

Hastings Car Show won't roll until next spring

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Unfortunately, gentlemen and ladies, you'll have to wait to start your engines. The rolling car show, which had been part of the Hastings County Economic Response Plan, to encourage locals to shop locally throughout the county, has been postponed. Due to COVID-19 restrictions, unpredictable weather and car enthusiasts putting their cars away for the winter, this event, which had been planned for late September in Madoc, has been delayed until May, 2021.

Based on an idea by Limerick Township Mayor Carl Stefanski to spur economic growth in Madoc and the northern municipalities like Limerick Township, the rolling car show had been planned for late September. In talks with Andrew Redden, the economic development manager at Hastings County, Fred Bendell, the chair of the Madoc Business Improvement Team and the Township of Madoc, this event was supposed to satiate local car lovers' appetites while bringing much needed tourism dollars into the area, money that has been sorely missed due to the effects of COVID-19. As part of the board of the Hastings Economic Development Council, Stefanski feels very strongly about bringing commerce to North Hastings.

However, in recent discussions, all parties decided to delay this event until next May.

With COVID-19 continuing to be an unpredictable force, the weather being unpredictable and with car enthusiasts like Stefanski putting their cars away for the season, the decision to defer the event made sense.

"I know I'm a member of the MG Car Club of Toronto and people have put their cars away from the last car club cruise on Sept. 12. So, a lot of people are putting them away because of COVID-19 and the availability of places to show them due to the pandemic. I have two vintage cars, a 1970 MGB GT and a 1974 MG Roadster, and I've barely had them out for cruises this year versus previous years. Also, Bancroft has decided against having any car shows and events with any possible appreciable attendance, and I wanted to do a reciprocity between Bancroft and Madoc, where one club would come to the others' town and show their cars and spend money, and vice versa. That's the reason I got involved was to increase economic development for the northern townships like Madoc, Limerick, Tudor and Cashel, Wollaston and Faraday," he says.

Everyone involved had been planning a two-hour show later this month, with about 60 to 100 cars participating, and with all safety restrictions being followed. The drivers of the cars would have even had different coloured face masks than everyone else. Redden said that he had been working with HPE Public Health, the Municipality of Centre Hastings and the Madoc Business Improvement Team to make sure everything would go off without any issues.

According to Fred Bendell, the chair of the Madoc Business Improvement Team, the car show was supposed to have been held in tandem with the town's pared down Heritage Harvest Day, which will still be happening on Sept. 26, despite holding the car show over until next May.

Stefanski says that this has been planned since March, with Redden, the Madoc BIT and the Township of Madoc all thinking it was a fantastic idea.

"But it was getting later in the year, and who knows whether Mr. Ford will put it back to Phase Two again [with the upsurge in COVID-19 cases], so it's a big unknown. So now this car show will be done in May of next year and it allows us a lot more time to fine tune and increase everything," he says. "The delay is a little disheartening, but you know what? A door closes and a window opens."