Festive Season continues with lighting of Aurora?s official Christmas Tree

By Brock Weir

Hundreds of people ? the young and the young-at-heart ? bundled up Friday night for the twelfth annual Aurora Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony.

Held in the forecourt of Town Hall, a Friday night ceremony was a first for Aurora, a first that paved the way for another first: the start of a three-day long Christmas Market outside the Aurora Seniors' Centre.

The ceremony was led by Geoff Dawe in his last official act as Aurora's Mayor.

?This is the last night of the 2014 ? 2018 term,? Mr. Dawe told the crowd before inviting returning, incoming and outgoing Council members to the stage and thanking event sponsors Aurora Home Hardware, Mead Electric, Desjardins, Rent Source and RBC. ?The holidays are always a time for joy, family and friends. It is also a time to reflect, perhaps, on those who are less fortunate than we are.?

With that, Mr. Dawe handed the microphone over to Major Brian Bishop of the Salvation Army who reminded attendees of the importance of the Salvation Army's Kettle Drive, led dignitaries through the lighting of the Peace Candle, and the audience through a round of festive Christmas carols.

Elsewhere, families were able to polish off a bit of Christmas shopping at the Market, which set up huts, tents, and even an igloo in the parking lot outside the Aurora Seniors' Centre. Market stalls continued inside where Mrs. Claus held court reading ?Twas The Night Before Christmas before a full house of eager youngsters.

Craft tables were busy in the next room while, outside, families lined up into the Aurora Arboretum for a chance to see some of Santa's reindeer inside historic Petch house.

Fire jugglers capped off Friday's outdoor entertainment, attractions throughout the weekend included performances from the Salvation Army Band, the Borealis Big Band, and Marquee Theatrical Productions.