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A festival on Lake Macquarie is fast becoming a must do for anyone with a paddle-powered craft...

Blessed with an abundance of coastline and the greatest lake in Australia, people in Lake Macquarie and Newcastle have taken to the water like ducks.
On any given day the beaches, lake and river are dotted with people in kayaks, surf skis, row boats and just about anything else that floats.
To raise money for community projects, the Rotary Club of Toronto Sunrise has celebrated this love of all things paddled and rowed with Paddlefest for the past four years.
The festival held at Speers Point has grown from strength to strength.
In 2006 the first dragon boat race attracted about 200 competitors and to date the 2010 event has already drawn 550 participants.
This year the festival has also expanded with more events for individuals and teams, including the dragon boat battle, family kayak challenge, kayak and canoe races, open-water lake swim and outrigger canoe races.
There will also be on-shore team building activities, live entertainment, food and drinks and a mini trade expo.
Rotary Club of Toronto Sunrise spokeswoman Keryl Fedrick said the organisation had created the event as a fundraiser for people to get involved in.
"This year the Paddlefest committee hopes to raise around \$30,000, which will go directly



Paddlefest organiser Keryl Fedrick and Steve Dawes from Newcastle Lake Macquarie Outrigger Canoe Club getting familiar with one of the canoes that will be raced at Paddlefest.

back into the local community," she said.
"About half of the money will go to Lake Macquarie mental health programs, and the other half to healthy lake programs."
Ms Fedrick said the event had been particularly popular with the business community that use it as a team building exercise.
"The guys that were in it last year are back, and (one of the teams) Energise have been taking secret lessons (in the dragon boats) to try and win it," she said.
Ms Fedrick said there were still places available in most events for the March 7 event.
For more information visit the festival website at www.paddlefest.com.au or phone Keryl Fedrick on 0421 041 987.

Local club helps Haiti
As Rotary is a world-wide organisation, not all its efforts are focused locally.
The Rotary Club of Toronto Sunrise has so far donated two shelter boxes to Port au Prince following the earthquakes that devastated the Haiti capital.
The specially-design plastic boxes are about the size of a household refrigerator and can be dropped from the air by helicopter or plane with enough food and supplies for 10 people.
The \$1200 boxes also contain a 10-person dome tent, tools and survival equipment.
Club spokeswoman Keryl Fedrick said if this year's Paddlefest raised more than the \$30,000 target for local charities, the extra money would be used to buy more shelter boxes for Haiti.

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