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Weekends 10 AM - 10 PM

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ICE ON WHYTE EMBODIES EDMONTON'S WINTER SPIRIT

Lucy Haines

Embracing Edmonton's status as a winter city has been an increasing priority for governments and event planners. Ours is the northernmost major city on the continent, so why not celebrate it loudly, say city fathers. More often, residents and visitors are seeing outdoor winter patios, free skating in front of city hall to the sound of swing music, and festivals of ice and snow—exhibit A: Ice on Whyte.

Feel like making a s'more at a snow-surrounded fire pit? Maybe a slide down an underlit, glistening and speedy ice slide? How about some toe-tapping music inside a heated entertainment tent, enjoying a craft beer or hot chocolate while winter rages outside? Ice on Whyte offers all that and more each January/February, an enticing reason for residents to get outside and play.

With the trend toward fat bikes (winter-friendly cycling), urban Nordic poles for winter walking and warming huts in city parks, Ice on Whyte festival producer Wanda Bornn says it's no wonder thousands venture out to End of Steel Park in the dead of winter to have fun in temperatures that can be in the minus 20s.

"We're one of the top winter festivals in Canada, and thousands come from all around for Ice on Whyte whatever the temperatures. It's also one of only three international ice carving competitions in the country—that's a big deal—and it's Old Strathcona's winter celebration too, a chance to get out and play with family and friends—to embrace the season," says Bornn.

Embracing the season becomes a focus when Edmonton welcomes the world for the International Winter Cities Conference, with

forward-thinking speakers from around the globe sharing ideas on how best to live in a winter city.

"We go toward things that generate light—candles, outdoor fire events, early Christmas decorations—these are all ways to make cities come alive outdoors in winter," says Daniel Firth, a winter cities strategies for Stockholm, Sweden—a city roughly on the same latitude as Fort McMurray.

Edmonton is inspiring other world cities with its own winter strategies—think the Freezeway, polar plunge fundraiser event, winter warming huts and events like Ice on Whyte, which get people moving and rosy cheeks smiling on even the coldest days.

"You see the kids on the slide or snow maze, and soon the parents are sliding too—blue jeans with a wet bum and all," laughs Bornn.



Have a fabulous & frosty Ice on Whyte Festival!

LINDA DUNCAN MP | Edmonton-Strathcona
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FRIENDS AND NEIGHBOURS CELEBRATE THE SEASON IN OLD STRATHCONA

Lucy Haines

Ice on Whyte is one of over 10 major festivals a year that fill the streets of Old Strathcona with revelers. It's a winter-time boon to boutiques, retailers, grocers and restaurants in the area that take advantage of the many festival-goers who move from the ice slides and entertainment tent at End of Steel Park to sleigh rides and shopping in and around Whyte Avenue each January and February.

The natural flow of visitors from festival site to the restaurants, cafés and shops in the neighborhood makes for a mutually beneficial relationship, according to Sydney McNeill, marketing manager for the Old Strathcona Business Association (OSBA). Time spent walking, browsing or people watching on the avenue usually translates into having a meal, meeting a friend for coffee or shopping the artisan crafts, books, clothing etc. That are the hallmark of this distinct area of the city.

"Retail loves Ice on Whyte," says McNeill, whose OSBA sponsors the L'il Chipper kids ice carving program for Ice on Whyte, as well as the free sleigh rides that bring visitors from the park to stops in Old Strathcona, close to shops and parking. For a donation to local charity (this year it's The Red Shoe Society) horse-drawn sleighs throughout Ice on Whyte weekend cover

several blocks of the area, great for hop-on/hop-off people-watching or getting from point A to B when the weather is especially chilly.

"This festival is a huge draw to the area, and many of the local restaurants and bars do a cocktail or food item related to Ice on Whyte," says McNeill. "This year, some spots have a Whiskey on Whyte promotion—it's a way for community to come together, and businesses get excited to share the popular event."

The Old Strathcona Farmers' Market is key to the Stew-Off competition, with chefs from local spots like Meat and Next Act vying for the title of best bison stew (which cold and hungry festival patrons get to enjoy). The OSFM provides the produce for the event, and offers free parking to Ice on Whyte visitors throughout the festival.

As well, area community leagues and residents are kept in the know on parking restrictions, while ETS provides needed public transport to the area. Festival producer Wanda Bornn says some 30 area businesses support Ice on Whyte (75 in the entire Edmonton area).

