# New technology increases protection

**by Jason Burgoone**

BRINSTON -– Tibben Equipment Limited took advantage of its newly renovated indoor service bay in hosting its bi-annual open house in Brinston on Nov. 8.

Owners Darlene and Doug Tibben used the opportunity to show off some of the more exciting vehicles in stock, and the extensive product lines specifically for their vehicles. Polaris clothing and helmets were the focus of the weekend-long sale.

"The quality of the helmets has been improving over the years," said Doug Tibben, regarding the benefits of purchasing a new helmet rather than a used one.

All-terrain vehicles (ATV) and snowmobile helmet manufactures have begun to take into consideration the fact that many young adults and children ride these vehicles, and the term "one size fits all" does not sit well with parents.

"It's very important that the helmet fits properly. The padding inside the helmet does eventually wear down," said Tibben regarding rider safety. "If it is worn down, it can slip around and damage your face." Polaris produces an extensive line of helmets for nearly any level of riding, regardless of age or size.

"There are two things that have to be on the helmet. First, it has to be DOT (department of transportation) approved. That's your basic approval that it meets all your minimum requirements," said Tibben. "The Snell approval is a higher quality approval. They have done more (stringent) testing."

Many of the DOT and Snell approved helmets are made of fiberglass. When a fiberglass helmet is impacted, it spreads the shock more evenly. Riders should be reminded that regardless of new safety features, if the chin strap isn't properly secured, the helmet is almost rendered useless. A properly secured chin strap will also help improve visibility through the face shield.

Proper ventilation throughout the helmet will reduce fogging and greatly improve your chance of an accident-free ride. Many new helmets come standard with a ventilation bar, which is usually designed into the bottom of the face shield.

Customers looking for a wider selection of Polaris accessories than is on display at Tibben Equipment are encouraged to stop in and speak to Tibben's Polaris sales representative, Randy Strader. Strader and the Tibben Equipment sales staff can accommodate any unique requests from riders of any skill level, age or recreational specialization.

Weekend warriors can also take advantage of Tibben's experienced sales team to find some of the more luxurious touring accessories. Easy to install cargo racks and fully adjustable backrests can make the long cruise across the backwoods more comfortable and make unpacking at the cottage much less stressful.

Hand-held global position systems and avalanche beacons can also provide peace of mind for a carefree weekend.

Additional information on any of the numerous services or products offered through Tibben Equipment Ltd. can be found at www.tibbenequipement.com or by contacting Tibben's Polaris sales representative Randy Strader at 613-652-4881.




*Owners Darlene and Doug Tibben greeted customers at the bi-annual open house event on Nov. 8. Prospective customers were welcomed to tour the shop and inspect Polaris snowmobile equipment.*
*Photo – Burgoone*

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# Snowmobile Showcase




*Mountain Trail Blazers celebrate 30th anniversary*

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*Special supplement to the Winchester Press, Chesterville Record, Morrisburg Leader, Iroquois Chieftain, Prescott Journal, Kemptville Advance and Russell Villager.*

**November 19, 2003**

# Support Easter Seals

MORRISBURG — Snowarama for Easter Seal Kids will again be hosted in Morrisburg this winter. The event will begin with breakfast at the Morrisburg Fire Hall on Sat., Feb. 7. The local Snowarama will be one of 50 Snowarama events being held across Ontario.

For the second year, the Dundas County District Council of the Easter Seals Society is organizing Snowarama in conjunction with Girls on Snow. Female riders in the National Valley Snowmobile Association formed the Girls on Snow group to organize a number of annual events.

Snowmobilers are asked to gather pledges in support of their full day on the trails. All participants will receive a free Snowarama embroidered jacket patch.

Riders will be starting their day with pancakes and sausages served at the Morrisburg Fire Hall beginning at 9 am. Riders who have gathered more than $50 in pledges eat for free. The cost for everyone else will be $4. Everyone is welcome to attend the breakfast.

The Girls on Snow will lead snowmobilers around a 130-kilometre course. Organizer Debbie Strader said that although the Girls on Snow are organizing the rally, that doesn't mean men aren't supposed to take part. The event is open to anyone with a snowmobile.

Support for Easter Seals goes to assist youth and young adults to live with physical disabilities. The goal is to allow these young people to achieve their full individual potential and to guide them toward future independence. There are now 29 families being assisted by Easter Seals in Dundas County. Last year, Snowarama raised close to $3,700.

There is currently a special need for Easter Seals support. The Ontario organization is dealing with $500,000 in requests that it can't afford and has 400 families on a waiting list for assistance. Any money raised in Dundas County will be used locally until all needs are met, then any surplus will be used to help neighboring communities dealing with a shortfall.

