

A trail for the artistic

By Bruce Bell
THE INTELLIGENCER

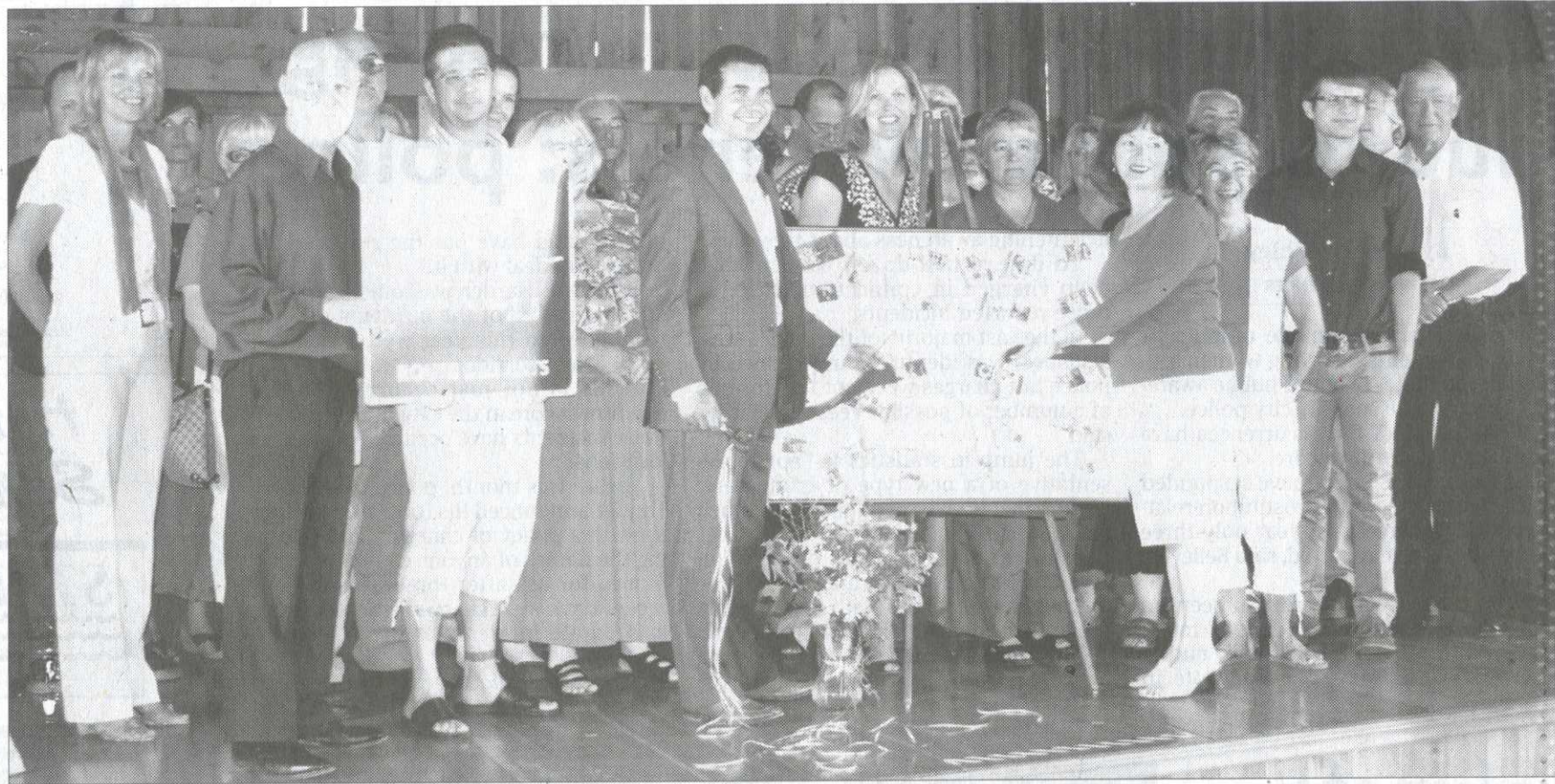
WEST LAKE — A new trail has been blazed through Prince Edward County, highlighting its blooming arts and cultural sector.

Ontario Minister of Tourism Peter Fonseca and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Leona Dombrowsky joined local dignitaries at The Fields on West Lake Thursday morning to officially launch the Arts Trail in Prince Edward County.

Hailed as the first of its kind in the province, the Arts Trail was started this spring and includes 22 studios and dozens of artists in Prince Edward.

"The trail was the next logical step for Prince Edward County after the Taste Trail was established in 2004 and this will just help to continue building tourism here," said Fonseca. "Promoting the arts in the county will not only benefit the artists, but the entire community as well. It will attract people from afar and will help make this an even greater destination."

Developed by Taste the County and the municipality's economic development office, the new Arts Trail is being funded in part by the 22 stakeholders, the municipality,



INTELLIGENCER PHOTO BY BRUCE BELL

Ontario Minister of Tourism Peter Fonseca and Minister of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs Leona Dombrowsky cut the ribbon to officially launch the Arts Trail in Prince Edward County Thursday morning. The launching ceremony was held at the Fields on West Lake on Highway 33.

The Ministry of Tourism Investment and Development Office and a \$50,000 grant from the Ontario Trillium Foundation.

Taste the County executive director Rebecca LeHeup-Bucknell said the trail will help the existing Taste Trail promote the municipality.

"Expanding on our experience from developing the award-winning Taste Trail, we are able to work with community partners to create an arts and cultural experience unique to

Ontario," she said. "This model was only made possible due to the strong stakeholder support and funding partners that had faith in our ability to succeed in promoting the unique culture in Prince Edward County."

A coloured brochure was published this spring for the unofficial launch of the program and sent to various regions.

Artists are reporting a sharp increase in visitors, particularly from the Quebec region.

"I believe this is exactly what we needed here because what it's doing is marketing to people outside the county who don't know what we have here," said Bloomfield potter Peta Hall. "My business is way up and I think everyone has been really busy because the Arts Trail is bringing in buyers and that's exactly what we need to succeed."

Fonseca said the county continues to lead the way in destination marketing in the province.

"Prince Edward County has all the ingredients for success because everyone has worked together to turn it into one of the finest gems in Canada," he said. "I knew this Arts Trail would happen because I knew Rebecca was determined. As a minister, I can tell you that what is happening in the County is an example for all."

For more information visit the website at www.artstrail.ca
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