

TurtleFest 2025 – Press Release, April 25

Tillsonburg TurtleFest 2025 combines old favourites with new experiences

Some things are old and some things are new in the newly announced plans for the 12th annual Tillsonburg TurtleFest in downtown Tillsonburg on Friday June 13 and Saturday, June 15.

The town's signature downtown street festival includes many of the activities which have attracted tens of thousands of visitors in the past and the addition of new experiences as well.

"The TurtleFest Organizing Committee is always looking to make TurtleFest bigger and better," said TOC chairman Mark Renaud. "Every year we review the previous TurtleFest and suggestions from the residents to see how we can improve it going forward."

Activities on Friday, the 13th, include the ever popular Ninja Turtle outdoor movie on the grounds of Annandale at dusk. New this year is an afternoon art contest and exhibit at The Station Arts Gallery and more music and activities at The Tillsonburg Town Centre. The full schedule for Friday's activities will be announced shortly.

Activities at Annandale continue Saturday morning at 10 a.m. with crafts and turtle exhibits and more.

Saturday the street festival on Broadway from Bridge Street to Oxford/Bidwell begins at noon and ends with the mainstage concert beginning at 9:00 p.m.

New on Saturday is all day music on the mainstage at Broadway and Oxford/Baldwin streets, the Food Truck Fairway on Brock Street, Young Entrepreneur Alley on Ridout Street sponsored by Shaw's Ice Cream, and an Agricultural Zone in the Town Centre's north parking lot. There will be no VIP area this year, but local restaurants will feature patios where patrons can enjoy food and beverages while they listen to the music.

Among the favourite returning activities on Broadway are the popular "bouncy castle" inflatables, including last year's hit, the iconic TurtleFest turtle. The Station Arts' Creative Imagination Station is back offering face painting and crafts for hundreds of children. You can get a video of your best dance moves as you dance to the music at the 360 booth. The petting zoo is back, bigger and better than ever and Reptilia returns for year two, this time with a 45 foot trailer where you can see and learn about more than a dozen exotic reptiles. The ever-popular Carver Kings will also be back.

In addition, many of the more than 100 vendor booths on Broadway will offer a variety of interactive activities for young and old.

The mainstage will spotlight local performers in a variety of musical genres in the afternoon beginning at noon, followed by a 2-time Juno nominated artist. The evening concert is headlined by a popular rock-country band sponsored by TD Bank and Execulink, a slight change from the TurtleFest performers featured in the past. Details of times and performers will be announced in the coming days.

In response to feedback from attendees last year, we have created “Food Truck Fairway”, your one stop spot to curb those festival cravings. Gone are the days of walking up and down Broadway to find your perfect bite. Enjoy all the tasty treats in one designated place – also allowing the food trucks to be accessible during the evening concert.

Shaw’s Entrepreneur Alley is an area where young people up to 16 years old can showcase their own small businesses and the Agricultural Zone offers residents an opportunity to get up close with farm equipment and experience Tillsonburg’s rural roots.

“The success of TurtleFest is possible because of the participation of many local businesses who sponsor events and activities and more than 100 vendors who set up booths and engage people in interactive activities,” said Renaud. “We are also very thankful to the Town of Tillsonburg for its financial and logistical help, without which TurtleFest would not be possible.”

“Tillsonburg Town Council is pleased to support TurtleFest,” said Mayor Deb Gilvesey. “Our annual event is not just an event – it’s a tradition. It’s a chance to draw people into our downtown, to breathe life into our local shops, to fill our sidewalks with music and food and to remind ourselves that there’s something truly magical about small town life.”

Follow TurtleFest at www.turtlefest.ca and on facebook and watch for more information as it becomes available.

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