For pledge sheets or more information, contact Margaret Reynolds at 613-543-2547, Jean MacDougall at 613-543-3480 or Debbie Strader at 613-543-2757. Riders and volunteer organizers are needed to make this year's event a success.

Members of Girls on Snow will be spending the evening at the McIntosh Inn in Morrisburg. Members are reminded to book their rooms in advance. This annual event is strictly women-only.




## Trip planning

Thanks to the most ambitious project of its kind in North America, snowmobilers are now able to plan their Ontario tours on-line this winter. With funding assistance from the Trail Safety & Sustainability Program, a partnership with the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and Recreation, the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) a new web-based tourism mapping tool has been launched. Snowmobilers can now click on www.ofsc.on.ca/Trails/TourPlanner to plan their trip.

Previously, no central source existed for simultaneously accessing all of the 46,000 km of snowmobile trails operated by the OFSC. Now, instead of relying on a multitude of often incompatible paper trail maps, snowmobilers will benefit from a one-stop planning site for both trail mapping and condition reports.



### On the cover

*The Mountain Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club is celebrating its 30th anniversary this year. This March 1974 photo features many of the original members with their sleds. Front row, left to right: Heather Alexander, Valerie Madden, Verna Simzer, Susan Percival, and Anita Simzer. Back row: Bruce Spong, Lloyd Madden, Gerald Simzer, Andrew Percival, Larry Simms, Harold Boyce, and Ewart Simms.*





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# Know the rules before you go!

As an off-road experience, snowmobiling is an inherently risky activity. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) assumes every rider using an OFSC Prescribed Trail understands and accepts that:

- All snowmobiles will be operated under a lawful trail use permit.
- All operators and passengers willingly use the trails at their own risk.
- Operators and passengers know and will obey the law, including, the Occupiers' Liability Act, the Motorized Snow Vehicles Act and the Trespass to Property Act.
- It is recognized and accepted that snowmobiling is essentially an off-road activity taking place in the natural environment.
- The OFSC is a volunteer-based organization with finite resources and manpower.
- It is not practical, possible or desirable to maintain all trails uniformly or to remove all potential hazards.
- The OFSC is providing the privilege of trail access without any guarantee of service or quality.
- Operators and passengers will not consume alcohol prior to or while using the trails.
- Operators and passengers will be prudent and responsible and shall ensure that snowmobiles are operated with appropriate care and control at all times.
- Operators and passengers know how to snowmobile competently and understand that the operation of snowmobiles requires full cognitive abilities.
- Weather conditions affect trails and snowmobile operation and they may change without warning.
- The maximum speed on trails is 50 km/h unless reduced by law or conditions.
- There may be permitted users on the trail other than snowmobilers.
- Operators will stay to the right of the trail, notwithstanding that there are no centre lines.
- Operators know that there may be grooming or other maintenance activities under way at any time of the day or night. Groomers may take up the whole or any part of the trail and have the right of way.
- Operators and passengers know that snowmobile trails are not engineered highways.
- All operators and passengers know and will adhere to the principles published as the Safe Riders Pledge by the International Snowmobile Manufacturers' Association.
- Operators and passengers are aware that emergency and cell phone service may not be available.
- Operators and passengers are aware that there are generally no legal requirements for signage on trails. When provided, it is only for assistance and convenience.
- Operators and passengers know that snowmobiling on OFSC trails is regarded as a family-oriented activity.
- Operators and passengers know the unique and particular dangers of ice crossing.
- The grooming and maintenance of trails, when provided, is meant solely to enhance the comfort and enjoyment of the safe and prudent operators and passengers.




- Operators and passengers will dress appropriately for all conditions and will have appropriate safety and emergency equipment at all times.

**SNOWMOBILING AND THE LAW**

- Many of the same rules of the road that apply to motor vehicle drivers are also the rules of the trails for snowmobile operators. Failure to comply with these rules carries similar penalties, including possible fines, loss of driver's license, criminal charges, and/or imprisonment.
- To drive a snowmobile legally, it is mandatory to possess a valid diver's license and/or snowmobile operator's permits, and carry current snowmobile registration and proof of liability insurance (minimum $500,000) at all times.
- Both driver and passenger must wear a helmet when riding a snowmobile.
- To ride on snowmobile trails prescribed by the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs, the law requires that a valid Snowmobile Trail Permit be affixed to your windshield. You can buy a permit from any local snowmobile dealer, at various snowmobile clubs, or online at www.ofsc.on.ca.
- The fine for failing to have or display a valid permit is a minimum of $205 to a maximum of $1,000.


