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Canadians ride through Emery County on trek



Marc Joinville and France Labonte during a previous trip.

By COREY BLUEMEL
Staff writer

Two adventurous Canadians from Quebec, are taking a year off to do what they like best: Ride their quads. Not on little day trips or even a weekend or two. Marc Joinville and France Labonte began their 10 month journey at the border of Canada and Montana on July 7. This trek will take them from Canada to Cabo, Mexico, and every mile of it will be ridden on their Polaris 4-wheelers. They recently spent several days in Emery County.

For two avid OHVsers from Quebec, probably the worst thing was having to trailer their OHVs across Canada. OHVs are not allowed on any paved road in Canada. So, their journey to Mexico had to begin at the border of Alberta and Montana.

Four years before the journey began, the pair, who works for Cascades, a paper plant, decided to take the year long sabbatical offered by their employer. "Most people do not take this opportunity," said Marc. "They don't see how it can be done."

He explained that for the four years prior to the onset of this trip, the pair began by living on only 80 percent of their earnings. The remaining 20 percent went into savings to provide for them during the year off. Every holiday gift, they gave each other something they thought they would need for this year on the trail. They began to do research into the route and laws of the areas they would be traveling through.

Marc began to design packs for the quads. He designed and built a box for the back of France's machine that would hold the items needed to prepare their meals. This cabinet type box hold the silverware, dishes, cups, and some of the dry goods such as instant coffee, soup mixes, and other dry items. On the front of France's quad, is another box Marc designed. It is a sturdy box which holds more perishable food stuffs. The outside of the box is covered with a wire mesh to keep animals out.

Marc's machine is used for hauling the extra gas cans and the sleeping trailer for the pair. They purchased a small trailer type tent. It can be pulled by the quad and folds out to a double sized bed. Inside the tent, the two sleep away from ground animals and insects.

In the event of danger from bears or others prowling animals, they park the machine which is hauling the food several hundred yards away from where they are sleeping.

During the four years of planning and building, the two took many experimental trips around Canada to test everything and to decide what else may be needed.

Marc said the trip began in Montana and the scenery has been great. The people they have met have been friendly. The only problems they have had, have been in Utah where they were met with the information that OHVs are not street legal in Utah. Some alterations had to be made to cross Utah on dirt roads and trails. The majority of the time spent in Utah will be on the Great Western Trail through the central mountains.

France said it is very fun to open the map every day and decide where they want to go. They stopped over in Emery County for several days and rode in the Arapsee ATV Jamboree hosted by the SouthEastern Utah Off Highway Vehicle Club. Their next stop will be the Paiute Jamboree in Richfield. "It is fun to have a guide and learn the history of an area," they said.

They have ridden 2,300 miles since July 7. It is considerably further to find a route they can travel than to go by highway.

Marc estimates when they cross into Arizona, they will be halfway to their destination. They plan to reach Cabo San Lucas, Mexico sometime in November. They will spend the remainder of their time off lying on the beach and relaxing.



The fold out sleeping trailer Marc and France are using on their trek.

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