



Art MacConnell, one of many dedicated volunteers at Farmtown Park in Stirling, is pictured here, last summer, adding the finishing touch to yet another original piece of artwork. This graphic design is destined to become the front panel of a bar at Farmtown. And as MacConnell and others in the know have often quipped, "Every sign you see at Farmtown is a work of Art." *TERRY VOLLUM*

PART TWO

A brief history of Farmtown Park

TERRY VOLLUM

Farmtown Park in Stirling is home to the Hastings County Museum of Agricultural Heritage which celebrates and preserves the culture of rural Ontario – stressing the importance of agriculture while paying tribute to the dedicated farmers who provide us all with fresh, wholesome food.

The idea for the museum was born in 1986 at the International Plowing Match and was the vision of a handful of local residents, whose passion and support for the idea was soon embraced by area farmers. But it would be more than a dozen years before the first building (the dairy building) was constructed and today the impres-

sive facility features nine buildings and more than 45,000 square feet of incredible displays, including thousands of artifacts and antique farm machinery.

The day-to-day operations at Farmtown Park are presided over by its one salaried employee, Farmtown manager Margaret Grotek. All other tasks are handled by a group of dedicated volunteers.

"Several years ago, I was asked to paint several signs for the museum," explained sign painter Art MacConnell. "As I spent more time there I realized there were many other projects I could help with... and that's when I decided to become a volunteer. And being a sign painter with more than 60 years experience, I felt I would fit in nicely."