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# IPM booth distributes literature

**by John Boals**
**District 1 manager**

CARLETON PLACE — This year the Rural Expo International Plowing Match was held in Carleton Place from September 17 to 21. The great weather buoyed the spirits of the 86,000 attendants — possibly a record — as they visited the innumerable attractions that filled the 900-acre grounds.

Organized snowmobiling was well represented by a team of dedicated volunteers from OFSC District 1 clubs which manned the booth and its wonderful display in the Lanark County tent at the main entrance. The volunteers' knowledge was much appreciated as they answered questions from landowners and from the public on trail usage and the sport in general. Clubs were rewarded with many thanks and positive comments in regards to the hard work done by their volunteers to develop and maintain the trails.

The IPM is the single largest event in Ontario that provides exposure to the sport of organized snowmobiling, and judging from the pickup-truck load of literature that was distributed, there is no reason to doubt it.

Many thanks are extended to the people of Lanark County for their generosity in providing the booth space in their tent, and to the club volunteers who donated their time as ambassadors of Ontario Snowmobiling for five terrific days.



*Volunteers from OFSC District 1 were at the International Plowing Match in Lanark County this year to answer questions from the public. They were just as interested in talking to landowners as snowmobilers, because trails wouldn't exist without access to fields.*

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That's right, there's something for every snowmobiler in eastern Ontario. Catch a local Celtic act, sample some French Canadian flavor, or relax in that cozy little inn along the way. Find out why we love to ride!

## Loiselle

• continued from previous page

Excellent mileage may come in handy this winter when riders are touring across the countryside, but safety should be of equal concern. Loiselle Sport carries everything a rider could ever dream of having. New clothing, helmets, additional sled storage, parts and accessories can either be purchased or ordered from Loiselle Sport.

Another important part of riding this winter is to know proper snowmobile etiquette. The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) annually provides riders across the province with everything from driver training courses to trail maps.

One educational program run by the OFSC is SledSmart. The SledSmart education team is a two-person traveling safety team that delivers entertaining, hands-on safety information to schools, clubs, events and trailside pit stops. The team travels by road and trail throughout the winter to ensure that as many people as possible receive a personal safety call from the OFSC.

Additional trail information for eastern Ontario can be found at www.district1ofsc.ca or by contacting at Loiselle Sport Inc. at 613-443-3260.


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# Still blazing trails after 30 years

**by Bonnie James**
*Press staff*

SOUTH MOUNTAIN — The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC) recently honored the Mountain Trail Blazers for reaching its 30th year as an OFSC member. At the meeting of the Nation Valley Snowmobile Association held Oct. 21, secretary Debbie Strader presented a plaque to Harold Boyce, one of the original members of the Mountain Trail Blazers, on behalf of the OFSC.

Boyce, of South Mountain, is now 84 and has many memories of the Mountain Trail Blazers' early years. "It began as just a group of friends who made it a point to go for a ride once a week," he said.

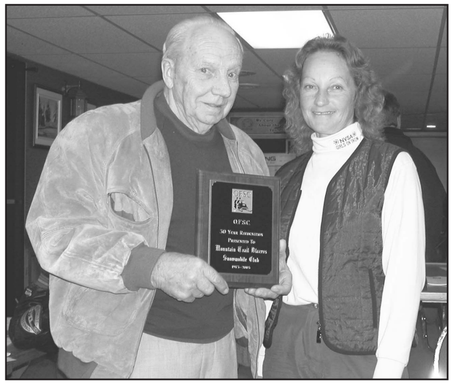
He doesn't remember when it first became organized as a club, but thinks it was around 1968. The minutes of the early meetings were burned in a house fire, so memories are all there is to go on. They started out meeting in people's houses and then in the basements of the Inkerman or Hallville churches. Later they met in the school house at Mountain. The club finally got its own permanent clubhouse in 1995.

Boyce figures club membership was about 20 families in those first few years. The majority were husbands and wives, as well as a few older children. "It was kind of a close fit for two on the snowmobiles in those days, but we did it," Boyce said.

One night a week about 20 or 25 sleds would go out for a little ride. "There were no trails, it was just bump, bump, bump. We had to make our own." he said. Often there would be Sunday afternoon rides as well. Boyce recalled that the group sometimes had scavenger hunts. "Just a little game we played," he said.

His first snowmobile was a used one that he purchased at Carl-Don Equipment, the International dealership in Mountain. There were many more places to buy sleds back then, as there were so many different manufacturers, explained Boyce.

Boyce is looking forward to the upcoming snowmobile season. "Oh yeah. I don't have my trail pass yet, but I have my licence and I'm raring to go," he declared. He is the only original member of the club still snowmobiling.



