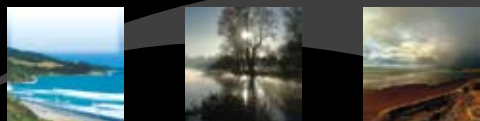


Feb-Mar 2010



THE LINK

Waikato District News



Hampton Downs officially opened

The country's newest race track got the thumbs up from 24,000 spectators, over three days, when it was officially opened during the NZ Festival of Motor Racing in January.

Mayor Peter Harris had the pleasure of officially opening the world-class motorsport venue, and congratulating owners Tony Roberts and Chris Watson on their magnificent achievement.

"I wish to thank Tony and Chris for this outstanding facility, and for having the courage and determination to develop this project to the stage that they can now host their very first major race meeting.

"One day, I believe the words 'Hampton Downs' will be known throughout the world as synonymous with New Zealand," he said.

Up to 10,000 people a day watched 400 competitors try out the new track at Hampton Downs during the NZ Festival of Motor Racing weekend. More than a quarter of the competitors were international entrants.

Motor racing legend Kenny Smith said it was a "magic track", and put it in the same category as his favourite circuit – the Manfeild track in Feilding.

Located near Te Kauwhata in the Waikato District, Hampton Downs has a lot to offer and there are a number of developments still to come. These include a 1.2km track, which can be combined with the present track to give a track length of 3.8 km. Other developments include a go-kart track, a hotel, convention facilities, a themed restaurant, camping ground, an SUV training course, purpose built skid pan for driver training, commando course, paint ball arena, and 15,000 sqm of automotive showrooms.

Hampton Downs is also starting to bring economic benefits to the local community. Up to 500 jobs will be created over the next five years, as well as a number of new business opportunities in the 170,000m² Business Park, which is currently being developed. ■



To follow the exciting progress at Hampton Downs, visit their new website - www.hamptondowns.com

Mayor's message

From beaches to bushland, from wetlands to water the Waikato District has a lot to offer. In November when our boundary expands to incorporate part of the Franklin District, we will become one of the largest Councils by area and certainly one of the strongest.

Farming plays a large part in the local economy. Dairy, drystock and the new Zealand tea farm are economically significant for this district.

Our coal mining, and sand and aggregate extraction companies are also key contributors. The huge chimneys of Huntly Power Station rising into the sky are undeniably synonymous with the Waikato District.

We are the motor racing capital of New Zealand, which I am very proud of. We have a fantastic line-up with the Huntly stock cars, the Meremere drag strip, and the recently opened Hampton Downs.

The mighty Waikato River that runs through our district is home to the centre of the Maori Kingitanga Movement. With Council entering into a Joint Management Agreement with Waikato-Tainui, we are in a fantastic position to formalise relations with the Movement and Iwi.

The Waikato District is renowned for its wonderful walkways at Lake Hakanoa, Lake Puketirini, the Hakarimatas, and around our wetlands. The Hakarimata Walkway takes you through native forest with huge kauri trees, a rare sight in the Waikato.

And then there is our seaside town of Raglan. With a world famous surf beach, it has arguably the longest left hand ride in the world.

This year the Waikato District will go from strength to strength as it grows in size, assets and resources. These are exciting times, and I would encourage you to get out there and explore what the Waikato has to offer - why should the tourists have all the fun!



Peter Harris
Mayor



Jumbo enjoys retirement at Franklin Zoo

Jumbo the elephant is enjoying her retirement at Franklin Zoo and Wildlife Sanctuary.

An African bush elephant born in the wild in 1974, Jumbo has spent time with London and Honolulu Zoos and two circus companies before her move to Franklin in December last year.

Sanctuary Director and veterinarian Dr Helen Schofield says Jumbo has settled very quickly into her new surroundings and large enclosure area. "Jumbo is intelligent and fun loving and gains more confidence in her surroundings and in her team of carers each day.

"When she's not in training, visitors can watch her out foraging in her parkland area, playing with toys, eating or sleeping on her clay or sand piles," she said.

Franklin Zoo and Wildlife Sanctuary care for at-risk exotic and native species, in particular, those that require homes from the circus or small zoo closures. Predominantly a sanctuary, most of the animals are old, need special care or just don't fit in with other groups of animals.

Keeping an elephant and other at-risk species is a significant financial commitment. The Franklin Zoo and Wildlife Sanctuary Charitable Trust was established one year ago to assist in the care of these animals. Donations are very much needed and appreciated and can be made at the Zoo or on the website www.franklinzoo.co.nz. ■

Franklin Zoo and Wildlife Sanctuary
Open every day
9am to 5pm
83 Ridge Road, Whangarata
Entry: \$6 for 3-17 yrs, \$12 for adults, Free for under 3's
Family Passes \$28 for two adults and two children

Protect our river banks

Children at local schools have been working hard to restore the native plants along the banks of the Waikato and Waipa Rivers.

Each year sections of the riverbank are selected, prepared and planted out in association with the schools. The children are very proud of their work and are working hard to re-vegetate the riverbanks with native species of plants once abundant in the times of our forefathers.

