

THE FMG, IN ITS ORIGINAL FORM, IS CANCELLED FOR 2020

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Gatineau - On April 10th, the Quebec government called for the cancellation of all festivals until August 31st. Although the FMG (Gatineau Hot Air Balloon Festival), scheduled to take place from September 3rd to 7th, is outside of the period covered by the government's request, a serious evaluation has compelled us to conclude that it is impossible for the organization to focus on holding the Festival **in its original form**.

Sanitary measures, the cancellation of festivals for the summer season and the prolonged temporary closure of many businesses are all factors that generate major impacts on the operations and sustainability of the organization. Some of the concerns that have contributed to this decision are the set-up of the site starting several weeks in advance and requiring the presence of hundreds of workers at times; lower revenues, including ticketing, affecting the operating budget of the non-profit organization; the impossibility of maintaining the usual standards and of generating the 177,000 visits expected annually, as well as several investments being necessary in advance in preparation for the event.

The many irreversible and unpredictable impacts that Covid-19 has on the 2020 edition of the FMG are important risk factors that guide the decision of the Board of Directors. The organization's priority is to ensure the sustainability of this flagship event in our region. "It breaks our hearts to have to make this decision knowing that the Festival has been part of the traditions of our community for 33 years, that it generates \$ 12M in economic benefits for the region according to KPMG and that it allows the creation and retention of 85 jobs per year, while offering a platform for the talent of several hundred artists from the Outaouais region and the province," said Stéphane Riel, President of the Board.

Of course, the Festival recognizes and supports the importance of the measures implemented by the Government of Quebec for the health and safety of our community.

Nevertheless, to highlight the great resilience of its community and to maintain the link with its precious partners and festival-goers, the FMG is working to develop different scenarios and alternatives to replace the usual event, and hopes to announce a decision on the viability of these scenarios around mid-June.

Although ticket sales to the general public have not yet begun, festival-goers affected by a refund or credit will be contacted by the Festival in the coming weeks.

The 2021 edition will take place from September 2 to 6 during Labor Day weekend.

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Informations :

Michelle O'Neil
Directrice des partenariats

Phone number : 819.743.7200
email : oneil.michelle@montgolfieresgatineau.com