*Harold Boyce is one of the original members of the Mountain Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club and he accepted a plaque recognizing the club's 30 years as a member of the OFSC. Debbie Strader presented the award on behalf of the OFSC on Oct. 21.*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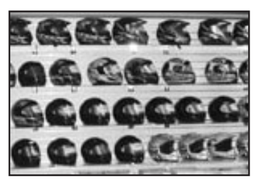




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# Season permits take $20 hike

**by Ray Godard**
**President, Nation Valley Snowmobile Association**

The $20 increase in the cost of this year's season permits to ride Ontario snowmobile trails is quite substantial. The cost of a permit will be $160 before Dec. 1, and $195 in the new year.

From what was learned at the annual general meeting of the Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs (OFSC), the price will not be coming down any time soon.

In the 2000-2001 season, the OFSC liability insurance premium was $365,000. This is the policy that protects our club volunteers, club events and most importantly, our landowners.

The number of statements of claim against the policy in 2000-2001 far exceeded the premium amount. Then the bottom fell out of the stock market, which not only affected people's personal pension plans and RRSP investments, it also knocked out the portfolios held by insurance companies. Compounding the problem, the effects of 9/11 affected the insurance market worldwide.

In 2001-2002, the cost for the OFSC insurance policy was $2.1 million and it went up again for the 2002-2003 season to $3.25 million. What is affecting us at the local club level is the deductible the club must now pay if there is an incident on our trails. The deductible went from $1,000 per occurrence to $50,000 per occurrence.

Even one claim could wipe out all the clubs that I know of in this area, along with all the efforts that many, many volunteers have put in over the years.

We now must look at what has happened in the last two years and what needs to be addressed in the coming years. Some of our volunteer governors were looking at risk management, prior to the insurance crisis in 2001. When the crisis came, they put forward a plan to address this issue.

At all levels, we have had to change the way we do things. This is very hard as most of the local clubs and their volunteers thought we were doing a good job, but claimants were winning because we were being held to highway-standard expectations.

The OFSC and its member clubs have embarked on a process that will take some of the risk out of doing things, and will place the risk with irresponsible riders. It has worked to a certain degree, as our insurance coverage has leveled off at $3.25 million dollars for the coming season. Good you say, as this will level off the permit increases. Yes and No. Yes — the premium did not go up. No — since the 2001-2002 permit increase did not cover the insurance costs for last year.

To be able to pay the $3.25 million dollar policy last year, the OFSC had to dig into all of its reserves, and all of its programs had to be cut back or cancelled. We now have to build up the reserves to a level where the programs we have been counting on can still move forward. And let's not forget our insurance premium is still $3.25 million, with no reserves to pay for it this time around. The only recourse is to raise the money through permit fees.

At the local level, clubs must follow some new risk management guidelines to reduce the level of the $50,000 per occurrence deductible. The deductible still remains at $50,000 per occurrence, but the OFSC has come up with a plan to assist clubs in financing that level of deductibility. All of our clubs are working with the same guidelines to be able to reduce that deductible, and it does come with a cost. Not only is it dollars, it also causes a strain on the volunteers who are spread very thin as it is.

For the OFSC to be able to come up with the difference on the $50,000, it has to have reserves. The experts are saying the OFSC must accumulate $750,000 per year minimum for the next seven years, to be able to cover the anticipated deductibles, as the result of legal actions taken against organized snowmobiling.

We are doing everything in our power to reduce the level of risk we are faced with at our end, but it is not easy. As for our own budget, we have allocated dollars towards this program. Facing a 30 per cent decrease in membership over the past two years, it is a challenge, but not impossible.

For myself, snowmobiling is still a great way to make the winter go by, as it is for many others. The Nation Valley Snowmobile Association holds monthly meetings on the third Tuesday of every month and all members are welcomed.


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# Snowmobilers flood Embrun before snowfall

**by Jason Burgoone**

EMBRUN — Snowmobilers from across the region met in Embrun from Oct. 30 to Nov. 2 with one thing in mind, getting their rides ready for that first good snowfall. Loiselle Sport Inc. helped prepare snowmobile enthusiasts for another year of track spinning and trail riding. The open house weekend made Loiselle's staff of mechanics and experts fully available to the public.

With one of the largest selections of new and used snowmobiles in eastern Ontario, the Loiselle staff needed every hand they could get as riders came in for everything from tune-ups to new equipment and licensing.

Riders looking for new vehicles were treated to a selection of more than 250 snowmobiles. Alain Leroux, a sales representative for Loiselle Sport Inc., took time out of his schedule to show off some of the newest toys in stock.

