

Inaugural Diamond Valley music festival to honour Ian Tyson

Set for July 30, Fly Spirit, Fly will be headlined by John Wort Hannam and Peter North's Tyson tribute show The Gift.

Western Wheel Staff
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Canadian folk music icon Ian Tyson passed away last December at the age of 89.

The Diamond Valley Chamber of Commerce, in partnership with the Town of Diamond Valley, is presenting the first annual Ian Tyson Memorial Music Festival this summer.

Fly Spirit, Fly will be staged at Irma Joy Brown Park in the community of Black Diamond in Diamond Valley on Sunday, July 30, tentatively from noon to 9 p.m.

The organizers' goal is to bring together the community, tourists and visitors from surrounding areas for a day of entertainment, fun and local economic stimulation. They are placing the utmost importance on presenting a family-friendly, welcoming and accessible event, providing an outstanding fundraising opportunity for the chamber and spotlighting the community as a summer festival destination.

They have booked nationally-renowned musical acts to kick-off this homegrown event, setting the tone for a landmark annual music festival that honours the legacy of Ian Tyson, a Canadian music icon with deep roots in the Foothills who died late last year.

Headline acts will be John Wort Hannam, recent winner of two Canadian Folk Music Awards, and Peter North's highly-acclaimed Ian Tyson tribute show known as The Gift, featuring former members of both Tyson's touring and studio recording groups.

In addition to musical entertainment, Sam King from Ride the Vibe will present his motorcycle stunt show to provide an element of unique excitement for festival attendees.

To ensure the one-day festival is an all-ages, family-friendly show, organizers are currently sourcing children's performers to begin the day as well as roaming circus performers to circulate throughout the site.

There will be an open-air beer garden featuring beverages from local brewers and distilleries as well as a variety of food and drink vendors, featuring the Big Burly Chef and others. Local artisan food offerings such as Black Sheep Coffee and Longview Jerky are being provided with priority space and local business community members will benefit from a "no vendor fee" policy.

For more information on food vendor opportunities, email the chamber at diamondvalleychamber@gmail.com.

Organizers are confident the festival will attract many day-tourists to the area, coupled with the Foothills Lions Club Car Show happening in a different part of town.

Going forward, they're looking at encompassing musical performances at other venues around town and in Longview, and potentially Priddis and Millarville, over a weekend to create regional excitement that would be a valuable contribution to the local summer economy.

The majority of the festival labour will be covered by volunteers in exchange for festival entry, so those interested in helping can fill out a volunteer application at diamondvalleychamber.com.

Organizers are funding festival start-up costs through a partnership with the Town of Diamond Valley and corporate sponsorships. Anyone interested in learning more about sponsorship opportunities is asked to email the chamber.

A date for ticket release has not been set, but organizers say the event will be affordable for families and local residents will have a chance to buy tickets before they go on sale to the public. Chamber members will have the opportunity to purchase tickets at a reduced rate.

Follow the Diamond Valley Chamber of Commerce on Facebook and Instagram @Diamond Valley Chamber or visit its website to get regular updates on the festival.