



Press Release: 86th Embro Highland Games – Tuesday, July 1, 2025

The Zorra Caledonian Society is putting the finishing touches on the **86th Embro Highland Games (EHG)**, taking place Tuesday, July 1, 2025, at the **Embro Zorra Community Centre (EZCC)** 355644 35th Line, Embro. Gates open at 7 am and there is a full line-up of family-friendly activities that will appeal to visitors of all ages.

There are over 248 entries in the individual piping and drumming competitions which begin at 8:30 am with the highlight of the day being the **Massed Bands** taking the Main Field at 12:30 pm and at 4:30 pm. Back-by-popular demand, Grade 2 Pipe Bands have been invited to Embro; travelling from further afield and performing with a higher degree of difficulty, their skills only add to the day! For guests wanting to take in some true Scottish culture the **Highland Dance** competition begins at 9 am and runs all day with 84 dancers registered so far, four from Scotland and one from Australia. NEW this year the dancing will be held indoors for some much-needed shade. In keeping with the theme, a wide variety of **Scottish vendors** will be on site selling Scottish jewelry, food, tartan clothing, and Celtic arts & crafts and more.

Back again in Embro is the popular **Tug-of-War** competition with five teams registered including local teams Ellice (near Stratford), Bluewater (Dashwood) and an army team from London, ON. There are also teams from Nova Scotia and from Minnesota travelling to compete. **Heavy Events** (complete with the caber toss) featuring male and female athletes from across the province vying for top honours, starts at 10:30 am. For those animal enthusiasts, the **Scottish livestock** area will be open all day with breeds of cattle, horses and sheep that would have all originated in Scotland. **Scottish Dogs on Parade**, always a favourite show for visitors, will "strut the ring with their humans" at 11 am. There will also be two **Dog Agility** shows and three **Sheep Herding** demonstrations.

Returning to Embro are **local craft breweries**; Upper Thames Brewing Co. (Woodstock) and Junction 56 Distillery (Stratford) and new to the Games is MadMash Brewery & Restaurant from Tavistock. **The Paddy Stones** and the **Doppelgangers** will perform three sets each for some rousing live music in the Muckle Tent. NEW the Embro & Zorra Agricultural Society is organizing the **wee Highlanders' play area** so our youngest guests can blow off some steam! For those wanting a slower pace, the **Scottish Tea Room** will be open from noon to 4 pm, hosted by the Knox Presbyterian Church, with the volunteers serving a selection of teas and traditional delicious delights to enjoy in the arena lobby.

Inside the Great Hall (complete with air-conditioning) the following events will take place. From 10 am to 3:15 pm, the children's **Scottish Crafts** will engage and entertain the wee visitors as they embrace and create with Scottish culture in mind! A **NEW Celtic Fiddle Fun Showcase** will take place starting at 11 am. At 1:15 pm there will be a special ceremony to mark the 25th anniversary of the twinning of Tamsui, Taiwan and Oxford County followed by entertainment showcasing **Taiwanese Culture**. This segment ties in with the Zorra -Taiwan connection and our shared "son" Rev. Dr. George Leslie Mackay. Lastly in the Great Hall, MadMash will do a Scottish cooking demonstration at 3 pm.

Under the new Pavilion, the **Oxford Weavers & Spinners Guild** and the **Visitors' Information** area (selling Zorra Caledonian Society tartan) can be found. Six Scottish clans have registered to participate in the Games this year rounding out a full day of family fun with a Scottish flair! Open all day are exhibits in the Great Hall which include the Taiwanese legacy of George Leslie Mackay, Tartans on Display, the Mighty Men of Zorra and Zorra Heritage.

For those who are unsure what a Highland Games is all about, four professional one-minute videos are available to watch online at www.embrohighlandgames.ca. **Admission at the Gate is \$30 for adults (OR \$ 27.50 if bought online in advance). All visitors under 18 years of age are admitted at no charge. Parking is complimentary.** Visitors are welcome to bring along a lawn chair and a refillable water bottle, as the **NEW hydration station will be debuted!** There is lots of accessible parking spaces and a free shuttle service operates in the parking lot to get visitors to the entrances.

The Zorra Caledonian Society is a non-profit community organization formed in 1937 that celebrates and promotes the Scottish heritage of Embro-Zorra. Their signature event, the Embro Highland Games, brings thousands of visitors to Oxford County and is the oldest Highland Games in Ontario. The Embro Highland Games truly exemplifies an entire community coming together for the celebration of all things Scottish! Follow us on Facebook, Snapchat & Instagram.

For more information contact Media Coordinator - Holly MacDonald at info@embrohighlandgames.ca