"For the more experienced rider, we just got the 2004 MX Z-REV," said Leroux. The latest result of the Ski-Doo/Bombardier marriage comes with the newly designed Rotax 800 HO engine.

The MX Z has been called the "meanest thing on two skis" by many snowmobile enthusiasts. The most notable changes to this year's MX Z model are its six-pound drop in frame weight, its overall strength gain, and improved rider handling.

For the rider making the jump to something a bit more powerful, but who's not quite ready for something as gifted as the MX Z, Ski-Doo has done some fine-tuning to the equally impressive GSX. This bad machine was designed with one thing in mind, satisfying the experienced rider.

Designers of the GSX made some mindful changes to the sled, incorporating the recently redesigned REV-X chassis. The reinvented ergonomics and centralized mass, along with an extremely lightweight design, bring control beyond compare to the GSX.

For the more experience rider who's looking for new and different features on their ride, the 2004 GSX design team has added the 800 HO engine, advanced rear shocks for a more enjoyable ride, and the convenience of electronic reverse. An electronic starter and additional storage were also added to this year's model, for when you're on that weekend getaway.

Another eye-catching addition to the 2004 product line is the new Ski-Doo Elite. The Ski-Doo/Bombardier designers went all out on this sled. The most noticeable change to the traditional seat design is the side-by-side passenger seat arrangement.

The unique seat design allows for better communication between passenger and driver, as well as a more comfortable ride. All the bells and whistles were added to this luxurious sled. The design team has added a roll-bar for added safety, enough room for luggage, and power outlets for a cell phone or global position system.

Leroux noted the fact that all of the 2004 models have been drastically improved in the areas of kilometre's per litre (KPL) and emission quality. Overall emission quality has been improved by 50 per cent and overall KPL has improved by as much as 25 per cent.

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*Loiselle Sport Inc. accountant Claudette Lavergne shows off one of the 150 new Ski-Doos in stock. The Embrun store also has an additional 100 used ATVs and snowmobiles for sale.* *Photo — Burgoone*


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For more information call Cory at 448-3458



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Saturday, February 7
This year our 'Girls On Snow' will be sponsoring Snowarama. We will be starting at the firehall in Morrisburg. With $25 or more in pledges, receive a FREE BREAKFAST
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# Trail Blazers prepare for 30th season

**by Mike Patterson**
**President**

MOUNTAIN — Well that time of year has come again to get the stakes, signs and brush trimmers and start laying the trails for another season of fun in the snow!

Again this year, like many in the past, the active club members are working hard staking out the great trails we Canadians are famous for. They will be at work in the coming months, in hopes of more snow than the year before. The predictions are favorable for all sledders, and like me, I am sure you can't wait to lay some tracks on some freshly fallen powder.

However, this can only be achieved with lots of organization as well as the hard work from volunteers who somehow juggle their busy lives to make this happen year after year. For that, I thank you!

In our club, as I am sure in many other clubs, volunteers are few and far between to take on the yearly tasks involved in making snowmobile clubs run smoothly. Unfortunately, these numbers seem to be dwindling as each year passes, leaving only the hard core snowmobilers to do the bulk of the work. As you all know, the only thing this excess workload brings on is burnout, in a big way!

The old saying, "Many hands make light work," still holds true in this day and age. When you have an average 25 to 30 members consistently chipping in and making things happen for the club each year out of roughly 200 members, burnout is bound to be at the top of the list of reasons why members want to throw in the towel. If you were to look at the number of members that most clubs have, this isn't a good average when you look at the duty of sharing the yearly workload in running a club.

Having the privilege of being the president for a second term of a club that is proudly celebrating its 30-year anniversary this year, I am looking at ways to ensure the club is around for another 30 years.

Obviously this can only be achieved through club members becoming active and helping out with the many activities, events, fundraisers and trail work as well as just being present at the club meetings to offer suggestions and a helping hand if needed. With the increase in our insurance for our trails, OFSC has seen a huge increase in its premium in the past few years. Of course this means fewer funds being available for clubs to assist in their trail projects due to the increase of funds going to insurance. This is why our club, as well as many other clubs, is looking at many other avenues for fundraising for club projects.

With the insurance increase in the past few years there is a need to stress the increased awareness needed to use the trails safely to prevent any further increases in years to come. The introduction of the Risk Management Program is a step in the right direction to help all clubs, as well as OFSC, try to lower the chance of their insurance rates going up in the future.

Our club is presently looking at ways to raise the funds each year that are needed to keep the clubhouse open, providing a place for all to stop in and warm their toes, while enjoying the company of fellow sledders. We are always open to suggestions toward fundraising that will help us all out in the end.

