

✓ Park gets grant for upgrades

Local residents will soon see some changes around Country Heritage Park thanks to a large grant it just received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

The funds will be used to paint 20 of the park's 33 exhibit buildings and to install a digital safety and security system.

"The volunteers, board of directors and staff are absolutely thrilled with the support we've received from the Ontario Trillium Foundation," said Reg Cressman, the park's general manager.

"An agricultural heritage site of 80 acres and 50 buildings requires a significant investment to repair and maintenance. We rely on volunteers who contribute over 600 volunteer days each year to do a lot of the work on smaller projects."

Mr. Cressman said work around the park is expected to start immediately, with guests seeing the difference this summer.

"Each building will look like new and fit the time period it represents."

He also pointed out the new digital camera surveillance system will be a major component of the park's risk management strategy, ensuring its collection of agricultural artifacts is secure.

"We have an outstanding collection that depicts 170 years of agricultural innovation and entrepreneurship. Some items are one-of-a-kind and our tractor collection is rated as one of the best in Canada, ranking in the top five in North America," Mr. Cressman said.

"These items were collected to preserve our rural and agricultural heritage and we have a responsibility to protect them. In addition, the system will provide an increased level of safety and security for guests, staff and volunteers. Country Heritage Park is a safe place for families and we want to keep it that way."

The Ontario Trillium Foundation's support isn't new to the park. In 2000, it received a grant that assisted in a re-branding initiative from the Farm Museum to Country Heritage Park. It also supported installation of a heating system in the Gambrel Barn and the launch of a horticultural program.

In 2002, as a part of the Trillium Foundation's 'Great Grants, Great Results' awards program, the local park received the Community Impact Award.

"We are especially proud of this award because it recognizes the heart and soul of Country Heritage Park," said Mr. Cressman. "We are agriculture, we are rural and we are a contributing part of a dynamic Ontario community."

Rural Watch helps keep residents informed

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Jean Woods of Rural Watch has a suggestion of her own to deter thieves. "When we went away, we'd leave toys scattered throughout the yard and a neighbour would move them around for us.

Anything that makes the house looked lived in will help keep the crooks away."

Ms Woods said joining a group such as Rural Watch, a program that informs residents of local crimes as well as suspicious persons or vehicles

spotted in the area, can help everyone be aware of criminal activity happening around their community.

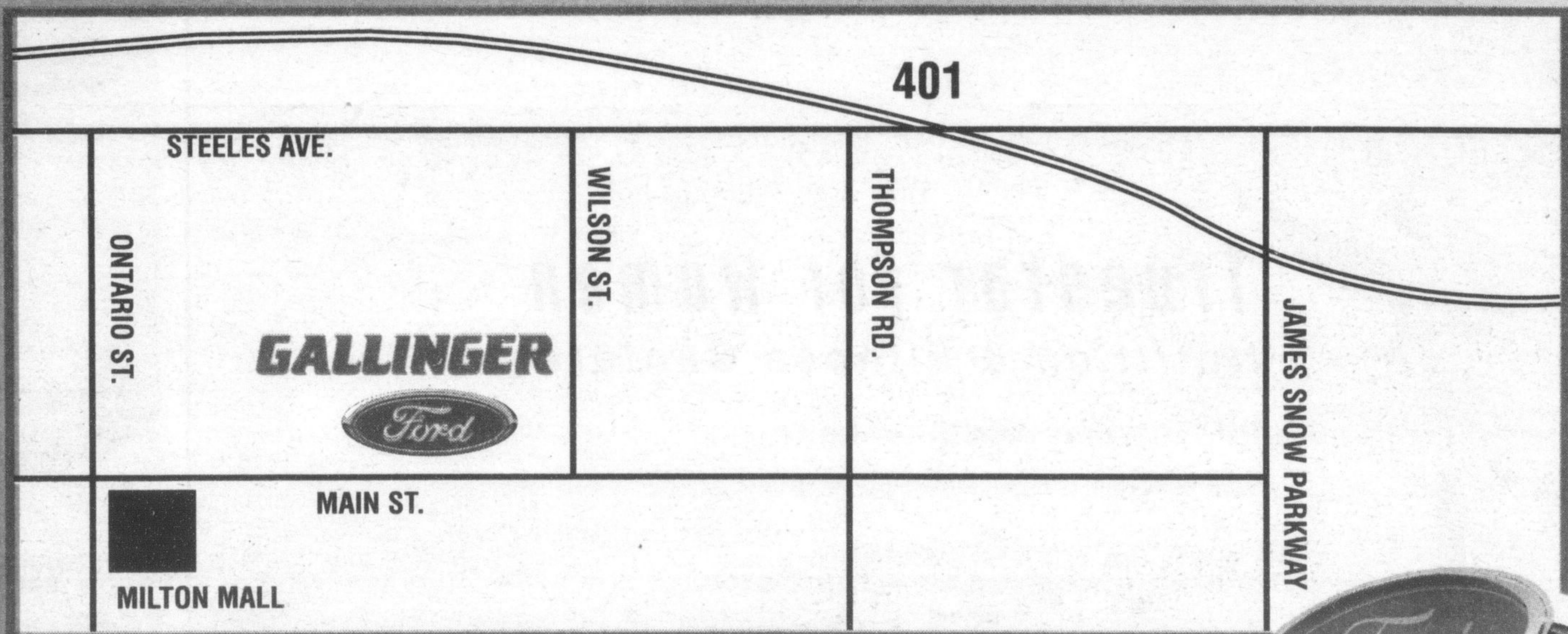
For more information on Rural Watch, contact Jean Woods at (905) 854-2107.

