

OAKVILLE — James Pinion and the Jesse Owens Memorial Park Committee are in another footrace against time.

Last January the committee was working feverishly to complete the park for the June 29 Olympic Torch Run and dedication to Owens, an all-time track-and-field great and Oakville native.

Although this year's deadline is self-imposed, time is important because preparations are being made for a June 28 museum dedication, which Pinion said will include an appearance by 1996 Olympic record-breaking sprinter Michael Johnson.

Pinion said construction of the park's museum is complete and the committee is preparing to begin work on the inside and its contents.

"We're in the process of developing a story line for the museum on how we want to portray Jesse Owens' life," he said. "Owens' oldest daughter Gloria (Owens Hemphill) is developing the story line and from there we'll gather the artifacts to blend in with that story line."

Pinion said he and fellow board member Henry Buchanan will meet with Mrs. Hemphill at Ohio State University later this month and the three of them will sort through 35 boxes of articles the

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university has said they can use in the museum.

"There are pictures, trophies, posters and news articles," said Pinion. "They have the gold medals up there. They're not going to give them to us, but we can have them replicated and they'll look like the real thing."

If the story line is done in pictures, an artist will have to draw sketches of Owens' early life in Oakville, said Pinion. He said they may authorize the artist to draw sketches of Owens' exploits in college, his Olympic triumphs and his humanitarian work.

"We're in the process of hiring a company to build the display cases, design the inside of the museum and to work with us once we get the materials for the museum," Pinion said.

The committee also will have the company design the use of interactive videos, Pinion said. He said visitors to

the museum will be able to push buttons and see film of Owens in action or watch a person who knew Owens give details of his life.

Owens' brother Sylvester, according to Pinion, has agreed to appear on a video in the replica of the sharecropper's house the family shared when they lived in Oakville.

"We'll have a lot of interactive video that can be used, but we'll still need volunteers to make sure everything is running smooth," Pinion said. "I'm lining up the 40 people who have put their names on the list to volunteer. We're developing a handbook for our program called Volunteers In the Park so everybody will know what they're supposed to do."

Buchanan said the committee is working on a brochure to promote the park and said other promotions may include postcards. Colonial Bank has included a photograph of the park's statue in its 1997 calendar.

"It's an excellent promotional tool because it's distributed throughout the Southeastern United States," Pinion said.