

# It'll be smooth sailing all the way to the top

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**M**LA Evelyn Gillespie's car was almost destroyed during a family trip, seven years ago, while trying to endure the treacherous grade along the rugged gravel road leading to Mount Washington. Thursday, with a triumphant smile on her face, Gillespie along with MLA Rick Kasper and Mt. Washington Resort chairman George Stuart cut the emerald green ribbon to officially open the mountain's newly paved road.

"I can't believe our skiers have put up with the road we had for so long," said Stuart at the road opening ceremony.

As well, Stuart announced that the project came in \$800,000 below budget, with the left over money being used to pave Nordic Road.

"The public got good value for their money," said Stuart several times during his presentation.

However, this opening ceremony has come before the completion of the highway. Pending weather conditions, road work will continue until the end of the month.

Six kilometres of road is left outstanding to pave with a second layer of asphalt, lines still need to be painted on the road and roadside barriers erected. In some



Mt. Washington president and CEO Pat Dixon watched as Mt. Washington resort chairman George Stuart and MLAs Rick Kasper and Evelyn Gillespie cut the ribbon to officially open the newly paved road to B.C.'s third most visited winter resort.

areas, with the edge of the road only inches away from a drop that would even knot up Evil Knievel's stomach, these barriers will act as a guard rail along narrow, winding stretches of the road.

All this work, as well as posting road advisory signs to warn drivers of sharp curves in the road, is expected to be completed well before skiers and snowboarders flock to the mountain.

With the exception of some 30 km/h construction zones, most of the current construction zone postings are consistent with speeds previously

posted on the gravel road.

"Obey construction speed limits. It's a mountainous road, so pay attention to advisory signs," warns highways area manager Dan Olson.

While the first 10 kilometre stretch up the mountain is posted at 60 kilometres, Olson says that it was designed for 70 kilometres and they will be looking into raising the speed limit once all the safety features have been added to the road.

The top seven kilometres, currently posted at 50 kilometres, may also be raised by 10 kilometres, with additional

speed reductions posted at especially sharp, curving areas.

Olson strongly suggests people heed these warning signs because while the ride may be smoother, excessive speeding is a safety concern along the unlit, winding road.

No sections of the new road were designed for speeds exceeding 70 kilometres.

The paving of the highway, coupled with \$300,000 spent by the resort on run expansions this summer, has Stuart expecting to see more traffic this year than in previous years.