"Collaboration and partnerships—it's how Ice on Whyte rolls," says Bornn.



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the past 25 years like Ice on Whyte.





BEYOND THE FESTIVAL

OUTREACH PART OF ICE ON WHYTE'S BIG PICTURE

Lucy Haines

With the two weekend-long wintertime fun festival at its core, Ice on Whyte is a well-established success story. The Old Strathcona-based ice carving competition and family fun event of food, entertainment and outdoor activities draws around 50,000 to its winter wonderland each year, bringing commerce to the Whyte Avenue area, helping celebrate ours as a dynamic winter city, and growing the art/sport of ice carving.

But Ice on Whyte isn't just the January/February event of all things ice and snow. Sand on Whyte, for example, takes the carving concept to summer on Whyte Ave. too. Festival producer Wanda Bornn continues to parlay Ice on Whyte into an educational, outreach-style organization—one that is a resource for other Alberta communities looking to host ice festivals, learn about ice carving or hire local experts to create winter fetes in their own backyards—ice slides, snow mazes, carvings, etc.

"The invitation list keeps getting longer. We go from Ice on Whyte to events in Cold Lake and Blackfalds, working with and showing locals how to create ice and snow carvings," says Bornn. "It's been a few years where Ice on Whyte has become a bigger endeavour, growing winter

tourism in Canada and turning into a national event thanks to the Canada Cup of Ice Carving. As one of just three internationally-sanctioned competitions in Canada, bringing Canada Cup to Ice on Whyte in 2019 will be huge."

Bornn said hosting ice carvers from all over the world is invaluable for encouraging more ice carvers to take up the pastime. That's the case for local carvers Cliff Vacheresse and Mark Berge, who created the giant ice slide and kids zone slide and maze for this and past Ice on Whyte festivals. The amateur pair is tackling the weekend three-block challenge by carving a mythical beast called Ramnosafist.

"We've probably worked 200 hours on the giant slide since the start of January," says Vacheresse, a carpenter by trade. "The weather has been up and down, but we dress for the conditions-- it's always fun to work with snow and ice to make this slide fun and fast for everyone."

Berge says the pair looks forward to working with communities to create their own festivals of snow and ice, and to share expertise learned from Ice on Whyte. "We're always learning, whether we work around the pros at Ice on Whyte or teach and share with people in smaller towns and cities."



A DAY IN THE LIFE..... OF AN ICE CARVER

Lucy Haines

What's it like to be an ice carver? Twelve hour days spent outside in frigid temperatures, cutting, sawing, chiseling and chipping away at massive blocks of ice to create 3D sculptures—and bringing the design on the page to shimmery life before the wind and sun erode it all away.

Welcome to the world of an ice carver—an art, a sport, a testament of endurance for dozens of pairs who travel the globe each year to create works for festivals, competitions and exhibitions. At this year's Ice on Whyte festival, nine teams took part in the International Ice Carving competition, spending two days with several blocks of ice and above zero temperatures, shielded by tarps and wind guards and aiming for top honours and prizes.

Latvian carvers Karlis Ile and Maija Puncule took third place at this year's competition for their airy, flowing creation Summer Wind, which pictures a woman's hair, cape and gown billowing in the breeze. For Ile, who has been an ice carver for 16 years, but also works in many mediums (sand, plastic, with fire and grass etc) ice and snow are just one avenue of expression—albeit cold ones

"I've been doing this many years, so we dress for it. There's no bad weather, just bad clothing," laughs the layered competitor as he and Puncule carve an exhibit piece—an owl—from ice and snow before the festival opens. "We're like one big family, all the carvers from around the world, and we look forward to meeting up at these events. But the most important part for us is that people can watch us work, communicate with us, get up close and ask questions."

Puncule said so much depends on whether it's sunny, windy, or warm when carving, though the pair comes into a competition with a design in mind and hopes the weather cooperates. "We keep our fingers crossed for good weather, so the piece doesn't become unstable or melt," she says.

The Dutch team of Edith Van De Wetering and Wilfred Stijger also came to Edmonton a few days ahead of the ice competition, creating a snow sculpture into the giant ice slide in honour of Canada 150 and the Old Strathcona rail history.

