

Special guest helps garden celebrate its 45th year

JAPANESE CONSUL IN LETHBRIDGE FOR NIKKA YUKO JAPANESE GARDEN EVENT

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Most 45th birthday parties don't feature a Japanese delegate as the guest of honour.

So for staff at Nikka Yuko Japanese Garden, who celebrated the milestone Saturday, having Consul-General Susumu Fukuda on hand to offer official birthday greetings was quite the distinction.

"It's a very special day for us here," said Lindy Rollingson, executive director of the Nikka

Yuko Japanese Garden.

"We are absolutely delighted that Mr. Fukuda has agreed to join us to celebrate an important birthday."

"It's a great honour to be here," said Fukuda, who also cut the birthday cake.

"On behalf of the government of Japan, I would like to congratulate the garden on their 45th birthday. Today is an extremely important anniversary in the relationship between Japan and Lethbridge."

Fukuda is a Japanese delegate currently based out of Calgary. He has served at Japanese embassies in Norway, the Dominican Republic, Chile, Guatemala and Peru.

Lethbridge is twinned with Japanese city Towoda and has a long-standing history with its people.

"This being the Consul-General's third visit to the garden

in a year, I think that it shows just how important Nikka Yuko's message is to the Japanese community in Lethbridge," Rollingson said.

"We greatly value the many contributions this Japanese garden has made to relations between Japan, Alberta and Canada as a whole," Fukuda added.

"It is my heartfelt wish that this garden will continue to be one of Lethbridge's major historical attractions with the support of Mayor (Rajko) Dodic and his colleagues."

Nikka Yuko is already planning for its 50th anniversary in 2017 and has formally invited members of the Japanese Imperial Family.

Herald photo by Nick Kuhl

Japanese Consul-General Susumu Fukuda cuts a piece of the 45th birthday cake at Japanese Garden Saturday.

