



Northern Manitoba Trappers' Festival  
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“Keeping Traditions Alive in 2025”

## Media Release

For Immediate Release

February 4, 2025

The Board of Directors of the Northern Manitoba Trappers' Festival are excited to announce the addition of a **Trappers' Festival National Ice Carving Competition** and a **Little Chippers** workshop to the event schedule for the 2025 Festival. The carving competition will see four carvers from across Canada competing over three days to create epic ice sculptures. The four carvers participating in the carving competition all have international carving competition experience with a plethora of top awards and recognition. The carving competition will be held Thursday to Saturday of Festival (February 13 - 15th) with the carvers capping off their Trappers' Festival involvement hosting a Little Chippers carving workshop for the tri-community youth. “We are extremely excited to host these carvers as they are internationally recognized carvers that will be bringing amazing works to our Festival,” Trappers' Chairperson Lorie Stevenson commented. “It is an honour for Festival, and our community, to have these carvers travel to Festival and take part in this way. We can't wait to see the amazing work they create.”

In addition to the carving competition the carvers are working with International carver Larry MacFarlane, to build and carve the 2025 Trappers' Festival Ice Fort. “We have been extremely lucky to have Larry as a part of our Ice Fort build since we brought it back three years ago. He is very knowledgeable and talented in not only building our Ice Fort but also in bringing to life the Festival images through his carving,” Stevenson commented. “We are super excited about this year's build as it is set to be the biggest and most intricate yet.”

MacFarlane added, “I would like to thank the board of the Northern Manitoba Trappers' Festival for inviting myself and my team to create this amazing ice fort. The community of The Pas and surrounding areas are blessed to have committed volunteers and sponsors to ensure such a successful Festival. Trappers' is truly an unique and exciting week-long event and I am proud to be a part of it.” “As Lead for the build and the competition, I hope to exceed the expectations of the previous year's Ice Fort. I know that the ice carving competition sculptures will truly be something to witness as the carvers attending are extremely skilled at what they do.”

*Ice Carvers professional highlights as follows:*

Larry MacFarlane - Owner of Prism Ice (a global winter events consultant), Ice sculpture competition Judge, Entrepreneur, Culinary Arts /Pastry Instructor and Hospitality Consultant. Larry has been carving ice and travelling the world for the last 42 years, representing Canada at three Cultural Olympics (Salt Lake City, Nagano, Richmond), as well as representing Manitoba at the Culinary Olympics in Frankfurt, Germany.

He has carved ice North of the Arctic Circle in Salekhard, Russia (-57°C) and South of the Tropic of Capricorn in Melbourne, Australia (+35°C). His most notable accomplishment is carving ice in five of the seven continents in the same year. His awards include: 1st in Salekhard, Russia. 2nd in Harbin China, 2nd place in the world ice arts as well as Creativity award in Gaeta, Italy.

Kee Gawah - Is a Malaysian living in Sweden. He has been ice carving for 27 years and participating in ice competitions for 23 years. His repertoire includes competitions in England, Singapore, Poland, Italy, Slovakia, Spain, Finland and Canada. Gawah's accolades include: Artists/Carvers Choice Awards at 6th World Ice Art Championship, Gaeta, Italy, January 2024; Second place as a team in November 2022 in Madrid, Spain; Second place solo in January 2017 in Finland; Second place in Edmonton, Canada in 2016. First and third place in London, England in 2013; Silver medal in Edmonton, Canada in 2010; People choice award in Calgary, Canada in 2010.

Thomas Pitt - Pitt has been carving for the past 35 years, starting his journey in 1989 in Japan. He is a former culinary arts instructor and restaurant owner as well as a team member of the Manitoba Olympic Culinary team for four years. Most recently he has been involved in the Lake Louise resort castle build as well as competitions in China, Japan, Germany, the United States and Canada.

Fermin Gomez - Originally from the Philippines, Gomez was trained at a young age by his father to sculpt ice, wood, chocolate, and fruits. Because his family originated from the "Province of Paete Laguna," the Wood Carving Capital of the Philippines, it is their province's culture to train their son as a sculptor. In 2004 Gomez joined the Instituto Culinario de Mexico as a Chef Instructor and Coach of the Mexican Team for the Collegiate Ice Carving Competition. He has competed and placed at the top in competitions throughout Canada and the United States.

Elmer Hernas - Hernas is a renowned international chef with exceptional skills in culinary decorative arts and Western cuisine. With over three decades of experience, he profoundly impacted the global culinary scene by blending artistry with gastronomy to create extraordinary dining experiences. In December 2024, on the shores of Lake Louise in Banff, Hernas participated in crafting towering, one-of-a-kind sculptures from massive 300-lb blocks of solid ice. This intricate art form combines intense physical effort with extraordinary precision, further showcasing his versatility and passion for creative expression. Hernas has earned more than 30 gold medals from international competitions in Singapore, Japan, Germany, and other prestigious culinary venues because of my talents.

“The board of directors is extremely excited by the high level of skill and artistry that these carvers are bringing to our Ice Fort carve as well as what they will be creating over the course of the three day competition,” Stevenson said. “We have to acknowledge The Pas Community Renewal Corporation for their support of the Little Chippers event. Without their support we would be unable to bring this unique event to the youth of our community. It is important to us to try to inspire the youth to try new things. The future of our Ice Fort build will be in good hands if we can harness the creativity and talent of future generations locally,” Stevenson said.

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For more information contact NMTF Chairperson Lorie Stevenson 204-620-2360

*The Northern Manitoba Trappers' Festival will be celebrating its 78th Festival this year, February 12-16th. Trappers' Festival is the longest running winter festival in Manitoba and the second longest winter festival in Canada. Trappers' Festival is proud to host the World Championship Dog Races, King and Queen competition as well as more than 20 events for people of all ages.*