"We use chips, chisels, chainsaw, rasp, shovels—different tools for ice or snow, but ones I've fashioned," says Stijger.

"We'd like to see new and younger people come into the field, with fresh ideas. But ice carvers are our family, our social life," adds Van De Wetering.



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ICE IS NICE -- IT'S NOT YOUR EVERYDAY FROZEN WATER AT ICE ON WHYTE

Lucy Haines

Do you ever wonder where the crystal clear, sparkling ice used for carvings at Ice on Whyte comes from? It's definitely not the same kind of ice we make in cube trays and stick in our fridge freezer. The cubes we make can be cloudy, bumpy, and chip easily into shards—not so with the professional-grade carving ice shipped in special for Edmonton's premiere winter festival and international ice carving competition.

In fact, with over 50,000 visitors taking in the annual snow and ice event in Old Strathcona, and Ice on Whyte marking one of just three such international competitions in the country (Lake Louise and Ottawa host the other two), organizers had better get only the best ice possible. Bragging rights and prizes are on the line, after all.

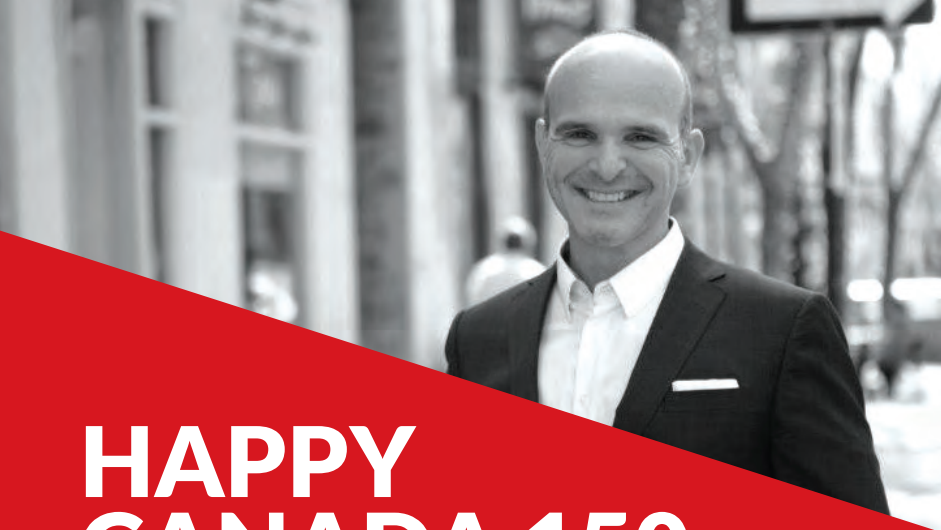
Ice on Whyte Festival producer Wanda Bornn says ice for the festival comes from Ice Culture in Hensall, Ontario, one of the only ice plants in Canada that makes the quality and quantity of ice needed for the ATCO International Ice Carving Competition. "Carving ice is made by a special process that freezes it from the bottom up so it is perfectly clear," says festival producer Wanda Bornn. "We believe it's the best carving ice you can get."

Ice on Whyte uses a whopping 360 blocks of ice for the competition, slide, exhibits and play area (not to mention countless dump trucks of packed snow). As each block of ice weighs 130 kg (286 pounds), that's a total of 46,800 kg or nearly 102,960 pounds of ice.

Competition carvings are each made of 15 blocks of ice, while this weekend's challenge for non-professional carvers uses three. Each ice block is .25M thick, .5M wide and 1M tall. It may take awhile to melt such huge chunks of ice, but Mother Nature can do a lot of damage with just a little sunshine and wind, according to carvers.

"Weather that is about minus ten and overcast is perfect for carving," says Wilfred Stijger, a professional carver at this year's Ice on Whyte. "When it's sunny and warm, the ice becomes unstable. When you put a chisel or chainsaw to it, it can crack into shards."

Ice carvers consider their work performance art--impermanent and ever-changing, just like sand castles that get pelted by rain or wash away in the tide. With ice carvings, wind can round off sharp edges and smooth out details.



HAPPY CANADA 150, EDMONTON!

May your 2017 be filled with amazing, uniquely Canadian experiences and celebrations to mark our nation's 150th birthday. We look forward to sharing it with you!

