

Local festivals getting \$10,000

By Sarah Sobanski

The province has announced its Celebrate Ontario 2018 funding for more than 300 festivals and events. Nearly 200 of those chosen are from rural and northern areas, according to the province.

More than \$13,000 was announced for Bancroft and surrounding area tourism. That's \$6,000 for this year's Bancroft Rockhound Gemboree, more than \$4,000 for the Wilberforce Agricultural Fair and more than \$3,000 for Wheels, Water and Wings.

Bancroft and District Chamber of Commerce Gemboree co-ordinator Maureen Cummings said she was "very excited" the festival's funding application was accepted.

"This is our 55th annual Gemboree, so we wanted to make sure we had speakers, presenters and guides for our field trips, as well as replacing some equipment that had been damaged in last year's wind storms," said Cummings.

The Gemboree is also celebrating its seventh time on the province's top 100 festivals list.

"This honour allows us the privilege of inviting only the best vendors and exhibitors," she said.

The agricultural fair brought in the second largest sum in the area. At \$4,392, Wilberforce Agricultural Society director Joanne Vanier said in a press release that the funding will go to its long-time goal of replacing "aging plywood tables."

"Partnering with the Municipality of Highlands East and the Old Rec. FUNraising Committee, the agricultural society will purchase 60 new tables for use at the agricultural fair, arena, curling club, and other community events," said Vanier.

She added, "It is exciting to see what can be done when the community works together. What may appear to some to be an insignificant factor, new tables, will improve the look and sustainability of our events. Sometimes it's the behind the scene factors that impact the organizers in big ways."

WWW has been granted \$3,198. *Bancroft This Week* reached out to the Bancroft Business Improvement Area but it was unable to comment before press time.

According to the announcement by the province, "support from Celebrate Ontario helps festival and event organizers enhance programming, activities and services so that festivals and events can offer new experiences, reach new audiences and support jobs in their communities."

More than \$20 million will be invested with the program in 2018. The announcement suggested "past recipients' data shows that every \$1 of Celebrate Ontario funding triggers \$21 in visitor expenditures."