

Volunteers needed for 2023 International Plowing Match and Rural Expo

Written By **Paula Brown**

Local Journalism Initiative Reporter

The 2023 International Plowing Match (IPM) and Rural Expo is rapidly approaching, and the call is out for volunteers to help with the local event.

Without volunteers the International Plowing Match would not take place. The volunteers do everything from organizing, to implementing, and taking down. It's the volunteers who do the work," said Cindy Sabo, volunteer coordinator.

The International Plowing Match (IPM) and Rural Expo is a five-day event that celebrates rural living and aims to educate attendees about agriculture and horticulture in Ontario.

The educational and competitive event began in 1913 at Sunnybrook Farm in Toronto and has since become the largest event of its kind in North America.

In 2022, it was announced that Dufferin County would be the host location for the 104th edition of the International Plowing Match (IPM) and Rural Expo. While the IPM event has been held in counties surrounding Dufferin County in the past, the 2023 IPM will mark the first time the event has been hosted locally.

For five days in September, the farmers' fields surrounding Bowling Green and Laurel will be transformed into a tented city with plowing competition venues, parking areas, and an RV Park.

It's an opportunity to educate people who might not be farmers or might not come out to the rural areas too much, and see all the things that Dufferin has to offer," said Sabo. It's also an opportunity to talk about the rural life and how important farming is to all of us."

As of the time of print, the local IPM committee has had around 350 individuals who have indicated an interest in volunteering for the event, but their goal is to have between 500 and 700 volunteers.

Specific areas where a large number of volunteers are needed include the tent city build; traffic and parking; tractor and wagon drivers; gates and tickets; and lounge and lunches.

The event is also looking for volunteers that have specific interests such as quilting for the quilting show, and creative individuals to take part in the event's lifestyle tent.

We have all kinds of areas that people can volunteer," said Sabo.

The 2023 International Plowing Match (IPM) and Rural Expo will be held from September 19 to September 23.

Applications to volunteer for the 2023 International Plowing Match can be found at the 2023 IPM website ? www.plowingmatch.org/ipm2023.

Those interested in volunteering for the event can apply by downloading, completing, and returning the application by email to cindysabo@xplornet.ca. Volunteers will be added to a database to receive updates and orientation information for the event.