

Reaburn will head Ontario W.I.

Rural Canada's lifeline through disasters

BEACHBURG — Christine Reaburn is the new president-elect of the 14,000-member Federated Women's Institute of Ontario. From a pedigreed seed farm and hog finishing operation in Renfrew County, she believes the Women's Institute, once the visible heart of the rural community, will come into its own again.

Reaburn says the organization has always worked hard for the betterment of the rural community but in the age of self-aggrandizement has "never been good at blowing its own trumpet".

The Institute has always been quietly at the forefront of benefit dances and helping ru-

ral families that find themselves suddenly in need. Typically, it sent a sizable chunk of money to flood victims in Manitoba. As a non-government organization recognized by the U.N. it, among other things, provided sewing machines for an African country.

But with government cutbacks on safety nets the Institute will return more to its home roots. With 800 branches intact, the Women's Institute has a strong rural network. Currently it's progressing with partnerships on health programs, one with pharmacists to promote healthful drug use.

The real roots of the organization go back to the 19th century and Governor General Buchan. Every one who took a grade nine English course in Ontario will remember him as the one who wrote *The Thirty-*

Nine Steps.

His wife Lady Tweedsmuir introduced the keeping of county histories with the admonition "Don't lose your history". She even recommended a house log. Reaburn says it's

fascinating to delve into these homemade histories.

In two years Reaburn will take over the head of the organization. Something she's used to. She's chaired the mammoth Family Lifestyle Exhibi-

tion at the International Plowing Match near Pembroke. She's been active in the county's successful ag awareness program and the Rural Ramble, in partnership with the tourist association.



Christine Reaburn of Beachburg is the president-elect of the Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO).

Christine Reaburn WI's next Ontario president

A Beachburg-area woman will head Federated Women's Institutes of Ontario (FWIO) next year.

Christine Reaburn was chosen president-elect of the organization at its annual meeting held in Cornwall last month.

Mrs. Reaburn said that she anticipates restructuring within the organization to be a significant part of her work during her term of office.

"We're downsizing the provincial board," she said. "And we'll have to revise the constitution to jive with those changes."

In keeping with the provincial theme, Safe and Healthy Communities, the FWIO has recently entered into partnerships with the Community Abuse Program of Rural Ontario (CAPRO), the Pharmaceutical Manufacturers' Association of Canada (PMAC), the Osteoporosis Society of Canada (OSC), and the Ontario Breast Screening

Program (OBSP). These partnerships enable Women's Institutes to offer educational materials and programs promoting health and safety as they related to the various areas involved.

"I don't doubt that more partnerships will come along in the future," said Mrs. Reaburn.

The new FWIO president-elect, her husband, Larry, and daughter, Janet, farm in Westmeath Township near Beachburg. She has two other daughters, Catherine who is in university and Charlotte in high school.

Mrs. Reaburn is no stranger to challenging tasks, having chaired the Family Lifestyles Committee for the 1994 International Plowing Match.

At present she is the president of the Westmeath Women's Institute Branch and resolutions co-ordinator for North Renfrew District.