



For Immediate Release

May 8th, 2008

Athletes Embark on Journey of a Lifetime

Saskatchewan marathon athletes, Winston McKay and John Laliberté, will be making the journey of a lifetime beginning on May 10th when the 2008 David Thompson Brigade is set to launch. McKay and Laliberté are just two of the many Saskatchewan paddlers who will be paddling and portaging historic 25' North Canoes for 63 days and 3600 km from Rocky Mountain House to Old Fort William (Thunder Bay). Saskatchewan Teams joining the brigade originate from Cumberland House, Amisk Lake and Moose Jaw.

McKay has been competing in the sport of marathon canoeing for close to 35 years. Although he was advised to quit for medical reasons about 10 years ago McKay continues to compete. McKay also is one of many who are supporting the development of the canoe team representing Saskatchewan at the 2008 North American Indigenous Games. Several of the team members have joined McKay and will be using the brigade as an opportunity to prepare for the games.

Laliberté, son of the great Cumberland paddler Jean Baptiste Laliberté, has also made his mark on the sport. In his career as a marathon paddler he has been successful both at winning and at promoting the sport to young athletes. Recently Laliberté became involved with sprint racing, an Olympic sport, as a coach and mentor at the Prince Albert Canoe and Kayak Club. He will be joined on his journey by his brother Frank, his son and several of his nephews who are all sprint and marathon athletes.

Marathon canoeing is an important part of Saskatchewan heritage. It is a sport for all ages with many being introduced to paddling at a very young age and becoming seriously involved with racing as adults. Marathon races can range in distance from 10 to 700 kilometers. It is a sport of strength, endurance, technique and knowledge. The experience that paddlers such as McKay and Laliberté have gained in the sport of marathon canoe racing will be called upon many times as they complete the David Thompson Brigade.

For more information about the 2008 David Thompson Brigade, visit the official website at <http://www.2008thompsonbrigade.com>.

For more information contact:

Jan Hanson
Executive Director
Canoe Kayak Saskatchewan
cks@accesscomm.ca
306.585.6366