



Sherwood Park Highland Gathering

A Festival of Celtic Traditions

July 13, 2019

Introduction

We are a diverse group of volunteers who love Celtic traditions and are looking to fill a need in the community for an annual highland gathering. Our objective is:

“to promote closer ties in the community through the use of Celtic music, dance, and traditions; to foster and promote community and create a family friendly event for all to enjoy.”

The **Highland Gathering** will be an outdoor event held at Broadmoor Lake in the heart of Sherwood Park ensuring easy access for all. The event will consist of piping and drumming competitions, massed band performances, highland dance competitions, and Scottish heavy games. There will also be children’s activities, food trucks, local craft beer gardens, community market, and a family Ceilidh.

What is a Highland Gathering?

The Highland Gathering will be a full day event. It will involve an all-day community market showcasing the vast array of service clubs, teams, and services available in Strathcona County. There will also be local vendors and artisans. The solo piping and drumming competitions will occur during the morning leading into an official opening of the games with a march-past consisting of a massed band. The pipe band competitions will begin in the afternoon and will be separated into different grades. Pipe bands are classified from grade 5 (Beginner) to grade 1 (professional). The closing ceremonies and awards will occur early in the evening. The day will also have highland dance competitions involving juvenile to professional. The Scottish heavy games will include events such as the caber toss and hammer throw and will take place throughout the day. There will be many other activities and events to augment the Highland Gathering and will involve a hybrid of Bagpipes and Indigenous drumming, children’s heavy games, face

painting, learn to dance sessions, food trucks, and local craft beer gardens. The event will wrap with a traditional family party called a “Ceilidh.”

Why Here and Now?

Strathcona County boasts a population of almost 100,000 passionate residents. Strathcona County invests heavily into the community and has been attracting many new events and businesses. The county is a showcase of tradition and culture and has a rich history in Canada. Since the cancelation of the Fort Edmonton Highland Games, many volunteers have banded together to fill the massive void left by the 28-year signature event. Many dancers and pipe bands rely on these sanctioned events to qualify for world competition. This event will be sanctioned and supported by the Alberta Society of Pipers and Drummers (ASPD) and ScotDance Canada.

Volunteerism has always been integral to every great event in this community and the Highland Gathering is an engine that is powered by volunteers in its planning and operation. Service Clubs, other groups and individuals are key to our plan. Now is the time to build on the momentum by staging a premier international experience. The vision is to make the Highland Gathering an annual celebration of culture that will span many years.

Benefits to the Municipality

The Highland Gathering will be a demonstration of what Strathcona County is capable of doing musically and culturally. It will heighten our place on the entertainment map and leverage our ability to attract top competitors. It will provide a venue for local performers looking to move to the next level of competition. And it will provide local businesses with a variety of opportunities. The previous event held at Fort Edmonton saw a draw of 1500 spectators for the event and over 500 participants. Many of the competitors are from out of town and some are international. The Highland Gathering will require numerous services including: accommodations, food and transportation; sound equipment and technical services; tent and fencing infrastructure; security and medical services. These will be sourced from within the City whenever possible.

The Venue and Show

All of the events and entertainment for the Highland Gathering will take place at Broadmoor Lake, Salisbury Athletic Park. The piping and drumming events will take place on the football field. The Scottish heavy games would utilize the baseball diamond. The Highland dance competition will occur in a tent on the soccer field. Judges and volunteers will use specially erected tents on site. Food trucks and community market will take place throughout the park. Bands and vendors will have access to the site on July 12th for site set-up. July 14th will be the teardown. The gates will open to the public at 8am on the Saturday and will close at 11pm.

Who Are We?

We are incorporated under the Societies Act, Government of Alberta as the 'Real Celtic Music Players Society'. Our dynamic and versatile committee members are:
Mike Johnson – Chair (RCMP Regimental Pipes & Drums, High School Teacher);
Shawn Styan – Vice Chair (RCMP Regimental Pipes & Drums);
Roxanne Carr –Director (former Mayor of Strathcona County);
David Johnson – Secretary/Treasurer (Executive Director ACCO, MBA Finance.);
Jenn Prezza - Director (Alberta Society of Pipers & Drummers);
Bob Scott – Director (President of Real Celtic Music Players Society).

For more information, please contact:

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