

PRESS RELEASE



IVAKKAK CELEBRATES ITS 10TH ANNIVERSARY

Start of Nunavik's Dog Team Race

For the cultural survival of a people

QUAQTAQ – Monday, *March 22, 2010* – Sixteen teams launched themselves today on the most captivating of journeys, where the definition of the words wisdom, fellowship and perseverance will take its true meaning – they're taking part in Ivakkak's dog team race, the most gruelling but also the most popular event in Quebec's Far North. The start of the race was given this morning in Quaqtaq and it should end in Kuujuaq in about a week, depending on the whims of Mother Nature. Stopovers are planned in Kangirsuk, Aupaluk and Tasiujaq.

The Makivik Corporation is extremely proud to celebrate the 10th anniversary of Ivakkak, which provides Inuit elders an opportunity to share their ancestral knowledge with the new generation whose way of life has changed significantly over the last decades.

Nunavik's dog team race was first held by the Makivik Corporation in 2001 to encourage Nunavimmiut to carry on with the practice of dog sledding, a tradition that was almost wiped out with the methodical slaughter of Inuit husky dogs by the authorities, which took place in Canada's north in the 1950s and 1960s. To this end, only Inuit are eligible to participate in the race, in the footsteps of their ancestors. Half a century later, it is with a lot of interest that Inuit enquire into the report written by retired Judge Jean-Jacques Croteau, which establishes for the first time the responsibility of the governments of Quebec and Canada in this tragedy.

Each team, composed of 8 to 12 husky dogs, for a total of about 180 Inuit sled dogs, lead by their masters and race partners, aged 15 and 56 and coming from 7 different Inuit communities of Nunavik will travel a distance of over 450 kilometres on the Ungava Bay coast. In addition to the challenges posed by weather conditions, each team must be self-sufficient: mushers and dogs will transport all the supplies needed to complete their journey on their sled, as spelled out in the race's very strict rules. At the end of each day, the teams will camp out together at pre-determined checkpoints.

Again this year, the Makivik Corporation can count on the support and generosity of its long-standing partners - Air Inuit, the Federation of Co-operatives of Northern Québec (FCNQ), the Kativik Regional Government (KRG) – as well as several sponsors including the Regional Board of Health and Social Services (NRBHSS), First Air, the Canadian Rangers and the Nunavik Tourism Association (NTA), to name just a few, without whom all of this would not be possible.

At the finish line, not only will the 2010 Ivakkak champion be presented with the Ivakkak Cup, but he will also receive a \$12,000 gift certificate from the FCNQ, a \$7,000 cash prize from the Makivik Corporation and a pair of return tickets to Montreal from First Air and Air Inuit, as well as gift certificates for double occupancy at the Dorval Airport Travelodge. Various cash and product prizes will be presented to the silver and bronze medallists, as well as participation prizes drawn amongst all participating teams.

The progress of Ivakkak 2010 and its teams may be followed daily on the race's official website at www.ivakkak.com, and on the air of the regional radio broadcasters –TNI and CBC North.

-30-

For information:

Daniel Despins

ddepins@plancom.ca

Tel.: (450) 621-2240

Kitty Gordon

kgordon@makivik.org

info@ivakkak.com

www.ivakkak.com

www.makivik.org