



PARIS AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Paris Agricultural Society (PAS) held its Annual General Meeting last night. In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, business was completed virtually for the first time in the Society's 163 years.

The cancellation of the annual five-day Fair along with the inability to rent the grounds and facilities for three quarters of 2020, resulted in a net loss of \$120,000 per the Society's year end financials. The Paris Agricultural Society owns over 100 acres of property including several buildings. "The need for maintenance and general operating expenses did not end" stated Ross Miller, President of the Society. "We are thankful for the foresight and planning of the Board of Directors who had previously established a Reserve Operating fund as well as Reserve funds for Capital Expenses. Without these funds we would have been faced with some difficult decisions this spring." Government funding, (Federal, Provincial and Municipal) also helped with wage subsidies, PPE expenses and the ability to provide virtual and drive-in experiences for the Community in 2020.

2020 was a year of creativity and Miller thanked the many volunteers who assisted with new events such as Drive-In Bingos, Take-out Meals prepared by the Homecraft Division, Outdoor Markets and a Drive-Thru Christmas Display. Members have experienced key learning opportunities that will strengthen their ability to host future events, including the 2021 Paris Fair, in a way that is safe for both volunteers and visitors.

Each year, the Society donates more than \$100,000 to the community through rental discounts to non-profit organizations and fund-raising events. The Board of Directors acknowledge the need for this donation to continue and are spending the time of closure to update policies, complete maintenance projects and ensure that all social distancing and cleaning precautions are taken to ensure a safe return to business once Pandemic restriction are lifted.

During the meeting Luciano DiBiase, Sheldon Grech and Bella Todd were elected to the Board to positions vacated by Doug Telfer, Owen Moore and Ryan Telfer. The PAS and its Board of Directors wish to thank the outgoing Directors for their past efforts and appreciate that they are remaining on as active volunteers.

Executive for 2021 are:

Ross Miller – President, Jim Lawrence – Past President, Jay Wood – 1st Vice President, John Stuart – 2nd Vice President, Matt Stuart – Director at Large, Valerie Stone - Homecraft President, Cheryl Muir - Secretary/Manager and Tracy Hussey – Treasurer.

Returning Directors are: Sydney Adams, Sean Chase, Lesleigh Elgie, Linda Head, Amanda Henderson, Beth Howell-Vervaeke, Suzanne Kelley, Rebecca Lyster, Alicia MacDonald, Lauren Miller, Darlene Murphy, Erica Sayles, Rick Stern, Dennis Tochor and Jeff Vanderhoek,

The Paris Agricultural Society is grateful for the communities support and looks forward to a responsible restart to events and friendship on our grounds.

Cheryl Muir
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