



MEDIA RELEASE

The Head of the Welland Regatta Receives Backing from the Province of Ontario



For Immediate Release – Monday, March 31, 2008

Welland – The South Niagara Rowing Club (SNRC) in partnership with the Welland Recreational Canal Corp (WRCC) is thrilled to announce the Province of Ontario's Ministry of Tourism has contributed \$63,375 to the Head of the Welland ~ Five Bridges Fall Classic. Through the Celebrate Ontario 2008 Funding Program, the Head of the Welland will receive monies to offset purchases of much needed docks, safety vessels and marketing efforts that extend into the US rowing community.

Niagara MPP Kim Craitor was very pleased to pass the news on to SNRC President Bill Sheldon who was elated with the successful application. "The Head of the Welland Regatta, with the partnership of the WRCC and the financial support of our provincial government, is poised to make a huge entry into the US Rowing Market, bolster our Canadian participation and move to include a higher number of masters rowers and university clubs", suggested Mr. Sheldon.

Peter Fonseca, Minister of Tourism, expressed that the McGuinty Government has a clear understanding of what events mean to Ontario's prosperity. In a letter from the Minister's Office, Mr. Fonseca goes on to say, "this contribution reflects our government's commitment... in your community and throughout Ontario."

The idea to expand the event into more of a festival, change the course to take full advantage of all five bridges in the City, and expand marketing efforts to include the US Rowing Market was driven by the WRCC's Business & Operations Manager, Stephen Fischer. "After witnessing the economic spin-off and sheer size of the Head of the Charles, it was abundantly clear that the Welland Recreational Waterway provides an equally as exciting course, the SNRC provides a superb level of experience in regatta delivery, and together as a team we could develop the Head of the Welland into the single largest Canadian-based head race in the nation," suggested Mr. Fischer.

"The Board of the WRCC is committed to efforts that deliver on our Sport Tourism objectives. The combination of strengths, plan for delivery, and the application itself was well conceived and put together. The Capital improvements slated for the North Course of the Welland International Flatwater Centre, approved by Council, will now serve this fantastic event in addition to a full schedule of events for the 2008 racing season" stated Bob Mahler, WRCC Chair.

"The enhancements are a necessary step to handle greater numbers of participants to the event. We are working to improve on all areas of the regatta from atmosphere to results posting using the Finish Lynx Timing System. This funding from the Province and the partnership with the WRCC allows us to upgrade the entire Head of the Welland experience," stated Scott Fleming, SNRC General Manager.

With its new name, new course, new partnership and provincial funding, the Head of the Welland ~ Five Bridges Fall Classic, taking place on September 27, 2008, through the heart of the City of Welland, is already an instant winner.

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