

Ice still too thin, marine unit warns

It may seem cold enough outside to freeze the lakes and streams, but it is not.

The York Regional Police Marine Unit is reminding everyone of the importance of staying safe this winter in any outdoor activity you participate in, which means staying off all open bodies of water until they are completely frozen over.

People who snowmobile and ice fish are reminded conditions are still too dangerous to be out on the ice and you are risking your life by even walking on newly-formed portions of ice.

York Regional Police remind the public snowmobiling and ice-fishing are inherently risky activities occurring in an uncontrolled and unpredictable natural setting.

If you make smart, educated choices on safety, accidents can be prevented.

For more information and safety tips, contact Sgt. Jeff Broughton or any member of the York Regional Police Marine Unit at 1-866-876-5423, ext 7321.

— Sandra Bolan

COMING UP

A look ahead in Whitchurch-Stouffville

EDITOR'S PICK



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

From left, Paul Houston, Cliff Dunkfeld and Russ Holden of the Stouffville Lions Club along with Bob the Belgian at Lionel's Pony Farm, get set for the 14th annual Mayor's New Year Celebration at Memorial Park Dec 31, where horse-drawn wagon rides will be available weather permitting. The Lions Club and volunteer firefighters have played key roles in the event over the years.

New Year's party free family fun

BY SANDRA BOLAN
Staff Writer

Family-friendly celebrations, complete with a bonfire, hotdogs, hot chocolate, ice skating and sleigh rides, will once again kick off this year's New Year's Eve celebrations in Stouffville.

For the past 15 years, Whitchurch-Stouffville's mayor has been hosting the alcohol-free event in Memorial Park.

"I wanted to keep the families together and provide some enter-

tainment for the kids before midnight," Mr. Emmerson said, noting the event finishes up early enough that the adults can still hit local private parties without missing anything.

Since the event's inception, everything, including the hotdogs and hot chocolate, has been free, thanks to the Lions Club of Stouffville and the Whitchurch-Stouffville volunteer firefighters, along with the many other local businesses who Mr. Emmerson

hits up for an annual \$250 contribution. The cost of the evening is about \$8,000 to \$10,000, all of which is covered by the business donations.

The event also hasn't changed much over the years. "I asked for suggestions last year, but nothing came forward, so we just continued forward," he said.

The New Year's Eve celebration takes place at Memorial Park and gets under way at 6:30 p.m. Fireworks start at about 8:45 p.m.

Continuing with the family-friendly New Year's celebrations, the mayor will once again host a levy at the Stouffville arena on Jan. 1, with a free skate and hot chocolate. The event takes place from 1 to 3 p.m.

"I always thought the family was important to the community and I'd like to provide outings for them at no cost," Mr. Emmerson said.

"We got a really good turnout last year and hopefully it will grow."



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