

Fresh fun and returning favourites planned for Arctic Adventure



By Brock Weir

Keep warm with a blast of Arctic chill this Monday at the Town of Aurora's Arctic Adventure.

The annual Aurora tradition returns to Town Park this Monday for Family Day and organizers promise a host of returning favourites and what is hoped to be the start of some new traditions.

"This is our only outdoor winter festival of the year," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town. "In the summer we have our routine concerts, Canada Day, and those types of things, but here we get to shake it up a bit. We get to see professional ice carvers, outdoor skating, snowshoeing and activities we get to present at this event that we don't have the opportunity to do at others."

Returning this year after a gap is "Speaking of Wildlife", an animal show-style presentation that will allow residents to get up close and personal with many of Canada's winter animals, such as baby foxes and coyotes and owls.

Canada's First Nations will also be represented, opening the festivities with, fittingly for Family Day, a presentation on family traditions of our native people.

"I always find this presentation to be so emotional and so life-changing because these First Nations describe what families were like 22,000 years ago when they were the first families in Canada," says Ms. Ware.

Outside of the band shell entertainment which will be hopping throughout the event, additional activities include the Battle of the Chainsaws, an ice carving competition hosted by Mayor Geoff Dawe and former mayor Tim Jones, "Arctic golf", bouncy castles, an outdoor fishing pond, curling, snowshoeing, and skating on the outdoor rink "weather permitting, of course.

"We've had great weather and the outdoor ice surface at Town Park is stellar right now," says Ms. Ware.

New this year is a partnership between the Town and the Aurora Farmers' Market, which will be setting up shop once again at the Aurora Armoury.

"We're really hoping that people who attend Arctic Adventure are going to discover the Farmers' Market and maybe become new, faithful attendees every Saturday," says Ms. Ware. "With winter, we try to stretch out the activities across further landscapes so people are walking further from one end to the other because we want to ensure people stay moving for the warmth factor.

?For some people, this will be the first time for many people trying snowshoeing and I think the enthusiasm of trying those types of experiences aren't routinely available in Aurora and it makes the day pretty amazing. Yet, the entertainment on the stage is very, very strong, which can also cause a family to stand there for six hours. I think it is fantastic now that we have the use of the Armouries because those who really are chilled have the opportunity to go in and discover the market, take a break from the outside and return again.?

A roaring bonfire will also be kindled for additional warmth.

But, what if Mother Nature has other ideas?

?We are Canadians, so we're used to this kind of weather and we will persevere throughout with a smile,? says Ms. Ware. ?The best way to realise why Aurora is such a fantastic place to live and work is to come and experience an event like this on Family Day. This is where families get to come together in the community. It really is a must-attend event because it is in your back yard.?