



Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Turns off the Taps and Closes the Kegs Marking Another Successful Year

Kitchener-Waterloo, Canada - October 14, 2012 - The festival that has impacted the local economy to the tune of \$21 Million annually, has wrapped up with another feather in its Bavarian fun hat. Last night Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest officially ended its 44th year with Closing Ceremonies at one of the newer festhallen locations, the Chicopee Haus. Festival organizers and guests looked on as the ceremonial keg was sealed in anticipation of its revival for the 2013 Festival season.

As volunteers and festival organizers now work to take down the symbolic elements of the festival throughout the region, Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest President, Vic Degutis, recaps the successes in 2012. "Attendance at the 18 festhallen and 40 family and cultural events has been strong again this year," said Degutis, who ends his final term as President with the festival this year. "I am so proud of the community and the collaborative spirit of this festival. New and emerging events like the Stein & Dine culinary event or the RBC Tour De Hans (which had 450 riders) continue to be popular for festival participants. We had more sponsors on board in 2012 and continue to seek ways of added corporate engagement. We successfully completed the upgrades to our world headquarters on Benton Street, sprucing up the retail location that is open for business all year long. As well, we added new elements of outreach as we partnered with the Lion's club to operate a 1,600 seat hospitality tent at the International Plowing Match."

While damp weather occurred, it didn't dampen the spirit and turnout at the events. The core events and activities of the celebration drew hundreds of thousands of festival participants throughout the regional activities.

The Festival started early with the premier culinary event of the season, Stein & Dine, a night of exquisite food paired with Molson-Coors beer, then continued on with Oktoberfest Rocks the Haus featuring great performances by Lulu's Roadhouse Band, Major Hoople's Boarding House and The Black Forest Band. The crowning of Miss Oktoberfest Lindsay Coulter at the 2012 Miss Oktoberfest Gala was one of the highlights of this year's festival.

Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is continually adapting to new technology to better serve our customers and our organization; including: e-ticketing, texting, social media, and media screens throughout the Festival and at the Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Retail Store and office. Rocktoberfest11 was a festhalle-shaking event again this year, with I Mother Earth and Walter Ostanek taking the stage on October 7th at Altes Muenchen Haus. The Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest Thanksgiving Day Parade attracted large crowds, and welcomed The Canadian

Pickers Scott Cozens and Sheldon Smithens as Parade Grand Marshals for 2012; as well as, the Prime Time Brass Band from Rochester New York, who were a big hit with viewers. Our community stepped up again in a big way to help support the Onkel Hans Food Drive, which raised 14,940 lbs of non-perishable food items and \$12,181 in cash for the Food Bank of Waterloo Region.

While the financial numbers are still being tallied for this year's festival, the satisfaction and excitement that has spread throughout the area and beyond are good measures for success. Early indicators of Festhallen ticket sales were brisk, also demonstrating the community uptake for the festival attractions.

Degutis also landed an exceptionally talented and truly engaging speaker for the President's Invitational Luncheon -Author of the *Wealthy Barber, Wealthy Barber Returns* and newest Dragon on CBC's *Dragon's Den*, Dave Chilton. He addressed a sold out crowd of business executives and participants of the 'Passport to Success' business attraction program, and spoke about his fond memories of the festival experience having grown up in the area and attended post-secondary school here. A leading economic guru, he commended the unique collaboration and entrepreneurial spirit of the Waterloo Region's diverse business climate. Referencing his early days in business startup mode, he said "local business leaders were willing to talk and were giving of their time" and this tradition continues today with substantial networks and support in the region. Known for his charity work and philanthropic nature, he commended festival organizers and said "Oktoberfest has been great for the community over the years: I have had a lot of fun."

Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest helps local charities raise over \$1.5 Million during the nine day festival. The festival brand is the third most recognized festival in the country and continues to gain international recognition with its plethora of offerings. The 2013 Festival will run from October 11 - 19.

About Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest

Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest is a not-for-profit Bavarian festival founded in 1969 by a group of volunteers committed to contributing to the social and economic vitality of Kitchener-Waterloo, Canada twin cities with German heritage. Canada's Greatest Bavarian Festival celebrates German heritage, food, music and festivities and is supported by more than 50 not-for-profit organizations. The festival is operated by eight year-round full-time staff, over 450 volunteers and 1,300 community and service club volunteers that stage the nine-day festival each October promoting a unique German cultural experience. As well as the economic boost the festival gives the local economy during the international festival, over \$1.5 million is raised each year by the not-for-profit organizations associated with Kitchener-Waterloo Oktoberfest, one of the top three most recognized event brands in Canada.

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