

## Snow Skimmers honoured in Maynooth



Joey Shulman of the Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association presents a token of appreciation to Maple Leaf Snow Skimmers club president Dewey Jordan and other club members for their work developing hundreds of kilometres of snowmobile trails for the area and enhancing the local economy. SARAH VANCE Special to This Week

### By Sarah Vance

Exemplary projects and the people who make them possible were themes at the local Citizen of the Year celebration in Maynooth, on Sunday, Jan. 24.

It was a full house at the Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association's annual potluck, which saw the Maple Leaf Snow Skimmers recognized for their many years of action.

"The Snow Skimmers are instrumental in generating \$23 million of business in the local area," said Joey Shulman, who presented a certificate of appreciation on behalf of the business association. "2.5 million of these funds are filtered into Bancroft and Hastings Highlands."

The Snow Skimmers were established in 1974, when founding members Con Dillabough and Glen Jones would haul old bed springs behind all-terrains so that people could ride the logging trails.

Today, just 50 years later, the organization boasts an 11 member executive, 12 trained groomer operators, and 20 certified trail wardens who facilitate activities involving more than 500 volunteers.

The club has also acquired four industrial groomers costing \$180,000 each, while also managing to fund an impressive maintenance and storage facility.

This is in addition to the daily round-the-clock task of actually grooming 300 km of trails, setting out signage, addressing problems and being outspoken environmental stewards.

The Snow Skimmers are connected to the provincial ministries of Tourism, Natural Resources, and Transportation. Their projects also see them working with law enforcement, local councils, and trails associations.

"The trails would not exist without the work of the Maple Leaf Snow Skimmers," said Shulman, comparing the organization to an essential service. "They are dedicated volunteers giving up their evenings and weekends to provide safe trails for all the riders who use the system."

Dewey Jordan, president of the Snow Skimmers, has been a long-time advocate of cutting more connecting trails from the railway line into town centres. Over the years he has presented different models of how this could happen and showing how this would increase seasonal traffic into the downtown core.

"The Business Association supports building connecting trails into Maynooth, and we are working towards that goal," said Carol

Russell, speaking about the Snow Skimmers projects.

'Landowners continue to be a crucial link to all trails throughout the province,' said Dewey Jordan. 'Respect the many properties, stay on the trails and say 'Thanks' when given the opportunity.' As the Snow Skimmers were applauded, Carla and Bob Van Balen Walter, along with Joey Shulman and Carol Russell, provided insights into projects being accomplished by the Maynooth and Hastings Highlands Business Association.

There have been infrastructure gains, including the acquisition of recycling bins for placement in front of the Hastings Highlands Centre, as well as year round public washrooms.

Marketing and advertising goals have also been realized. The association hopes to increase its membership to 100 this year.

'We have had a superb new business directory and 5000 copies have been printed,' said Carol Russell. 'People are beginning to know us and they are also coming to see us.'

Dewey Jordan insists that he is going to retire from the Snow Skimmers this year, but as he addressed the crowd gathered to honor the work of this vital organization, I wasn't at all convinced.