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Dufferin-Caledon festivals and events getting nearly $400,000

Five festivals and events in Dufferin?Caledon have been selected to receive $386,288 in funding through the Reconnect Festivals and Events program.

Funding for Festivals and Events in Dufferin-Caledon include:

? $232,550 for Rodeo Management Group's Headwaters?Orangeville RAM Rodeo

? $66,988 for Theatre Orangeville's 2021 Summer Series

? $61,250 for Downey's Farm Market's Christmas at the Farm and Sunflower Trail

? $25,500 for the Town of Orangeville's Summer Concert Series

?This is an important investment for the tourism and culture sector in Dufferin-Caledon,? said Jones. ?The support from the reconnect festivals and event program is allowing organizations and businesses to recover and relaunch events and activities that we have all missed during the pandemic.?

The provincial government is investing $43 million through the Reconnect Festivals and Events program, which is helping festival and event organizers deliver innovative and safe programming. This one-time funding is meant to ensure long-term success of the festival and event sector. The funding is supporting 439 festivals and events throughout Ontario.

Lisa MacLeod, Minister of Heritage, Sport, Tourism and Culture Industries, was joined by Michael Thompson, Chair of the Economic and Community Development Committee, City of Toronto to provide details about the announcement last Monday (Aug. 23) at the Grand Bizarre in Toronto.

?For more than a year, the pandemic has disproportionately impacted tourism and culture ? two major industries that bring people together and our communities to life,? said Minister MacLeod. ?Increasing our annual support for festival and events will give the sector a much-needed boost as we continue to deal with the effects of COVID-19. Our government is supporting organizations that are finding new ways to safely engage and reconnect Ontarians with their local communities while creating local jobs.?

The Reconnect Festivals and Events program (known as Celebrate Ontario prior to the COVID-19 pandemic) was developed to help festival and event organizers adapt to new public health measures with virtual, drive-through and other safe offerings. This ensures support is directed to community-based events with safe, innovative experiences, while creating opportunities that encourage Ontarians to reconnect with the beauty and diversity of their community in new ways.

This investment also includes $6 million to Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster events. The Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster program supports municipalities and organizations in Ontario to host largescale, high-impact signature events that draw significant tourist attendance and increase tourist spending, increase Ontario's profile through media and broadcast exposure and provide significant economic impact and legacy development for the province.

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, every $1 of provincial funding invested through Celebrate Ontario (the model for the Reconnect program) resulted in almost $21 of visitor spending. The impact of the 2021/22 Celebrate Ontario Blockbuster and Reconnect Festival and Event Program investment is estimated to generate over $1 billion in economic benefit across the province.