

District of North Vancouver marks 125th birthday

Plans in the works for party at Cates Park this September

[Brent Richter](#) / North Shore News

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North Vancouver-Seymour MLA Jane Thornthwaite and District of North Vancouver Mayor Richard Walton celebrate the district's 125th anniversary Wednesday. photo Mike Wakefield, North Shore News

The District of North Vancouver turned 125 years young on Wednesday.

On Aug. 10, 1891, the first and only North Shore municipality, stretching from Deep Cove to Horseshoe Bay, was incorporated by the province. The first municipal election 10 days later saw Charles John Peyton Phibbs elected reeve for the district's 250 residents.

Today's Mayor Richard Walton, (who coincidentally shares the same birthday as the district) marked the auspicious quasiquicentennial (Google it) with a flag-raising ceremony Cates Park/Whey-ah-Wichen in the morning. The district followed up with a little birthday self-reflection in the form of a history lecture at district hall in the afternoon.

The event drew DNV emeritus staff, including some who were around to help plan the 100th anniversary in 1991. Daniel Francis, author of the recently published *Where Mountains Meet the Sea*, an Illustrated History of the District of North Vancouver, summarized the pivotal and the trivial moments that helped shape the district.

As white settlement goes, the district largely began in the 1870s as "Shaketown" a logging village in Lynn Valley, named for the cedar shake shingles produced there.

In 1907, a group of landowners and developers successfully petitioned the province to carve the City of North Vancouver out of the district, beginning the era of two North Vancovers. The District of West Vancouver followed in 1912, establishing the municipal boundaries that we still observe today.

A referendum to amalgamate the two North Vancovers failed in 1968 with 90 per cent of district residents approving of the plan but only 50.5 per cent agreeing in the city. The rules of the vote called for a 60 per cent majority in the city to pass.

The rest of Francis's lesson touched on the Squamish and Tsleil-Waututh nations' thousands of years of presence here and the growth of the district as industrial port, a destination for adventure-seeking tourists and, with the help of bridges and ferries, a commuter suburb of Vancouver.

Those who missed the sum-up of our local history can hear Francis give a talk Saturday, Oct. 1 at the Community History Centre.

To cap off the anniversary, the district is hosting a bash at Cates Park on Saturday Sept. 17 from 3 to 8 p.m.

The event is scheduled to include all-ages entertainment including live music, dancing, an improv comedy review of the last 125 years, as well as food trucks and fireworks.

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