

Snowfest in Caledon will be a fun Family Day celebration

Voted Festival/Event of the Year by Ontario Tourism for the Hills of Headwaters Region, SnowFest 2014 returns for Family Day (Feb. 17).

There will be a full slate of winter activities at the Caledon Fairgrounds, including returning favourites, plus new features which will keep visitors of all ages engaged from the moment their boots, skates or snowshoes hit the snow.

Dedicated to winter fun, exercise and friendly competition, SnowFest activities will include snowshoeing, dog sled and horse drawn sleigh rides, a hockey match and public outdoor skating, a kids' snow castle competition, a special 'Chilly Cook-Off' and the centerpiece Firefighters Challenge.

The event is being hosted by the Caledon Agricultural Society.

'Community engagement is paramount,' observed Society First Vice-President Tim Forster, convenor of SnowFest.

He was referring to the competitions involving service clubs and community groups, churches, elementary school children and volunteer firefighters, who compete for podium positions and the coveted gold, silver and bronze medals.

'At James Dick Construction, we are absolutely thrilled with the success of SnowFest and the great community event that it has become,' commented James Dick Vice-President Greg Sweetnam. 'Tim Forster and his volunteer team have done an outstanding job building a festival out of, basically, a pile of snow and added a bunch of happy people.'

The company is the presenting sponsor of SnowFest.

New for 2014 is the visitor engaging Angel Mania and the first ever Ambassador Challenge involving Junior and Senior Fair Ambassadors from across the region in a timed obstacle race which tests speed and agility, plus prowess and ingenuity.

Spearheading the Ambassador Challenge, scheduled for 10:30 a.m. is Lindsay Bebbington, Caledon's own multi-tier former Ambassador and Queen of the Furrow. She has secured participation from neighbouring fair ambassadors, including Orangeville, Erin, Grand Valley, Shelburne and Fergus, with more to come.

Returning favourites include the kids Snow Castle Competition at the base of McDonalds Snow Mountain; the Chilly Cook-Off featuring culinary wizardry from the region's service clubs, local churches and community groups; the SnowFest Hockey Challenge; and a Snowpitch game.

Centerpiece of the event, the Firefighters Challenge will showcase dedicated firefighters (the majority of whom are volunteers) from across Caledon's nine fire stations, with each sponsored by community-minded realtors, in a Winter-Olympics style competition.

Competition, with a start time of 12:30, will be keen from each hall for this head-to-head style race against the clock. It will pit pairs of teams over simulated fire and rescue obstacles. Visitors will enjoy play-by-play action provided by the inimitable 'voice of radio' and Caledon resident Don Berns.

'Town of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services are pleased to take part in the Snowfest Firefighters Challenge again this Family Day,' remarked Fire Chief Dave Forfar. 'We're looking forward to a fun, family event for our whole community. Our firefighters are an integral part of this community, so it is fitting that we are here. I'm looking forward to cheering on the Challenge participants.'

In between heated medal competitions, SnowFest visitors can rest their cheering voices and engage with woodcarver Kevin Pinkney, learn snowshoeing from Caledon Hills Cycle, take a dog sled ride with the Good Guys Carting Dogs, enjoy a horse drawn sleigh ride or sharpen their blades for public skating immediately following the Hockey Challenge.

Visitors to SnowFest can enjoy winter comfort food at its best with Howard The Butcher's incomparable beef burgers. Back by popular demand are the legendary Beavertails.

'None of this would be possible without the support of an incredible team of volunteers and the generous support of not only our presenting sponsor, James Dick Construction, but the cast of support sponsors which include Scotiabank and their volunteer staff, the newly opened McDonalds in Caledon Village, Town of Caledon Fire and Emergency Services and the support of realtors who stepped up to the plate for the Firefighters Challenge,' Forster said.

Admission to Snowfest is free. The gates will open at 10 a.m. and things go to 4 p.m.

The Fairgrounds are on Highway 10, just south of Charleston Sideroad in Caledon village. For more information and schedules, visit www.snowfestcaledon.ca