

Aurora gears up for Canada 150 Celebrations

By Brock Weir

Cakes are being made, parade-marchers are practicing their paces, and national and community bands are polishing up their brass ? Aurora's Canada Day Celebrations are just around the corner.

This year, as the nation marks 150 years since Confederation, organizers say the pressure is on to make this year's festivities extra special, beginning with, as tradition dictates, the Canada Day Parade.

For the second year running, the Canada Day Parade will feature a shortened route, beginning at Mosley Street in the north, running south on Yonge Street to Murray Drive.

It will showcase colourful floats, community organizations, children's groups, and marching bands.

Everything is framed in the Canadian context, says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora, if this year's extra infusion of Canadian pride. The parade has a very strong multicultural theme to it. We have many different cultures represented with their performances, including Mexican dancers in full Mexican costume, a flare of colours from a variety of colours infusing the traditional marching bands, and we have also increase the size of the Governor General's Horse Guards' presence this year.

Following the end of the parade at 11 a.m., the party shifts once again to Lambert Willson Park for celebrations through 10 p.m. The festivities begin with a free pancake breakfast from the Optimist Club of Aurora, while quantities last, a ceremonial cake cutting led by Mayor Geoff Dawe, Citizen of the Year Peter Van Schaik, Members of Council, and leaders from Aurora's twin, Leksand, Sweden.

The first half of the celebrations in the park will also include performances from the Aurora Community Band, which will debut a new original composition, a Birds of Prey show featuring Canadian wildlife, and Canadian musicians throughout the day.

After the Birds of Prey visual performance, we will be moving into Blue Radio, a tribute to Blue Rodeo, and we will also have one of our local bands, called The Chums, perform, says Ms. Ware. Then we will have our annual Aurora Teen Idol competition before capping the event off with The Wheat Kings, a tribute to The Tragically Hip, before a really dynamic fireworks display. Ms. Ware is hoping the torrential downpours experienced this week will have cleared well in advance of the Canada Day Party, particularly for the Fireworks Display.

There is probably more pressure to want to get it right and to ensure that we're trying all things from all angles, and also hoping that we are meeting the expectations within the community, says Ms. Ware of the extra-special Canada Day. The whole Canada 150 theme is a very easy theme to work with because our history is very vast, very diverse and very rich, so it is easy to pull elements from to celebrate which we have been able to infuse throughout all of our events to date and those being executed this summer onwards to the end of the year.