

Earth Week to be marked with Eco Fair for Aurorans of all ages

By Brock Weir

Earth Week was started with noble intentions but, over time, has become 'meaningless for most people,' according to Aurora's Mel James, a member of Aurora's Environmental Advisory Committee (EAC).

While kids and environmental groups, he says, might be an exception to the rule, it's time to really raise awareness of environmental initiatives and issues right in our own back yard.

Enter the inaugural Community Earth Week Fair.

Taking over the historic Aurora Armoury on Wednesday, April 20, from 5 ? 9 p.m., EAC welcomes all members of the public to learn more about how they can make a positive impact on the future of the Earth, all the while picking up handy pointers on how to reduce your energy consumption and, in turn, reduce your energy bills!

'Earth Week has actually become meaningless for most people, and yet children and different groups are very active,' says Mr. James. 'I was [recently at] the Region's EAC meeting and I was just gobsmacked by how much was going on in the Region and I asked, 'How come we don't know about this?' There is a huge amount of environmental and energy management things going on within governments, yet the public don't know. So, I decided something had to be done about this Fair.'

Working with a team within EAC, they brainstormed many different ideas on how this broad topic could be tackled, focusing on the energy side of things with local businesses that have stepped up to the plate to offer some green solutions.

'The Town is doing quite a bit with street lighting and solar, so we have those people coming in to explain what it is they're doing ? and it is also telling the public what the Town is doing with their taxes as well,' says Mr. James. 'It is going to be very interactive. We're going to have environmental groups and light commercial groups. The environmental groups will deal with everything environmental with activity centres. There will even be a person there who will teach you how to compost and there will be a bin with worms in it, and the planting of seeds.'

This first Community Earth Week Fair will shine a light on 'daily decisions' everyone can make to reduce carbon emissions and 'live in balance with the environment.' It will also look at ways of eating sustainably. Success for this inaugural event will, of course, be measured by the amount of traffic coming through the Armoury on April 20, but it is about much more than that.

'What amazes me is a community like Markham has three full-time people on the environmental side of things and they have Earth Week all week,' says Mr. James. 'The list of what the Region is doing is endless. They are targeting children, so both school Boards have an environmental person actively involved in working with the schools and we don't know about these things.'

'What we're attempting to do is bring those things out. If it is successful, then we will make it more successful next year and we can book the Aurora Family Leisure Complex where we have a gym and breakout rooms for lectures with experts to talk about certain things.'

'I just want people to come and have a good time. It will be a family day to make Earth Week meaningful so the public starts thinking.'