Currently the Mountain Trail Blazers are fortunate enough to have a group of Scouts at the clubhouse on Saturdays, serving up breakfast and lunch (weather permitting once the trails open) for anyone who wishes to stop by. This works well for two reasons. The clubhouse is open and warm, and it provides a great, place to stop for a rest during a daylong outing. Their food is great, and best of all, it's served with a smile in a comfortable environment at a very affordable price. This is a great experience for them. The Scouts are solely responsible for this weekly activity and are doing a great job.

For those members looking to help out and jump in with both feet, our regular club meetings are on the second and fourth Thursday of each month. This is your invitation to help build a great winter.

Again this year we are having our Sweetheart Rally in February. Watch for information on the date and starting time. For all you ladies looking to ditch the guys for a day — Girls on Snow is in full swing again this year. Also, a reminder for all members selling tickets for that sled raffle being drawn at the Bring on the Snow Dance (Nov. 22): please make sure all tickets and money are handed in soon to ensure everyone is in the draw!

Hope to see you on the trails this winter. We are due for a BIG snow year folks. Keep your fingers crossed.


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# District 1 still growing and improving



*There are 33 snowmobile clubs in eastern Ontario, all eager to welcome new riders to the 5,000 kilometres of marked trails in District 1. The office for District 1 is located in Morrisburg.*

MORRISBURG — "The state of snowmobiling in eastern Ontario is strong and vigorous," is the message from OFSC District 1 office manager John Boals.

He feels that although sledders had a bit of a slow start due to the light snowfall early last year, as a whole the season was a success. "It was thanks to the good old-fashioned winter weather in February and March with snow every few days and no thaws," says Boals.

"On the business side of things, we've had a very busy year as a district office, assisting the clubs and associations of District 1," he adds, explaining that the clubs and associations of the district saw some very impressive numbers on how and where those hard-earned trail permit dollars went.

The 2002-2003 season saw 41 large groomers use over $70,000 in fuel over 12,994 hours of machine time to groom more that 5,000 kilometres of club tails. The number of permits sold last season dipped somewhat from the previous year, and totalled 9,000. In spite of this, club volunteers kept the groomers running with no major breakdowns. Volunteers did extensive trail clearing and re-routing, and even built new bridges.

Trail permit dollars were invested in the future of the sport in District 1 via the purchase of new grooming equipment. Carleton Regional Snowmobile Club became home for a Bombardier BR180. Glengarry Snowmobile Club purchased a Massey tractor. And the West Carleton Snowmobile Association purchased a John Deere tractor unit. OFSC grants provided $105,465, while the clubs came up with $83,700 for these purchase.

The District 1 office itself granted $40,000 to eight different clubs for trail improvement projects. However, these clubs put in the notable amount of $161,000 of their own to carry out these endeavors. This is why it is so important to purchase your permit from the club where you ride.

Clearly, trail permit dollars are going a long way toward providing sledders with quality trail development, improvement, and maintenance. However, these accomplishments could not have been realized without the small corps of dedicated volunteers who put in over 80,000 hours of their own time last year performing these invaluable tasks.

Become an active member of a club is a great way to contribute. By doing this, you have a say in decisions on future improvements and developments in your area. You just might have a great idea that will benefit every snowmobiler in your club.

District 1 and all its snowmobilers extend their greatest appreciation to the landowners of eastern Ontario for their generosity in making their property

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Trail signing

# Trying times for snowmobilers

**by Bruce Robinson**
**Governor of District 1**

Hopefully we are only a handful of sleeps away from the start of the snowmobiling season. The preparations have begun. Trail brushing, sign preparation, groomer maintenance and regular meetings are all in full swing.

Don't forget to buy your trail permit early. Purchase them early and you will be eligible for prizes. Remember this price goes from $160 to $195 on Dec. 2.

The second major happening in snowmobiling is the change in the way clubs will sign the trails. The OFSC has done a great job at keeping us in business as our liability insurance went from $325,000 to $3.2 million in a span of two years. We were very close to not being able to find insurance and that would have shut the trail system down.

The OFSC cleared out every penny from its reserves and still had to increase the permit price to pay this whopping bill. But the federation took expert advice to meet the situation and came up with a new signing standard that meets the approval of the insurance company, the legal team, and the risk management committee.

As a result of many hours of volunteer time, new signage standards have been established and we started to see some of these last year. You will see more effects this year as the curve signs disappear. The chevrons will disappear by next year, and other signs such as caution, trail narrows, bridge ahead, and steep hill will all be replaced by the SLOW sign and the straight arrow.

