

Speaker Biographies

Officials



Hon. Lisa Thompson, Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs, MPP for Huron-Bruce and Chair, Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians

Lisa was first elected as the Member of Provincial Parliament for Huron – Bruce in October 2011, and was re-elected in June 2014, June 2018, and June 2022. On June 18, 2021, Lisa was proudly appointed Ontario's 40th Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs by Premier Doug Ford. After her successful re-election in June 2022, Lisa was reappointed as Minister. Prior to being Agriculture Minister, Lisa served as Minister of Government and Consumer Services, Ontario's Registrar General and Minister of Education. Additional to her parliamentary roles, Lisa is honoured to represent Ontario as Chair for Commonwealth Women Parliamentarians—Canada Region. Lisa was born and raised near Wingham in Huron County, but now calls Bruce County home as she lives near Teeswater on a farm that has been in her husband's family for 122 years. Lisa is a graduate of the University of Guelph and is also an alumnus of Class 6 of the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program and the George Morris Executive Leadership Program. Before entering into politics, Lisa served as the General Manager of the Ontario Dairy Goat Cooperative (ODGC). Lisa has a long history of being an active and engaged citizen, working with many community organizations. She is a past Chair of the Ontario 4-H Foundation and also served as Vice-chair of Ontario Agri-Food Education Inc. (now known as Agscape).

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Will Bouma, MPP Brantford-Brant, Chair Standing Committee on Government Agencies and Caucus Chair

Will Bouma is the Member of Provincial Parliament for Brantford-Brant. His involvement in the community is extensive. He was elected as Brant County councillor in 2014, following 8 years of service on the Committee of Adjustment. Passionate about public service, he was a member of the Brant County Board of Health, the Brant Waterways Foundation, and has volunteered with the local fire department since 2008.

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Mayor David Bailey, County of Brant

Elected as the Mayor of the County of Brant in 2018, David Bailey is serving his first four year term and has been re-elected for a second term. David's life has been rooted in the County of Brant. Living in Glen Morris, Paris, Mount Pleasant and now St. George, David has experienced many of the charming communities, first hand, that make the County of Brant simply grand. David's passion also extends to many other facets of the community. He has been actively engaged in civic leadership for over 25 years. David has led in a variety of capacities such as Chair, Vice-Chair, President, Member and/or Honorary Member of many Boards of Directors and Foundations.

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Keynote Speaker

Keynote: It's the End of the World as We Know It (and I Feel Fine): How Inflation, Deglobalization, War and Demographic Collapse Point to Ontario's Next Agri-Food Opportunities



Brock Dickinson

Assistant Director of the Economic Development Program, University of Waterloo

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Brock Dickinson has worked in economic development for more than 30 years. He is currently the Chief Economic Development Officer for the New York-based real estate development firm Blue Cardinal Capital, and he also holds the position of "Entrepreneur-in-Residence" at the University of Waterloo. On January 1, he will also become the new "Director of the Economic Development Program" at the University.

Brock advises a range of companies, governments and organizations on innovation, entrepreneurship and the economy, including the Canadian Food and Wine Institute Innovation Centre, the United Nations, the NAFTA-linked Commission for Environmental Cooperation, and the North American Ecolnnovation Network.

Moderators

Zach Gable

Senior Economic Development Officer, County of Brant

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Zach is the Senior Economic Development Officer with the County of Brant. Zach is certified by the Economic Developers Association of Canada and has a degree in Economics and Political Science from Western University and a Masters in Local Economic Development from the University of Waterloo. Zach has a variety of experience in implementing economic development programs including community improvement plans, agricultural economic development activities and workforce development projects.



Nick Kinkel

Economic Development Specialist, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs

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Nick is an Economic Development Specialist with the Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs and is experienced in developing and delivering agri-food, rural and community economic development programs, services and resources. He has a Bachelor's of Science in Agriculture from the University of Guelph. He is honoured to have worked with many rural organizations, volunteers and professionals interested in making Ontario a great place to live, work and enjoy.



