

[AS PREPARED FOR DELIVERY]

Good afternoon. On behalf of the office of the Mayor, City Council and the City of Sault Ste. Marie, I'd like to welcome all of our out of town guests, including participants, officials, volunteers and representatives from Skate Canada Northern Ontario and Skate Ontario, to our city for the Ontario Regional Synchronized Skating Championships.

Sault Ste. Marie has a long tradition of skating excellence. We are very pleased to be able to host a competition of this caliber in our community.

To our visiting participants and families, your stay in Sault Ste. Marie will coincide with the final weekend of our annual Bon Soo winter carnival. I hope that during your down-time from competing that you will be able to partake in some of the events and activities that Bon Soo has to offer.

To those who may be unfamiliar with it, synchronized skating is an artistic and athletic sport that families can enjoy watching together. I encourage the people of the community to support these young athletes by coming out to watch the competition and cheer the skaters on. You never know, there might be a future champion in the crowd who will be inspired to take up the sport as a result of watching this year's championship!

Events such as the Ontario Regional Synchronized Skating Championships are very important to our community. In addition to the positive economic benefits they provide, hosting events such as these also allows our homegrown athletes to compete at a high level in front of friends and family. They also provide the chance to showcase our top-notch facilities and our welcoming community to new visitors.

I would like to commend Tourism Sault Ste. Marie and Skate Canada Northern Ontario Algoma Region for their efforts to secure hosting rights for the Ontario Regional Synchronized Skating Championships. Sault Ste. Marie has never before hosted a synchronized skating event of this magnitude. We are very proud to be able to do so now, and it is thanks to your enthusiasm and professionalism.

To all the skaters, good luck and best wishes for a fun and exciting competition!