

## **Record Crowd Attends Ridgetown Graduation in New Rural Development Centre**

Ridgetown – Close to 1000 people attended the 55<sup>th</sup> annual Spring graduation ceremony held Friday, June 1<sup>st</sup> at the University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus. One hundred eight-one students received their diplomas or certificates for academic achievement in the campus' new Rudy H. Brown Rural Development Centre. Over \$24,000 in awards and prizes was distributed at the ceremony as part of Ridgetown's \$125,000 annual awards and scholarship program.

The Best All Round Student award, donated by the W.G. Thompson families, went to Ms. Erica Unger of Belmont who also delivered the valedictory address. Unger reminded classmates and guests that the purpose of an education is to replace an empty mind with an open one, and thanked the academic staff for their commitment to achieving this goal.

Mr. Greg Devries, Class of 1990 graduate, agricultural leader and local farmer, delivered the graduation address. He told the students that the direction their lives take in the future may not be what they expect. "When I graduated 17 years ago, I had no idea that I would one day return to Ridgetown to speak to the class of 2007," he said. To succeed, Devries encouraged the graduates to get involved in their respective industries, set priorities and to work with determination to achieve their goals.

The ceremonies were led by Dr. Art Schaafsma, Director of Ridgetown Campus, who noted several key partners that make the education programs at Ridgetown possible including: the University of Guelph, the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, the Awards and Scholarship Program donors, and the entire Ridgetown staff.

In closing, Dr. Schaafsma reminded graduates that the Ridgetown Campus will always be their 'home' and he encouraged them to return anytime. A garden party for everyone attending was held after the ceremony.

Ridgetown Campus is a regional campus of OAC, the Ontario Agricultural College, at the University of Guelph.

- 30 -

### **Media Contacts:**

Art Schaafsma  
Director  
University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus  
519-674-1505  
email:aschaafs@ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca

Liz Meidlinger  
Manager, Communications  
University of Guelph, Ridgetown Campus  
519-674-1587  
e-mail:lmeidlin@ridgetownc.uoguelph.ca