

Bust out your Red & White for a two-day Canada Day party

It's time to dust off everything red and white because Canada's Birthday Town has a two-day party planned to celebrate the country.

Canada Day is just around the corner and on Monday, June 30, celebrations will begin with the Town's annual Dance in the Park, sponsored by the Rotary Club of Aurora.

This year's program will take place around the band shell, opening with North of the Border, a band led by Aurora's own James Brown. They will be followed by another local band, Tangent, and the duelling bands are anything but ? they're currently putting their heads together on complementary song lists focused on Canadian musicians, with no duplication between acts.

?It's a solid, four-hour party,? says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora.

Dance in the Park takes place at Town Park from 7 ? 11 p.m.

Don't stay up too late, however; the party continues bright and early on Tuesday, July 1, with the traditional Canada Day Parade up Yonge Street from Edward Street in the south to Aurora Heights Drive in the north.

?I think with Canada Day this year there's a lot more to celebrate and a lot more to be mindful, especially with [the] political climate to the south. I think we've got a lot to celebrate up here,? says Ware.

The parade, which begins at 10 a.m., will boast several marching bands ? including two bands new for 2025 ? and a bevy of cultural performers, along with an appearance from the Governor General's Horse Guards, and much more.

The parade will be marshalled by volunteers from the Men's Shed at the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

?The only thing we don't have control over is the weather, but if there's a little bit of liquid sunshine, persevere through it ? it will just make the day more refreshing!? says Ware.

Following the Parade, the fun shifts over to Lambert Willson Park, just behind the Aurora Family Leisure Complex, for activities that will keep everyone entertained from the late morning until the traditional fireworks display at nightfall.

?Our Canada Day has always been designed around travelling Canada in Lambert Willson Park with interactive and educational activities reflective of each province and territory,? ware continues. ?I am pretty proud of our Passport concept because I don't know if any other municipality [does it]. It's a lot of work to come up with new activities for a province and territory, but I think we really bring the true celebration of what Canada is, and about it.?

The Passport activity showcases many aspects of Canadian life.

The Alberta activity, for instance, is inspired by the Remington Carriage Museum, which is the world's largest and oldest museum of wagons. On Canada Day, an Ontario-based collector will bring one of his own historic wagons for residents to explore. Dinosaurs will also be the order of the day in ?Saskatchewan,? where the largest T-rex example yet found was discovered.

The Nunavut station will showcase the ingenuity of the residents of Canada's newest territory, particularly their conversion of shipping containers into greenhouses to grow veggies and much more all year round, despite the cold climate.

Other activities throughout the day will be a Citizenship Reaffirmation ceremony at the start of the day, the ever-popular Birds of Prey show, showcases from Science North, a LEGO lounge, and live entertainment from Aurora artists The Beresfords, a tribute to Great Big Sea, and, before the fireworks, a performance by Run To You, a Bryan Adams tribute.

?Aurora has been cheering on Canada Day [from the beginning] and planning these events you come to understand maybe the Canadian spirit or what it means to be Canadian ? and even to celebrate Canada Day,? says Ware. ?Canada is so amazing ? there are so many different facets, it's still evolving, and there are still gems to be discovered. It's such an incredible country to learn and discover. This is one day out of the year investing in learning how great our country is.?

For a full roster of Canada Day programs, including virtual offerings, visit aurora.ca/canadaday.

By Brock Weir