workshops featured new and innovative tools and techniques that can be used to help change thinking, engage and collaborate with others and overcome roadblocks to improving rural communities and organizations. This coming year's Leading Edge Summit planned for October 18 and 19 2011 will continue to build upon this theme.

Speaker's Network

2010 saw the launch of the Steps to Leadership Speaker's Network directory and funding program. A number of rural and agricultural organizations have accessed funding to hire speakers and facilitators from our directory to speak about board governance, conflict management, volunteer management as well as a number of other leadership topics and contemporary issues. Recruitment of both speakers/facilitators as well as organizations to access the funding will continue into 2011.

Policy & Stakeholder Engagement

Early in the inaugural year we consulted our key stakeholders about issues ROI might focus on and what processes would engage them. We met with key informants and partners, we surveyed AALP graduates to see how involved they wanted to be, and discussed potential ways to move forward with former working groups.

A new engagement framework will soon be implemented. It aims to increase the use of the web to connect rural leaders and should enable ROI to be more responsive to opportunities to influence policy by strengthening the voice of rural stakeholders. It will feature: on-line networks in 3 theme areas (economy, environment and society); policy panels of experts and practitioners; and regional meetings to share success stories. The Asset Based Community Development workshop series being held in 7 different areas of southern rural Ontario is an example of this type of regional initiative. The recently released Rural Ontario Reader represents the focus on building value for subscribers. Significant behind the scenes work has been done to update the website to reflect the engagement framework and create a subscriber profile system to enable us to better connect with and engage subscribers.

An emphasis has been on relationship building with partners. On the research front we contributed to the review of rural research proposals under the OMAFRA/U of G grant, worked with EDCO on their Regional Research project and partnered with national and provincial organizations to present the first annual Rural Research Workshop. We were a successful partner with the Monieson Centre in accessing a SSHRC grant for their *Renewing Rural Economies* initiative which will unfold

over the next few years. We partnered with Wayne Caldwell and the U of G's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development to develop a series of workshops which will be offered in the coming year to present the results of his research on Success Factors in rural community economic development. We followed up the Rural Research Priorities report with a session at ROMA to discover what municipalities are doing about the key concerns – a report has been produced. Other examples of collaboration included: providing assistance to FRL on a Trillium funded project for Social Enterprise; contributing to the planning and rural content for the SWEA and CCEDNET Ontario conferences; and assisting the Ontario Farmland Trust in planning an event to bring together farmland preservation interests, municipal EDO's and planners.

ROI brought together key stakeholders around the Provincial Policy Statement review and to identify priorities for applied research in equity and rural health. ROI submitted a policy brief in response to the release of the panel recommendations on Rural and Northern Health Care and participated in the Growing Forward consultations and GTA AAC action planning.

A three year memorandum of agreement with OMAFRA was established reflecting ROI's roles in identifying issues and opportunities, connecting rural leaders and initiating dialogue. In partnership with MEDT, MNDMF, OMAFRA, MTCU, ROMA and the provincial Local Training and Adjustment Boards we were successful in accessing funds for a \$175,000 project to develop a tool for *Benchmarking Rural Community Attractiveness to Newcomers*. Morgan Boyco was hired by ROI to coordinate this initiative.

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