



Media Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Niagara IPM organizing committee kick off the commemorative bench sponsorship programme

The IPM bench program is truly a collaborative project giving sponsors a unique way to participate and remember the IPM legacy for years to come

NIAGARA REGION, Ontario (April 28, 2025) – The International Plowing Match & Rural Expo (IPM) Local Committee is proud to launch the Bench Sponsorship Project, a unique opportunity for individuals and businesses to support the IPM which is coming to Niagara this fall.

Commemorative benches have evolved into somewhat of a tradition in recent years at the IPM and are the perfect project to provide sponsorship and legacies opportunities while providing comfort for Match visitors. During the week of the Match the benches will be scattered throughout the IPM Tented City to provide a comfortable spot for visitors to sit and relax.

The Bench Sponsorship Project is a unique opportunity, highlighting and celebrating the talents and skill development of local youth, with high school students from across the Niagara Region actively involved in designing and building the commemorative benches while gaining the valuable hands-on experience in carpentry and woodworking. Participating schools include West Niagara Secondary School (Town of Lincoln), Heritage Christian School (Town of Lincoln), and A.N. Myer Secondary School (Niagara Falls).

“This is an incredible learning opportunity for students” said Steve Ecker, IPM Bench Sponsorship Project Coordinator. “They get to work on a real-world project, apply their skills and contribute to an event that brings thousands of people together. Knowing their work will be used and appreciated by visitors makes it even more meaningful,” he said.

A project of this scale would not be possible without the generosity of local businesses and Smithville Home Hardware has stepped up in a big way, donating all of the building materials for this project ensuring that students have everything they need to create high-quality benches for the event.

“Giving back to the community is at the heart of what we do,” said Mike Keizer, Smithville Home Hardware owner. “We are proud to support this initiative that not only benefits the IPM but also gives students hands-on experience in woodworking and craftsmanship.”

Each bench is built to be sturdy and functional, providing much-needed seating throughout the event grounds and boasting a plaque affixed to the back of the bench recognizing the name of the residents or businesses who sponsored the individual bench.

Benches are available for purchase, \$500 each and at the conclusion of the Match sponsors get to keep the benches. Over the years many of the IPM benches have found a place of honour in the sponsor’s backyard or place of business, with some sponsors even choosing to donate them to community facilities where they can be enjoyed by the public for many years to come.

For information on the Bench Sponsorship please visit www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2025/sponsor-a-bench/ or contact Steve Ecker, IPM Bench Sponsorship Project Coordinator at steveecker55@gmail.com.

The IPM is a long-standing tradition that brings together rural and urban communities, celebrating agriculture, heritage and innovation. Niagara last hosted the Match in 1926 and almost 100 years later it is making a return. The 2025 event will take place in West Niagara, Niagara Region from September 16th through 20th and is expected to draw over 60,000 visitors. Be sure to mark your calendars and plan to attend.

To find out how you can get involved as a volunteer, sponsor or exhibitor be sure to visit the website at www.plowingmatch.org/IPM2025.

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Instagram: 2025IPM

Photo, attached. Cutline included.

Posing with the first two benches built for the 2025 IPM are (left to right) Andrew Bok, Heritage Christian School (HCS) student; Brian Bruinekool, HCS construction and woodworking teacher; Nicholas Menger, HCS student; Mike Keizer, owner of the Smithville Home Hardware Building Centre; Renate McGillivray, 2025 IPM chair; Matt West, West Niagara Secondary School technology teacher; Roger Vaughan, volunteer bench builder; and Steve Ecker, IPM Bench Sponsorship Project coordinator.

To access the IPM 2025 Media Release archives, visit: <https://www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2025/about-us/media-centre/>.

Quick Facts

- The International Plowing Match and Rural Expo is held in a different Ontario community each year, highlighting the many great things the area has to offer and attracting thousands of visitors from across the province, throughout Canada, the United States and beyond;
- Tourism industry figures put the economic impact of the IPM at about \$25 million annually (not including the long-term benefits this exposure provides to communities) and it spurs tourism in the surrounding area for years to come; and
- Profits generated by the IPM are donated to groups and organizations within the host communities; and
- The VIP Plowing on Opening Day is always a fan favourite as we watch provincial party leaders try their hand at plowing driving tractors of the appropriate party colour.

Quick Links

- Visitor Information: <https://www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2025/visitor-info/>
- Volunteer Information: <https://www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2025/get-involved/become-a-volunteer/>

About

The International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM)

The International Plowing Match and Rural Expo (IPM) 2025 will take place from September 16 to September 20 at the West Niagara Fairgrounds and neighbouring farms in Grassie, part of the West Lincoln Township in the Regional Municipality of Niagara, Ontario. The IPM is a five-day celebration of agriculture and rural living. There will be plowing competitions, a range of activities for people of all ages, numerous opportunities to learn about agriculture, daily live entertainment in multiple Match venues, hundreds of vendors and exhibits, a wide variety of food, an RV park and more. For more information: www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2025/.

The Ontario Plowmen's Association (OPA)

The Ontario Plowmen's Association is the parent host of the International Plowing Match. Each year the OPA partners with a community to organize and host the International Plowing Match and Rural Expo. For more information please visit www.plowingmatch.org.

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