



May 24, 2011

Province Invests \$1.4 Million in Ridgetown Campus *Will Support New Student Service, Recruitment Centre*

The University of Guelph's Ridgetown Campus — experiencing the highest enrolment in its 60 years — has received more than \$1.4 million from the provincial government for a new student service and recruitment centre.

The funding was announced today in Ridgetown, Ont., by Pat Hoy, MPP for Chatham-Kent-Essex, and John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities.

“Ontario’s economy is turning the corner, to a better tomorrow, and the McGuinty government’s investment in the Ridgetown Campus is an investment in Ontario’s future prosperity,” Milloy said.

Hoy added: “I’m pleased that the McGuinty government continues to invest heavily in the Ridgetown community. Today’s announcement builds on the millions of dollars of wise funding we’ve delivered for this community and this region.”

The new centre has also received support from the Ontario Ministry of Food, Agriculture and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA), the Agricultural Research Institute of Ontario (ARIO), and the Ridgetown Campus Agri-Food Foundation.

“This is an investment that will have a resounding impact,” said U of G president Alastair Summerlee. “The Ridgetown Campus is an innovation hub and a driving force in the regional economy. We are extremely grateful to the provincial government for this assistance; the timing could not be better.”

Enrolment at the Ridgetown Campus has increased by unprecedented levels — 30 per cent in the past three years alone. The campus will see its largest-ever graduating class in June, and the trend is expected to continue.

“Ridgetown is proving to be an attractive option for students across Ontario, especially during this period of a changing economy,” Summerlee said. “Our goal is providing our students with the best possible teaching and learning environment.”

As part of U of G’s Ontario Agricultural College (OAC), the Ridgetown Campus offers degree, diploma and certificate programs supporting agriculture, food, veterinary technology and

environmental management. Enrolment in the agriculture diploma programs has nearly doubled in the past two years, and the campus forecasts additional growth.

“This new facility will allow us to further enhance the quality of the educational experience that we deliver to our students and also support the greater demands for classroom space and services on the campus,” said Rob Gordon, OAC dean.

The building will double as a careers centre and as a welcome venue for prospective students and their parents. It will also hold conferences and other campus and community events. The project will combine new construction and renovation that will make better use of the existing Reek Administration Building.

The Ridgetown Campus Agri-Food Foundation will continue working with the campus to raise funds for the centre’s construction, which will cost about \$3.2 million.

Ridgetown numbers about 700 students, 45 faculty and instructors and 130 staff. The campus joined U of G in 1997 under the enhanced partnership between the University and OMAFRA. Campus facilities are owned by ARIO and supported financially by both OMAFRA and ARIO.

“It’s a unique collaboration,” said Rich Moccia, associate vice-president (strategic partnerships). “The synergy is enhancing and advancing education and training opportunities in the agri-food and veterinary field to the benefit of all Ontarians.”

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Pay Hoy, Liberal MPP for Chatham-Kent Essex



Honourable John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities



Community Stakeholders Celebrate Funding Announcement

L-R: Jeff Schieck, Manager Business and Administration, Research Branch, OMAFRA, Pay Hoy, Liberal MPP, Chatham-Kent Essex, Dave Baute, Chair, Ridgetown Agri-Food Foundation, Dr. Art Schaafsma, Director, Ridgetown Campus, University of Guelph, Honourable John Milloy, Minister of Training, Colleges and Universities, Gary Paling, Vice-Chair, Ridgetown Agri-Food Foundation, Dr. Rob Gordon, Dean, Ontario Agriculture College (OAC), University of Guelph, Randy Hope, Mayor, Municipality of Chatham-Kent