

# Canada Weekly

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## Gala opening marks special anniversary for the Rideau Canal

Hundreds of activities are being staged this year in honour of the one-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary of the Rideau Canal, which stretches from Ottawa to Kingston, Ontario.

The 198-kilometre waterway was first constructed as a defensive safeguard then became a beehive of commercial activity as it changed slowly into a main transportation route.

The Rideau Canal is the longest such waterway in Canada and is a popular route for pleasure craft, power boats, yachts and canoes. There are 47 locks along the canal length with a normal draught of 1.67 metres. Over 20 towns and villages are dotted along the banks of the historic body of water, between the cities of Ottawa and Kingston.

More than 300 events have been planned to celebrate the canal's birthday during the year in Ottawa, Kingston and the smaller surrounding communities such as Perth, Smiths Falls and Rideau Ferry. The communities will recall the past with picnics, boat shows, flotillas, races on land and water, sports tournaments, concerts, heritage exhibits and festivals of all kinds.

The annual opening of the Rideau Canal took place on May 23 during Ottawa's Festival of Spring. In honour of this special occasion more than 165 gaily decorated boats sailed through the canal in Ottawa. Governor General Edward Schreyer was one of the participants in the parade aboard the antique steamer *Phoebe*.

Following the parade, a water show called, the Rideau Canal 150 Aqualude, took place on Dow's Lake which is situated alongside the canal. The show included a remote-control powerboat demonstration, water ski displays, historical exhibits and other entertainment.

A major part of the year-long celebration is the ceremonial re-enactment of the voyage from Kingston to Bytown (now Ottawa) made by Colonel John By, the canal's builder. The original trip was made to officially open the waterway in 1832. Towns and villages have planned festivities when the refurbished *Phoebe* makes its stops along the water route.

In July, a flotilla of more than 40 vintage steamboats from across Canada and the United States will travel the waterway from Kingston to Ottawa.



More than 165 boats took part in the canal's gala opening.



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