

ORFA Warns: Aging infrastructure puts local arenas, pools and recreation centres in jeopardy

NEWS PROVIDED BY

The Ontario Recreation Facilities Association →

Oct 03, 2025, 12:11 ET

MARKHAM, ON, Oct. 3, 2025 /CNW/ - Leaders from Ontario's recreation sector will come together at Markham's Pan Am Centre on Monday, October 6 to address the problem of aging recreation infrastructure. The Ontario Recreation Facilities Association (ORFA) is warning that without more investment in recreation infrastructure, more facilities will close, and many community hubs will be lost at a time when social connection and physical activity are more important than ever.

[Continue Reading](#)



Dozens of communities across the province are dealing with massive repair or replacement costs, forcing the closure of local community hubs where people exercise, socialize and gather.

Summer 2025 was one of the hottest on record, yet several municipalities are being forced to close outdoor pools due to looming repair and replacement costs. Central Huron, a community of around 8,000 residents located in southwestern Ontario, is removing its outdoor pool as the cost to repair the 50-year-old structure is estimated at \$5 million.

The City of Elliot Lake, a community of approximately 12,000 residents located west of Sudbury, closed its 55-year-old arena in 2023 due to structural concerns. The City has already invested \$11 million into the facility and is set to spend another \$11.6 million so that the arena can reopen in the near future. This includes a \$3 million donation from the Rogers family to assist with the facility

Larger communities are not immune to the problem of aging recreation infrastructure. The City of Hamilton is facing a \$300 million funding backlog for maintenance and renewal of its parks and recreation facilities.

No matter the community's size, people need physical and social activity to thrive, especially in our modern world that prioritizes screen time and social media. In the last 30 years, obesity among children and youth in Canada has nearly tripled and young people increasingly struggle with their mental health. Community facilities are critical to our quality of life, physical health and mental wellbeing.

During the pandemic we experienced a world without recreation infrastructure as most community pools, ice rinks and recreation centres were closed. The effects of a few months without our recreation centres are still being felt today.

ORFA is hosting the **Aging Recreation Infrastructure Symposium**, October 6-8 at the Pan Am Centre in Markham, Ontario to raise awareness of the urgent need to save recreation facilities. The Symposium features more than 30 education sessions covering a range of topics, including: the recreation infrastructure lifecycle; asset management; funding opportunities; building for climate change and accessibility; and several case studies highlighting real life experience with aging recreation facilities.

Program information is available on **ORFA's website**.



Quick Facts:

- Ontario has more than 2,700 ice rinks, pools and community centres and much of it was built more than 50 years ago and needs to be upgraded or replaced.
- The cost to replace Ontario's recreation infrastructure is estimated at \$45.1 billion.
- 30-35% of Canadian recreation facilities have condition ratings of fair to very poor.

The **Ontario Recreation Facilities Association** provides leadership in professional development, and in products and services for its members who operate and manage recreation facilities in municipalities, educational institutions, government agencies, First Nations communities and in the private recreation sector.

SOURCE The Ontario Recreation Facilities Association

For more information, contact: Jacqueline Demers, demers@redbrick.ca, 416-859-6250