

IN GOOD COMPANY

By Mayor Geoff Dawe

The holiday season is just around the corner!

It's about spending quality time with our family and friends and getting through the bustling tasks that accompany this time of year. Our community is waiting in great anticipation for a visit from our favorite man dressed in red, Santa Claus! I invite you all to join us at Aurora's Santa Claus Parade on Saturday, November 28 at 6 p.m. for a chance to see the decorated floats and submit your letters to Santa which will be collected for delivery to the North Pole!

Also, don't miss the upcoming Culture Quest event on Saturday, November 28 at 9 a.m. Help build a plan for Aurora's Cultural Precinct and mingle with Santa and his elves. Participate in an urban adventure race and receive clues while exploring downtown Aurora. Public feedback will be used in the development of Aurora's Cultural Precinct Plan. For more information on this project, please visit www.aurora.ca/culturalprecinct.

If you're still looking for something to do throughout the holiday season, Aurora's 10th Anniversary Tree Lighting Ceremony will be held on Wednesday, December 9 at Aurora Town Hall from 6:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Enjoy carolling led by The Salvation Army's Brass Band and participate in the important task of trimming the Town's tree. There will be festive games for the kids and Mrs. Claus will be reading ?Twas The Night Before Christmas. You'll also get a chance to see live reindeer up close!

Still don't have plans to ring in the New Year? Join us on Thursday, December 31 from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Aurora Family Leisure Complex. Celebrate the start of 2016 with complimentary hot chocolate, free skating and swimming, a reptile and magic show and many more fun activities. For more information on special events in Aurora, please visit www.aurora.ca/specialevents. The year is almost done but we are still working away on many important initiatives. Aurora Town Council and Town Staff have been effectively working through the budget process. Our goal is to have the final budget approved on Tuesday, December 8 at the Council Meeting. Feedback from our residents is invaluable. Thank you to everyone who provided their input on what they would like to see in Aurora's 2016 Budget. Please visit our budget web page at www.aurora.ca/budget for more details.

On another note, municipalities in Ontario face exceptional pressure about infrastructure development, access to quality services and the ability to generate sources of revenue to meet the needs of residents. With the emergence of cutbacks and increasing cost pressures, we need to find alternate sources of revenue versus the current user fees, taxes and development charges. The Provincial Government is investigating additional revenue opportunities similar to those provided for in The City of Toronto Act, which includes a municipal land transfer tax. The proposal is still under consideration by the Ontario Government. Stay tuned for further developments.

With the imminent onset of snow and ice, please remember that Winter Parking Restrictions are in effect from Sunday, November 15 to Friday, April 15, 2 a.m. to 6 a.m. Vehicles are not permitted to be parked on the street, over sidewalks or onto the roadway. This is hazardous for residents as it obstructs the ability for Infrastructure and Environmental Services staff to plow our roads and sidewalks. For more information, please call 905-726-4751 or visit www.aurora.ca.

During this holiday season, I would encourage everyone to participate in the tradition of giving. Please support the Aurora Food Pantry by donating non-perishable goods. Visit the pantry's website at www.aurorafoodpantry.ca to find out more about how you can help. I also encourage our community to give generously to Aurora's Salvation Army Kettle Drive. The campaign runs until Thursday, December 24 and contributions will provide practical assistance to vulnerable members of our community throughout the year. Look out for the kettles in Aurora at Town events, The Real Canadian Superstore, Metro and the three LCBOs in town.

Stay tuned to In Good Company for more information about Aurora.