



WHEELING AROUND THE UNITED COUNTIES

Get Out the ATV

By Lorraine Payette



There's nothing like the change of seasons – crisp autumn air, leaves changing colours and falling in gentle drifts to the forest floor, new vistas opening up every day for the eye to marvel at. The smell of wood smoke in the air, shorter days and longer nights, Orion is chasing the Pleiades over the horizon in the darkening sky.

A great way to indulge in all of this is on the all terrain vehicle (ATV) trails in Leeds-Grenville. With proper training, the whole family can indulge in this great outdoor pastime and enjoy a little extra bonding along the way.

To get started, find a good instructor and take a Canadian All-Terrain Quad Council of Canada Safety Institute (CASI) approved ATV rider course. It will allow you to gain knowledge of safety and basic riding skills, while you practice in a controlled environment with a certified instructor supervising your every move. You will receive the most current hands-on ATV safety program in Canada, which is based on the well-recognized ATV Safety Institute (ASI) program. It has been enhanced with input from Chief Instructors across Canada and is supported and endorsed by the Canadian off Highway Vehicle Distributors Council – all of whom are ATV major manufacturers.

Once trained, you'll need an ATV. Don't go racing out to buy one or more right away. Instead, contact an organization such as the Johnstown ATV Club or the people at Limerick Forest. They can help you find rental units you can use as well as reputable dealers to get you on your way.

Remember to dress properly. Under their Safety Rules, the Everest Re Group suggests you wear a DOT-compliant helmet, goggles, long sleeves, long pants, over-the-ankle boots, and gloves when doing any serious riding.

Enjoying the ATV can definitely be a family sport, and can be something to do with other enthusiasts. Consider joining a club and getting to know the trails in Leeds-Grenville.

"(The Johnstown ATV Club) has a 150-kilometre trail system which extends from Angelo's Restaurant (Old Highway 16) just north of Johnstown to the Limerick Forest South Tract," says the Leeds Grenville website. "Their website states they cater to both serious and casual riders. There is a tunnel under Highway 416, which allows access to trails on both sides of the highway. The trails are open year round with the only exceptions being closure during the spring thaw and district hunting seasons..."

"The trail network within Limerick Forest consists of approximately 180 kilometres of trails, ranging in size from 'single track' to emergency access roads suitable for full-sized vehicles. In addition, approximately 30 kilometres of 'groomed' snowmobile trails are maintained by the Leeds & Grenville Snowmobile Association. A number of information kiosks have been installed at various locations throughout Limerick Forest. Mosaics of air photos and trail maps, 911 locations, parking areas and public service announcements may be found on these kiosks."

Above all, get out and enjoy everything ATV riding in Leeds-Grenville has to offer. You can participate in the sport year round, and this is a great way to get to know the wild beauty waiting for you in the united counties. **LH**



You're never too old – Edwina Griffin goes out for a ride around the yard with her son the day after her 100th birthday celebration (family file photo)

To find trails, training and equipment, check out Leeds Grenville at <http://leedsgrenville.com/en/visit/thingstodo/ATVTours.asp>, the Johnstown ATV Club at <http://www.johnstownatvclub.org/index.html>, Limerick Forest at <http://www.limerickforest.ca/en/recreation/index.asp>, CASI ATV Rider course at <http://www.atvquad.ca/en/casi-atv-ridercourse-sm/> and Everest Re Group Ltd.'s safety rules at <http://www.everestregroup.com/Portals/0/Documents/Alerts/LC%20Alert%20ATV%20Safety.pdf>.