

Dallas Smith and The Road Hammers to headline 2015 Hoedown

By Brock Weir

Award-winning country rockers Dallas Smith and The Road Hammers are set to headline this year's Wild, Wild West Hoedown.

Hosted by Magna International at their Wellington Street Campus, this year's party ? one of the biggest annual bashes in York Region ? is slated to be a two-night extravaganza showcasing popular, established singers and new and emerging local talent.

Festivities get underway on Friday, September 18 under the Hoedown tent with an early afternoon Hoedown organized by the York Region District School Board for special needs kids in both the public and Catholic streams. In the evening, however, the night belongs to The Jim Cuddy Band, as well as country hopefuls who have made the finals of the annual Hoedown Showdown.

Performing their final songs, the winner will be critiqued at the event by a panel of judges before the ultimate winner is crowned.

The main event, however, takes place on Saturday, September 19, when Juno-winners Dallas Smith and The Road Hammers ? along with the Showdown winner ? conspire to make it a foot stompin' evening to remember.

Saturday's headliners were announced at Adena Springs, the farm owned by Magna founder Frank Stronach, last Wednesday morning. The official Hoedown launch brought together the 15 local charities and non-profits that will share proceeds from this year's event, organizations which span the length and breadth of York Region.

This year's Hoedown will be the 27th since Frank Stronach founded the event as a backyard barbeque. With one exception, it has taken place every year ? and it has grown each and every time.

?It was strictly going to be a barbeque ? and it was ? but it has turned into a pretty big barbeque,? said Magna's Marc Neeb, stressing the importance of these charities and non-profits who help make the event possible, selling both event and raffle tickets. ?The key purpose for having a Hoedown is obviously to make sure Magna gives back to the community. That has always been important to us.

?This is one event in particular that is so dependent on volunteers. All of you have jobs, you're all busy, but you're finding time to make sure you're contributing to this and we know we wouldn't be able to sell tickets or get people to come to the event if it wasn't for you. That is why we're happy to be a partner in this event because we know the backbone of the event and the volunteers really make it happen.?

This was a sentiment shared by Councillor John Abel, who said the event also speaks to breaking down barriers across York Region.

?It really brings and draws all these organizations and volunteers together and it really strengthens our community,? he said, of the company which recently announced their decision to leave Aurora for King by 2017. ?It's a big benefit to all of us. We would like to thank Magna for calling York Region their home ? and they have committed to making it their home again.?