



Tuesday, November 22, 2005

For Immediate Release

Operation Winter Blitz promotes winter road safety

Snow plow challenge highlights safe driving campaign

NEWMARKET – Members of York Regional Council and local area councillors from across York Region joined members of the York Region Traffic Safety Strategy Committee (YRTSSC) at the Silver City Cinemas in East Gwillimbury today to promote safe driving on winter roads at the second annual Operation Winter Blitz.

Participants learned from various transportation experts from York Region, York Regional Police and The Miller Group about how to prepare for inclement weather and the often unpredictable road conditions encountered during the winter months.

“York Region continues to be an active participant in promoting road safety with our partners”, said York Regional Chair and CEO Bill Fisch. “Operation Winter Blitz helps promote the important message of road safety out to our motorists. Many traffic accidents occur during wet and slippery winter conditions, but with preparation and a little extra caution, accidents can be avoided.”

“Traffic enforcement is a key element in keeping our roads safe, but without public education we are fighting an uphill battle”, said York Regional Police Chief Armand La Barge. “Operation Winter Blitz presents us with a tremendous opportunity to promote traffic safety to the public, especially in advance of the holidays when vigilance on our roads is increasingly important.”

The second annual Operation Winter Blitz follows last year’s highly successful launch that included a public service announcement campaign throughout December and January. This year’s campaign featured a number of different vehicles, with information on road awareness and modifying driving for road conditions.

Members of the media learned first-hand how difficult winter driving can be, by getting behind the wheel of a snow plow and trying to navigate a pre-set course.

“We cannot stress safety enough when it comes to winter driving throughout our Region,” said East Gwillimbury Mayor James Young. “York Region is such a large community, it can be clear in Richmond Hill, raining in Aurora and snowing in East Gwillimbury. With this level of unpredictability, it is imperative to slow down in the winter and modify driving habits appropriately.”

“It is a real eye-opener for people when they see how difficult it is to drive a large vehicle during adverse winter conditions,” said Doug Milne, a representative of The Miller Group who spoke about awareness around large vehicles, including the company’s waste management trucks. “Winterizing your own vehicle and being aware of weather conditions and other drivers are key factors to consider when safely navigating icy winter streets.”

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The YRTSSC was formed as a municipal partnership with members of the private sector to promote driver safety through public education, police enforcement and road engineering. The YRTSSC runs a series of initiatives throughout the year as part of its Save-a-Life program.

Save-a-Life focuses on education through community-based workshops, highly visible police enforcement campaigns and a commitment to identifying and improving the safety potential of Regional roadways. For more information on Operation Winter Blitz, or the Save-a-Life program please visit www.yorkregionsavealife.com

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