

## Counting moose numbers in Bancroft



by KRISTENA SCHUTT-MOORE

Staff

A lot of helicopters have been flying overhead in Bancroft and the surrounding area lately. The majority of them are involved in a Ministry of Northern Development, Mines, Natural Resources and Forestry program called the Moose Aerial Inventory. From Friday, Jan. 28 to Tuesday, Feb. 15, three helicopters and their crews completed surveys to help monitor moose populations. Using Bancroft Community Airport as its base of operations and a central location, the three teams covered Wildlife Management Units 57, 58, 60, 61, 62, and 63. These areas include Bancroft, Tweed, Madoc, Marmora and Eganville. The survey information on the number of moose in an area, their age and sex are used to make informed decisions on moose and habitat management in the coming years including setting the numbers of moose tags available for hunters in the annual moose tag allocation process.

The surveys are conducted across Ontario between mid-December and February, where MNDMNR staff use the aircraft to look for moose and their tracks in fresh, deep snow. This year the conditions were perfect. Surveys are flown: between Dec. 1 and mid-February, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. within 12 to 72 hours of a fresh snowfall (at least 30 cm) to better see moose or their tracks when the weather is colder than -5C, when moose are more likely to be active at about 140 metres above ground level, at close to 145 km/hour when the wind is less than 20 km/hour and the sky provides adequate visibility. Lynn Davis, president of the Bancroft Flying Club, which owns and operates the Bancroft Community Airport, was extremely pleased that the MNDMNR continue to use the airport as their base of operations for the survey. The BFC is a non profit organization with a mandate to promote aviation and air transportation in the region. The airport helipad is not only used by the MNDMNR, but OPP rescue services, Ornge Air Ambulance, Hydro One and the Armed Forces. While at the airport the helicopters refuel and the fuel sales assist in the maintenance of the airport. It is expected that the data from the surveys taken in the Bancroft area will be finalized and available in early April.