

Museum receives \$85,000 for renovations

The Bancroft North Hastings Heritage Museum is up for some renovations including an accessibility ramp. / NATE SMELLE Staff

By Nate Smelle

Bancroft North Hastings Heritage Museum will receive an \$85,000 Canada 150 grant.

According to chair of the museum board Councillor Mary Kavanagh, the funds acquired through the grant will be used to improve the facility by making it as energy efficient and as accessible as possible. She said the projects they plan to address with the funding include upgrading the heating system; improving insulation; updating the electrical system and building a new accessibility ramp.

“A new ramp will improve accessibility to the main floor of the museum,” said Kavanagh.

“The original ramp, which was installed in the 1980s, does not meet today's safety standards. This improvement will allow people of all ages that use wheelchairs, walkers, strollers and any other mobility device to more easily enter the museum.”

Kavanagh said it seems fitting to receive one of the Canada150 grants in 2017 given that the museum was opened as part of Canada's centennial celebrations in 1967. Whereas last year the museum was only open from mid-May until just before Christmas, she is hopeful that the improvements to the facility will allow the museum to remain open year-round. In the meantime, Kavanagh said the museum will be closed for the next few months until all the renovations and upgrades have been completed.

“Because the museum has only been open for just July and August until 2017, there was little opportunity for school children to learn history by visiting this wonderful resource,” she said.

“This past summer the staff provided programs for the Experience Day Camp. The children and their councillors thoroughly enjoyed themselves as they explored the history of their community. The museum board was encouraged by this success.”

Kavanagh said the museum's board of directors feel that it is very important for local children and youth to have the opportunity to learn about the history of the community they call home. She believes the Bancroft North Hastings Heritage Museum is the perfect place for students to connect with the past. Once the renovations are complete, Kavanagh indicated that the board plans to invite classes from local schools to come and visit the museum. She said that in 2018 the museum will also be hosting a variety of activities centred on the traditions of Thanksgiving, Halloween, Remembrance Day, and Christmas. The museum also plans to honour the Indigenous and pioneer women of North Hastings this year by collecting their stories and publishing them in a book.