

**City of Fort St. John
High On Ice Festival
Ice and Snow Event Agreement**

Background

The City partnered with the Arts Council to deliver the Ice and Snow component of the High on Ice Festival in 2004. It was recognized in 2009 that the Ice and Snow component required a formal agreement for service for both parties to outline roles and responsibilities as well as define the structure of the relationship for future events. A formal agreement was negotiated and signed for the 2010 high On Ice Event.

Purpose

The City of Fort St John (referred to as The City) hereby contracts the services of the Fort St John Community Arts Council (referred to as the Arts Council) to deliver the Ice and Snow Event (The Event) at the annual High On Ice Festival.

Within this agreement, the Arts Council is required to:

- a) develop, coordinate, deliver, maintain, execute and evaluate Ice and Snow project plans that are aligned with the City's vision and identified goals;
- b) Ensure that assigned areas of responsibility are performed within budget and assure effective and efficient use of budgeted funds, personnel, materials, facilities, and time.
- c) Prepare a final report back to Council to explain measurable outcomes of the festival, where & how the funding provided was used, & the overall measurable impacts to the community by no later than March 31 of each year.
- d) Submit the next year's budget by May 1.

Theme

The Arts Council will be consulted annually for feedback about the theme for each year's Event, however, setting the official theme shall be the responsibility of the City.

Sponsorship

The Arts Council shall develop their own sponsorship program for The Event and be solely responsible for providing any promised return on investment for each sponsor, including signage. All secured sponsorships must be identified in the Annual Report to Council.

The City may also develop a separate sponsorship program for other High On Ice activities, not including the Ice and Snow Event.

Each shall be required to reinvest all funds generated toward the betterment of the overall High On Ice Festival.

Expectations of the City:

- Act as the Chair for the entire High On Ice Festival
- Make an annual allocation of dollars to the Ice and Snow Event at least 6 months prior to the event date.

City of Fort St. John High On Ice Festival Strategic Plan

Background

The High on Ice Festival is held in January each year and includes an International Ice Carving Competition, snow sculpting, toboggan races, children's activities in the park, live entertainment, sleigh rides, an ice fishing derby, an "Over the Line" ball tournament, Mukluk Curling Bonspiel and Comedy Night. It is organized by a planning committee made up of various community organizations and interested citizens, and outside of the ice component plans which begin in May of each year, most planning starts in the fall for the following year's celebration.

High On Ice Festival Overall Vision

The following represents the vision that the City of Fort St John desires to create through the continued development of the High On Ice Festival:

- The City of Fort St John's High on Ice Festival is recognized as a signature community event and is one of the City's means of supporting and building capacity in the arts, culture and heritage of the region.
- Fort St John is an internationally competitive destination, renowned for our hospitable nature and acclaimed as the Province's most outstanding host community in Northern BC. The High On Ice Festival features a unique tourist draw in the winter season allowing our community to showcase our unrivaled hosting abilities.
- The High On Ice Festival provides a venue for local residents to celebrate our people, our spirit, and our talents. It is a fun filled event for all ages to enjoy during our winter months designed to encourage healthy, active families and lifestyles.

The overall festival is separated into two distinct planning areas: Ice and Snow Events and Community Celebrations.

Ice and Snow Event Vision

The following represents the vision that the City of Fort St John desires to create through the continued development of the Ice and Snow event:

- A celebration of visual art and local culture is brought to the annual High on Ice event through the ice and snow carving events and competitions.
- Ice and snow events foster our local artists and provide a venue for new enthusiasts to develop their skills and techniques related to carving, and offers a community based venue to showcase, celebrate, and promote Fort St John's talented residents.
- The High On Ice Festival's Professional Carving is known globally as a premier competition for carvers. Further, the masterpieces created each year by professional and amateur carvers alike offers a unique attraction in Northern Canada and an established winter visitors' destination in Fort St. John.

Current Situation

The *High On Ice* Festival held each January features the only NICA sanctioned British Columbia Ice Carving Championship in its impressive list of activities, and one of only four in Canada including Ice Magic in Lake Louise, Winterlude in Ottawa, and Ice On Whyte in Edmonton. Lake Louise is run by Alberta Tourism, Winterlude is coordinated by the National Capital Commission, and Edmonton's tourism association manages Ice On Whyte. High On Ice is the only municipally operated NICA sanctioned ice carving competition in Canada.

Both local and international ice carvers from Russia, Japan, Belgium and the United States, as well as carvers from across Canada have competed in High On Ice in the past five years, creating artistic masterpieces easily rivaling any other ice carving competition in the world.

The City partnered with the Arts Council to deliver the Ice and Snow component of the High on Ice Festival in 2004. While ice carving is just one of the many components to this exciting festival and many partners come together to make the annual High On Ice Festival a success each year in Fort St John, the Ice and Snow Event makes the event unique across British Columbia.

By 2009, staff for both the Arts Council and the City had formally expressed that they were finding difficulty with the existing structure of our unwritten partnership for event delivery. In particular, the Arts Council was finding the Festival to be extremely taxing on the human and financial resources of their volunteer organization, and while they wanted to continue their involvement in the event, could not continue to deliver the Ice and Snow Event as it is now with their current resources.

