

# ✓ Operators of Country Heritage Park are happy with agriculture facility's dramatic turn-around

*Museum revenues have almost tripled over the past three years*



File photo by GRAHAM PAINE

Country Heritage Park has seen a significant increase in facility rentals for events like the Milton rodeo last August.

A solid year of progress was recorded by Country Heritage Experience Inc., the non-profit association that operates Country Heritage Park (formerly the Farm Museum) on Tremaine Road.

At the association's annual general meeting April 6, members were gratified with the dramatic turn-around since 1998 and were excited with the outlook for next year.

"In 2000 we delivered what we promised," said Reg Cressman, general manager of the park.

"Our repeat and new business says it all. Revenues from operations have almost tripled since 1998. We've come a long way since it was announced in 1997 that the Ontario Agricultural Museum was to close.

"And, we're doing it with four full-time staff, 10 part-time historical interpreters and a great group of collector clubs and rural associations that last year donated more than 597 volunteer days of service."

Highlights of 2000 include:

- A \$71,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation that funded: The installation of natural gas heat in the 8,000-square-foot Gambrel Barn (the largest meeting and event centre at the site); the creation and implementation of the Country Heritage Park name and logo, including new site signage; and the launch of a themed horticultural program, including 131 varieties of iris, 36 varieties of lilacs, 32 varieties of lilies and 22 varieties of flowering shrubs

- Sponsorship of the education program by the

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## ✓ Park board has a new president

David Pelletterio was elected president of the board of directors of Country Heritage Experience Inc. at the association's annual general meeting April 6.

Country Heritage Experience Inc. is the non-profit association that operates Country Heritage Park, the former Ontario Agricultural Museum/Farm Museum on Tremaine Road.

Mr. Pelletterio served on the board of directors since 1997 and replaces retiring president Dr. Rob McLaughlin. Dr. McLaughlin, who served two years as president, will remain on the board as past president.

"The first year (1997) was very difficult," Mr. Pelletterio said, reflecting on the five years he has served on the board.

"It was a 'stop and get control of the operation' year after the government of Ontario ceased operating the site. Since then, however, significant progress has been made towards the goals of self-sufficiency and financial sustainability. We have steadily increased revenues from events, admissions, school programs, group tours and facility rentals while maintaining the historical collection of over 20,000 artifacts."

### Interesting year ahead

The year ahead promises to be interesting, he added.

"Bookings of events and facility rentals are ahead of last year. Corporate partners such as the Dairy Farmers of Ontario, the Ontario Cattlemen's Association, and UPI

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