



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Rural Ontario Institute Welcomes Kimberly Earls as New Executive Director

GUELPH, ON, February 2, 2026 - The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is pleased to announce Kimberly Earls will be joining the ROI team as Executive Director. Kimberly will begin her new role in February.

"After a thorough and robust interview process, we are pleased to share Kimberly Earls will be joining the Rural Ontario Institute as the new Executive Director," said Dan Borowec, ROI Chair. *"Throughout her career, Kimberly has been actively engaged in the local business community and has served as an industry stakeholder on numerous federal, provincial, and municipal advisory boards. We are excited to welcome her to the ROI team."*

Kimberly is a Norfolk County resident with experience across both the private and public sectors. With more than 15 years in community and economic development, she has led large-scale initiatives that strengthen community competitiveness and long-term success, including projects in transit, workforce development, energy infrastructure, and agrifood systems.

Most recently, Kimberly served as the Executive Director of the South Central Ontario Regional (SCOR) Economic Development Commission, a regional organization representing the counties of Brant, Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk, and Oxford. In this role, she oversaw strategic planning, board governance, stakeholder engagement, and the execution of high impact initiatives.

"I am thrilled to learn that the role of Executive Director will be filled by Kimberly Earls, formerly of the South-Central Ontario Region EDO," said Ellen Sinclair, Past ROI Executive Director. *"Kimberly is a strong leader whose collaborative partnership I've been privileged to experience throughout my time at ROI."*

In addition to her executive leadership, Kimberly teaches part-time at Fanshawe College and holds a Master of Public Administration from Western University. Prior to her work in the public sector, Kimberly was an owner and partner in a construction and masonry business with her husband.

"I am honored to join the Rural Ontario Institute team. I've had the privilege of working alongside them as a partner, and now I'm excited to contribute to such a mission-driven organization," said Kimberly Earls, ROI's new Executive Director. *"The Rural Ontario Institute has a strong track record of supporting rural communities, developing valuable tools, and championing the needs of rural Ontario, work that I'm thrilled to be part of."*

In her new role, Kimberly will oversee the organization's daily operations, strategic plan, and overall growth. She will forge new cross sector partnerships, bringing together resources to enable innovative and impactful projects and programs that advance ROI's mission and support capacity building and community development in rural Ontario.

ABOUT

The Rural Ontario Institute (ROI) is a charitable organization committed to developing leaders, informing decision makers and connecting communities. ROI delivers the renowned Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) and the Rural Change Makers (RCM) program, a leadership and rural development program working to creating meaningful change with communities. We provide data research and analysis on rural priorities, sharing information and equipping communities with tools through our Rural Community Wellbeing factsheets and accompanying dashboards, and Rural Housing Information System - addressing the housing and homelessness crisis faced by thousands of Canadians. ROI is funded in part by the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Agribusiness and is supported by the Ontario Ministry of Rural Affairs.

MEDIA RELATIONS

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