

Spruce Lake bridge open for business



By Nate Smelle

On the surprisingly mosquito-free morning of Friday, May 29 a crowd of 20 assembled at the new Spruce Lake bridge to celebrate its official opening. Bringing together seven partners to help see it through to completion, the new bridge provides a safe and accessible access point to un-harvested forestry lands as well as eastern Ontario designated recreational trails. In the first year the new bridge, which is located at the end of Upper Turriff Road in L'Amable, is projected that 400 to 500 loads will cross the structure.

Bancroft's Mayor Bernice Jenkins expressed her gratitude to the long list of community partners who came together to make this project happen.

"I am proud of the group and the size of the group that came together to make this happen," said Jenkins.

"With everyone standing here today, each and everyone of you played a crucial role in seeing this project through. It shows me that we can move forward."

The Bancroft Area Forest Industry Association (BAFIA) played an integral role in the Removal and Replacement of the Spruce Lake Trail Bridge. BAFIA is an incorporated group of forestry companies ranging from loggers, sawmill operators, foresters, forest technicians, woodlot owners and managers who operate on both crown and private land. The project fits well with the organization's goals to promote long term sustainability and growth of the forest industry in the Bancroft area, said BAFIA president, Larry McTaggart.

Also in attendance was Prince Edward-Hastings MP Daryl Kramp. Agreeing with McTaggart, he says the bridge will also benefit the tourism industry by providing better access to ATV and snowmobile trails throughout the area.

"This is the kind of project that feels good because it was a team effort made it happen," said Kramp.

"It's hard to be competitive in today's world and we understand the pressures that the logging industry is facing on a consistent basis. We recognize that the logging industry and tourism and recreation play huge role in North Hastings."

Kramp announced that the Spruce Lake Bridge project would be receiving an investment of \$50,000 through the Community Futures Development Corporation of North & Central Hastings and South Algonquin. The total value of the project was approximately \$110,000. Funding for the project was received from: the Eastern Ontario Trails Alliance, Town of Bancroft, Freymond Lumber, Freymond Logging, Jan Woodlands, Bancroft Fish & Game Club, and the Rally of the Tall Pines.

"There is a lot of gains here and no losses," Kramp said.

"There's nothing that this interferes with in a negative capacity. It's a win-win for everybody."