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Claim a piece of history with 104th International Plowing Match?s commemorative benches

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LOCAL JOURNALISM INITIATIVE REPORTER

Dufferin County residents have the chance to take home a commemorative piece from the 104th International Plowing Match (IPM) and Rural Expo to remember the event for years to come.

In recent years, commemorative benches have become a tradition at the International Plowing Match as a practical way for residents and businesses to show their support for the match and contribute.

These benches are still available for purchase for local residents to commemorate the historic agricultural event.

?The benches ? from the wood right through to the construction and labour ? are representative of the strong community partnership that must be activated to bring an event of this magnitude to fruition,? said Sandy Brown, chair of the bench sponsorship program and member of the IPM 2023 local committee.

Four high schools and one church congregation were involved in the bench craftsmanship, including Centre Dufferin District High School in Shelburne, Emmanuel Christian High School in Fergus, Robert F. Hall Catholic Secondary School in Caledon, Grey Highlands Secondary School in Flesherton and the Christian Reformed Church in Orangeville.

Orangeville Home Hardware, Shelburne Home Hardware, Orangeville Building Supply and AVERTEX Utility Solutions Inc. all stepped up and donated the building materials for the project.

The spruce and pine wood benches that have been specifically handcrafted for the commemorative project will be placed through the International Plowing Match site during the match week to allow visitors a place to sit if they need to.

Visitors may notice plaques affixed to the back of the benches, which name individuals, families, farm families, and businesses that have supported the commemorative project by sponsoring the benches.

Following the end of the International Plowing Match, those who sponsored the program will be able to take their bench home as a reminder of the once-in-a-lifetime week-long event, which will see crowds flock to Bowling Green.

While many of the benches have already been claimed by sponsors, organizers of the program said they still have a few benches that are available for sale for $500 each.

Anyone interested in purchasing an IPM bench can contact the chair of the bench sponsorship program, Sandy Brown, by email at sandybrown1000@gmail.com.

Benches will be available for pickup after 5 p.m. closing on Saturday (Sept. 23) and Sunday (Sept. 24).