

Tuhoe prepares for its biennial festival

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IT was all hands on deck at Ruatoki yesterday as Tuhoe prepare for their biennial festival, Te Ahurei a Tuhoe, which starts tomorrow.

First held in 1972, the three-day festival at Mission Road, Ruatoki, celebrates unity within the tribe and every second year thousands of people who affiliate to it make the trek back to the Eastern Bay over Easter weekend to participate in kapa haka, debating and sports competitions.

This year the event kicks off on Friday morning and culminates in a family entertainment evening on Sunday that includes performances from New Zealand musicians Adijah, L40 and the Modern Maori Quartet.

Organising committee chairman Paora Kepa said several new initiatives would be trialled at the festival this year, including technological advancements, a focus on recycling and more events for children.

“Our Ruatoki community is thrilled to be hosting our Tuhoe whanau from throughout the country and Australia at this year’s Te Hui Ahurei a Tuhoe.

“For the first time we will be trialling new initiatives of parakore, children’s sevens rugby,



SETTING UP: Members of Ruatoki community help set up the site on Mission Road for the Te Ahurei a Tuhoe festival, which will take place over Easter weekend.

Photo Karla Akuhata D3450-01

[traditional Maori game] ki-orahi and a whanau concert.

Mr Kepa said the event brought together the Tuhoe tribe and it would not be possible without the support of the entire community.

“It truly is a community effort to make our ahurei a success, from the 66 co-ordinators, our [hapu-based governance groups] tribals donating marquees, the kapa haka teams and supporters, to our local marae in the valley, who will be hosting groups from the South Island up to Auckland.”

Fellow organising committee member Patrick McGarvey said new forms of technology would be introduced this year as part of a partnership with Vodafone.

He said a range of connected

devices would be given to staff and volunteers, which would help with communication during the event and also provide vendors with a choice of alternative payment methods, such as eftpos.

“We have more than 20,000 people at every festival and there are many more who would like to be here. A reliable telecommunications network is very important to us.

“Not only does it enable us to carry out our mahi (work) more efficiently, it gives the community the chance to freely share their Tuhoe Ahurei experience in real time with whanau across the world on social media platforms, such as Facebook and Twitter.”