



## MEDIA RELEASE

### Head of the Welland ~ Five Bridges Fall Classic

#### For Immediate Release – Sept 25, 2008

Welland – The fourth running of the Head of the Welland regatta on Saturday Sept 27th, 2008 is really like the first time. The regatta received a boost from the Ontario Ministry of Tourism and the Welland Recreational Canal Corp (WRCC) that has allowed for numerous exciting changes and upgrades. This year's event is now aptly named the Head of the Welland ~ Five Bridges Fall Classic as a new course layout finishing at the North Timing Tower of the Welland International Flatwater Centre will allow rowers to pass under five bridges through the heart of Welland on their way to the finish (Main St, Division, Lincoln, Railway Swing Bridge and Broadway).

Hosted by the South Niagara Rowing Club (SNRC), their partnership with the WRCC has allowed for increased marketing, the new course, wakeless safety and officiating launches, higher profile race entries, use of the Finish Lynx Timing System and a great festival atmosphere that the North Course offers. Athletes from over thirty-three different Rowing Clubs (an increase of over 50% over 2007) will be competing on the Welland Recreational Waterway. The final tally on entrants is in and athletes and coaches attending the event have broken the 700 person mark in 2008. Entries have come in from across Ontario and five different states in the US and include over 80 local competitors.

The course on the Recreational Waterway has been brightly marked with coloured buoys that stretch 4.8 km from Thorold Rd to the finish on the North Course. Bill Sheldon, President of the South Niagara Rowing Club, since touring the course himself contentedly reported, “the course that has been laid out is absolutely fantastic. The opportunities to watch from the bridges, locations for crews to pass, the professionalism of the finish; the trip is worth ten thousand words.”

The north section of the Welland Recreational Waterway is phenomenal for a world class head race regatta. “The WRCC is thrilled that the SNRC has been so receptive to working together to develop the Five Bridges Fall Classic into one of the single largest regattas in Canada”, stated Stephen Fischer, WRCC Business & Operations Manager. “It will take a couple more years to achieve but the positive results of this year will serve as a catapult. We are thrilled to have American Universities coming to the Head of the Welland from as far away as Clemson University in South Carolina.” Mr. Fischer continued saying, “being able to take an existing, marketable regatta and work together to grow it into an international calibre event has been an exciting opportunity to showcase the WIFC, our commitment to sport tourism and to flatwater sports.” “The positive effects of this growing this event cannot be understated. The Head of the Welland will have wonderful effects on businesses in the community and on the future of flatwater sports in the City”, stated Mr. Sheldon. “We encourage you to come on out and see what it's all about.”

Races begin at 8:30 a.m. and run until 4:00 p.m.

Viewing can take place from suitable spots on bridges, from the Canal Trail on both banks or catch the crews pushing to the finish from the bleachers near the North Timing Tower

Visit [www.wifc.ca](http://www.wifc.ca) for other information

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