

FOR RELEASE: June 29, 2006

TVO and TFO Mobilize for Digital Future

TVOntario CEO Lisa de Wilde is pleased to announce a new Strategic Agenda for TVO, involving a transition to digital technology, a new content strategy that responds to Ministry of Education priorities and new directions in revenue generation that will address the organization's long-term sustainability. Today's TVO news also coincides with the beginning of a new era for TVOntario's French-language educational media organization, TFO.

TFO

TFO will become a separate, stand-alone organization, with its own Board of Directors, management and budget, as announced today by the Minister responsible for Francophone Affairs, the Honourable Madeleine Meilleur. "This is a natural evolution for TFO and flows from its current successes, as well as from the needs of the Francophone communities that TFO serves," said de Wilde. "I am very proud to see the TFO team realize these ambitions as TFO celebrates its 20th anniversary, and I look forward to supporting the transition." TVOntario's Board will present a transition plan to the Ontario Government by the end of this year.

TVO: Transition to Digital

At the heart of TVO's new Strategic Agenda is its digital production and multi-platform distribution strategy. With the financial support of the Ministry of Education, TVO will convert its production facilities from analog to digital technology by September 2007. "Our Strategic Agenda is all about making TVO more relevant to Ontarians," said de Wilde. "As customers seek more control over how, when and where they consume content, we will offer digital content on many different platforms."

Content Strategy: Responding to Ministry of Education Priorities

Over the next 15 months TVO will roll out a new content strategy that is aligned with Ministry of Education priorities. "We now have a clear strategy focusing on content that supports learning outside the classroom for children and their parents," said de Wilde, "and content that fosters citizenship by engaging people as active participants in the public issues defining our society."

Kids and Parents

TVO will focus on early childhood education, and specifically on literacy and numeracy development for preschoolers. For school-aged kids, TVO will focus on keeping them interested and engaged in learning with fun, educational content, and equipping them with the tools to use educational media in a positive way in their lives.

Continuous *TVOKids* programming throughout the daytime will be introduced on television this fall, representing a weekly increase of 13 hours. *Tvokids.com* will enrich its learning content for children with more webcasts, more interactive opportunities and more challenging activities and games. "We believe every child should have the opportunity arrive at school ready to learn," said de Wilde. "The most valuable contribution we can make to children is to encourage them to succeed in school."

A dedicated online community for parents will also be launched, offering access to research on the latest thinking and practices in education, downloadable tools and an environment for parents to share their ideas and views with TVO and with each other.

Citizenship and Public Engagement

All content for adults, whatever the genre, will be anchored in citizenship and public engagement. TVO is developing a new nightly prime-time current affairs flagship program, *The Agenda with Steve Paikin*, set to launch this fall. Anchored by one of Canada's premier broadcast journalists, it will help contextualize the many complex issues related to how we as citizens function in society. The program's single-issue format will deliver more in-depth discussion on the issues that define our society and more voices and viewpoints, reflecting the diversity of today's Ontario. It will introduce user-generated content, and give Ontarians a voice through monthly public forums, all delivered on multiple platforms. Steve Paikin will host a live online Q&A from 1-2 pm Friday, June 30 on the topic of TVO's new current affairs show. Log on at tvo.org or leave a message in advance with your question by calling 1-800-613-0513, selecting 1 and then entering extension 2604.

Person 2 Person with Paula Todd will return as a weekly series with a more focused mandate: through the stories of individuals it will explore cultural, political, and socio-economic issues around citizenship. Given the changes in approach to current affairs, *Studio 2* will not return next season. Other in-house productions not returning in the fall are the daytime information program *More to Life* and the weekly teen talk show *Vox*. Films, documentaries and series are powerful educational vehicles that can provide opportunities to serve TVO's citizenship direction. TVO will continue its commitment to partnering with the industry's independent production community to source and create relevant programs that meet its definition of educational content.

"The need for a public educational media organization is greater today than ever," said de Wilde. "Whether we're equipping kids to succeed in school or serving as a navigator that helps citizens to make sense of the world around them, TVO's role is clearly defined."

On TVO's new directions, Education Minister Sandra Pupatello commented, "I believe the organization has built sound content and distribution strategies that will energize its relationship with Ontarians, while clearly supporting the education priorities of the government."

Financial Sustainability

A priority for the organization is to build a sustainable business model. This will involve creating new revenue streams. "All media organizations are grappling with the need to create new revenue streams and viable business models in the Internet age," said de Wilde. "We are confident that the shifts in our content and distribution activities will open up many new opportunities in revenue generation and move the organization to financial sustainability."

TVO will establish an incubator capability to develop and test new ideas and technologies for digital content and multi-platform distribution, with a view to driving innovation and developing new strategic alliances and revenue opportunities.

"We are very excited about this opportunity to revitalize TVO for the digital world, and to offer more ways for Ontarians to have active and engaging experiences with our content," said TVOntario Board Chairman Peter O'Brian. "The Board greatly appreciates the enthusiastic support of Premier McGuinty, Minister Pupatello and the Ontario Government for TVO's Strategic Agenda."

TVO delivers content that stimulates curiosity and engagement for children and parents, and that engages people around issues of citizenship. TVOntario's French-language television network, TFO, will become a separate stand-alone organization to better serve Ontario's Francophone communities. TVOntario also operates the Province's distance learning service, the Independent Learning Centre.

Contact: Jill Javet
Manager, Corporate Affairs
jjavet@tvontario.org
416-484-2630