



OPEN FOR BUSINESS: Hundreds of women from across Ontario gathered at Guelph Township Park Sunday afternoon. They were there to celebrate the opening of the new headquarters of the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario.

HILARY STEAD The Guelph Mercury.

WI headquarters opened Sunday in grand style

BY HILARY STEAD
THE GUELPH MERCURY

Busloads of women descended on Guelph Township Sunday afternoon for the grand opening of the new provincial headquarters of the Federated Women's Institute of Ontario.

"They're like a close-knit family," said Margaret Atkins of the provincial organization, as women from rural communities and small towns across the province lined up to sign the register beside their new offices in the 19th century farmhouse at Guelph Township Park.

The solid historic building "harkens back to another day," and signifies the "enduring strength of the organization," said Wellington MPP Ted Arnott, who presented a certificate to the organization on behalf of Premier Bob Rae.

Township Reeve Les Foote told the crowd that the farmhouse had not been used for several years and that the Women's Institute was the answer to what to do with the building.

"We finally found the best tenant we could ever find," Foote said.

There were speeches from every branch of government, as well as from the president of the University

of Guelph. There are strong links with the university because of the post-secondary scholarships and other support the institutes provide.

Women from all levels of the organization in Canada also spoke at the gathering.

"Long may you continue to make a difference — for women, for families and for communities around the province," said Peggy Knapp, Canadian president of Associated Country Women of the World. Charlotte Johnson, president of the Women's Institutes of Canada, said the new home provides a "new impetus for the future" for the organization that was founded in Stoney Creek in 1897 and now has 900 branches and 15,000 members.

Although the majority of the women attending the event were older, there were younger women, members of the Junior Women's Institutes of Ontario in attendance who will carry the organization into the future. Their president, Susan Peavoy, gave the shortest speech of the opening ceremonies with her one-sentence signal of what the junior branches have in store — "Never underestimate the power of a woman," she said.



Federated Women's Institute
of Ontario
OFFICIAL OPENING
of
PROVINCIAL OFFICE
Located in
Township of Guelph



Sunday, August 21st, 1994
Opening Ceremonies
1:00 P.M.

By Vera Richard