

## **Press Release: Embro Highland Games ON THE MOVE after 80 YEARS!**

Plans are well underway for the **81<sup>st</sup> Embro Highland Games** taking place on **July 1, 2018**, with one major change - after 80 years, the Zorra Caledonian Society will be moving the Games to **Canada's Outdoor Park** home of Canada's Outdoor Farm Show located at 744906 Oxford Road 17, northwest of Woodstock.

"As the Games continue to grow and diversify to offer new programming to our traditional offerings, we require more physical space, and also adequate separation between the various activities" states Gord MacKay, the newly-elected Society president. For 2018, the Society is launching a Rugby Sevens tournament (men's & women's), increasing the amount of Scottish livestock on site (cattle, horses and sheep) and adding a local craft brew flavour to the event. Returning to the Games will be the Ontario Heavy Events Championships, tug of war, massed pipe bands, a Highland dance competition, Scottish dogs on parade and live Celtic music. Canada's Outdoor Park which is situated on 50 acres, also offers lots of convenient parking close to the event. Gate admission will be streamlined as one main entrance will be established.

An internal pressure the Society has been feeling is the amount of time that set-up and tear down have been taking in recent years. "We are a volunteer organization and people can only get so much time off work". At Canada's Outdoor Park there is perimeter and livestock fencing already in place, as well as shelters & pavilions, bleachers, benches, picnic tables and even people movers. Water and hydro are available for our food concessions and for the livestock penning. "With all of this available just 12 km east of Embro we did not have to go far to find a world-class outdoor event facility" states MacKay.

While the Games attracts annually 4,000 visitors, surveys done last year found that in addition to locals and visitors from along the Windsor - Toronto corridor, guests attended from Saudi Arabia, Japan, France, Germany and Alberta. "We are truly becoming an international event which no doubt is a result of advertising in the global marketplace and increasing our social media platforms" states MacKay. Canada's Outdoor Park is also very close to the birthplace of Rev. Dr. George Leslie MacKay (no relation) which is a popular stop for visitors from the Toronto Taiwanese community who often travel by bus to the Games.

"It was a difficult decision to leave Embro" states MacKay, "as it has been our home for 80 years (Matheson Park 1937- 1992 and Embro Zorra Community Centre 1993-2017) but the decision by the membership was unanimous so we will see how it all plays out".

Important to note, NOT moving with the rest of the Games, is the Embro Highland Games annual road race (2, 5 and 10 km) which is part of the Run Piker Series. The event, which attracts approx. 200 runners, will remain at the Embro Zorra Community Centre since the course is already marked and measured, and the committee decided moving it would be too much upheaval.

Follow us on Facebook, Snapchat & Instagram. For information on the Zorra Caledonian Society visit; [www.embrohighlandgames.ca](http://www.embrohighlandgames.ca) or contact the president, Gord MacKay at 519-475-4424, [gordmackay4@gmail.com](mailto:gordmackay4@gmail.com)