

Peel Region officially enters Stage 3 of provincial reopening

Written By ALYSSA PARKHILL

"While more restaurants, theatres and businesses can hang up their Open for Business Sign, we're asking everyone to follow public health advice and act responsibly," said Premier Doug Ford, at the announcement that all regions would be moving into the final phase of the economic reopening.

Peel Region finally moved into Phase 3 last Friday (July 31), joining Toronto and Windsor-Essex in the third, and final phase of the relaunch.

Stage 3 allows public gatherings to increase to 50 people indoors, with individuals still expected to keep two meters apart from each other, and 100 people outdoors.

Indoor dining is now permitted at restaurants and bars, with strict health and safety measures in place.

"We have made tremendous progress that allows us to return to something a little closer to our normal lives this summer, but we are not out of the woods yet. This virus is still among us and we have to be extra cautious to avoid sparking a surge or an outbreak. I strongly urge everyone to continue following public health protocols," said Ford.

The Town of Caledon has announced additional services that are now available for the public in Stage 3.

Ice rinks at the Caledon East Community Complex are available for affiliate and partner groups as of Tuesday (August 4), while all parks and trails are now open. Playground equipment will be available effective Friday (August 7). As well the swimming pool at Mayfield Recreation Centre will be open for recreation and lane swims.

Fitness programs will be available at the Caledon Centre for Recreation and Wellness starting August 17.

"After seeing lower COVID-19 cases over the past several weeks, I'm happy to see Caledon moving into the next phase of recovery," announced Mayor Allan Thompson. "It's important that our residents and business community can start transitioning back into what our new reality might be. And, this also means that I'm counting on all of us to continue to work together to keep ourselves, our families and our community safe."

Landmark Cinemas across Ontario have opened as of last Friday (July 31). Safety measures have been implemented in each cinema according to local and provincial directions.

These include wearing face coverings while in the building, as well as maintaining physical distancing from those around. Each auditorium has a limit of 50 people as well as reduced showtimes. There is now an increased time in between shows to avoid heavy traffic in the cinema.

Enhanced cleaning and sanitization programs have been implemented, with additional cleaning crew members brought on board, which Landmark staff say will be dedicated to keeping the theatre clean at all times.

Crystal Larouche, owner of Crystal's Lucious Lashes in Bolton, was finally able to reopen her business as she patiently waited for Stage 3 to roll around.

"I feel very relieved and a lot of stress taken off my shoulders, because even though I was signed up to CERB, I barely had enough to cover my expenses while putting food on the table for my children," she explained. "I won't have to worry anymore where the money is coming from and how much left over there is for groceries."

Larouche and her family have been in business for over 30 years, she explained, and she understands and was raised with business ethics. It was difficult watching more and more businesses open around her, but she knew she had to remain patient.

?I choose to follow all the government rules and regulations,? she said. ?There were a lot of spa businesses still operating, but doing house calls or back door services. I had people ask me to work on them, but due to trying to stop the spread of COVID-19 and maintaining my business ethics, I kept my business closed.?

Crystal's Lucious Lashes has had to make several necessary safety changes to keep herself and her customers safe from the virus, but she is making it work after being open for a week now. Crystal says she's slowing adapting to the use of mandatory masks, even though they are constantly interfering with eye pads and tape used to apply the lashes.

While some businesses have been forced to up their prices during the pandemic, Crystal is honouring her pre-COVID-19 rates.

?I have to eat the cost of being closed for five months. I don't feel it's right to pass that cost onto my customers like other retail stores have done. There is a slight extra cost because of masks but this is inventory I used before COVID,? she explained. ?I don't have all my regulars back yet as some are not working still. Some ladies are also still working from home, so they don't have the need for eyelash extensions. In addition, we still can't have big gatherings or allowed to travel out of country, so the need for that is none.?

She added, ?I appreciate all my customers and am thankful for everyone who supports me. I know we can all get through this together to stop the spread of COVID. I miss all my customers and I know one day things will go back to normal. A new normal at that too.?