This winter, when you see a SLOW sign you know that there is a significant situation ahead that you must slow down for. It could be a bump, a dip, a steep hill, or a sharp curve. If it is a curve that cannot be negotiated at 50 kilometres per hour, you will encounter an arrow that points out the direction of the curve, either left or right. The sign will not, however, attempt to describe the angle or severity of the curve.

All snowmobile trails will be signed for safe travel at 50 kilometres per hour. Any time you travel in excess of this speed you are exceeding the speed limit, breaking the law, and putting yourself at risk of injury or death. The OFSC has set up the system to defend itself against unreasonable lawsuits because the federation has to reduce its insurance payments in order to reduce its premiums. If we cannot do this, then be prepared for the permit to increase substantially, or the trails may close when no company will insure us.

It's not a good news story and our risk management is taking a large toll on our volunteers, but we have to keep up the good work we have started. I am not prepared to let the careless snowmobilers ruin my fun on our trails and I expect all of you who enjoy the sport to join me in our battle to resurrect snowmobiling as a safe family sport that we can enjoy and insure for a reasonable sum.

These are tying times for snowmobilers with the large increases in insurance on sleds, and permit increases every season. There was a 10 per cent drop in permits sold last season and there may be a further reduction this year. This has left many people without riding partners.

Your buddies have sold their sleds and turned to other recreations. If you are in this boat, then all the more reason to turn to your local club to meet other riders and participate in the events that they organize. After all, our clubs were formed many years ago for that specific reason, to enjoy our sport in a group setting and to provide organized social events. Snowmobiling is more fun when you have buddies to ride with.

That's all for now. RIDE SAFE. RIDE SOBER. RIDE OFTEN!

## District 1

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available for use each year. It would be difficult to imagine the state of the sport without their co-operation.

See you at the next club meeting or event, or better yet, on the trails.

**ABOUT DISTRICT 1**

The District 1 office of the OFSC is located in Morrisburg and responds to administrative issues and fieldwork inquires from the 33 snowmobile clubs and associations in eastern Ontario. The district consists of the area west to Napanee, north to Calabogie and east to the Ontario/Quebec border.

District 1 has over 5,000 kilometres of marked, groomed trails. The clubs in District 1 sell over 10,000 trail permits annually to families in eastern Ontario. The OFSC mission is to provide strong leadership and support to its member clubs.

It is the club members themselves who establish and maintain the quality of the snowmobile trails in an environmentally responsible manner for the safe enjoyment of organized snowmobilers.

For more information on OFSC District 1 and its mission, contact the office at 613-543-0374 or check online at district1ofsc.ca.



# Riverside gears up for better season in 2004

MORRISBURG — Wow! The season started late last year, but did we ever have great riding into February and March. We are now gearing up for an even better season in 2004. We groomed an impressive 482 hours last season, second only to the great year of sledding in 2000. Yes, it is snowmobiling season again and we love to ride on riverside trails.

The club and its small army of volunteers wish to thank everyone who bought an OFSC trail permit from us last year. This year's permits are now available. The prices for the 2003-2004 season are: $160 before Dec. 1 and $195 after Dec. 1.

Riverside permits are available at Jim's Performance Plus, Irwin's Supply, Thompson's Yamaha, Claude's, Upper Canada Motors (Barry McMillan), Hartley's Ultramar, Ingleside Lumber and the Riverfront Diner in Long Sault. You can also contact Barb Rabideau (543-3114) or Mark Shaver.

**COMING EVENTS**

There are a number of coming events to note. The Children's Christmas Party is scheduled for Dec. 13. There is a change this year as we are starting the sleigh ride at 5 pm and Santa will arrive after.

As always, the club is open for breakfast on Sundays, starting Jan. 4. It will be weather permitting and only after the trails are opened and groomed. Wing night dates are Jan. 4, Feb. 6, and March 5. The wiener roast will be held from 1 to 3 pm on Feb. 15 at Riverside Bridge E104, north of Long Sault. All proceeds will go to the Riverside Warden Program.

The snowmobile rally date is Jan. 24. The CHEO Ice Drags will be held Feb. 1. And the District Ride is on Feb. 21. The club is proud to report that last year we had the "best ever" ice drags, according to vice-president Terry Veinotte. We presented CHEO with a cheque for $4,000 and also contributed $2,000 to Winchester District Memorial Hospital's Renewing the Vision Campaign.

Mark your calendar with the club general meetings to be held the first Wednesday of each month. They will start at 8 pm and will be held at the Riverside Clubhouse. Elections for the executive positions for the new season will be held on Dec. 3, starting at 8 pm. Please step up to the plate and put your name forward to become an active member in the club.

