



Foundation for Rural Living
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The Oil Heritage District Community Centre Association celebrated for excellence

Guelph, Ontario, April 12 – The vision of a community centre and the unbridled persistence of its volunteer committee has earned the group a prestigious award.

The Oil Heritage District Community Centre Association was last night named winner of the **Outstanding Philanthropic Action** Award, one of seven rural groups to be honoured at the **7th Annual Awards of Rural Excellence** at Blue Mountain Resort in Collingwood, Ontario.

The Awards program, hosted by the **Foundation for Rural Living** (FRL), recognizes and honours rural communities, organizations, and groups who, through programs, projects, and initiatives, act on their vision of a better rural Ontario.

The Oil Heritage District Community Centre Association was initiated in 1985 by a group of community volunteers who identified the need for a multi-use community centre to serve the residents of rural Central Lambton. Over the past twenty years the people of rural Central Lambton have rallied together and overcome many challenges and barriers to achieve this dream. Through the commitment of the Association, the new community centre is now under construction.

To complete this \$7.6 million facility, the volunteers of the Oil Heritage District Community Centre Association are currently conducting a \$3.3 million public fundraising campaign. Through the generosity of many donors and partners, the Association has raised \$4,486,000 in government funding and over \$1.7 million in public fundraising.

Tenacity, determination, vision, and a passionate belief in the value of a project are significant factors that have been instrumental in the Association achieving its philanthropic outcomes. This spirit and work ethic is the backbone of rural communities.

“The new community centre project is a true testament to the power of people working together to make the rural community of Petrolia vital and sustainable,” states Diane Schultz of the Association. “It is a legacy that we owe to future generations.”

For more information:

Diane Schultz

The Oil Heritage District Community Centre Association

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The winners in the remaining six categories are:

Winner Excellence in Community Leadership: Sunderland Lions Club

Winner Excellence in Formal Co-operative Models: The Ontario Co-operative Association

Winner Excellence in Economic Development: Renfrew County Agricultural Economic Development Consortium

Winner Voluntarism and/or Partnership in the Voluntary Sector: Brighton Applefest

Winner Outstanding Rural Youth Achievement: Weedgee Kidz Project

Winner of the Outstanding Partnership with Business Award: Rural Water Quality Program
Grand River Conservation Authority

For more information on the Awards of Rural Excellence, please contact

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Background: The Awards of Rural Excellence

The Foundation for Rural Living's (FRL) Awards of Rural Excellence program began in 1999 to recognize the excellence emerging from rural Ontario and to promote those initiatives to other organizations throughout the province. Contribution to community and a view toward enhancing and sustaining the future are the cornerstones of the awards criteria.

Enterprises being recognized with each award must take place in rural Ontario. "Rural" includes communities with a population under 50,000. Amalgamated municipalities of small towns where the population may exceed 50,000 are also eligible.

Proud sponsors of the *7th Annual Awards of Rural Excellence* program are founding sponsor Pioneer Hi-Bred Limited, The Co-operators, the Province of Ontario through the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, and Union Gas.

The Foundation for Rural Living

FRL was founded in 1979 as a non-profit, registered charity. Our mission is to build sustainable rural capacity and enhance the quality of life for rural citizens through the growth and development of community investment in the form of philanthropy, citizenship and collaboration. Various programs and partnership endeavours aim to advance the role and interests of the charitable sector for the benefit of rural communities.

FRL has initiated and partnered in key programs including The Ontario Rural Council, the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program, and the Rural Philanthropy Resource Network. During the ice storm of 1998 we established the Ontario Rural Relief Fund, which raised over \$500,000 for rural communities affected by this disaster.