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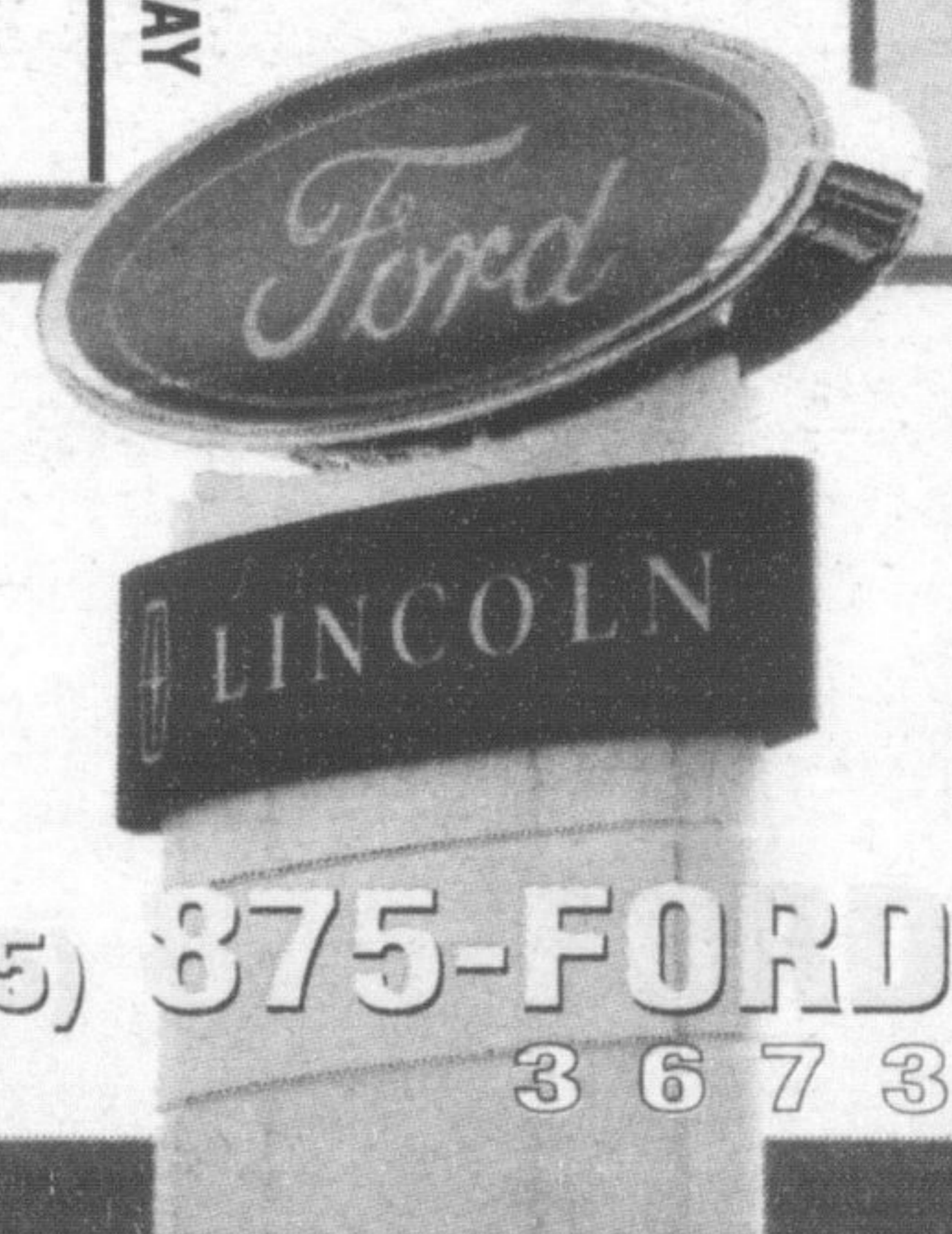
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