

Treaties Week honoured with new 'on location' Museum exhibit

Treaties Recognition Week, a time to examine all our roles as Treaty People, is now underway and is being marked locally by the Aurora Museum & Archives with a new 'on location' exhibition at the Royal Rose Gallery.

Members of the Museum Team were at the downtown Aurora gallery, which has evolved into something of a community hub, on Monday afternoon putting the finishing touches on the exhibition, which takes pride of place in the centre of the gallery.

The new 'Aurora Museum & Archives: On Location' exhibition follows the inaugural show paying tribute to the 100th anniversary of the Aurora Horse Show.

Treaties Recognition Week was first recognized in Ontario in 2006 with legislation designating the first full week of November as a time to honour the importance of treaties and assist Ontarians of all ages learn more about treaty rights and relationships.

Treaties are legally binding documents that outline the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people.

The Town of Aurora is part of 1805's Treaty #13 and The Williams Treaties, which were signed in 1923.

'By learning more about our collective treaty rights and obligations, we can create greater understanding and nurture relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples,' said the Town of Aurora in a statement. 'Treaties Recognition Week represents one of the many steps in Ontario's journey of healing and reconciliation with Indigenous peoples.'

Added Mayor Tom Mrakas: 'In observance of Treaties Recognition Week, I urge our community to learn more about the significance of treaties and their relevance as we progress on a path to reconciliation. Learning more about what a treaty is and the rights and responsibilities regarding treaties will help us build and foster the relationship with our Indigenous partners. This is a great opportunity to learn, reflect and discuss the importance of treaties.'

In addition to the exhibition at the Royal Rose Gallery, the Museum has produced an interactive website to help residents learn more about Treaties and all they entail. This includes a map feature which will tell you exactly which treaties your home address fall under.

'Treaties are legally binding documents that outline the relationship between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people,' says the Museum. The Royal Proclamation of 1763 established the recognition of Indigenous rights and title in Canada including self-determination setting the stage for treaty negotiations. It forbade the settlement of British colonists on native lands and is enshrined in the Canadian Constitution (1982). Canada, however, has not always upheld its end of the bargain forcing First Nations to seek remediation through the Canadian legal system.

'For most of the 20th century, the Canadian policy of assimilation and colonial practices to solve the 'Indian Problem' stood in the way of swift resolution. Land claim negotiations continue to this day in areas that were never covered by a treaty, or where original treaty negotiations are questioned. After the American Revolution there was a growing demand for land, which was granted as a reward for loyalty to the British Crown. The first land grants in Aurora date to 1797 and were issued to William McClellan and Thomas Phillips on the West side of Yonge, and to Charles Fathers, and Frederick Smith on the East side of Yonge. By 1806, most of the land on either side of Yonge Street in Aurora had been claimed.'

For more visit www.aurora.ca/en/Museum/treaties.aspx. The exhibition runs through December 2.

By Brock Weir
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