

# Theatre Wakefield project gets \$62K in funding

By Anastasia Philopoulos

Brenda Rooney's mouth could not have been open any wider while reading a letter handed to her by Theatre Wakefield General Manager Peter MacGibbon. Federal Minister of Canadian Heritage Shelly Glover looked on with a smile as Rooney happily discovered Theatre Wakefield's proposed cultural action project had received \$62,467 in federal funding.

"We're thrilled," MacGibbon said. "It's a significant amount, it's actually everything we asked for."

Minister Glover was in town as part of a tour of a handful of Pontiac community sites, including the Shawville community centre, Wakefield's Fairbairn House, and Theatre Wakefield's film camp, finishing up with a pint at the Chelsea Pub.

After film camp students showcased a spine-chilling morgue scene (shout-out to the kids that played the corpse) in the basement of the Wakefield United Church, the Minister shared the good news.

"These kids and community that bring us arts and culture, they make us feel good about ourselves and remind us what it means to be Canadian," Glover told the Low Down. The federal minister added that investment in community-based cultural projects generates economic returns for taxpayers, putting money back into local economies.

The funds will go towards Theatre Wakefield's newest venture, 'River Valley Rendezvous!', a project focused on the cultural heritage of the lower Gatineau Valley that will engage local seniors and youth and will



Brenda Rooney got quite the shock when Theatre Wakefield General Manager, Peter MacGibbon presented a letter confirming \$62,467 in federal funding for a proposed heritage animation project. A. Philopoulos photo

partner with a number of community stakeholders, including Maison Fairbairn, the Quebec Anglophone Heritage Network, Connexions Resource Centre, and Hendrick Farm.

"We'll be focusing on the development of seniors as cultural mentors to youth," MacGibbon said.

The idea is to engage a group of seniors and youth from vari-

ous MRC des Collines municipalities in the creation of 12 heritage stories as audio vignettes featuring dramatizations, songs, narrated tales, and recorded interviews. The second phase of the project will see the 12 heritage stories presented by actors, musicians, and storytellers in a professional variety show. Finally, all the materials and footage will be compiled and edited into a Heritage Animation DVD toolkit, and will be disseminated to other Quebec communities interested in developing similar heritage-themed projects created from local interactions.

The project will happen over the next year and MacGibbon says the first steps to build the core group of seniors and youth could start as early as August. "This is a chance to demonstrate our community's contribution to this part of Quebec."