

Tens of thousands expected at Sunday's Street Festival

Tens of thousands are expected to descend on Yonge Street this weekend as York Region's biggest annual tradition returns - the Aurora Chamber of Commerce's Street Festival.

The Aurora Street Festival, which has taken over Yonge Street from Wellington in the north to Murray Drive in the south on the first Sunday in June for more than 25 years, will once again span the heart of Aurora's Downtown Core on June 7, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m.

More than 500 vendors are set to take part this year offering something for everyone, with entertainment dotted all along the route to add to the Festival atmosphere.

"This Street Festival has been running for more than 25 years and it started as a community garage sale to what it is today - with over 500 different vendors lining the two-kilometre route," says Aurora Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Alison Mumford. "We have a number of vendors who come back year after year and they request the same spots because they know their customers are going to be looking for them. But we also have a lot of new vendors and that's always exciting.

"It's just such a fun community event. There are very few communities who get to shut down such a large road like Yonge Street, and when you're standing in the middle of it, the volume of people who are all coming out for this event, if you think about 25,000 - 30,000 people, it's like a stadium and it's cool to picture that all along Yonge Street."

On board with their support for this year's Aurora Street Festival is NewRoads Aurora Toyota, which is the event's Presenting Sponsor, as well as the Osborne Goddard Re/max Team, the Town of Aurora, and Telmax.

Partnering on entertainment this year is the Aurora Cultural Centre, which will program a stage near the Aurora Public Library, while returning favourites, Coyotes, will play the stage near Brookland. Buskers like The Fire Guy will perform along the route throughout the day.

The ever-popular Craft Beer Festival is also back as an added attraction.

"One of the coolest things about planning [the Festival] is just seeing the variety of vendors," says Mumford. "Some of them come from Aurora, some of them come from outside Aurora. They come back year after year, but from as far as 50-, 100-, 200-kilometres away, and they make it a point of making the Aurora Street Festival one of the annual events they attend. As an organizer, it's really cool to see the variety of people who want to take part in the festival. On the day of, it's hard to get to all 500 vendors. It's busy, there's lots of stuff going on, you can spend all day walking up and down Yonge Street and still miss certain people. For me, it's being able to connect with each of these different businesses and meet all kinds of different people, whether they're Chamber members, local businesses, or coming from elsewhere.

"It's a rain or shine event, so come out and support local and support all of these vendors. Parking is not available on Yonge Street, but there's lots of parking around and there's no any one point of entry, you don't need to start at one end of Yonge Street or another. This is one of those you-must-experience-it types of days. It's hard to describe it without being there and experiencing it."

For more information on this weekend's event, visit www.aurorachamber.on.ca/aurorastreetfestival.

By Brock Weir
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