

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Re: Harris Hill Ski Jump: Construction on Schedule for 2009; Costs Up

Brattleboro, VT – Construction of the new tower and in-run for the ski jump is under way and the goal is to have the work completed before the snow flies, or by Thanksgiving, whichever comes first. That's according to Jason Evans of J. Evans Construction in Dummerston, contractor for the project who is working hard to meet this aggressive schedule.

Getting to this point has not been easy for the board and committee. Since receiving a gift of \$130,000 from the Manton Foundation last February to complete the \$300,000 fundraising campaign, the committee has been committed to having the new hill ready for a tournament in February, 2009. Delays in getting FIS (International Federation of Skiing) approval* of the new hill and engineering plans that were affordable have taken much longer than ever anticipated. All the while, steel prices have soared, which sent the design back to the engineer to search for cost-saving options.

The final design of the hill adds \$188,000 to the cost of this new hill, which the committee will have to raise. "There are no off-the-shelf designs for a 90-meter ski jumping hill," notes Pat Howell, Co-Director. "It has cost us time and money to get here, but we have so much more for our money with this revised design.

FIS certification allows jumpers at our tournaments to gain points toward national ranking—a benefit that would bring us more top-notch jumpers. It also qualifies us to host the highest level of international tournaments down the road. "When you compare this design to an early (2006) design for a 90-meter, FIS-approved hill estimated at \$900,000, this is an incredible price and value," commented Rex Bell who is heading up the design and construction of the hill.

With Fall approaching and the need for an additional \$188,000 to complete the project, the board and organizing committee voted to move forward with construction and seek to fund the shortfall with a personally guaranteed loan until the \$188,000 can be raised. "This is a huge commitment on the part of members of the board and committee," said Liz Richards,

board member. "It puts us back in what we call, Extreme Fundraising Mode. This event belongs to the community and we felt we couldn't let the community down and go another year without a tournament."

The steps that so many people in the community have "purchased" for \$1,000 to have their names on them are being fabricated and will be installed over the next few weeks. The names will be applied at a later date. About 80 steps have been sold, with many remaining. Individuals, families, friends, companies, and groups have purchased steps. Anyone interested in purchasing a step can call the Chamber of Commerce for more information (254-4565).

Tournament Plans

The committee is in gear planning for the 2009 tournament set for February 14 & 15 and lining up sponsors. The goal is to begin promoting this year's celebratory event in December. The committee plans to invite the U.S. women's ski jumping team and the Canadian women's team, both of which are star-quality jumping teams to this year's competition. The tradition of inviting European and other international teams is also part of this year's plan.

In the coming weeks, up-to-date information about the 2009 tournament and the "Step Up & Soar" campaign to raise the final \$188,000 will be regularly posted on our website: harrishillskijump.org. In the interim, call the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce for questions and information at 802-254-4565.

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