

Record crowd at beer and food festival

By Mark Pavilons

Smashing all previous attendance records, the King City Craft Beer and Food Truck Festival is a surefire hit.

The second annual event Saturday drew 5,603 visitors to Memorial Park to enjoy a full day brimming with suds, great food and amazing entertainment.

The King City event has finally come into its own, according to Councillor Cleve Mortelliti, one of the event's chief supporters and organizers.

"We knew we struck a chord in 2014 when we moved to the Craft Beer and Food Truck format and reached an all-time high of about 3,000 people, up from 1,000 people in total in 2013. And because the brewers and food trucks did not quite know what to expect in terms of numbers, some of them ran out of food and beer in the late afternoon last year.

"This year we asked them all to be prepared and we added a couple more food trucks in the hope that we would reach 4,000 people. The final count for Saturday was 5,604 people who walked through the ticket booth smashing the 2014 total by 2,600 people.

"With this success it has become a marketable event. This year for the first time we had sponsors coming to us, as well as the food truck vendors and craft brewers signing up months in advance. And since all of them did so well, they want to come back for 2016. I even had three people approach me wanting to sponsor for next year. So the future is bright.

"We (myself, Peter Culbertson, the sound and music coordinator, the KC Lions and parks staff) have been working on the King City event for five years now tweaking it every year to try to find our niche in the King Township context. The key to success for any event is sustainability, and it appears we have found our niche as this kind of event in King City seems to work very well as it provides something different."

Mortelliti added that as he toured the grounds for the last two events, he saw smiles and families making a family picnic day out of it. The adjacent skate park was packed with kids and he saw literally thousands of adults, young and old, talking and socializing for hours.

He pointed out that King City has historically never had anything like this sustained for more than two years, so it is very gratifying for me to see this event, now in its 5th year, evolve into such a great success."

Onward to 2016.

King Mayor Steve Pellegrini echoed Mortelliti's sentiments.

"I am extremely proud how this day has evolved into a premier event. We now have wonderful events in all parts of King from Soupfest in the Marsh, Main Street Christmas and the Annual Schomberg Agricultural Fair, to Victoria Day and Feast of Fields in Nobleton and we can't forget Christmas in Kettleby along with all our tree lighting events.

"Credit needs to go to Councillor Mortelliti and the King City Lions for starting this journey five years and now with staff's involvement we truly continue to shine a very bright light on King for all to see."

The economic impact, he noted, along with tourism opportunities that spin off from having 5,500 people visit are widespread.

"Thank you to all involved and especially the King Weekly Sentinel who partnered with us for the promotion of the event."