

The committee launched its public awareness campaign on Dec. 1 after research contracted to SMARTRISK that included focus groups and surveys of residents and visitors to the area.

The Drive Safe, Ride Safe campaign includes posters, billboards, print and radio ads. The key messages are: 1. Drinking and driving recreational vehicles is against the law; know the laws; 2. Driving or riding recreational vehicles while impaired is as serious and risky as driving a car while impaired; understand the consequences; and 3. Impairment starts with the first drink.

For example, a series of light-hearted posters have been created with an underlying serious message, featuring photos and headlines such as "ATV for sale; ridden once; trailer included; can't afford insurance; caught drinking and ATVing." Then the slogan, "Break the Law...Pay the Price."

For more information on the campaign, contact Velma Shewfelt at 705-721-7330, ext. 7527 or velma.shewfelt@smdhu.org.

OIPC 2007 abstract deadline is Feb. 7

The Ontario Injury Prevention Conference 2007 theme is *Preserving Our People: Strategies Designed for Life*. The June 3-5 conference will be held in

Thunder Bay, the first ever OIPC to be hosted in a northern Ontario community. Both unintentional and intentional injury within the private and public sectors will be highlighted.

Submit your abstracts by Feb. 7 for oral, poster or workshop presentations. For more information, see www.oipc.org or contact Stephanie Ash at Firedog Communications, 807-767-4443.

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 Ontario Injury Prevention Resource Centre

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Let us know what you think about OSN

The Ontario Stakeholders News needs your help! We are asking subscribers to evaluate OSN. Your input will help us continue to provide a useful and interesting publication to Ontario injury prevention stakeholders. Please take the 5-minute survey at www.smart-riskresearch.ca. If you have no Internet access or prefer to fill in a hard copy, e-mail osn@smartrisk.ca or call 416-977-7350. We will fax you a survey which you can complete and fax back. Participants will be entered in a draw for a free registration to OIPC 2007.

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Popular ladder story offers media lessons

Why does the media run with one story and ignore another? It may often seem like a crapshoot, but that's not necessarily so.

In November, the Canadian Institute for Health Information released a statistical report on ladder injuries in Ontario – also the peak month for these injuries. The story got wide play, including in national newspapers and on TV. Canadian Press wrote a story complete with sidebar and at least 37 of its subscribing newspapers across Canada ran it.

What did this story have going for it? Spokesperson Margaret Keresteci was quotable and offered context. Even better, she had been injured on a ladder herself! CIHI listed Phil Groff of SMARTRISK for extra "expert" comment and he was ready with safety tips. Interest for a lot of readers/viewers – most people own and sometimes use a ladder. Unexpected – it's a risk many people have not considered. Seasonal, timely, lending itself to funny headlines about fall. Only a couple key messages – people get hurt on ladders; here's how not to. CIHI offered clear numbers and well-prepared interviewees. Never underestimate the value of making it easy for reporters to cover your story!

"Be realistic...not an ATV statistic" now underway

Be Realistic...Not a Statistic. That's the message behind a social marketing campaign promoting safe all-terrain vehicle riding now underway in Central Hastings in Eastern Ontario.

As ATVs become increasingly popular, more injuries and deaths result and most are preventable. Because speed, alcohol, inexperience, non-use of helmets and improper apparel are the most common factors in ATV-related injuries, the campaign focuses on a few key messages: Ride Sober – no alcohol or drugs. Slow Down. Wear a Helmet. Wear the Gear. Get Trained and Ride with Others. The campaign is aimed at males 21-44 years, with a secondary target group of teenagers.

Central Hastings is a popular area for ATV riding. It has a beautiful trail system, the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance, which has been featured on Dirt Trax television and is an ATV Ontario site. In addition, ATV bylaws have been passed in the municipalities of Central Hastings which allow ATVs on all roads for which the municipalities are responsible. (ATVs are not allowed on Provincial Highways 37 and 62 and 7).

With these factors in mind, the next logical step was to provide safety education and awareness. The campaign takes a proactive, preventive approach: ATV riding involves risks but people can choose to take smart risks. The campaign was officially launched in fall 2005 and continues to evolve and expand.

The professionally designed campaign materials include posters in local businesses such as ATV dealers and other businesses that ATV riders frequent; newspaper inserts; community displays; radio public service announcements and a large six-foot mall poster.

"Trail Paks" are distributed by Central Hastings OPP officers to ATV riders and snowmobilers stopped along the trails. The Paks contain information on snowmobile and ATV safety, impaired driving, ice conditions and trail rules and regulations. Recipients of the Paks have a chance to win an approved helmet. The Trail Paks help to reinforce safe, sober and smart riding on the trails.

Future campaign plans include producing billboards and possibly expanding to include a component to address ATV injuries in young children. The campaign runs year round, with extra promotion occurring at certain times of the year,

such as spring and fall hunting seasons, when ATVs are especially in use.

Partners in the campaign include Central Hastings OPP, Central Hastings Community Policing Advisory Committee, Hastings and Prince Edward Counties Health Unit, Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance and MADD Quinte Chapter. Campaign partners would be pleased to share campaign materials with other health units and OPP detachments. The materials can be reproduced if the original partners are acknowledged.

For information, contact public health nurse Kerri Jianopoulos at 613-966-5513 ext. 229 or kjianopoulos@hpechu.on.ca or Staff Sergeant Peter Valiquette, Detachment Commander, Central Hastings OPP at 613-473-4234 or peter.valiquette@jus.gov.on.ca

Campaign aims to cut impaired recreation

North Simcoe is also taking action to reduce the risk of injury on ATVs, along with snowmobiles and boats. The Safe and Sober Awareness Committee of North Simcoe is aiming to reduce impaired driving on recreational vehicles in their popular tourist destination.