In 2010, the Arts Council and the City signed an MOU with the Arts Council being responsible for all the Ice and Snow events. Task responsibilities were outlined in the MOU and as we continue to forge this new relationship we have clarified and confirmed roles for a seamless event.

The City expressed a desire for expansion and development of new and intermediate carvers within our local market in conjunction with continuing the professional carving competition. In 2009, the City requested changes to the Ice and Snow event format.

City of Fort St. John High On Ice Festival Strategic Plan

Current Situation (continued)

In 2010, it is reported that the event saw over a 50% increasing intermediate category. In addition, City Council no longer wanted to cover the full cost of professional carver travel expenses and per diems for commissioned works that are not requested by the City. Instead, these works would become contingent on receiving community sponsorships solicited by the Arts Council.

The Arts Council has brought forward a proposal for 2011 for a colored ice workshop. The cost associated will be outline in the 2011 budget.

2011 Goals for Ice and Snow Events:

Through strategic leadership (such as the previously identified Vision) and the goals seen below, City Council has identified the general direction and future for the Ice and Snow Event at the High On Ice Festival.

Goals:

1. To continue with the Professional carving component, limiting it to 8 teams (up to 16 participants).
Objectives:
 - Showcase highly skilled artists to our local community
 - Create a unique tourist draw for Fort St John
2. To continue a sponsorship program
Objectives:
 - Leverage the funds directed to Ice and Snow by the City to solicit sponsorships and cover the cost of commissioned works and related carver expenses.
 - Both the Arts Council and the City shall develop individual programs to meet the needs of the program as required
3. To expand the local carving component
Objectives:
 - Increase the number of local carvers competing at the event
 - Increase participation and promotion of "Add-on" programs such as the SD60 culinary presentation, carving events at NPSS, the carver's workshop held each November and others

Community Celebration Vision

The following represents the vision that the City of Fort St John desires to create through the continued development of the Community Celebration events:

The Community Celebration events of High On Ice promote overall community involvement for all demographics including families, adults, children and seniors.

It is a signature community event that residents can be proud of and enjoy and celebrate the winter season and outdoor activities.

City of Fort St. John High On Ice Festival Strategic Plan

Community Celebration Vision (continued)

The community celebration events are low cost or free and strive to include, develop and foster partnerships with other organizations to assist in coordination and implementation.

Current Situation

In addition to the Ice and Snow events, the High on Ice Festival includes a community celebration featuring toboggan races, children's activities in the park, live entertainment, sleigh rides, an ice fishing derby, an "Over the Line" ball tournament, Mukluk Curling Bonspiel and Comedy Night. It is organized by a planning committee made up of various community organizations and interested citizens, and planning starts in the fall of each year for the following year's celebration.

In addition to City staff, 2010 High On Ice Committee representatives included:

- Cathy & Russ Wilkinson, Volunteers
- Randy Kirschner, Northern Horse & Mule Harness Association
- Brian Kirschner, Lido Theatre
- Byron Stewart, Mudder Truckers Slowpitch Team
- Paul Rondeau, Backcountry
- Niki Hedges, Fort St John Arts Council
- Laurie MacKenzie, Fort St John Curling Club
- Tara O'Donnell, Fort St John Arts Council
- Audrey Fowler, Cadets

The event kicked off with our opening reception for dignitaries, sponsors, carvers, and volunteers on Thursday January 14 at the heated tent in Centennial Park, where candles lit the pathway to the festivities. Live entertainment was provided by Ryan Smetaniuk and mocktail bartenders served non alcoholic drink to the guests. Speeches began at 7:15pm and went for approximately 20 minutes. The reception concluded at 8:00pm.

The formal entertainment began Friday night at the Lido Theatre with a comedian. Children's activities in the park began Saturday Morning at 11:00pm. Saturday and Sunday the park activities included snow painting, 5 chute ice slide, face painting by the Girl guides, crafts with S.U.C.C.E.S.S. and a youth group and live entertainment. A special appearance by Frozen John was received well by the community. There were free sleigh rides at the Toboggan Hill. There were also toboggan races on both days. The activities in Centennial Park ran until 4:00pm and at 4:30pm the awards ceremony and Ice and Snow Event ended the celebration.

2011 Goals for Community Celebration event:

1. To encourage overall community participation

Objectives:

- Provide free or low cost activities for all ages
- Provide and showcase local entertainment
- Promote family involvement

City of Fort St. John High On Ice Festival Strategic Plan

2011 Goals for Community Celebration event: (continued)

2. To Celebrate the Winter Season

Objectives:

- Provide outdoor activities during the festival
- Encourage activities that promote the annual theme
- Work with ice and snow event to add more ice slides if budget allows
- Have a comedy show outdoors in the park for all ages

3. To coordinate a safe and non-congested site at Centennial Park

Objectives:

- Create and maintain safe walking spaces for the public.
- Work with Ice and Snow event to alleviate traffic congestion through ice sculptures

4. To continue to recognize our hard working volunteers.

5. To develop a coordinated sponsorship program

Objectives:

- Offset the funds directed to the event by the City

6. To develop a cooperative regional marketing plan for advertising High On Ice outside of the community.

Objectives:

- Promote High On Ice as a unique tourist attraction
- Increase the level of interest from professional carvers
- Increase the overall profile of the event regionally and nationally