

Caledon Village to celebrate Bicentennial on September 24

By Zachary Roman

Caledon Village residents will be celebrating their village's bicentennial later next Saturday.

On September 24, a day of events is planned to celebrate the big day at the Caledon Village Fairgrounds.

Things will begin at 10 a.m. when attending dignitaries will be piped in as they walk to a stage set up for the day's opening ceremonies, which begin at 10.15 a.m.

In the exhibit hall at the fairgrounds, there will be a display on Caledon Village's history set up by Heritage Caledon members.

The Dufferin Piecemakers will be displaying their quilts and quilting, and heritage artifacts from Caledon Village will be on display too. Also in the hall will be presentations on the aggregate industry in Caledon Village, beginning at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m. respectively.

For the kids, there will be a magic show, face painting, and lots of games.

Caledon Fire will be displaying fire trucks from three different eras, and the Caledon OPP will be in attendance as well. Musicians will perform live all day, including a children's choir, gospel choir, retro bands, and Terry Chishom.

There will be many food options available at the bicentennial celebration, such as peameal on a bun, Cuban food, ice cream, home-baked treats, kettle corn, and burgers and hot dogs. There will also be a beer garden.

Fay McRea, a member of the Caledon Village Association and an event coordinator for the bicentennial, explained planning for the event originally began in 2020, but then the pandemic hit. Planning resumed in March of this year.

McRea said she's been interested in local history since she moved to Caledon in 1970. She's not so much interested in her own family history or genealogy like many are, she just loves local histories.

McRea has used her love of history and been a member of Heritage Caledon and the Caledon Heritage Foundation.

"I have about 35 binders of history in my closet," said McRae. "I shared all my pictures with Heritage Caledon, who will have a great display? they're all volunteers and they do a tremendous job of putting all this history together."

The land that Caledon Village now sits on was first surveyed in 1819, after it was acquired by the British Crown a year earlier in 1818 through the Ajetance Purchase. The land's original inhabitants were Indigenous people, including the Huron-Wendat and Haudenosaunee. The land continues to be within the treaty lands of the Mississaugas of the Credit First Nation.

Caledon Village was at the geographic centre of the former Caledon Township, and the first settlers there were Allen Eddy, James McNabb, and William Mattice.

Those three men arrived in 1820, and just a year later, McNabb sold his property to the Bell family. This was the start of the Bell family's long history in Caledon Village.

Caledon Village was established at the corner of what's now Highway 10 and Charleston Sideroad. A general store was built at that intersection in 1836 by a merchant from Brampton by the name of George Wright, and a year later it was taken over by a man named James Charles.

That led to the village being called Charleston; though in 1839, George Bell opened up the village's first post office and named it Caledon. Bell also donated land for a schoolhouse and Presbyterian church and cemetery.

By 1846, Caledon Village had a Town Hall and two hotels, and by 1854 its first subdivision was registered.

Sadly, in the early 1860s, a fire destroyed one of the hotels, but the area was soon rebuilt.

Caledon Village benefited greatly from the Toronto Grey & Bruce Railway coming through it in 1871, and this drove growth of the village to new levels. The Caledon Agricultural Society was soon formed, and many new tradespeople came to the village.

By 1880, the village had a full-time doctor by the name of Duncan McFayden.

Caledon Village has a history that cannot be captured in just one article, said McRea, and she encourages people to come out to the bicentennial on the September 24.