

## 2014 Community Recognition Awards will move to spring

**By Brock Weir**

After a final bow this fall, the best and brightest among Aurora's volunteers will receive their moment in the spotlight this spring, along with 2014's Citizen of the Year.

The Community Recognition Awards will be moved to May come 2014 after this year's awards conclude in either late September or early October, if Council follows through on their decision made at Committee last week.

The Community Recognition Awards, which salute community-oriented Aurorans in a number of different categories from type of public service to longevity in the field, have been held in November for the last several years.

Ongoing discussions over the future of these awards, and the Citizen of the Year Award, which is typically awarded at a separate Council meeting before the summer recess, have come to the conclusion a move would enhance both ceremonies.

Throughout the discussion there was a general consensus that combining the two ceremonies would enhance the profile of both award ceremonies and their respective recipients, said Aurora CAO Neil Garbe in a report to Council. Having the Citizen of the Year ceremony in the spring allows for the recipient to participate in the Canada Day Parade. Should the two ceremonies be merged, maintaining a spring timeframe would permit the Canada Day tradition to continue.

Councillors voted in favour of merging the two ceremonies into one by 2014, but such a move will necessitate getting a bit of a head start on this year's community recognition awards so everything falls into place accordingly, said Michael Kemp, Aurora's Manager of Corporate Communications.

The reason the [September or October] timeframe was chosen was if we wished to merge the Citizen of the Year, we need time between the two events, he said. It takes approximately six to eight months to prep and get all of the information out to the public, get all the nomination forms in, give the Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee enough time to review those and make their selections.

The format that is proposed is the one we ran in 2012, which was at the request of Council, which was the same format that was done in prior years.

Council decided to base last year's Community Recognition Awards on the 2010-and-earlier model after criticism levelled by some Councillors over the 'Hollywood' themed ceremony not because of the theme, or the souped up ceremony which included videos of the nominators explaining why they put certain names forward and costumed greeters escorting guests down the red carpet, but due to a lack of Council participation in handing out the awards and interacting with the winners.

The awards themselves were also streamlined, eliminating some long-standing recognition awards.

In addition to awards for 5 years, 10 years, 15, 25, and 35 years of service, recognition was also made through the Bob Harman Memorial Award, the Johnston's Cultural Achievement Award, the Civic Appreciation Award, Outstanding Achievement (Individual and Non-Profit Organization), the Youth Volunteer Achievement Award, the Community Organizer of the Year Award, and the Good Neighbour Award.