



Businessman Tom Joy



Fireworks over a Windsor fountain

# Windsor

## ROLLS OUT THE red carpet

### FOR THE OAS

Delegates to the 30th General Assembly of the Organization of American States will notice a special warmth when they arrive in their host city of Windsor, Ontario, this June. It won't be just a foretaste of Canadian summer: greeting them will be a community genuinely delighted to have the visitors in town.

The 350 000 residents of Windsor and Essex County will be doing their utmost to welcome their guests, ease them over unfamiliar hurdles and make them feel at home.

Prominent in mobilizing the volunteer-based effort has been Tom Joy, a Windsor businessman famous in the area for his support of civic causes. Says Joy, "When Herb Gray, the Deputy Prime Minister of Canada, called and asked if I would chair a volunteer committee for the conference, I said, 'Mr. Gray I'd be honoured.'"

Fred Sorrell is co-ordinator of the initiative. He says, "We started by listing every visitor's need we could think of. Then we set up committees to deal with each. In no time we assembled a team of

experts from the Windsor area—volunteers all—to chair these committees. The City of Windsor and Mayor Michael Hurst responded wonderfully, assigning a delegate to each committee." From this framework grew an army of 800 volunteers, providing everything from technical help for visiting journalists to hospitality services for delegates.

One committee is organizing entertainment and activities in the parkland along the Detroit River. On the bill will be live jazz, rhythm and blues, salsa and Motown performances plus a concert by the Windsor Symphony Orchestra, sponsored by the Windsor Casino. The welcome to the OAS, says Joy, will be the focal point of a celebration of Windsor, complete with fireworks, music festivals and a nighttime flotilla of boats down the Detroit River. A corps of roaming volunteers fluent in Portuguese, Spanish, English and French will help people find their way around.

Supporting the voluntary effort is funding of \$300 000. Of this amount, \$200 000 comes from the City of Windsor and \$100 000 from Tom Joy himself. He

says, "Hosting the OAS General Assembly is a great opportunity for our young people to get ready for the future by learning about the Americas." It will in fact be an educational experience: a special Web site will tell students all about the Americas, and children will contribute to an art display on human rights and a 34-piece mural with an Americas theme.

Deputy Prime Minister Gray notes that host communities do not usually become so involved in diplomatic meetings. He thinks Windsor's preparations for the Assembly highlight an advantage linked to community size: "Prime Minister Chrétien and Foreign Affairs Minister Axworthy believe that international conferences shouldn't always be in larger cities or capitals. A place like Windsor can be an excellent choice."

Tom Joy agrees: "To bigger metropolitan centres, something like this is just one more convention. To us it's a lifetime event."

As Member of Parliament for Windsor West, Herb Gray can think of other reasons why his home town is a good place in which to build hemispheric unity: "It's a major crossroads of trade and transportation between Canada and the United States, an example of good neighbourliness in every sense—personal as well as economic. In fact, Windsor exemplifies what the OAS is all about." ●—

City of Windsor, Ontario

Celebrations include a full program of cultural events.

