

Legion members have a got ticket to ride



By Brock Weir

Members of the Royal Canadian Legion now have a ticket to ride.

Ontario bikers ? many of them veterans of Canadian deployments overseas ? descended on the Aurora Legion on Friday to support the new Legion Riders program.

The initiative was launched by the Legion's Dominion Command last month to capture the attention of members who are also motorcycle enthusiasts to help generate awareness and raise the profile of the Legion across the country.

The idea was first floated by the bikers themselves, looking for a way not only to share their love for motorcycles within the group, but also promote Legion work throughout their communities to generate vital new support for the veterans' service group.

Adjacent to the Aurora Legion on Industrial Parkway North is the Legion's Ontario Command. There, the provincial body shared its enthusiasm for the new program.

?Based on popular demand from our Legion members, Dominion Command has?created the motorcycle group to help generate awareness about the Legion, its community engagement across the country and its services to our serving and retired veterans, RCMP personnel and their families,? said provincial president Bruce Julian. ?The Legion is an iconic cornerstone of Canadian communities at the forefront of support for the military and the RCMP members and their families. Many members of the Legion are also motorcycle enthusiasts. Until now, this aspect of their Legion service has not been addressed.

?[This initiative will] help generate awareness of the Legion, its community engagement across the country and its services to our serving and retired veterans, RCMP personnel and their families. The Legion riders are now able to mount up across Canada and you will start to see them forming at Legion branches from coast to coast. For many members of the Legion, the Legion riders will allow them to be a part of a group of motorcycle enthusiasts and provide them with a great way to enjoy and share one of life's great passions.?

Speaking after the event, Mr. Julian said the Legion is always looking at new initiatives to satisfy the needs and interests of their members, while also generating new members at the same time. To this end, the Legion Riders will increase the visibility of the Legion wherever they ride.

?Nothing is more visible than these things rumbling down the street to an event,? he said, pointing to the sea of motorcycles parked

outside the Aurora Legion which paraded onto the grounds with the colour party. ?It's a good thing for everybody. It gives them an outlet for activities, to volunteer, and it gives us the benefit of that.?