Workforce

Danielle Sharman

Policy Analyst, Ontario Federation of Agriculture Session Chair

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Danielle Sharman is a Policy Analyst specializing in rural economic development, on-farm diversification, workforce development, municipal engagement and local food systems at the Ontario Federation of Agriculture (OFA). Danielle holds a Master of Applied Environmental Studies degree in Local Economic Development from the University of Waterloo and a Bachelor of Science honours degree from the University of Guelph. She completed the Advanced Agricultural Leadership Program (AALP) in 2022 and is a Certified Economic Developer (Ec.D.). At OFA, she manages innovative projects and develops resources to help grow the agri-food sector. Danielle lives with her husband and son on a cash crop farm in Rockwood, Ontario.

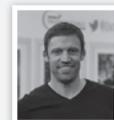


Stefan Larrass

Senior Policy Advisor, Ontario Fruit and Vegetable Growers Association

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Stefan Larrass has over ten years of experience in the industry. During his previous position as Senior Policy Advisor at Ontario Pork, he was responsible for advising producers and the association board of any changes in government programs, policies and regulations, and for developing industry responses to policy consultations that could lead to better outcomes for producers. He also draws on over five years of experience working in OMAFRA's division responsible for provincial agricultural policy. His work there covered a range of agricultural issues including business risk management programs and policies that make it easier to sell and buy food locally in Ontario. During his high school and university summers, Stefan worked as a farm hand in the Pelham area, working in a local apple orchard, and growing a variety of crops including strawberries, raspberries and garlic.



Jen Wright

Acting Executive Director and Director, Operations, Programs & Partnerships, Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council

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Jen Wright is the Acting Executive Director and Director of Operations, Programs and Partnerships for the Canadian Agricultural Human Resources Council. She is a senior success-driven business leader with more than 20 years of experience effectively developing strong teams. Jen is an effective facilitator, bringing stakeholders together and is skilled in human resource management.



Richard Wyma

Director of Community and Development Services, Town of Kingsville

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For over 25 years, Richard Wyma has worked in the parks, conservation, and land use planning sectors in Nunavut, and Ontario in a variety of management, community development, climate change, and research roles. As Director of Community and Development Services for the Town of Kingsville, Richard is responsible for overseeing planning, parks and recreation, and arts and culture in Kingsville which includes providing guidance on land use planning and regulatory processes, administering the Official Plan and Zoning By-Law policies and overseeing land development for the Town. Richard holds a degree in Urban and Regional Planning from the University of Waterloo, Masters degree in Landscape Architecture from the University of Guelph, a diploma in International Design from Wageningen University (Netherlands) and is a long-standing PhD Candidate in Landscape Architecture where his research, together with his professional experience, is exploring a landscape ecological analogy for planning and designing 'place'.



Eliseo Martell

Public Health Consultant, Grand River Community Health Centre

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Originally from El Salvador, due to the civil war in that country, I migrated to Canada as a refugee in the early nineties. Before coming to Canada, I graduated as a physician and specialized in Paediatrics. I also hold two master degrees: a Master in Public Health and a Master in Science. I have more than 15 years of work experience in public health and many years of volunteer roles most of them related to new immigrants and refugees. Some of these activities include: member of the K-W Multicultural Health Coalition, one of the founding members of the Kitchener Downtown Community Health Centre and a member of the Settlement Pillar Work Group from the Region of Waterloo Immigration Partnership. Currently and for the last five years, I have been working as the Health Promoter for the International Agricultural Workers Program with Grand River Community Health Centre. In this position I work in collaboration with organizations to support IAW's living in our community, support local IAWs to access health and support services & provide health promotion education.



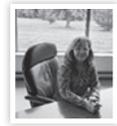
Agriculture, Environment and Partnership

Kim Earls

Executive Director, South Central Ontario Region Economic Development Corporation

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Kimberly is the Executive Director for SCOR EDC, a municipally owned economic development corporation owned by the counties of Brant, Elgin, Middlesex, Norfolk and Oxford. Kimberly currently serves on various committees throughout the South Central Ontario Region, including the London Chamber's Government Affairs Committee and the Economic Developers Council of Ontario, Elgin Middlesex Oxford Intergovernmental / Inter-ministerial Committee, Workforce Planning Taskforce of Grand Erie, Program Advisory Committee for Conestoga College Agricultural Equipment Operator Program and the Program Advisory Committee for Fanshawe College Agri-business Management Program. Prior to her work in the public sector Kim was owner and partner in a successful regional construction and masonry business with her husband for over a decade. Kimberly is a community builder, advocacy specialist and is passionate about the work she does.



