



*Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night*  
Family-Friendly Fun and Multicultural Festivities  
on New Year’s Eve at Victoria’s Inner Harbour

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For Immediate Release

VICTORIA, BC — Victoria’s iconic Inner Harbour will be the backdrop on New Year’s Eve for *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night*, a family-friendly, multicultural celebration, featuring festive lighting displays, live performances, local food vendors and spectacular fireworks to launch Canada’s 150<sup>th</sup>. The event will take place on Saturday, December 31, 2016 from 5 p.m. – 9:30 p.m.

This morning, Mayor Lisa Helps was joined by Member of Parliament Dan Ruimy (Pitt Meadows – Maple Ridge) and Alan Lowe, Chair of the Greater Victoria Spirit Committee at Victoria’s Inner Harbour to announce the event line-up planned for *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night*.

Victoria is located on the traditional territory of The Lekwungen People. The City of Victoria has declared 2017 a ‘Year of Reconciliation’ and will be working closely with the First Nations towards reconciliation as Canada marks its 150<sup>th</sup> in 2017.

*Spirit of 150 Victoria - First Night* will kick-off with a First Nations Welcome Ceremony and performances by the Lekwungen Dancers and the Esquimalt Singers on the First Night Main Stage. Fronting Government Street, the stage will be stepped back from the corner of Belleville and Government Streets, between the Royal BC Museum and the Legislature Building.

In October, the City of Victoria in partnership with the Greater Victoria Spirit Committee, announced [it had received \\$224,000](#) from Canadian Heritage’s [Canada 150 Fund](#) to host the *First Night* celebration. The City of Victoria is [one of 19 municipalities across Canada](#) to receive support from the Canada 150 Fund, designed to create opportunities for Canadians to participate in local, regional and national celebrations that contribute to building a sense of pride and attachment to Canada.

“On December 31, I encourage residents of Victoria to bundle up and come together with their loved ones to witness the greatest Canada-wide celebration in our country’s history,” said Member of Parliament Dan Ruimy. “Join the thousands of Canadians from coast to coast who will be kicking off the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Confederation.”

The First Night Main Stage will feature a diverse range of regional and local talent. Headlining the First Night celebrations will be Vancouver-based *Dear Rouge*, the husband and wife Juno winning duo of Drew and Danielle McTaggart. Their song, "I Heard I Had" peaked in the top 10 of the alternative and rock charts in Canada.

Also taking the Main Stage will be BC resident and Cuban-born, Alex Cuba. Harnessing the sugarcane-sweet melodies and pop-soul hooks, Cuba has won multiple awards including two JUNO Awards and a Latin Grammy Award.

Rounding out the stage performances will be the *Vic High R&B Performance Band*, *The Midnights*, and two additional acts still to be announced. The *Vic High R&B Performance Band* features local youth in Grades 9 - 12 who sing, play the trumpet, saxophone, trombone, electric bass, electric guitar, or drum kit. They will be accompanied by local 12-piece R&B band *The Midnights*.

"We are thrilled the Canada 150 Fund has made *Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night* an opportunity for the community to come together on the eve of Canada's sesquicentennial," said Mayor Lisa Helps. "What better place to commemorate Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary and begin our reconciliation with the First Nations than here at Victoria's Inner Harbour."

Creative lighting displays and projections on surrounding buildings will provide a welcoming, illuminated, family-friendly event. Large screens will flank the Main Stage, with additional screens located along Government Street.

"We invite Greater Victoria to join us for *First Night*," said Alan Lowe, Chair of the Greater Victoria Spirit Committee.

*Spirit of 150 Victoria – First Night* will culminate with spectacular fireworks at 9 p.m. over Victoria's Inner Harbour, timed with fireworks in the nation's capital. The family-friendly event will end at 9:30 p.m.

The public can learn more about what's planned by visiting the event's interactive website at [Spirit150victoria.ca](http://Spirit150victoria.ca), which launched today and is designed to be the one-stop resource for all Canada 150 events taking place in the Capital Region in 2017.

In addition to event listings, the website will feature engaging content, including "Spotlighted Stories from Canadians." Visitors to the site are invited to share their story on what Canada means to them by way of an audio recording, video or text submission. The website will also feature a full social media dashboard including Twitter, Facebook and Instagram feeds at a glance. For event updates, follow @Spirit150Victoria.

In addition to New Year's Eve, 11 days of multicultural programming are planned leading up to Canada's 150<sup>th</sup> on Saturday, July 1, 2017. To learn more on how to sponsor *Spirit of 150 Victoria First Night* and other upcoming Canada 150 programming, email [sponsorship@spirit150victoria.ca](mailto:sponsorship@spirit150victoria.ca). For general enquiries, email [info@spirit150victoria.ca](mailto:info@spirit150victoria.ca).

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