

IN GOOD COMPANY: Tons of ways to get involved

Tons of Ways to Get Involved in Aurora!

By Mayor Geoff Dawe

Rain and a drop in temperatures is a tell-tale sign that we are on the cusp of autumn.

Despite the weekend drizzle and a bit of chill, the 10th anniversary of Aurora's Ribfest went off without a hitch. Our headline bands Chilliwack and The Spoons rocked the house with great performances of their signature 80s hits.

The Hoedown Showdown featured some fantastic local talent and I crowned Bone Daddy's as the Best Ribs winner!

Ribfest is one of The Town of Aurora's signature events; three days of food, fun and activities for the whole family. Rain or shine, this weekend always delivers great entertainment. It takes a lot of work, and I would like to thank Town staff for another stellar job! Rain also threatened our Celebration of the Queen's Reign on September 9 in Queen's Diamond Jubilee Park, but the clouds parted long enough to raise the Canadian Red Ensign, host a citizenship re-affirmation and acknowledge the unsurpassed reign of Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II.

It was a great afternoon, shared with Queen's Diamond Jubilee Award winners and dozens of Aurora residents. Special thanks to Councillor Jeff Thom for his efforts to bring this celebration to fruition.

At Town Hall we are moving quickly into the 2016 Budget discussion.

This year, our goal is to have the entire 2016 Budget approved before year's end. Consultation with the public on how their municipal property tax dollars are spent is essential to ensuring that residents are getting value for their money. Further to that, I am pleased to announce the return of our Citizen Budget online survey.

The Citizen Budget survey will be available until October 30 at aurora.citizenbudget.com or www.aurora.ca/citizenbudget. Those who took the survey last year will note the familiar 13 core service areas as well as the easy-to-use sliders to indicate an increase or decrease in spending. This is a great tool to help residents understand the wealth of services they receive from their municipal property taxes.

It is also useful for members of Town Council to determine how we are doing in providing appropriate service levels. Residents who take the survey will be enrolled to win a \$250 Cineplex gift card.

In addition to Citizen Budget, the Town is moving forward with a new Sport Plan and Parks & Recreation Master Plan update. The plans encourage greater collaboration with community partners to make good use of existing recreational facilities over the next five years. Residents can provide input to help determine priorities for sports in our community by answering the survey at www.aurora.ca/sportplan or www.aurora.ca/masterplan.

I would like to take a moment to highlight some upcoming meetings and events which will be taking place. On September 30, the Town is hosting the second Public Planning meeting to discuss the Highland Gate applications. As with the first planning meeting, this session will be held at St. Maximilian Kolbe High School at 6:30 p.m. to ensure we have adequate seating for interested residents.

On September 18 and 19, the ever-popular Hoedown Presented by Magna, returns to Aurora. This year's event features live entertainment by The Jim Cuddy Band and Dallas Smith & The Road Hammers. There are silent auctions, raffles and the finals of the Hoedown Showdown Talent Competition. Tickets are available at hoedown.ca.

On September 20, I invite you to join me at the 35th annual Terry Fox Run, held at Sheppard's Bush. Hundreds of people turn out at this great fundraiser in support of cancer research, and I am looking forward to another great year. Registration kicks off at 8:30 a.m. and the run starts at 10 a.m. I hope to see you there!

The Town of Aurora hosts a ton of happenings and events all year long. To help residents keep track of things to do, we recently launched Aurora Matters, our new monthly E-Newsletter. If you haven't signed up, I encourage you to do so. Visit www.aurora.ca/auroramatters to enroll and you will receive email updates at the beginning of each month.

Before signing off, remember to visit www.aurora.ca/specialevents and follow us on Facebook and Twitter for information on upcoming events and initiatives.

On October 8, our popular Colours of Fall Concert takes place, and on October 24 our spooky spectacular Haunted Forest returns for another scary run. These events are a great way to stay active and healthy, which is something I will be promoting in the coming months with my Mayor's Task Force on Physical Activity.

Stay tuned to In Good Company for more information.