

## Spectacular opening planned for Oval

Be among the first to skate on the ice at the Richmond Olympic Oval and enjoy spectacular live entertainment when the Oval officially opens on Friday, December 12 and Saturday, December 13.

The opening night festival will be held Friday, December 12 from 4:30 to 10:00 p.m. and will feature official opening ceremonies from 5:00 to 6:00 p.m., special entertainment, building tours, and the first public skate on the Oval track.

The festivities will continue from noon to 7:00 p.m. on Saturday, December 13 with a community open house featuring public skating, entertainment, building tours and more.

No tickets are required for either Friday or Saturday's activities and admission is free. However, seating is limited so get there early.

Live entertainment on the mainstage begins at 4:30 p.m. on Friday, December 12 with the official opening ceremonies commencing at 5:00 p.m. The opening ceremonies will include the breathtaking aerial dance of the Aeriosa Dance as they perform their mid-air ballet suspended from the Oval's spectacular wood roof. This will be followed by a ceremonial ribbon cutting with a bang that will open the Oval's 400-metre track up for skating.

At ice level, Quebec's Le Patin Libre will entertain with their alternative take on an ice show, which combines figure skating, acrobatics, barrel jumping and fire breathing with hip hop and other dance and skating elements. Local skating groups will join in the performance, which also features audience interaction.

The acclaimed 15th Field Artillery Regiment Band, popularly known as Vancouver's "Army Band" will also perform with special guest Alexandria Beck, North America's first female 'opera-crossover' singer and rising star from Richmond, now living in London, England. The evening's entertainment will also include performances from a variety of local musicians, dancers and drummers.

Attendees will have an opportunity to take tours of the new Oval - with a twist. Actors will guide groups of people throughout the various areas of the Oval, using comedy and participatory activities to excite and engage participants, while highlighting the special features of the facility.

A number of 45-minute public skating sessions will be held on both Friday and Saturday. Some skates will be available for rent, but the public is encouraged to bring their own.



Quebec's Le Patin Libre will perform their innovative, interactive and high energy skating show a number of times during the Richmond Olympic Oval's opening festivities on December 12 and 13.



Richmond's own Alexandria Beck will perform at the opening night celebrations at the Richmond Olympic Oval on December 12.

Public parking for the event will be in designated offsite parking lots and on neighbourhood streets. Event parking is limited so spectators are encouraged to carpool, take transit or walk to the Oval.

Watch the City's website at [www.richmond.ca](http://www.richmond.ca) for more details on the opening.

## Riverside Spirit Square opened

Mayor Malcolm Brodie and Richmond-Steveston MLA John Yap cut the ribbon on the Riverside Spirit Square—the spacious, multi-level plaza on the riverfront side of the Richmond Olympic Oval.

Riverside Spirit Square was made possible in part by the provincial government as part of

the BC Spirit Squares Program, designed to commemorate the 150th anniversary of the founding of British Columbia. The goal of the BC Spirit Squares Program is to support the creation or improvement of gathering places for community celebrations in cities and towns throughout the province. It is one of four Green Cities programs realizing the provincial government's vision of greener, healthier, livable communities.

Riverside Spirit Square is a key component of the City's waterfront strategy in the City Centre Plan. It will become the outdoor focal point of the new, sustainable mixed-use development planned for the Oval precinct after the 2010 Winter Games.

The 12,000 square-metre area will serve as an informal amphitheatre for events, as it combines an upper plaza next to the Oval and an open green along the riverfront, connected by a large sweep of steps that recalls the arcing tracks left by a speed skater's blades. The programmable area will hold more than 5,000 spectators and is ideal for water shows, such as rowing competitions. It also connects to the trail system that runs along the river, and is fully accessible.

## Community update offered

Richmond Oval Update is a monthly report to the community on City initiatives related to the Richmond Oval project and to the community's preparations for the 2010 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games. For more information visit the City's website at [www.richmond.ca](http://www.richmond.ca) and click on the Olympic Oval link under the Popular Topics tab on the home page.