

Edmonton Downtown Business Association Kicks Off the Holiday Season on 104 Street with inaugural Downtown Winterval



The Edmonton Downtown Business Association celebrates the holiday season with the launch of a new winter festival called Downtown Winterval. The inaugural event will take place on the iconic 104 Street on December 1 and 2 and features free outdoor concerts, festive and cultural activities, free horse-drawn sleigh rides, an indoor Christmas market, an outdoor beer garden and more.

Building on the success of EDBA's holiday programming last year aimed at activating and showcasing businesses on Rice Howard Way, the holiday festivities will move to 104 Street for 2023.

"The holiday season is a magical time for people to come together in good company, and downtown has always been an important gathering place for Edmontonians at this time of year. It's also one of the most critical times of the year for our small businesses, and we're excited about the opportunity to create some new experiences and moments of joy to attract new visitors and patrons to discover all the incredible shops and restaurants we have in the area," says Puneeta McBryan, Chief Executive Officer, Edmonton Downtown Business Association.

"Winter events like Downtown Winterval support Edmonton's Winter City Strategy and encourage Edmontonians to get outside during the winter, have fun, connect with one another, and support small and local businesses with their holiday spending," adds Puneeta.

Celebrations will kick off on Friday, December 1 with free performances by Juno Award-nominated artists Jamie Fine and Rich Aucoin on the Winterval main stage. Vancouver alt-rock band Rare Americans will headline Downtown Winterval on Saturday, December 2, along with performances by local musicians and cultural arts organizations.

EPCOR comes onboard as Downtown Winterval's Celebration Partner. "We're inspired by the work of the Edmonton Downtown Business Association to promote the vibrancy of our city's downtown and to create an event where lasting memories happen this holiday season," says EPCOR President and CEO John Elford. "We invite everyone to take time to experience the fun, festivities and illuminated art brought to life by Downtown Winterval."

Visitors can also interact with the EPCOR Powering Memories installation, an LED light-art piece that celebrates how light and energy have been integral in creating many of our fondest holiday season memories.

To experience the full magic of Downtown Winterval, attendees are encouraged to wander 104 Street and neighboring streets to enjoy a variety of event programming and dining and shopping features at participating downtown businesses. Some highlights are:

- A kid-focused Christmas party at Rocky Mountain Icehouse featuring Santa Claus
- Free arcade games and food specials at Home & Away
- deVine Days at deVine Wines & Spirits
- A dog-friendly "Pawliday Party" at Fawkes Coffee Shop
- Caribbean Christmas celebrations at the Jamaican Association of Northern Alberta
- A Free crafting workshop with Alberta Craft Council
- Over-the-top holiday window displays
- A pop-up indoor Christmas market featuring downtown businesses and locally made gifts and treats, operated by the Edmonton Downtown Farmers Market

Michael Phair Park will come alive with family-friendly programming, including ice-carving stations, campfire baked apples, maple taffy and a second light-art installation.

Other Downtown Winterval partners and sponsors include the City of Edmonton, Downtown Edmonton Community League and the Michael Phair Park Group, and Hiregood who are all committed to building a lively and vibrant downtown.

Events like the EDBA's Downtown Winterval are helping to transform downtown Edmonton into a strong, vibrant, and safe recreation and shopping destination," says Mayor Amarjeet Sohi. "The City of Edmonton's Downtown Vibrancy fund supports our downtown partners in creating new and exciting experiences like Downtown Winterval that draw people to the downtown core."

"Local winter festivals and events encourage Edmontonians to get out into the community no matter what the weather may be, and they remind us all of why living in a winter city is an incredible opportunity. Downtown Winterval is only the beginning of what will be another exciting season of winter events and activations in Edmonton, and I hope many Edmontonians make it out to the festival." the Mayor adds.

Downtown Winterval kicks off the December event season for downtown Edmonton and is one of many festive events happening all-month long in the core.

Daily throughout December – The Ice District Plaza and City Hall Plaza skating rinks will be open daily for free public skating under a canopy of festive lights and larger-than-life holiday décor.

Dec. 1 – The Oil Kings present their 16th annual Teddy Bear Toss in support of 630 CHED Santas Anonymous. This season, it is expected that the Oil Kings and their fans will collect a record 150,000 bears, eclipsing the current total of 146,930.

Dec. 16 – The City of Edmonton hosts Bright Lights Skate Night at City Hall Plaza ice skating rink. During the event, visitors can see the holiday tree and moonGARDEN, an award-winning interactive art installation never before seen in Edmonton. Free skate rentals will be available.

Dec. 8 -23 –Stroll the Alberta Legislature grounds and enjoy the lights and sounds of Christmas. Scheduled performances will be held Fridays at noon and Saturday evenings in the Legislature Building Rotunda.

Dec. 27 – Dec. 31 – Corteo, Cirque du Soleil's enchanting arena production charms Edmonton audiences for the very first time. This one-of-a-kind production, directed by Daniele Finzi Pasca, was performed for the first time in Montreal in April 2005. Since its creation, the show has dazzled over 10 million people, in 20 countries on 4 continents.

Dec. 31 – Head to Sir Winston Churchill Square and City Hall Plaza to usher in a new year at the New Year's Eve Downtown Festival and Fireworks.

Visit edmontondowntown.com for full Downtown Winterval details and a list of downtown events happening throughout December.

[Hi-res images are available online.](#)

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