

## *Canada Day in Mill Woods - Worth the effort and risk?*

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The Mill Woods Canada Day Celebration is a well-attended event that has become a community tradition over the last 28 years. 50,000+ people attend to enjoy the free entertainment, activities, displays, and of course, the spectacular fireworks. But is it worth the effort? Is it worth the risk?

I know what you're thinking. What effort and what risk? The city of Edmonton has deep pockets and no shortage of human resources and equipment to draw on. A \$130K is pocket change in a \$3-billion budget.

Except the city of Edmonton doesn't deliver the Mill Woods Canada Day event. They are a valued partner for sure, but the event is delivered by the Mill Woods Presidents' Council and a Canada Day committee of dedicated volunteers.

The Mill Woods Presidents' Council, or MWPC, is a small organization comprised of 12 members and four executive committee officers, all volunteers. The Canada Day committee of the MWPC is even smaller. Also small is the operational budget of the MWPC, most of which is goes to the Canada day event.

At this point you should be wondering, how does a small group of volunteers find time to recruit and organize 200 + volunteers, provide 6-hours of children's activities, deliver 8 hours of stage entertainment, set-up and tear-down the venue, and orchestrate the other dozen elements?

Dedication to the community and a belief that this event helps realize the MWPC's purpose: "to realize a thriving southeast Edmonton as a safe and supportive community to live, work and play." They simply make the time, find the energy, and persevere.

Ultimately, volunteers step forward



**"Carter and the Capitals", a high energy five-piece funk group from Edmonton, will be the headliner at this year's Canada Day celebration in Mill Woods.**

Photo: Carter and the Capitals

and their efforts inspire joyful smiles lighting up the faces of multitudes while simultaneously creating loving connections and enduring memories. The happy magic of life stuff that we all treasure.

That's the effort, tell us more about the risk.

I'm glad you asked.

As a self-funded event, it is up to the MWPC to find the money year-after-year. Half at best comes from grants, an unreliable source with ever changing conditions and often a complex application process. Some comes from members and earned casino proceeds. The rest, often the majority, comes from sponsors.

While you would think that as big and treasured as the Mill Woods Canada Day Celebration is, finding engaged community business sponsors would be easy. After all, this is a way to promote one's business, return value to the community that supports it, and an opportunity for social responsibility. Especially when sponsorship starts at \$50.00.

Following two consecutive record deficits, 2019 is the make-or-break year for the Mill Woods Canada Day Celebration. Another year of financial loss will almost certainly mean the end of the event to the detriment of southeast Edmonton. Joy and happiness don't trump financial reality.

It takes a community to deliver a community event. A community organization, strengthened by a community of volunteers, supported by a community of businesses.

Is it worth the effort and risk?

Of course! Joyful experience, happy memories and meaningful connections are priceless. They are the glue of community and the essence of the Mill Woods Canada Day Celebration.

See you Monday July 1st at the Mill Woods Canada Day Celebration.

[www.seedmonton.ca](http://www.seedmonton.ca)