Randy Boissonnault, Edmonton Centre MP


Liberal



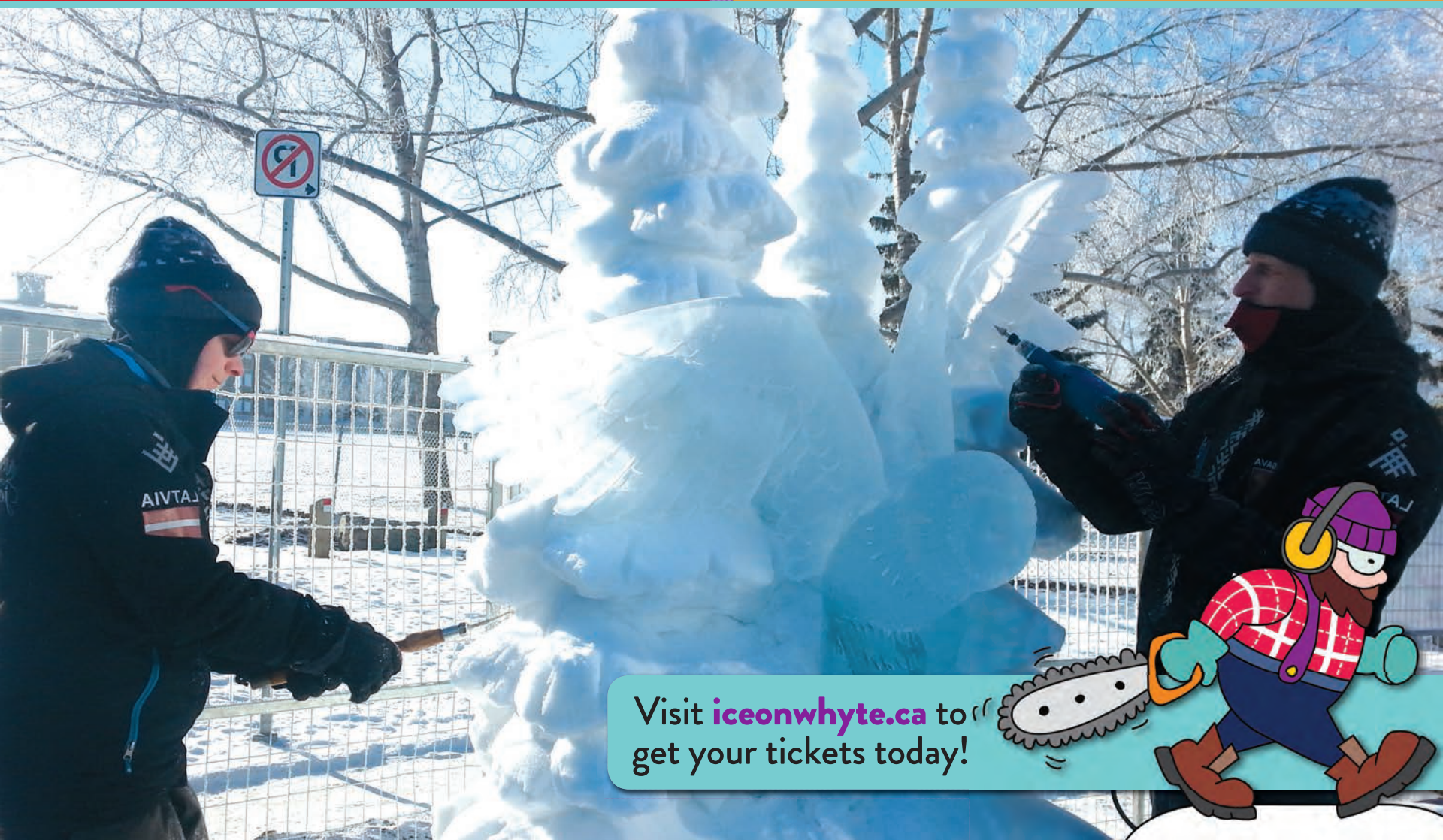
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get your tickets today!

