



NEWS RELEASE

Fairbairn House renovations now underway

Wakefield June 4, 2010: Mayor Robert Bussière, Warden of the MRC des Collines-de-l'Outaouais, officially launched restoration work on the Fairbairn House with a ceremony at the site in Hendrick Park today.

The work on the exterior of the house is the first phase of the project to create a regional heritage centre. Work to be done includes installing a new metal roof, a wrap-around verandah, new siding and an entrance to the basement where two meeting rooms and a kitchen will be located as well as an elevator for handicapped access.

Constructions Marc Paris of Chelsea is the contractor. Marc began working as a contractor with his father in 1988. Since 2002 he has lived in Chelsea and, with his own crew, works in Chelsea and La Pêche.

This first phase will cost an estimated \$130,000. The second phase will see renovations to the interior of the house, and the third phase will deal with exhibit spaces, programs, and administration of the new Maison Fairbairn House Heritage Centre, scheduled to open in 2012.

"The Centre will celebrate the cultural and natural heritage of the Gatineau Valley and the hills around," said co-president Michael Cooper. "This fascinating story is not very well known or appreciated and the new Fairbairn Centre will bridge that gap. Eventually we will need artifacts, original papers and especially the stories of our Valley to make it all come alive" he added. The building and the surrounding Hendrick Park will offer a number of activities for young and old, tourists and residents. It will be the only facility of its kind between Gatineau and Maniwaki.

Built in 1860 by William Fairbairn, well known as the builder of the Wakefield Mill In 1838, the house served as a family farm home for well over a century. The heritage house was twice saved from demolition and was finally moved to its present location In Hendrick Park In 2005 after being acquired by the Municipality of la Pêche.

Mr. Cooper added that success of the project depends on the support and involvement of the entire community. An active membership and fund-raising drive will be undertaken in coming months to help cover the costs of the interior renovations of the house, to be carried out next summer, he said.

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