

# Massey Area Museum celebrates 50th anniversary



Jayson Stewart

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Photo by Jayson Stewart/For The Mid-North Monitor Caption: Algoma- Manitoulin MPP, Michael Mantha and AlgomAlgoma-Manitoulin-Kapsukasing MP Carol Hughes came out to celebrate with the Massey Area Museum board and guests for the museums 50th anniversary.

The Massey Area Museum was busy last Saturday when special guests welcomed a standing-room-only crowd who gathered to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the museum.

Museum chair Barbara Mawhinney introduced the guests who included musicians, poet Charlie Smith, presenters from all three levels of government and the winners of this year's Fred Lafrance Creative Writing Contest.

"Fifty years is quite a feat and when you look at this museum and where it was," reminisced Algoma-Manitoulin MPP Mike Mantha. "When you look at this building, you look at an entire community. This is a living organism and is a true testament to the pioneers who were here back then and the volunteers who are here now."

In his address to the crowd, Mayor Les Gamble, announced that funding from all three levels of government was recently approved, which will allow the Massey Area Museum to hire a full-time intern curator.

"My vision for the next 50 years is to see this building open 365 days a year. That's where it's going with the hiring of this intern," said Gamble.

Mahwinney explained that the museum "applied for a grant for an intern curator to work full-time with us. We hope to be hiring her within the next few weeks and she will work with our curator Carolyn Hein, who has been with us for 23 years, and will be retiring within a year or so."

Noting how difficult it is to find grants in a time of austerity, Mahwinney is overjoyed by the chance to bring on additional staff.

"This is a wonderful grant. We have to pay 10% of the grant so we needed some help and the Township of Sables-Spanish Rivers came through with that."

Never far from a museum event, Algoma-Manitoulin-Kapsukasing MP Carol Hughes appreciates the value of community organizations like the Massey Area Museum.

"I love museums. It's a great opportunity for people to understand where they came from. For me, as a Member of Parliament, it's a great opportunity to really understand a community and how the area came to be," Hughes said.

She has been a vocal cheerleader for the Massey Area Museum since first being elected to Parliament 10 years ago.

"With this particular building there was a challenge to get funding and we had to continue to push, but the federal, provincial and municipal governments as well as Sagamok Anishnawbek have come to the table. We also see that some of that funding continues as we see having employees, placements and interns, do some of that work.

"There's a huge dedicated team here and to be able to celebrate 50 years is quite amazing," Hughes added.

The Massey Area Museum has been in its new building for only five years, but space is already limited with displays that range from forestry, mining and farming equipment; a replica general store, schoolhouse, fur trade fort, church and kitchen; a fire fighting pumper truck; dioramas and much more.

