

# Connecting to Edmonton online

*Bringing the world to our doorstep*

## Volunteer Edmonton

**Special to The Examiner**

For nearly four years, Connect2Edmonton.ca has been bringing people from around the world together to talk about one thing – Edmonton.

As its name suggests, Connect2Edmonton.ca (C2E) is a place where people can connect, share ideas and speak out on hot topics related to Edmonton.

Along with its popular forum, the website features guest columnists, contests, polls and an "Ask Ed" section for folks interested in moving to or travelling to Edmonton.

With about 14,000 discussion topics, 6,500 registered members and 50,000 people visiting the website each month, our little corner of the world has proven to be a hot topic.

**A WINNING PARTNERSHIP**

Richard Skermer, co-chair of C2E, explains that the concept was created from a mix of ideas stemming from his

work with Promote Edmonton and fellow co-chair Kenn Bur's involvement in the Edmonton Booster Club, an initiative of the Edmonton Economic Development Corporation.

"Kenn saw us and knew the alignment between what he was looking to do with taking the Edmonton Booster Club online, and I noticed the same passion in Kenn that I had," Skermer says.

Together, they merged their ideas to form C2E.

Partners like Edmonton Economic Development Corporation, Edmonton Airports, Edmonton Chamber of Commerce, and the City of Edmonton provide their support by covering the cost for web hosting and maintenance, and help promote the website.

"Now that we're a private not-for-profit, our partners are truly promotional partners. They believe in the concept and are often our conduit for partnering on promotional contests or soliciting

guests to appear as columnists or 'Ask forum' participants," Skermer explains.

"I'm very happy to say that no partner has ever tried to go against the philosophy of hands off on content,"

Recent discussions about developments on the Anthony Henday, LRT expansion, where to eat or shop in the city, the downtown arena and the Expo 2017 bid are just a few of the topics that can be found.

No topic is off limits, but members must abide by the online community's guidelines to ensure that hateful or derogatory material isn't posted.

Skermer credits the volunteer moderators for monitoring content so that the forum remains accessible, inclusive and relevant.

"Moderators ensure that contributors aren't intimidated by the remarks of others. We try to ensure that contributors discuss the topics and not the person posting the comments," says volunteer

moderator David Norwood.

His volunteer work has introduced him to like-minded Edmonton enthusiasts who share his passion for the city.

Skermer hopes to see more people with differing opinions and ideas join the discussion to keep the website fresh.

**JUST A CLICK AWAY**

After all, this website truly belongs to all of us.

To sign up to become a member of Connect2Edmonton, to volunteer or to learn how to submit a guest column, visit [www.connect2edmonton.ca](http://www.connect2edmonton.ca).

*Look to this space to see the work that the city's volunteers and non-profit organizations are carrying out and what it is that Volunteer Edmonton is involved in. For more information or suggestions for story ideas, please contact Evelyn Pham, communications co-ordinator, at [epham@volunteeredmonton.com](mailto:epham@volunteeredmonton.com), call 780-732-6655 or check out their website at [www.volunteeredmonton.com](http://www.volunteeredmonton.com).*

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