



RAVEN RECYCLING

Our Commitment is the Environment

This column originally appeared in the July 9th, 2004, edition of the Yukon News

RECYCLING COULD MAKE YOUR KID SMARTER

Recycling beverage containers in the Yukon means money in your pocket.

The big question facing some families is what to do with all the money they get back recycling beverage containers.

Raven Recycling alone hands out about a million dollars a year in refunds. That's over thirty dollars for each Yukoner. A family of three is pulling in about a hundred bucks.

Now a hundred dollars a year in refunds isn't much when considered how many bottles and cans that is.

It's ten 24's of beer, two dozen large wine or hard alcohol bottles, a dozen large bottles of soda water or other form of mix, 124 large juice or pop bottles, and 100 six-packs of pop.

Maybe 600 pop cans for a family of three is a bit much, but with the recent heat wave it is suspected that consumption of these items is pretty high.

Substitute bottled water or juice drinking boxes for pop and it is probably pretty accurate.

Spread all those beverage containers out over an average family's yearly consumption of water, fruit juice, pop and alcohol and it actually isn't that much.

The refund is another matter. If all those containers were handed into a Yukon recycling centre a refund of one hundred dollars would be issued.

Empty bottles, pop cans and drinking boxes are worth money. The number of times that Raven staff have found empty beverage containers in the hard plastics drop-off bin is beyond count. The same goes for juice cartons in the milk container drop-off bin.

All beverage containers sold in the Yukon that are ready to drink are part of the deposit/refund system. The only exceptions are containers that contain dairy or dairy substitutes, such as rice or soymilk containers.

Refunds range all the way from twenty-five cents for a large wine bottle to five cents for a small fruit drinking box.

For a complete list of which containers are worth what check out www.ravenrecycling.org and follow the "What Can I Get Money For" link.

Let's get back to that annual one hundred dollars a Yukon family of three could be pulling in.



RAVEN RECYCLING

Our Commitment is the Environment

When handing out refunds Raven staff often joke with customers on the best things to do with the money.

Comments range from “here’s today’s coffee and donuts” to “invest it wisely, buy some steel mill shares, get the economy going”.

While the temptation to spend a recycling refund is strong, a family might want to consider the following.

Put that one hundred dollars a family might get annually in bottle refunds into a Registered Education Saving Plan.

According to an online RESP calculator found on the Net, one hundred dollars annually could be worth over \$7,800 by the time a new born kid decides to go to college in about 2022.

That \$7,800 is very dependant on the interest rates the RESP would earn. It’s also worth thinking about how high tuition fees will be in 2022.

Encouraging a child to save the bottle refund teaches useful life skills.

These include money management, saving for the future and breaking away from “spend instantly whatever money you have on cheap plastic crap” culture.

And you thought recycling was just about saving the planet.

Lewis Rifkind is an employee of the Raven Recycling Society.