Bryan Gilvesy

C.E.O. ALUS and Owner of Y U Ranch

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Bryan is C.E.O. of ALUS (alus.ca), a national community-led, farmer delivered charitable program that rewards farmers to produce more ecosystem services and develops market value for those services. He is also owner of the Y U Ranch, a Texas Longhorn ranching operation in Norfolk County, Ontario. Bryan serves as an Executive in Residence for Agriculture and Sustainability at the Ivey School of Business at Western University.



Louise Heyming

Grand River Conservation Authority Rural Water Quality Program

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Louise has more than 20 years of experience working in the field of conservation and stewardship. This broad experience includes the management and delivery of a number of initiatives to encourage rural and urban private landowner stewardship action. Louise became a member of Grand River Conservation Authority's Conservation Services team in 2002, working one on one with agricultural producers through the Rural Water Quality Program. Today as Supervisor of Conservation Outreach, she manages the delivery of this program as well as a number of school and community outreach initiatives.



Steve Sickle

Owner Sickle Farms, Brant County and 1st Vice President, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

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Steve Sickle is a farmer based in St. George, Brant County where his family owns 350 acres and rents another 900. He practices no-till, seeds corn, soybeans, soft red winter wheat, hay and cow-calf pairs. He also does custom work for other farmers. Steve is the winner of the 2019 Beef Farmers of Ontario Environmental Stewardship award, and a Director with the Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association and involved with the Brant County Cattlemen's Association. Steve is married to Amanda and has two children Kara & Ethan.



Nancy Van Sas

Workshop Leader, Ontario Soil and Crop Improvement Association

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Nancy Van Sas, formerly trained in history, archival studies, records management and museum studies, joined the team on the program side at Ontario Soil & Crop Improvement Association as a Workshop Leader in 2018 for the Golden Horseshoe Region. In addition, Nancy has also become involved at the grassroots level in the Norfolk and Haldimand SCIA local organizations as an executive, as well as a member of the Brant Woodlot Association and president of the Optimist Club of Scotland and District. Farming continues to be a large part of Nancy's lifestyle as she assists on her husband's family farm operation.



Ig Kolenko

Executive Director, SMART Centre, Conestoga College

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Ig Kolenko is the Executive Director of Conestoga College's Smart Manufacturing & Advanced Recycling Technologies (SMART) Centre, where we assist our collaborative industry partners in solving innovation challenges. As part of our applied research work with industry, we've seen an increase in activity in precision/smart agriculture, allowing us to apply our know-how in robotics, automation, machine vision, IoT, machine learning and AI to support innovation in the agricultural technology sector, which in turn provides amazing training opportunities for our students to be tomorrow's highly qualified personnel for industry.



Data Driving Economic Vibrancy

Patricia McCarney

President & CEO, World Council on City Data

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Patricia McCarney is President and CEO of the World Council on City Data (WCCD) and is a Professor of Political Science at the University of Toronto, Canada. She has served as Associate Vice President, International Research and Development at the University of Toronto. Professor Patricia McCarney received her Ph.D. from M.I.T. in 1987. Before joining the University of Toronto, between 1983 and 1994, Professor McCarney worked as a professional staff member in a number of international agencies, including the World Bank in Washington, and the United Nations – HABITAT in Nairobi. Dr. McCarney heads the Working Group on City Indicators in ISO Technical Committee 268, Sustainable Development in Communities and was integral to the development of the ISO 37120 Series, including: ISO 37120, the first International Standard on Indicators for Sustainable Cities; ISO 37122, Indicators for Smart Cities; and, ISO 37123, Indicators for Resilient Cities. Having founded the WCCD in 2014, Patricia McCarney is building a globally standardized data platform for cities worldwide, where cities report data in conformity with ISO 37120 Series for WCCD ISO Certification. As host of this new knowledge platform, the WCCD is the leading global city data base with ISO certified, and globally comparable city data for a growing network of smart, resilient and prosperous cities.



