

What is the Agri-Culture Center?

Located on the LBA fairgrounds in Ormstown, the Agri-Culture Center is a multipurpose facility designed with the goal of becoming a regional hub for agri-tourism events and activities.

It is the first major accomplishment of an ambitious strategy, developed with the assistance of Desjardins's Fonds du Grand Mouvement, to preserve and enhance the heritage fairgrounds.

By transforming the site into a year-round center that will provide a modern space, equipment and technologies responding to the needs of the regional agri-food industry and surrounding rural communities, LBA will be able to maintain a heritage facility while offering a wider range of agri-tourism activities and services to the region.

The original dining hall that stood there was named the "Green Rooster" in honour of Ormstown farmer, writer and broadcaster, Gordon Green. He frequented the dining hall regularly during the fair and he was a dedicated volunteer, especially with the poultry show, for many years. The name of the new facility is a play on the word "agriculture", representing its primary focus on the agri-food sector, while at the same time conveying the importance of other cultural elements that are the fabric of a vital community. The name also reflects the bilingual heritage of the region.

The aspiration is that new Agri-Culture Center will continue to fulfill the Green Rooster's legacy, as well as that of all the hundreds of other volunteers who help to make LBA activities a success every year.



Outside view of the Centre Agri-Culture Center

Background

Despite successfully organizing the Ormstown Fair since 1910, the LBA directors realized that more would be required to maintain the heritage buildings on the LBA fairgrounds than just one annual event. In 2019, with the support of the Caisse Desjardins du Haut-Saint-Laurent, the LBA received a grant from the Fonds du Grand Movement, along with a contribution from other Caisse Populaire's in the region, to undertake a strategic planning exercise and develop a business plan that would ensure the sustainability of the heritage site and buildings into the future.

LBA's long-term strategy is to host an event or activity every week of the year in relation to the regional agricultural sector, as well as responding to the local and surrounding community needs.

Phase 1 of the plan was to construct the Agri-Culture Center on the site of the old dining hall. Recycling as much of the materials as possible from the wood-frame building, the new center is designed to accommodate meetings and events for 100 people, responding to a demand in the region for a medium-sized meeting, conference and event facility. Equipped with a modern kitchen, the Agri-Culture Center can now provide full-catering services to farm, agri-food and family events, as well as offer a commercial kitchen for local caterers to prepare meals and to local agri-food entrepreneurs for product development.



Inside the Centre Agri-Culture Center

In addition to the investment from LBA's own funds, the construction of the Agri-Culture Center was made possible by the financial contributions of:

Desjardins' Fonds du Grand Mouvement, in conjunction with:

- Caisse Desjardins du Haut-Saint-Laurent
- Caisse Desjardins de Beauharnois
- Caisse Desjardins de Salaberry-de-Valleyfield
- Caisse Desjardins de Vaudreuil-Soulanges
- Caisse Desjardins de l'Ouest de la Montérégie
- Caisse Desjardins de Châteauguay
- Caisse Desjardins des Seigneuries de la frontière
- Caisse Desjardins des Moissons-et-de-Roussillon



Avec la participation financière de



Ministère des Affaires municipales et de l'Habitation (MAMH)
Fonds régions et ruralité (FRR)



Ministère de l'Économie, de l'Innovation et de l'Énergie
Programme d'immobilisation en entrepreneuriat collectif (PIEC)
d'Investissement Québec



Tourisme Montérégie
Entente de partenariat régional et de transformation numérique
en tourisme (EPRTNT)



Société d'aide au développement des collectivités du Suroit-Sud (SADC)
Fonds d'investissement

The Future

The construction of the Agri-Culture Center is just the start.

Phase 2 is to renovate the Industrial Building and make it a second year-round facility for exhibitions and large meetings and events. Built in 1931, the Industrial Building has display booths on the ground floor, and the second story is a large open space (60 x 100 feet) for craft and artistic exhibitions as well as functions for 200+ people (meetings, concerts, weddings, etc.) Both floors need to be winterized and renovated to meet modern requirements.

Phase 3 will be to continue the renovations on the arena and the grandstand. The arena was built in 1912 with metal girders and supports, but the rest of the building, including the outside cladding and interior seating, is all made from wood. The same applies to the grandstand, built in 1919, and both facilities require renovations to strengthen the century-old construction and bring the buildings in line with modern safety standards while maintaining their heritage appearance.

The renovation of LBA's heritage facilities is the foundation for becoming a regional hub for agri-tourism events and activities. The improved and enhanced buildings will allow LBA to offer and host year-round activities that will increase agri-tourism in the region and support the agri-food sector with a leading-edge facility for training, meetings, conferences, services and product development. The Agri-Culture Center will contribute to business development and job creation while building on the region's farming and agri-food traditions.

The enhanced site and buildings will allow LBA to continue to fulfill its mission to promote advancement and education in the fields of agriculture, horticulture and animal husbandry. Whether it's setting up agricultural activities for children at the fair or offering a resource center where anyone can get information to help them move forward, the LBA's aim is to be a leader in the regional agri-food sector.



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