

International Plowing Match & Rural Expo gives preview of what's to come

By Brian Lockhart

It is going to be one great big party with lots of good competition and entertainment when the International Plowing Match & Rural Expo gets underway in Amaranth on Tuesday, September 19.

The event will run through to Saturday, September 23, and is expected to receive close to 80,000 visitors.

Some of those visitors will make it a day trip, while others will stay for the entire event and live in the RV park that is currently under construction.

Event organizers hosted a media day on Friday, September 8, to invite the media and dignitaries to preview the site and see all the work being done to make the event's several hundred-acre venue ready for all the people and plowing events to come.

The work being done is very impressive, with hundreds of utility poles erected through Tent City and the RV park to accommodate the electricity flowing into the park and a system designed to supply fresh water. The Tent City is just as it sounds, with tents of various sizes on the grounds. Some are very large and accommodate hundreds of people.

This is the 104th edition of the International Plowing Match and the first time it is being held in Dufferin County.

"This is the first time the Plowing Match & Rural Expo will be held in Dufferin County and we couldn't be prouder as a County and community," said Dufferin County Warden Wade Mills during opening remarks. "As a largely rural county with rich agricultural routes, we are excited to welcome the expected 70,000 attendees. I would like to thank everyone involved in the planning and execution of this beloved tradition. We look forward to celebrating agriculture and rural living at the IPM and connecting with our local residents and those that come to visit."

Held in Amaranth, local farmers donated the land for use during the Plowing Match.

Amaranth Mayor Chris Gerrits thanked town staff for their effort in helping with the event.

"The Township of Amaranth last published a history book in the early 80s and I have confidence that when we update that history book, there will be a whole chapter on this event," Mayor Gerrits said.

When it gets underway, the Plowing Match is expected to provide an economic boost to the region when the thousands of visitors arrive through spending at local establishments, restaurants, accommodations and other costs associated with staying out of town.