Alison Newton

MBA, Ec.D., CEcD., General Manager Strategic Initiatives, County of Brant

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Alison Newton is the General Manager of Strategic Initiatives with the County of Brant with a portfolio including Corporate Communications; Public Relations; Economic Development & Tourism; Special Events & Filming; Arts, Culture and Heritage; and Accessibility and Public Transportation. Prior to joining the County of Brant, Alison held positions in both the public sector and private sector as a Capital Markets Consultant working with global industrial clients. She has worked in the UK and Canada throughout her career. She holds a BA in Political Science from Carleton University and a Master of Business Administration from Heriot-Watt University, Edinburgh. Alison is a Certified Economic Developer with the Economic Developers Association of Canada (EDAC) and the International Economic Development Council (IEDC). Alison is the Past President of the Economic Developers Council of Ontario (EDCO) and currently sits on the Board of Directors for Trillium Network for Advanced Manufacturing.



Agricultural Systems

Nancy Rutherford

Rural Planner, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs

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Nancy is a Registered Professional Planner (RPP), member of the Ontario Professional Planners Institute and has many years' experience in land use planning, mainly at Regional and Provincial government levels. Supplementing her planning career, Nancy also utilized her planning foundation and background to branch into the area of economic development, in the role of a Manager of Agriculture and Rural Affairs, where she provided agricultural and rural support services to several municipalities and created economic development strategies supporting community economic growth. As well, she developed the first Agricultural Advisory Committee and Agricultural Strategy for the Regional Municipality of Durham. Nancy currently is employed with the OMAFRA in the Land Use Policy and Stewardship Unit, as well, instructs at Fleming College in Environmental Planning & Sustainability.



Carolyn Puterbough

Ag & Rural Economic Development Advisor, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture Food and Rural Affairs

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Carolyn Puterbough has worked with the Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs since 2009 and her current role is as an Agricultural and Rural Economic Development Advisor. Carolyn has a Bachelor of Science in Agriculture degree from the University of Guelph, is a member of the Economic Development Council of Ontario (EDCO). Carolyn provided an agriculture and an economic developer's lens during the development of Ontario's Agricultural Systems approach.



Brandon Kortleve

Planner, County of Brant

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Brandon Kortleve is a Planner in the Policy Planning Division at the County of Brant, having worked with the County of Brant in various roles since 2015. As a planner with a focus on land use policy and public engagement Brant's Development Services Department, his recent projects have included policies and implementation tools related to agricultural systems, complete communities, urban design, and heritage conservation.



Troy Tate

Grain Originator / Location Manager, Snobelen Farms, Brantford

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Troy Tate is the location manager of the Snobelen Farms Grain Elevator, Brantford. In addition to the day-to-day operational duties at the elevator Troy is also responsible for grain originations as well as seed sales for the region around his location. Snobelen farms is a large commercial grain elevator located just east of Brantford on Hwy 2. Boasting over 2 million bushels of "dry storage" capacity, this location specializes in the handling of all varieties of wheat, spring cereals, round up ready soybeans and corn. In 2020 Snobelen Farms expanded their capacity and capabilities with the addition of a brand new "stand alone" food grade IP soybean receiving/storage facility providing local growers with a new opportunity to enter the global food supply market.



2023 Host: City of Temiskaming Shores

Airianna Leveille

Economic Development Officer, City of Temiskaming Shores

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My name is Airianna Leveille, and I am a marketing professional with nine years of Municipal Government work experience. Currently I am the acting Economic Development Officer with the City of Temiskaming Shores, prior to this role I was the Public Works Clerk and Executive Assistance. I am passionate about building community partnerships & developing innovative result driven programs within our Municipality. I am committed to professional advancement. I recently graduated with honors from the Executive Municipal Management program through, AMCTO. Outside of work, I enjoy traveling and spending time with my family.

