

For immediate release
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Northerner Jean-Louis takes over as chair of Ontario research network

TORONTO- Maxim Jean-Louis, one of Ontario's most accomplished education leaders, takes over as Chair of the Board of the Optical Regional Advanced Network of Ontario (ORANO), which owns and operates the ORION ultra high-speed optical research and education network.

The President and CEO of Contact North/*Contact Nord*, Jean-Louis replaces York University VP of Research and Innovation, Dr. Stan Shapson, who steps down as Chair and board member after three years at the helm. Anne Sado, President of George Brown College in Toronto, was elected Vice Chair.

An executive specializing in technology and education, distance learning and alternative delivery with a special focus on small and remote communities, Jean-Louis has been President and CEO of Contact North/*Contact Nord* since 1996.

With network use growing over 600 per cent in the last two years alone, ORION is playing a growing and increasingly vital role as critical infrastructure for research and education in Ontario - enabling advanced teaching and learning, distributed high-performance computing, collaborative research projects spanning the globe and supporting researchers in fields such as medicine, the environment and physics.

"This is just the beginning and I am very excited about the future and the role the board and ORION can play," says Jean-Louis.

"Having access to this world-class technology places Ontario in the top rung of global players. I'm proud that we have been able to contribute in a very tangible way to providing our province with this critical asset and to support our transformation towards a knowledge-based economy," he says.

"We are grateful to Dr. Shapson's leadership during the last few years and his role in our success in expanding the network and helping introduce new and exciting collaborations in Ontario's research and education community," says ORANO President/CEO Phil Baker.

"Our focus now is on introducing new services and applications that can take advantage of ORION to accelerate the use of sophisticated new enabling technologies to support the work of our researchers, scientists, teachers, learners and innovators in Ontario," he says.

Apart from his work with ORION, Jean-Louis has served as Chair of the Broadband Wireless Multimedia Group, and has held board memberships in leading organizations including the Chair's Advisory Council on e-government for the Government of Ontario, the Ontario Postsecondary Education Quality Assessment Board and World University Service of Canada. He currently serves on the Groupe de travail permanent sur l'éducation en langue française of the Ontario Ministry of Education, the board of Computers for Schools Ontario, and the Citizenship and Immigration Canada-Francophone Minority Communities Steering Committee (CIC-FMC).

Prior to assuming his current position at Contact North/*Contact Nord*, Maxim held a variety of senior posts with Athabasca University in Alberta from 1980 to 1995. Maxim is a graduate of the University of Alberta. Maxim, his spouse Lise and their two sons live in Sudbury.

Other ORANO board members include Lisa de Wilde, CEO of TVOntario; Dr. Khaled El Emam, Canada Research Chair, Electronic Health Information Associate Professor, Faculty of Medicine, University of Ottawa; Terry Mosey, Past Executive Vice-President, Bell Canada; Robert J. Kennedy, Educational Consultant, Apple Canada; Patrick Spence, VP, Cingular Wireless & Rogers Wireless Business Unit, Research In Motion (RIM), as well as ORANO's President/CEO Phil Baker.

About ORION

The Ontario Research and Innovation Optical Network (ORION) is Ontario's ultra high-speed research and education network which connects all of Ontario's universities, most colleges, several medical and other public research facilities and a growing number of school boards to one another and to the global grid of research and education networks. Stretching 5,800 kilometres over 21 communities throughout Ontario, ORION connects over 1.3 million Ontario researchers, scientists, students, teachers and staff to critical infrastructure for research, education and innovation. Learn more at www.orion.on.ca.

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