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CANADA AT 150 –

# WHAT WILL YOUR COMMUNITY'S 2017 LEGACY BE?



Is there a Centennial Park in your community? A Centennial Trail or Garden perhaps? Judging by the show of hands when I asked about 200 parks professionals at this year's BCRPA Annual Spring Training event, 1967 was a good year for investing in parks and community amenities!

With Canada's 150th anniversary coming up in 2017, we need to start thinking about how communities will mark the occasion. As we enjoy a legacy of visionary investments made by our predecessors, we need to focus on creating tomorrow's heritage.

Engage your community in brainstorming ideas for Canada's 150th. Remind elected officials that they can make a big splash with a small investment.

- **RETROFIT.** Centennial amenities unveiled in 1967 are now deteriorating. Pick from your existing 5-year plan and invest in a mid-life rejuvenation of an existing facility.
- **EXPAND.** Add a new ceremonial entrance, a public plaza or public art to an existing facility. Plant 150 trees.

- **RE-BRAND.** Simply spruce up a section of trail and rename it. Sesquicentennial is not a catchy word, so consider Canada, Confederation, BC, Heritage, etc. Challenge Heritage Society folks to find a famous local resident or event from 1867 or 1917.
- **HAVE A PARTY.** Canada Day will not be the same as usual in 2017. Don't wait until 2016 to realize that every community around yours has big plans in place. Make your 2017 Canada Day program a much louder party than usual.
- **PARTNER.** Many groups are slowly waking up to the 150th. Be first in line to ask Rotary Clubs, banks and local industries to champion one of your 2017 initiatives.

Finally, think big. The recent "Experience the Fraser" project provided a unique

opportunity for Lower Mainland communities to work together on a network of waterfront trails.

As a kid yearning to become an urban planner, it was inspiring to see a new island built in the middle of the St Lawrence River, brilliant architecture and huge crowds visiting Montreal's Expo 67. I had the same feeling when BC hosted Expo 86 to mark its 100th anniversary. These investments left an extraordinary legacy of waterfront trails, parks and facilities. They created lasting tourism attractions such as Science World in Vancouver.

In BC communities, large and small, public sector officials need to show leadership, leverage Canada's 150th anniversary, and attract a larger share of the fiscal pie to invest in parks, recreation, heritage and art projects. ■