Unfortunately, the dumping of garden waste is hampering their efforts. Dumping garden waste on the riverbank might seem harmless – but it is creating havoc with our ecological system. Most of the waste contains weeds that multiply quickly and kill off native plants. Weeds are causing major problems throughout New Zealand, and the riverbanks are especially at

risk as some people use them as dumping grounds.

We need to work together as a community to help restore and protect the riverbanks. You can help by letting others know how harmful waste on the riverbanks is, and by informing them of alternative ways of disposal.

There are good things that can be done with garden waste, such as:

- Composting - its free and great for your garden
- Using a garden bag collection service
- Taking garden waste to the recycling centre



Recognise the efforts of our children and ring Council on 07 824 8633 or 0800 492 452 if you see any illegal dumping.

Rain tanks required in the Waikato District



All new premises in the Waikato District are now required to have a rain tank under the new Water Supply Bylaw.

The bylaw, enforced from March 2010, is a move by Waikato District Council to create more sustainable water supplies, and encourage storing rainwater for non-drinking use.

What's required?

A rain tank is required for all new premises that will:

- be more than 30m²; and
- connect to a Council water supply; and
- have facilities that use water such as a toilet/laundry that the roof water could be used for.

All new connections to a Council water supply will have a water meter. The water will be billed based on the amount used.

What's optional?

- The rain tank does not have to be plumbed into the house. However, if the rain tank is used, (for example, to flush toilets), a Council water supply connection should be provided as backup for dry weather.
- Rain tanks are optional for modifications to an existing premise, including building consents that involve a new water connection.

How big does the tank need to be?

The minimum tank size for urban properties is 5,000L. There is also a minimum roof area that must be connected to the tank. The required roof area depends on the number of bedrooms.

For rural properties connected to tricklefeed, the minimum tank size is 22,000L ■

Safer vehicles, safer roads



Parking wardens often get a hard time, but understanding the important role they play in making roads safer, and helping businesses by keeping carparks turning over is key.

Waikato District Council (WDC) has one parking warden who works hard to ensure the cars on our roads have a current license, and Warrant of Fitness (WOF).

Steven May, WDC's Monitoring Manager, says parking wardens, during their rounds, often encounter a number of people who drive vehicles that are unlicensed and un-warranted. "Recently we came across a vehicle that had not been safety inspected since 2007. This is definitely a concern. Would you want this vehicle being driven towards you?"

"By checking for a current WOF we ensure the vehicles on our roads have passed required safety standards, and a current vehicle license ensures the costs of road use are supported by all vehicle users," he said.

WDC's parking warden visits the district's commercial centres to ensure that customers can access a parking spot as near as possible to their favourite shop. They also make sure that the elderly and disabled are supported by keeping mobility parks saved for those with an approved mobility permit ■

So when you see our warden out in the community, remember that she is working hard to make the roads safer for you and your family.

For more information about the Water Supply Bylaw check out Council's website www.waikatodistrict.govt.nz

What's happening

Balloons over Waikato



A visual spectacle as over 30 magnificent hot air balloons from New Zealand and overseas, take to the skies for five days of fun and competition.

☐ Wednesday 24 – Sunday 28 March

📍 Innes Common, Hamilton Lake
www.balloonsoverwaikato.co.nz

Balloons Out and About

Roll out of bed and come and see the balloons in Ngaruawahia. Ten balloons will inflate and lift off (conditions permitting).

Entry is FREE.

☐ Friday 26 March

🕒 Approx 7.15am

📍 Patterson Park, River Road, Ngaruawahia
www.balloonsoverwaikato.co.nz

Earth Hour



Earth Hour is a worldwide phenomenon and is the world's biggest climate change initiative. This year around one billion people and over 1000 cities are predicted to turn their lights off for one hour - Earth Hour.

☐ Saturday 27 March 2010

🕒 8.30pm

www.earthhour.org

Briefly

Permits for rural fires



Council would like to remind rural property owners that a permit is required to light fires in the open.

There is no charge for a permit. Once an application for a permit is received the permit will be processed, or a Rural Fire Officer may visit the site and discuss time of lighting, fuel types, weather and management of the fire before issuing a permit.

For further information contact one of the Rural Fire Officers at Council on 07 824 8633 or visit the website www.nrfa.org.nz.

Keep off the bridges

Every year people die and are severely injured on the railway tracks.

Trains are usually closer and move faster than people think. It is against the law to walk on rail bridges, and for good reason – it is dangerous.

Please don't take shortcuts or mess around on bridges – it could cost you your life or a fine of up to \$10,000 ■



Check out water alert levels

Please remember to keep your eye out for the Waikato District's water alert levels over summer. Water alert levels are in place to guide water use in a sustainable manner and ensure consistent supply throughout the summer.

Water levels range from 1 which is limited restrictions, to 4 which is a total ban on non essential use. Check out your local newspaper and Council's website for the latest water alert level update.



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Waikato

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