



CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION
AUG 19 TO SEPT 5 | 2022
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A HISTORIC YEAR FOR THE CANADIAN NATIONAL EXHIBITION, AND PRELIMINARY ATTENDANCE FIGURES INDICATE LIKEWISE

Ahead of the final long weekend of Canada's largest fair, organizers are tracking an increase in attendance from 2019 when the fair last opened to visitors

Toronto, ON (September 2, 2022) – With the long weekend still ahead, which typically attracts massive crowds enjoying the last hurrah of the summer and to take in the Canadian International Air Show, CNE organizers are optimistic that this year's attendance should surpass 2019 and are hoping to reach 2015's record-breaking 1.6 million attendees.

The 2022 CNE is currently tracking more than a 10% increase in attendance to-date compared to the same timeline from 2019. Although the final official tally will take a few more weeks after the CNE closes on September 5th to count total gate sales, online sales, and tickets from various retail and promo partners, organizers are confident that total attendance is trending to exceed 1.5 million.

"Regardless of the final attendance number, 2022 has been a banner year and significant milestone for the CNE in so many ways. We have persevered through two years of closures, re-called our full-time staff and brought back our seasonal staff, partners and vendors. Collectively we've put forth a spectacular season," says Darrell Brown, CNE CEO.

Brown adds, "It's an incredible comeback story; and the resiliency of the CNE is largely thanks to our patrons who are coming out in droves to show their love and support for the Fair. Thank you to everyone who is helping make the 2022 CNE a success – a year that will be forever etched in the legacy of the Exhibition."

The historic re-opening of the 2022 Canadian National Exhibition was celebrated on August 19th, with a momentous funding announcement from both the Government of Canada (\$7.1 million) and Province of Ontario (\$1.6 million). The financial assistance enabled the CNE to introduce new and innovative programming, which included immersive art exhibitions, enhancements to the Gaming Garage powered by AMD, a nightly drone show and a multimedia show called NEVAEH & the Northstar, both presented by VinFast.

Factors such as rainy weather, a labour dispute between TSSA and its employees that coincided with the event, and ongoing pandemic concerns for some, may have impacted the trajectory of the turnout but certainly did not impact the enthusiasm of those who attended. Vendors, performers, and small businesses that rely on the CNE each year also shared positive sentiments of being back at the Fair.

Harrison and Sam Swift, creators of the ketchup and mustard ice cream along with the mac & cheese pizza said, "We travel throughout the year to various fairs across North America, and it has been great to be home in Toronto. We've been at the CNE since 2013, and this has been by far the biggest year we've ever had at the CNE, or any other fair. Customers are so happy to be back that they are spending and having a blast."

Adal Aguilar, owner of Panchos and Machete in the Food Building said, “The Food Building has been packed every day from opening to closing hours. We added a new booth this year, Machete, and our sales have multiplied. Our business, Panchos Bakery, books events throughout the year, and no other festival compares to what we generate at the CNE over 18 days. It has been a fantastic way to come back after two years -- as a small business, we really needed this to recover from the impact of the pandemic.”

When last measured in 2017, the CNE annually generated an economic impact of more than \$93 million to the GTA, and \$128 million to Ontario. That impact is likely to have grown this year with increased spending and participation at the Fair. In 2022, the CNE hired and supported more than 5,000 seasonal jobs and 78% of its workforce identify as a visible minority.

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