

**Client:** Yokohama Tire (Canada ) Inc.  
**Project:** Rallye Aïcha des Gazelles – announcement release  
**Writer:** MacDonald  
**Date:** February 9, 2009

*For immediate release*

### **Yokohama sponsors Québec 'gazelles' in all-female international off-road adventure**

LANGLEY, (DATE) – Yokohama Tire (Canada) Inc. will be the title sponsor of a Québec duo in the 19<sup>th</sup> annual, all-female, international Rallye Aïcha des Gazelles to be held in March in Morocco, the company has announced.

The Rallye Aïcha des Gazelles is a premier adventure-sports event and the first all-female rally in the world. First-time competitors Julie Lévesque (driver) and Geneviève Bachand (co-driver) – Team 172 – will carry the Yokohama banner this year. It is the first time Yokohama has been a sponsor at the event. Team 172 will be one of a field of more than 200 teams from over a dozen countries, including 12 others from Québec/Canada and one from the United States (entries close February 20, 2009).

Lévesque and Bachand decided to participate as an extension of their passion for outdoor adventure. They also have a humanitarian reason: they want their efforts to help fight breast cancer. Through a partnership with the Cure Foundation in Québec, 10 per cent of the proceeds they earn through fund-raising events will be donated for research on breast cancer.

"Yokohama is well-known for its rally involvement," said Jonathon Karelse, manager of marketing for Yokohama Canada, "but the Rallye Aïcha des Gazelles is unique because it's an all-female competition and its focus is not on speed but on resourcefulness and navigational abilities."

Over the course of two weeks, the teams – or "gazelles" – must navigate through 2500 km of grueling terrain in the heart of the Sahara desert using only a compass, map and their navigational skills. Global Positioning System (GPS) satellite navigation is not allowed. Competitors are given specific coordinates each day for a number of checkpoints and the final destination. It is up to each team to determine the routes it must take. No team can be assured that another has the same checkpoint coordinates, so following the vehicle in front is not an option. The winners at the end of each day are the teams that complete the daily course with the minimum number of kilometres.

The event has a humanitarian objective and financially supports medical and children's causes in Morocco through the Heart of Gazelles Association. "It is also the first desert navigation rally to adopt an eco-friendly mandate, and this is important to us," Karelse said.

The 2009 Rallye Aïcha des Gazelles will be take place from March 14 to March 28. Lévesque/Bachand will drive a Nissan Navara (Frontier in Canada) during the event. It will be equipped with Yokohama Geolander A/T-S tires. News and updates on the team's progress will be posted on Yokohama Canada's website [www.yokohama.ca](http://www.yokohama.ca).

Yokohama Tire (Canada) Inc. markets and distributes a full line of tires for high performance, passenger car, light truck and commercial truck applications as well as off-the-road tires for mining, forestry and construction applications. It maintains distribution centres across Canada to serve more than 700 independent tire dealers.

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