

October 7, 2009

Precision snowmobile team preparing for Torch Relay celebration

The Orangeville and District Snowmobile Club has transformed itself into a snowmobile precision team. The club agreed several months ago to take on the challenge and has been rehearsing patterns under the direction of Canadian choreographer Roland Kirouac.

The precision team is a unique event for Torch Relay celebrations and will be featured in a CTV documentary entitled “This Great Land: Canada Welcomes The Torch”, to air on October 24 at 8 p.m. A CTV cameraman captured the action of a rehearsal from the vantage point of a Hydro bucket truck, as members went through their second rehearsal in early September.

The Orangeville and District Snowmobile Club has 35 active members, of which about 12 will be involved in the precision performance on December 28 when the Olympic Flame arrives in Orangeville for a mid-day celebration. The snowmobile performance, slated for the sports field behind Orangeville District Secondary School, will involve eight riders (with four alternates).

Club president Zen Slipenkyj says the participants consider it a privilege to participate in the Torch Run celebration. “Roland makes the day, by starting with music and getting everyone hyped,” Mr. Slipenkyj says, adding the rehearsal for CTV was a great experience. “The riders worked hard and it came together well.”

The group will be rehearsing in a field just north of Orangeville, usually on Sundays, on ATVs and then switching to snowmobiles once there is snow on the ground. “Our plan is to practice on sleds, even if we have to trailer to the snow, as we are sure it will be much less maneuverable and may take a few adjustments to the routine,” Mr. Slipenkyj says. This new precision team expects to rehearse weekly from October to December, for a total of 40-50 hours so they can deliver a great show.

As to which vehicle they will use on December 28, that is totally dependent on weather. “ATVs can be used in low snow conditions but we prefer the sleds. It will be up to the weatherman.”

They have selected several routines that they will perform, with the choreographer’s direction, and the patterns are new to all of them. “The guys are really excited and practice comes at our busiest time as the guys are going to begin clearing trails and getting signs and markers up before the frost. However, they are quite willing to make time for both.”

For more information on the Orangeville and District Snowmobile Club, visit www.orangevillesnowmobileclub.com. For more information on Orangeville’s Olympic Torch Relay celebration, visit www.orangeville.ca.