

Veterans to be remembered and celebrated this fall with street banner program

By Brock Weir

Each year, Aurorans pause on Remembrance Day ? and the Sunday before it ? to remember the fallen and pay tribute to those servicemen and women who were able to make it home with services at the Cenotaph and a parade down Yonge Street.

But, this year, the Aurora branch of the Royal Canadian Legion, in partnership with the Town of Aurora, is spearheading a new way to remember.

Approved by Council last month, the Legion has launched its Honour Our Veterans Program, which will see the images of over 40 veterans ? past and present ? flown from lampposts in Aurora's Downtown Core beginning this October until just after Remembrance Day, and brought out each year in the same time period for three years, the life expectancy of each banner.

?The mission is to honour our veterans ? our local veterans, deceased veterans, and active service members or veterans who have a service member associated with Aurora ? and promote remembrance in our community.? says Ken White of the Aurora Legion. ?It is to be used for the benefit of recognizing those who served or are currently serving in the Canadian, Allied or Commonwealth forces and have a tie to Aurora. This can include those born in Aurora, those who resided or currently reside in Aurora, or those who have a close connection to Aurora. Priority in the 2016 program might or might not be given to living veterans depending on how many submissions we get.?

The Honour Our Veterans program will be administered by a Legion committee, which will retain the sole authority to approve the creation and installation of the banners, which must meet strict guidelines.

In addition to the photograph of each man or woman honoured, the banner will include the Canadian and British flags, the phrase ?Lest We Forget?, an image of the evocative red poppy, and the logos of both the Legion and the Town of Aurora.

Veterans will be recognized for their service in the following categories: Army, Navy, Air Force and Merchant Marines. But, they will be recognized without rank.

?We want all veterans to be recognized as equals,? says Mr. White.

Veterans and servicemen and women will also be recognized for the following theatres and missions: the First World War, the Second World War, Korean War, Afghanistan, Peacekeeping, Regular Forces, and Reserve Forces.

If you have a special serviceman or woman you would like to see honoured, the Legion is now accepting submissions of individuals, along with sponsorship opportunities. Individual sponsorship is available at the cost of \$200 a banner and applications are available for pickup from the Legion at 105 Industrial Parkway North or at Town Hall.

?Thank you so much for bringing forward such incredible ideas to honour our veterans,? said Councillor Sandra Humfries, after Mr. White presented the proposal to Council, which was approved on consent. ?We will continue to do things of this nature to honour our veterans and I am just so excited to see this this year, coming up to Remembrance Day.?

Added Councillor Jeff Thom, himself a member of the Legion: ?I appreciate you coming forward with this. This is a really excellent idea and it is really important to keep remembering and honouring our veterans. We look forward to seeing it in the community.?

Mayor Geoff Dawe echoed the sentiment: ?We look forward to these flying in Downtown Aurora.?

The completed banners are expected to be raised October 3.