

Procession will lead residents from Festival to Town Square opening

A procession led by Town Crier John Webster will bring residents from Saturday's Multicultural Festival at Town Park to the grand opening of Aurora Town Square.

Saturday is shaping up to be a busy day of celebration in the community as the annual Multicultural Festival, traditionally held at Town Park, will serve as a prelude to the Aurora Town Square's (ATS) grand opening celebrations where multicultural festivities will take over the brand-new space following the formal ribbon cutting at Victoria and Church Streets.

The fun begins on Saturday morning at 9 a.m. with a host of cultural programming from the band shell at Aurora Town Park. The Orient Dance Company will kick off the part with a performance celebrating the culture of China at 9.30 a.m. They will be followed at 10 a.m. (and again at 11.30 a.m.) with Huairapungo, showcasing the arts and culture of Ecuador.

Panwar Music and Dance Company, at 10.30 a.m., and again at 12 noon, will bring to life South Asian cultures while, at 11 a.m. Yavir will showcase the traditional dances of Ukraine.

"This year, for the first time ever, we're split between locations," says Shelley Ware, Special Events Coordinator for the Town of Aurora. "At 12.30, we're going to have the Town Crier lead a procession over to Town Square where, at 1 p.m., is the official ribbon cutting. Carrying on from 2 to 4 p.m., is an extension of what we did at Town Park, again with another multicultural showcase with different cultures, different groups, and different performers.

"When we move into Town Square, we will resume the multicultural showcase at 2 p.m., with a Bollywood performance, which I am quite excited about, and following that we go into Hips Don't Lie dance company, which is a Brazilian performance. Following them, we have an Egyptian belly dance performance and then we will be closing again with a Hips Don't Lie dance company with a second Brazilian performance."

In addition to the performances, the Festival is a chance to savour the flavours of the world.

"In supporting a variety of local restaurants, kind of in the auspices of the Taste of Aurora, we're cooking Japanese dumplings, Middle Eastern fried beans, encapsulated as falafel, we're looking at arancini rice balls, and spanakopita, fried cheese wontons, spicy and non-spicy rice cakes, as well as beef, chicken and vegetable samosas, and quesadillas - a variety of appetizers from different cultures," says Ware.

"We're starting the day at Town Park and we're very excited to be ending the day at Town Square. Both properties, and I've walked this many times, are literally three-and-a-half to four minutes apart, so I am quite excited for the procession from Town Park into Town Square. One of the measures of success will be in seeing new faces coming out to this event as well as welcoming those we do see frequently at events. Of course, we also want to hear, see and feel the buzz of excitement as people tour the facilities, ask questions, check out amenities for the first time, which we all get to watch in a front row capacity. When you see someone discover the bridge for the first time, how dynamic it looks, showcasing the outdoor square, but then someone comes around the corner and checks out the Performance Hall for the first time all those layers of excitement will be really, really rewarding."

For a full roster of Multicultural Festival activities, visit www.aurora.ca/en/recreation-arts-and-culture/multicultural-festival.aspx.

By Brock Weir