

Rally Car National, Regional Races Coming to Errol Area

The 19th annual New England Forest Rally is set for next weekend, July 16-17 at Sunday River Resort, and its national and regional events will pass through in Newry and Mexico Maine, as well as Errol.

This year the NEFR will be the final round of the Rally America National Championship Series, and a prelude to the Summer X Games. The weekend also includes two Eastern Regional competitions, held concurrently with the national race: the Mexico Regional Rally, presented by the Mt. Washington Auto Road, takes place on Friday; and the L.L. Cote Regional Rally takes place on Saturday in western Maine and Errol.

The NEFR will host a large contingent of regional teams from across the northeastern U.S. and eastern Canada. The National Championship Series competitors will race over two days on 130 miles of gravel and forest roads; the regional teams will compete on those same roads, but in two separate, one-day events run simultaneously with the national rally.

Friday's regional event will be known as the Mexico Regional Rally and will include a "Super Special" in Mexico, Maine. At the Mexico Recreational Area just off Route 17, spectators will be able to watch their favorite driver or team complete an entire gravel rally stage, complete with a jump. Fans can also meet the drivers and co-drivers and watch the service crews in action at the Service Park.

Saturday's regional rally is named for its title sponsor, L.L. Cote in Errol. According to Wendy Lyndes of L.L. Cote, the sport shop and convenience center will be the official gas stop for the Regional Rally, and the cars' service area will be at JML Trucking on Route 26. L.L. Cote will have special gas in its tanks for the race cars, and there are 50 teams currently entered in this year's rally.

L.L. Cote will also give out prizes such as "Rally Ride Experience," which is for the winner and two other people to visit the Team O Neil Rally School and Car Control Center in Dalton. They will visit the school, tour the facility and get a high-speed ride on the course by the driving instructors.

The company is also providing three tickets to the New England Forest Rally VIP Bus on Saturday, July 17, for a coach bus ride to and from the rally spectator and service areas. Packed lunches with refreshments will be served on the bus, which will depart from Sunday River Resort early Saturday morning and return in the evening. Riding the VIP bus is an all-day event; due to the distances the bus will not return to Sunday River until day's end.

Drivers in this year's event include the 2009 New England Forest Rally winner Travis Pastrana, Dave Mirra, Ken Block, Antoine L'Estage and Bill Bacon.

Pastrana and Mirra are X Games legends. Pastrana has won four back-to-back Rally America championships and competed in the Red Bull New Year No Limit in Long Beach, Calif., this past January. He drove a Subaru Impreza Rally car off the Pine Avenue Pier in Long Beach at 91 m.p.h. and jumped 269 feet over Rainbow Harbor, breaking the previous record by 100 feet.

Top teams in the Rally America Championship are also invited to compete in ESPN's Summer X Games. A complete list of the X Games athletes can be seen at espn.go.com. Based in Minnesota, Rally America sanctions the premier rally racing series in the U.S. and can be found on-line at www.rally-america.com. Complete

series in the city, and can be found on the community, entertainment, sports
spectator information for the July 16-17 NEFR is available on the site.

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