

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
April 30, 2010

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Chautauqua County Executive Calls Past Winter's Snowmobile Season a Success

Mayville: -- With the final numbers coming in, Chautauqua County Executive Gregory J. Edwards has hailed the County's most recent snowmobile season a major triumph.

"I am pleased to report that thousands of people from Chautauqua County, the surrounding region and as far away as California used our over 450 miles of snowmobile trails that are maintained here locally," Edwards proclaimed. "We truly enjoyed a great season."

Paul Weatherlow, Secretary of the Snowmobile Clubs of Chautauqua County, agreed with Edwards that the 2009-2010 snowmobile season was a huge success.

"We had a great winter," Weatherlow said. "Missing from the typical weather was the normal meltdown during the season. We only had one weekend in January where warmer temperatures and some rain forced cancellation of our weekend events."

Weatherlow said the official County snowfall was just about the normal average with 223" (about 19') falling in Mayville. He stated that the combined membership from the Chautauqua County Snowmobile clubs from the previous season totaled 3,380 Family Memberships and over 5,000 snowmobiles.

"Of the 3,380 Family Memberships, 889 were from Pennsylvania, 545 were from Ohio, and more from other states such as California, New Jersey, North Carolina, Texas, West Virginia, etc.," Weatherlow said. "Overall, the clubs had a double digit increase in Family Memberships."

Edwards also received a financial report from County Clerk Sandra Sopak on the number of people who registered their snowmobiles at the Department of Motor Vehicles.

"Sopak reported to me that they had over 5,000 total snowmobile registrations," Edwards said. "That was an increase of over 9% from last winter."

Edwards agreed with Sopak's assessment that the large amount of money these snowmobilers spent in the County's numerous restaurants, bars and stores was a significant investment in the local economy.

This season a Snowmobile Economic Impact Survey was being led by the Chautauqua County Visitors Bureau (CCVB). Thirty survey boxes were placed in various businesses around the county, and the survey results are currently being tallied. It has been estimated that snowmobilers contribute millions of dollars to the local economy each year, and the Snowmobile Economic Impact Survey is looking to solidify the exact totals.

Weatherlow and Edwards both praised the local clubs for all they did to prepare for this past season, especially after the floods of 2009. Over 2,000 hours of 100% all-volunteer labor was expended on the trails' maintenance before the trails could open.

"Northern Chautauqua County took a terrible beating from the flooding of some of the creeks and streams," Weatherlow said. "The Cherry Creek Sno-Goers had to replace 17 separate bridges which had been damaged or totally washed away."

Edwards said the largest event held this past season was the All Club Ride-In in February.

"It was held at the Chautauqua County Fireman's Grounds in Stockton. Over 700 snowmobilers were expected, but it was estimated that the actual attendance was closer to 1,000 snowmobilers!"

Already looking ahead to the 2010-2011 snowmobile season, Weatherlow said that they plan to work to make improvements to the trails, upgrade some of their equipment and expend a total of somewhere between 4,000 and 5,000 hours of volunteer labor before, during, and after the snowmobiling season.

"I want to thank everyone who rolled up their sleeves to help or came out to ride during the 2009-2010 snowmobile season," Edwards concluded. "I can only hope that the 2010-2011 will be yet another great season for Chautauqua County."

For more information on snowmobiling in Chautauqua County, please visit www.sledchautauqua.com. It is under development and will lead you to all five individual club websites.

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