**NO VOLUNTEERS, NO TRAILS**

We are in need of trail wardens. Please come out and be an ambassador for the club. You only need to volunteer a few hours a season and you get to wear a wonderful warden jacket that we supply. Please call Terry Veinotte, our club instructor, for more information at 543-3753 (work).

The trail work has started and we see no major changes for trail locations for this coming season. Keep in mind when you are sledding that there may be new trail signs. You will see more slow signs and directional arrows, so ride safe and respect the landowners' property. Stay on the marked OFSC trails. Trail condition reports will be available online at www.district1ofsc.ca.

The Riverside Club extends a warm welcome to all snowmobilers. Come and see for yourself what we have to offer, including great trails and a great clubhouse. You are sure to have lots of fun. Make sure to try some of Barbie's famous wings.

Ride safe, ride sober, and happy snowmobiling. See you on the trails.

Grenville Snowmobile Association

# Visit the clubhouse

PRESCOTT — Mel Shannon is the new president of the Grenville Snowmobile Association. The clubhouse is located north of Prescott on the Charleville Road. It is just 20 minutes north of the Prescott/Ogdensburg International Bridge.

The club has a 10-year-old log clubhouse on the main trail system. The clubhouse is on a paved road and has full kitchen facilities for 120 people. The clubhouse is open Saturdays and Sundays from 9 am to 5 pm for breakfasts and light lunches. There is a large parking lot with lots of space for trailers.

Shannon welcomes everyone to stop by and enjoy the food and approximately 1,000 kilometres of groomed trails. The Grenville club is part of the larger Leeds and Grenville Snowmobile Association (LGSA).

The LGSA is an association of five eastern Ontario snowmobile clubs, including the Grenville Snowmobile Association, the Kemptville Snowmobile Klub, the Athens and District Snowmobile Club, the Elizabethtown Snowmobile Club, and the Rideau Ridge Riders Snowmobile Club.

To date, the LGSA has over 1,200 members. The association also produces a map of the counties of Leeds and Grenville. Association trails are connected to the rest of the Ontario system. If you would like more information, contact Shannon at 613-925-5510.

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## TRAIL SIGNS

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs

The new signage approach continues to remind riders that snowmobiling is an inherently risky activity that each individual chooses to participate in of their own free will and at their sole risk. It also provides ongoing notice to riders of their personal responsibility to choose to ride the OFSC trail in a safe, prudent and lawful manner. Any signage provided by the OFSC for the convenience of snowmobilers is never a substitute for rider knowledge, choice or vigilance. The law says that snowmobiles must stop at all road crossings.

Snowmobile clubs and volunteers are under no legal obligation to place any signs on snowmobile trails, but do so as a courtesy and convenience, to provide visual assistance for riders who are operating their sleds within the law and with care and control.

The following are some of the signs riders may see on trails and their meaning:

***Color Theme***

**RED - Significant Warning. Failure to obey may result in personal injury or death.**




**YELLOW - Back off the throttle and prepare to take corrective action.**




## THANKS TO OUR LANDOWNERS

**Throughout our trail system, generous landowners allow the winter use of their property for the enjoyment of snowmobiling. This land use privilege is crucial to the existence of the snowmobile trails which provide many social, recreational and economic benefits to our entire community. Without the continuing co-operation of these unselfish friends of snowmobiling, the quality of winter life throughout our area would be significantly diminished.**

**We ask everyone in our community, but especially snowmobilers and those who benefit most directly from snowmobile trails, to say a special thanks to our landowners for the use of their property again this season.**



***This ad sponsored by Riverside Snowmobile Club***

The Ontario Federation of Snowmobile Clubs

*Thank you from*
**All the OFSC Clubs and Volunteers in Ontario**

## *Mountain Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club*

P.O. Box 260
Mountain, Ontario
K0E 1S0

# NOTICE OF TRAIL CLOSURE

The Mountain Trail Blazers Snowmobile Club and the South Dundas Snowmobile Club would like to let fellow snowmobilers know that effective immediately the following trails will no longer exist:

- Trails number 9 and 10 on this year's NVSA trail map are closed due to re-routing that has taken place since the closure of access under Hwy. 416 just north of Johnstown.
- This affects the old trail number 9 that runs from where NVSA trail meets Kemptville trails at the river, running south about 10 kilometres to meet with trail number 10 (E105).
- As well, trail number 10 (E105 trail) running from the old Mainsville-Pittston club house and running west towards Hwy. 416.

With the above closures taking place, the E105 will be as follows: New E105 trail will now run from the Kemptville trails at the river and join with NVSA trail number 8. From here it will follow east to meet up with trail number 13, and follow south towards Glen Stewart and join up with trail number 12 continuing south to join up with the existing E105 (trail number 11).