



A proud unveiling for the Patrick J. McManus Convention Centre

Founding members of the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, Patrick McManus and RVCA chairman, Dr. Grant Carman complete the dedication ceremonies of the new convention centre. The facility named in honour of McManus, will function as a conservation classroom and visitors centre, Energy needs for the centre will be served by a photovoltaic power system using light from the sun. *Review Photo - M. Stokes*

His generous community spirit has involved sports groups and young people, school boards, volunteer fire brigades, the Canadian Legion activities, and finally the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority where he held several offices including that of Chairman for eleven years (1974-1984).

In fact, Mr. McManus is a founding member of the Conservation Authority which he helped to form in 1965-1966. He saw the Authority as a logical way to combat the increasing problems on the Rideau waterway and to expand efforts to teach youngsters about conservation. He has continued to pursue those goals to the present. He remains an active Executive member.

In 1967, he was awarded the Centennial Medal for his relentless contributions to community life. His enthusiasm and good will are not diminishing in retirement. One of his latest project was to help establish a naturalist's group in the Perth-Smiths Falls area. His life-long love and respect for the environment and healthy enjoyment of the outdoors is something he shares with everyone he talks to.

Mr. McManus has served and continues to serve the Rideau Valley community in a generous and self-sacrificing way and has consistently shown qualities of outstanding citizenship in response to membership in this large and diverse watershed. His contributions, made without thought of personal gain or recognition, have made this part of Canada a better place to live.

The building, designed by Ottawa architect Julian Smith, blends in with the forest environment at the Conservation Area. Earth berms are used to bank up the walls on the north and east sides of the Centre for landscaping and energy retention. A built-in classroom with floor-to-ceiling windows faces out towards the woodland. And a large sheltered outdoor amphitheatre is featured in a southern exposure near the main entrance to the Exhibit Hall.

The building is about 30% larger than the former Centre. It does however retain the warmth and beauty of the big timber ceiling beams which were a trademark of the old chalet.

Several new amenities and conveniences are built into the new Centre including a large public conservation exhibit hall, indoor washrooms, larger mud and cloak room at the entrance, and a food services area with a serving counter.

The McManus Centre is also a working model of many energy conservation techniques. In addition to the ecological architecture and placement of the building, the centre features a photovoltaic (PV) power system using solar energy. Light from the sun is trapped in special silicon cells and converted into direct current electricity.

The interpretive trail of numbered panels (the "Sunshine Trail") informs visitors about the major parts of the solar energy system.

The Rideau Valley Conservation Authority, in cooperation with Energy, Mines and Resources Canada, and Astropower Canada Limited, installed the PV system during the winter of 1987 - 1988. The new centre is designed and constructed to use the PV system efficiently. Energy captured by the solar arrays powers many appliances including all indoor and some outdoor lights, ceiling fans, computer displays, and the super-energy efficient refrigerator.

The Baxter Photovoltaic system demonstrates how PV can supply electricity to remote centres and facilities in harsh environments. This makes Baxter a unique working model for tours by foreign dignitaries looking for energy alternatives.

The system highlights Canadian solar energy technology and is available for public viewing. Each year the Baxter Conservation Area hosts close to 25,000 people including 6,000 students who come to study the area's natural resources. This installation adds a new dimension to existing outdoor education activities at the centre. Visitors can see how this clean, safe energy system operates.



**"PATRICK J. McMANUS CONSERVATION CENTRE"
AT BAXTER CONSERVATION AREA**

The Baxter Conservation Area, on the banks of the Rideau River south of Ottawa, has been a nature reserve and environmental study site since 1976. It is owned and operated by the Rideau Valley Conservation Authority (R.V.C.A.) and is the flagship Conservation Area in the Ottawa-Carleton region. The beach, forest trail system and picnic grounds are all well used by the general public.

With the opening of the new "Patrick J. McManus Conservation Centre", the Baxter Area becomes more than ever a site to see. The new Centre is a first-class building exquisitely suited to its function as a conservation classroom and visitors centre.



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