

Ottawa Journal by David Tilson MP ? Christmas lights across Canada 2015 is a to be seen

The Christmas season has officially arrived.

One sure sign the season has arrived is the many beautiful and unique Christmas light displays we see here in Dufferin-Caledon. Another sign is the arrival of the 31st edition of Christmas Lights Across Canada. It is a spectacular display in our capital cities from coast to coast to coast, which brings great national pride and adds to the joy of the season.

The Christmas Lights Across Canada Program began in 1985. It was intended to showcase the many significant landmarks and historical sites on Confederation Boulevard, which includes Parliament Hill, national museums, monuments, embassies, and symbolic buildings in the Canada's Capital Region and to launch the holiday season, as well as to enhance the unique and very special character of Canada's capital city during the winter season.

The 2015 edition of Christmas Lights Across Canada began Dec. 2 with an official illumination ceremony which took place on Parliament Hill. The ceremony typically attracts thousands for this official kick-off. Once the lights have been officially turned on for the season, thousands of Christmas lights can be seen on Confederation Boulevard, a ceremonial route of 7.5 kilometres, which forms a loop that includes Wellington Street, Mackenzie Street, Elgin Street and Sussex Drive in downtown Ottawa, as well as Laurier Street in Gatineau Quebec and the Alexandra Bridge. The highlights of the display are often the front lawn of Parliament Hill, Confederation Square and the Alexandra Bridge.

Outside of our nation's capital, the Christmas Lights Across Canada program is also hosted by each of Canada's 13 provincial and territorial capitals. Each provincial and territorial capital offers an outstanding and unique display every December. It's definitely something to put on your list of sites to explore in Canada. If you're unable to take in any of the Christmas light displays in either the capital or in the provincial or territorial capitals, you may visit Canadian Heritage's website at <http://canada.pch.gc.ca> to view photos of the dazzling displays.

Each year, I have the honour of being in Ottawa to see the Christmas lights on Confederation Boulevard and it is truly magnificent. If you're looking for a vacation closer to home with your loved ones this year, I highly recommend a visit to our nation's capital to see this display and the many wonderful and historical attractions Canada's capital city has to offer. It will surely be a highlight of your Christmas holidays!

