



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

***Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets show that rural residents make up 21% of Ontario's population**

Guelph, Ontario, August 13, 2015. Rural residents comprised 25% of Ontario's population in 2006, and according to the data in the newest set of *Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets, rural citizens accounted for 21% of the province's population in 2014. Even though the population of rural Ontario remained fairly stable between 2006 and 2014 urban areas saw consistent growth during the same period. As a result the rural proportion of the Ontario population went down.

Norman Ragetlie, Director of Policy and Stakeholder Engagement at the Rural Ontario Institute says, "There are three drivers of population change (natural balance, net immigration and internal migration). 20% of rural (non-metro) census divisions are consistently growing and about 20% are consistently declining. By contrast, all urban areas throughout the province continue to grow year over year.

International migration continues to flow almost entirely to urban areas and according to Ragetlie, "a paltry number of international immigrants settle in small towns and rural communities. There are no easy answers for how to change that and it may require federal and provincial policy changes in how we recruit immigrants."

Ragetlie continues, "Looking at just internal migrant flows we see that rural places have actually been gaining people from other Ontario communities but on a net basis were losing rural residents to other provinces. Perhaps the recent relative economic downturn in western Canadian economies in the past year will show up in next year's inter-provincial migration balance."

Focus on Rural Ontario fact sheets are based on Statistics Canada data and are part of a series that profile key facts and figures on rural socio-economic trends such as population change, migration patterns, income/education and employment. All *Focus on Rural Ontario* fact sheets are available for download at:
www.ruralontarioinstitute.ca/focus-on-rural-ontario.

Many small organizations working in rural Ontario do not have the capacity to access and analyze Statistics Canada data, so the Rural Ontario Institute commissioned this series to help build understanding of key demographic and economic trends affecting this huge region of the province.

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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