

Caledon East to celebrate bicentennial

By Zachary Roman

Another of Caledon's historic villages is going to be celebrating its 200th birthday soon.

That village is Caledon East, and the celebration will be held on August 27 from 4 to 9 p.m. at the Caledon East Park. A full day of events is planned, beginning at 4 p.m. with a plaque and trowel presentation at Airport Road on the Caledon Trailway.

Remarks from speakers will be made and the Sandhill Pipes and Drums will be playing to mark the occasion.

To beat the summer heat, Main Street Ice Cream will be providing delicious cold treats, subsidized by Cheryl Robb at Royal LePage and Andrea Prieur at Core Solutions. Howard the Butcher will be grilling up hot dogs, and there's going to be free bicentennial cookies for residents too.

Downey's Farm will be providing free pumpkin donuts, and the Davis Family Farm will be providing free sunflower seeds for the occasion.

Heritage Caledon and the Caledon East & District Historical Society will be present to educate people on the village's history. There's going to be a Caledon East heritage poster display, and independent historical walking tours that people can embark on.?

For the kids, the Town of Caledon's Recreation department will be on hand with their games and activities, as well as Sparky the Fire Dog and a Caledon Fire truck. The Caledon OPP will host an open house from 2 to 6 p.m., the Caledon Parent Child Centre will be in attendance, and another Art Crawl like the one that recently happened on August 13 will also occur.

Local vendors, drawings of what the new Caledon East Community Complex will look like, and more all round out the day's long list of things to see and do.

The bicentennial will finish with a beautiful bang at 9 p.m. as a fireworks show is planned to begin at that time.

The land on which Caledon East sits has been used by Indigenous peoples for millennia, such as the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee. It's part of the Treaty Lands and Territory of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation and was acquired by the British Crown in 1818.

The first settlers in what's now Caledon East were Elizabeth Tarbox and her husband Elisha. Elizabeth was the daughter of a United Empire Loyalist, and received a grant of 200 acres of land at what's now the corner of Old Church and Airport roads in 1818. She and her husband built a log cabin there and after completing other duties required for settlement, received full ownership of the land in December 1821.

Caledon East's early days saw people follow the Tarboxes to the area and get into agriculture.

A grist mill on Innis Lake and a roadside tavern were some non-farming ventures that just didn't quite pan out in the village's early days. A newcomer to Caledon East, then known as Tarbox Corners, spearheaded some of the first successful non-agricultural developments in the area.

His name was William Stone, and he and builder Joseph Carter built a store and several other buildings.

In 1851, a man named Joseph McDougall's general store began doubling as a post office. It was named Caledon East due to its easterly position in the Township of Caledon. The tradition of merchants serving as the village's postmaster lasted for 110 years.

Fast-forward to 1877, and the Hamilton & Northwestern Railway added a stop in Caledon East, and named it Caledon East, like the post office. From then on, Caledon East was known to all by its current name. The train coming to the village offered passenger, freight, and telegraph services.

Caledon East was formally incorporated in 1957 after it saw a post-war boom in population. By that time, subdivisions had been developed, the village had a volunteer fire service, and many successful family businesses that had been running for multiple generations. In 1976, two years after Albion, Caledon, and the north half of Chinguacousy township amalgamated to become Caledon, the civic campus in Caledon East was built. Caledon East's central location made it the perfect place to be the civic centre of Caledon.

Elizabeth and Elisha Tarbox's second home is still standing today on Walker Road West, and since it was built in the 1840s, it's Caledon East's oldest building.

Caledon East's history certainly can't be summed up in one short article, and those interested in learning more can visit the Caledon East bicentennial celebrations on the 27th.