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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

2022 Ontario Winter Games Postponed Until 2023

The 2022 Ontario Winter Games to be hosted by the County of Renfrew has been postponed.

The announcement, by County Warden Debbie Robinson, was made amidst the growing concern of the impact the Omicron variant is having on the health and safety of Ontario residents.

All parties will be working together over the coming weeks to explore the possibility of hosting in 2023, and additional information will be shared when a decision has been reached.

“The County of Renfrew was prepared to host the 2022 Ontario Winter Games during a pandemic, but we could not do it while safeguarding the health of the athletes, their families, our volunteers or the community at large,” Warden Robinson stated. “The support from the Provincial Government, especially that of Minister MacLeod and her staff along with our MPP John Yakabuski was outstanding, but there is just too much risk involved to make the Games a reality in less than two months.”

“The safety of Ontario communities is of critical importance right now, so while I also regret the necessity of postponing the Games, I am pleased to continue working with organizers to host this event in Renfrew County when it is safe to do so,” said Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries. “The Games are an important contributor to the economic and social well-being of the Renfrew County community, and as Ontario works to support the sport sector through the impacts of COVID-19, we will continue to support the Games to ensure their future success.”

Games Organizing Committee Chair, Reeve Peter Emon, has amassed a determined group of volunteers and sponsors who came forward early on to offer their support for the Games, touted as the best ever Ontario Winter Games. He is confident that a delay will not dampen their enthusiasm or commitment to the event.

“Our volunteers, sponsors and community partners all wanted our Games to highlight our community and to encourage athletes, officials and visiting parents to explore and enjoy the rich history and the many splendid settings here in the County,” offered Chair Emon. “The Omicron variant was not going to allow our community to safely shine for our guests and visitors in 2022.”

The decision to postpone the Games is also supported by MPP John Yakabuski. Having played a pivotal role in the County acquiring the Games for 2022, he was frequently updated on the work being done and the challenges the pandemic continued to place on the organizers.

“While disappointing to so many, this is the right decision at this time,” said MPP Yakabuski. “I want to thank the

Games Committee, all of the volunteers and the sponsors for all of the work they have done up to now in preparation for the Games. Their efforts will not be in vain as we are in a great position to host the games in the future. I also want to thank Minister MacLeod for her understanding and continued assurance of her support going forward.”

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