

## AuroraFest 150 - September 15-24, 2017



One of the most comprehensive and broad based community events ever to be held in Thompson is coming in September 2017. AuroraFest 150 will be a 10 day festival to celebrate the 150 year anniversary of Confederation. A gamut of activities will occur during the day, evening, and at night to photograph Aurora Borealis, experience nature, paint beautiful autumn colours, taste multi-cultural dishes, howl with the wolves, admire beautiful art and photography, and participate in various cultural experiences.

Spirit Way Inc. (SWI) is the primary host and has received a \$48,500 grant from the Canada 150 Fund. SWI will partner with MaMowWeTak Friendship Centre and numerous other sponsors who are currently being solicited and briefed on the various activities that were approved by the Fund. A representative of Canada 150 stated SWI's application was one of the most comprehensive they had received and were glad to see the variety of fun things that will happen and the inclusive nature of the events, many of which will be unique to Thompson that will not be held elsewhere during Canada's sesquicentennial year. As this is funded by the federal government, most information will be bilingual, and activities will be inclusive of our indigenous, French, and immigrant communities.

Over the course of 10 days from September 15 to 24, 2017, there will be a sunrise indigenous ceremony, community BBQ, a Wolf Week with two movie actor wolves from Alberta, art and photo contests, displays, People Choice photo awards, a pow wow, music and dance, DSLR and smart phone photography workshops, field shoots of northern lights, a pop-up restaurant near a river, a mass Millennium Trail bike ride, a GPS wolf hunt, steak and spud evening, birch bark biting workshop, a paint and wine evening, two major professional entertainment shows, a Guinness World Book of Records attempt (to be announced), animal puppet shows, youth and elder feast, hot chocolate and face painting party, ethnic food tastings, mini brewery beer fest, plus numerous activities at Thompson schools and AuroraFest souvenirs and Canadiana

## **AuroraFest 150 - September 15-24, 2017**

giveaways. Special guest speaker(s) have been invited from Ottawa. There will also be volunteer awards and celebrations when it's all over for those who sign up to help make it all happen.

The idea for AuroraFest originated with a loosely knit group of night photographers called the Thompson Aurora Borealis Enthusiasts. They intended to hold a conference that would take aficionados into the night to shoot northern lights. Although that event was delayed, the seed was still dormant until Hugh Fraser, retired teacher and superintendent from the School District of Mystery Lake mentioned it to some directors with SWI. As Spirit Way Inc is all about building community pride through art and culture, the goal was immediately to partner and apply for Canada 150 funding. After several revisions to the application to meet the criteria that the federal program required, the final approval and 100% of the ask was awarded in April, 2017. Meetings, organizing, and presentations have been ongoing since.

Marion Morberg, President of SWI, and Hugh Fraser have been appointed as co-chairs of AuroraFest 150. Design North and Wise Sage Social Media will prepare marketing and social media campaigns that will launch in July. Current efforts underway are in planning and meeting with partners and stakeholders and any group interested to help make Thompson's new and innovative event happen. On-going promotion and communication will take place all summer. Management of the festival's affairs will go into overdrive in September when students are back to school and active. It is expected that September is a great month for beautiful autumn colours, exposure of northern lights, and a perfect adjustment time for people from summer to winter.

### **AURORAFEST 150 COMING SOON!**

Co-chair Hugh Fraser stated: " This event for the whole community will be every bit the dream we had as Thompson photographers to offer a unique celebration of all that is wonderful about living in Northern Manitoba. I am excited and gratified to see our dream realized."