ICE ON WHYTE 2017 CALENDAR OF EVENTS

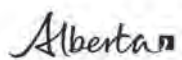
FEBRUARY 2 TO 5

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Weekends 10 AM - 10 PM

End of Steel Park in Old Strathcona

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THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 2

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

2 PM - 10 PM Forge
5 PM - 8 PM Edmonton House Brigade
6 PM - 10 PM The Rec Room Slide Races

CTV ENTERTAINMENT TENT:

2 PM - 10 PM Second Cup Café
5 PM - 9 PM ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen
2 PM - 10 PM Agrium Seed Survivor Station
3 PM - 6 PM Ordinary People...Extraordinary Stories
5 PM - 8 PM Edmonton House Brigade
5 PM - 10 PM Canada 150 Mural Painting Workshop

AGRIUM KIDS ZONE:

5 PM - 8 PM Crafts
5 PM - 8 PM L'il Chippers

FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 3

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

2 PM - 10 PM 3 Block Ice Carving Challenge
4 PM - 7 PM Edmonton House Brigade
2 PM - 10 PM Forge
6 PM - 10 PM The Rec Room Slide Races

CTV ENTERTAINMENT TENT:

2 PM - 10 PM Freeze Your Cask Off! (ticket holders only)

AGRIUM KIDS ZONE:

5 PM - 8 PM Crafts
2 PM - 10 PM Second Cup Café in the Igloo
6 PM - 7 PM Danielle Deighton in the Igloo
7 PM - 8 PM Nick Samoil in the Igloo

SATURDAY, FEBRUARY 4

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

10 AM - 12 PM 3 Block Ice Carving Challenge
10 AM - 10 PM Forge
12 PM - 4 PM Old Strathcona Sleigh Rides
4 PM - 7 PM Edmonton House Brigade
6 PM - 10 PM The Rec Room Slide Races

CTV ENTERTAINMENT TENT:

10 AM - 10 PM Second Cup Café
10 AM - 12 PM Edmonton Public Library
10 AM - 6 PM ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen
10 AM - 10 PM Agrium Seed Survivor Station
10 AM - 7 PM Ordinary People...Extraordinary Stories
2 PM - 3 PM 3 Block Challenge Awards
2 AM - 10 PM Edmonton Beer Geeks Anonymous Saloon
4 PM - 7 PM Edmonton House Brigade
7 PM - 9 PM Punch Drunk Cabaret

AGRIUM KIDS ZONE:

11 AM - 12 PM L'il Chippers 2 PM - 8 PM Crafts
2 PM - 3 PM L'il Chippers
5 PM - 6 PM L'il Chippers

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 5

FESTIVAL GROUNDS

10 AM - 10 PM Forge
12 PM - 4 PM Old Strathcona Sleigh Rides
1 PM - 3 PM Mr & Mrs White Picnic
5 AM - 8 PM Edmonton House Brigade
6 PM - 10 PM The Rec Room Slide Races
7 PM - 8 PM Festival Finale with Fire & Ice Show

CTV ENTERTAINMENT TENT:

10 AM - 10 PM Second Cup Café
12 PM - 6 PM ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen
10 AM - 10 PM Agrium Seed Survivor Station
10 AM - 1 PM Ordinary People...Extraordinary Stories
2 PM - 6 PM Old Strathcona Farmers Market Stew Off
2 PM - 10 PM Edmonton Beer Geeks Anonymous Saloon
3 PM - 4 PM Stew Off Awards
4 PM - 5 PM Ordinary People...Extraordinary Stories
5 PM - 8 PM Edmonton House Brigade
8 PM - 9 PM Martin Kerr

AGRIUM KIDS ZONE:

11 AM - 12 PM L'il Chippers 10 AM - 1 PM Crafts
2 PM - 3 PM L'il Chippers 2 PM - 6 PM Crafts
5 PM - 6 PM L'il Chippers

**FINAL
WEEKEND!**

LET IT SNOW!

It is our privilege to serve the Alberta communities where we live, work and volunteer. We are pleased to support the Ice on Whyte Festival.

**JOIN US THIS JANUARY 26 - 29 AND FEBRUARY 2 - 5
AT THE ICE ON WHYTE FESTIVAL!**

January 26 - 29: The ATCO International Ice Carving Competition

Watch as artists from around the world create breathtaking ice sculptures over the course of three days.

NOON, January 28: ATCO Ice Carving Competition judging

2 PM - 6 PM, February 5: Heritage Stew Off

Join ATCO Blue Flame Kitchen experts in the CTV Edmonton tent as we judge the best stews on the city.

> ATCOGas.com/IceOnWhyte to download
2 for 1 tickets to the festival, on us.

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