

NCCN-07-06-07-FS



The National Capital Commission presents

# Winterlude

in Canada's Capital Region

**Weekends from February 1 to 17, 2008**

## WINTERLUDE'S 30<sup>th</sup> EDITION

From **February 1 to 17, 2008**, North America's unique winter celebration will storm into town for three weekends of family fun during which Canada's Capital Region will be transformed into a one-of-a-kind winter destination.

Residents and visitors are invited to join more than **650,000 winter revellers** who come to Canada's Capital Region each year to take part in the festivities. From spectacular ice carvings and giant snow sculptures, to the world's largest naturally frozen ice rink, the biggest snow playground on the continent and an outdoor amphitheatre, Winterlude is a great way to take in the best of our Canadian winter.

## HISTORY

Created in 1979 by the National Capital Commission (NCC) to celebrate some of Canada's favourite winter traditions, Winterlude has since grown into a world-class festival which attracts hundreds of thousands of visitors each year. At the heart of this enchanting celebration, you'll find the **Rideau Canal Skateway** — recognized as the **world's largest naturally frozen ice rink** by Guinness World Records™. Each winter, the NCC welcomes skaters from around the globe who descend upon the **7.8-kilometre ice surface**. Families and fun-seekers alike will find a wide variety of services along the Skateway, including rest areas, food concessions, skate and sleigh rentals, skate sharpening and boot check services.

The Rideau Canal Skateway was the inspiration for Winterlude and that's where the majority of the events took place in the beginning. Over the years, the event grew in popularity and the festivities are now held on various official sites located on both sides of the Ottawa River, including Confederation Park's Crystal Garden in Ottawa and Jacques-Cartier Park's Snowflake Kingdom in Gatineau and, most recently, on the Snowbowl stage in Ottawa.

**Snowflake Kingdom**, located in Gatineau's Jacques-Cartier Park, is Winterlude's snow playground. This wintry paradise, with giant slides, snow labyrinth and traditional winter activities, is the ideal destination for the young and the young at heart. Snowflake Kingdom is also the home away from home for the Ice Hog family — Winterlude's furry mascots. Families can meet the **Ice Hogs** during their daily walkabout in Jacques-Cartier Park, where they are sure to get one of the mascots' legendary Ice Hog hugs. Snowflake Kingdom is also host to the **National Snow Sculpture Competition**, organized in collaboration with the Ville de Gatineau. During this competition, thirteen teams of sculptors from across Canada are challenged to transform giant blocks of snow into larger than life masterpieces.

**Crystal Garden** at Confederation Park in downtown Ottawa is the ideal stop for ice sculpture lovers. During the first weekend of Winterlude, visitors are invited to stop by Confederation Park to admire the spectacular works of art created during the 21<sup>st</sup> International Ice-Carving Competition by carvers from around the world. Visitors to Confederation Park will also have the opportunity to meet participants of Students on Ice 2007 Arctic Expedition and learn more about this part of Canada.

The **American Express Snowbowl** stage is the newest Winterlude site and features daytime and evening programming. This outdoor amphitheatre hosts a variety of free shows by Canadian artists from across the country during Winterlude. The evening performances are enhanced with special lighting effects and multi-media projections that provide spectators with an unforgettable experience.

## **WINTERLUDE FACTS**

- Since 1984, Winterlude has been the recipient of more than **30 awards** from the prestigious **International Festival and Event Association**.
- A 2004 survey estimated that **616,000 fun-seekers** took part in Winterlude activities that year.
- Each year, Winterlude welcomes **hundreds of performers, athletes and snow and ice carvers** from across Canada and around the world.
- A 2004 survey estimated that Winterlude-related spending generated a total of **\$151.7 million** of economic activity in Ontario and Quebec — **\$82.5 million** within Canada's Capital Region.
- In 1979, the first edition of Winterlude was presented with the help of a handful of volunteers. In 2007, more than **600 people** generously volunteered for the NCC during Winterlude, giving over 8,000 hours of their time helping out with various activities.
- Most Winterlude activities are **free of charge**. Registration and admission fees may apply to certain collaborators' and sporting events.

## **PUBLIC INFORMATION**

For more information on **Winterlude**, the public may contact the NCC at **(613) 239-5000** or **1 800 465-1867** or visit the website at **www.winterlude.gc.ca**. TTY (text telephone for the hearing impaired) (613) 239-5090 or toll-free at 1-866-661-3530.