



Press Release: 87th Embro Highland Games – Wednesday, July 1, 2026

The Zorra Caledonian Society (ZCS) is putting the finishing touches on the **87th Embro Highland Games (EHG)**, taking place Wednesday, July 1, 2026, at the **Embro Zorra Community Centre (EZCC)** 355644 35th Line, Zorra. Gates open at 7 a.m. and there is a full line-up of family-friendly activities that will appeal to visitors of all ages until the day ends at 5 pm.

There are **189 entries** in the individual piping and drumming competitions which begin at 8:30 a.m. with the ever-popular **Massed Bands** taking the Main Field at 12:30 p.m. and at 4:30 p.m. with a **record-setting 15 Pipe Bands** making their way to Embro. For guests wanting to take in some true Scottish culture the **Highland Dance** competition begins at 9 a.m. and runs all day with close to **80 dancers** registered to compete. In keeping with the theme, a wide variety of **Scottish vendors** on site offer Scottish jewelry, food, tartan clothing, and Celtic arts & crafts and more.

The new **INTERNATIONAL Tug-of-War** competition will take place with **nine teams** registered! Teams are coming from Northern Ireland, British Columbia, Nova Scotia, Ontario (Ellice, Bluewater, South Huron, Williamstown) and Minnesota and Wisconsin in the USA to see who is the mightiest! Special thanks to the **2026 Tourism Innovation Grant from Community Futures Oxford** for helping to support this international endeavour! **Heavy Events** (with the popular caber toss) featuring male and female athletes from across the province vying for top honours, starts at 10:30 a.m. 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. There will be two **Dog Agility** shows and three **Sheep Herding** demonstrations. Also new in 2026 is an interactive display about life at the time of the **Jacobite rebellion of 1745!** Returning to Embro are three **local craft breweries**: Upper Thames Brewing Co. (Woodstock), Junction 56 Distillery (Stratford) and Madmash Brewery & Restaurant (Tavistock). The **Paddy Stones** and **Devil's Brigade** (who tour the world) will each perform rousing sets of live Celtic music in the Muckle Tent. For those wanting a slower pace, the **Scottish Tea Room** will be open from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., hosted by Knox Presbyterian Church, with 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 children's **Scottish Crafts** will engage our wee guests as they have fun creating Celtic-themed art. The **Celtic Fiddle Showcase** will take place in the morning, and after lunch David Prosser will take the stage to read from first-hand accounts of Rev. Dr. George Leslie MacKay's life in Formosa (now Taiwan) followed by the **Taiwanese entertainers** bringing his stories to life through our shared connection with Zorra's "son". A Scottish food demonstration will take place at 3:30 pm. Open all day in the Great Hall are the following exhibits: the Taiwanese legacy of George Leslie Mackay, an up-close look at the Scotch Thistle, the Mighty Men of Zorra, Thistle Theatre, and Heritage of Zorra by the Beachville Museum.

Open outdoors all day; the **wee Highlanders Play Area** will be popular with families and is operated by the **Embro & Zorra Agricultural Society**. The **Oxford Weavers & Spinners Guild** and the **Visitors' Information** area (selling EHG merchandise and ZCS tartan) will be set up under the Embro Zorra Community Centre Pavilion. Ten Scottish clans will participate at the Games this year rounding out a full day of family fun with a Scottish flair!

Four professional one-minute videos of the Embro Highland Games are available to watch online at www.embrohighlandgames.ca. **Save money and purchase admission tickets in advance - Adults are \$ 27.50 (or \$30.00 at the Gate). All guests under 18 years of age are admitted at no charge. Guests are welcome to bring a lawn chair, parking is complimentary and a shuttle service is available for those who require extra help to get to the gates.**

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 President Alex McKay at president@embrohighlandgames.ca or info@embrohighlandgames.ca