

14  
■ SUPPORT: Celebrations denied funding

# Grafton Canada Day organizers will dig deeper

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GRAFTON — Grafton's Canada Day parade and celebrations show small-town spirit at its best.

For the 2014 edition, however, more fundraising and donations than ever will be required, as the event has been denied financial assistance through the Celebrate Canada Program, Alnwick-Haldimand Township Sandra Walls reported last week.

This community-based event that has welcomed 23 summers, Walls added, and they were previously able to rely on some level of financial support through the program.

Grounds cited for denial were the fact that the event is traditionally held in advance of Canada Day and, in light of the number of requests received, events taking place on July 1 had to be given priority.

The organizing committee has met since receiving the news, Walls said, and they are still resolved to provide the best Canada Day celebrations possible.

"We are forging ahead with our event, regardless of the grant denial," Walls stated.

"We have some amazing events planned through our fire department, and are hoping that this will be another amazing Canada Day parade and celebration.

"We would just have to dig a little deeper to be able to financially support the event."

The fact is that holding the celebrations on the Sunday prior to July 1 has always worked well, Walls explained.

"We are able to book bands and groups to attend, without having to compete with so many of our surrounding municipalities who hold their events on July 1," she said.

"If we were to hold our event on July 1, we would not be able to compete with booking bands and dignitaries, or securing participants and onlookers."

Another way the early date serves residents and visitors alike is by offering the chance to expand their celebrations over a few days without having to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Grafton's Canada Day parade and celebrations show small-town spirit at its best, but their tradition of celebrating early — the Sunday prior to July 1, as in this photo from last year — means they did not get Celebrate Canada funding for the event this year.

choose one venue over another.

That goes for the MP and MPP, Walls added — they can join the celebrations without having prior commitments.

"Because of our specifically choosing to hold our Canada Day Parade on the Sunday prior, we have been fortunate to have the attendance and participation of our neighbour-

ing mayors, our local Royal Canadian Legion, the Band Chief of Alderville First Nation as well as an impressive participation and presentation by our Northumberland OPP," she said.

In prior years, the early date has never been a problem with receiving financial assistance, but Walls was told this year that the July 1 date is being strictly enforced.

"We were relieved to hear that our application for promotional items such as bookmarks and posters would still be filled this year regardless of the funding denial, and that being turned down this year would not have a negative impact on future consideration," she said.

Council has unanimously agreed that this decision will not

prevent the township proceeding with plans for 2014.

"This year's event is scheduled for Sunday, June 29, at 2 p.m. and will proceed as usual," Walls declared.

Not quite as usual — more advance legwork will be required to be able to enlist the support that will ensure that the show goes on. But Walls is determined that it will happen.

"Although we may have to dig a little deeper this year and fundraise a little harder, we will be celebrating both Canada Day as well as the spirit of the residents of Alnwick-Haldimand, who are second to none."

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