



RAVEN RECYCLING

Our Commitment is the Environment

This column originally appeared in the September 24th, 2004, edition of the Yukon News

CANADA WINTER GAMES COMETH!

With the completion of the Canada Senior Games the local sports fanatics are now gearing up for the 2007 Canada Winter Games.

For those living in plastic bubbles, these games will be held in Whitehorse with some events taking place in adjacent communities.

It is anticipated that thousands of athletes, coaches, spectators and journalists will travel to the Yukon to participate.

This provides a perfect opportunity for Whitehorse, indeed the entire Yukon, to show the country how we deal with waste.

The term waste is a bit of misnomer.

Almost everything that is currently placed in so-called garbage receptacles is of value.

It can be reused, it can be recycled or it can be composted. Given enough planning, the amount of what is now termed waste can be reduced.

In fact, it can be reduced to nothing. This concept is known as Zero Waste.

The idea is that there is no waste, there are only misplaced and misused resources.

For example, landfilling an orange peel is misplacing compost material.

Buying single-use plastic-lined paper plates is misusing reusable ceramic, plastic or starch (more on this later) plates. These sort of paper plates are currently not recyclable nor compostable.

While Zero Waste can be applied to any form of event, or to any community, the Canada Winter Games can provide a focus for Whitehorse to apply this concept.

Zero Waste could be part of the legacy from this event.

Legacy is a term used to describe the beneficial "things" an event or occasion can leave to a community.

This can range from buildings to vehicles to capacity to run programs.

For example, a building legacy could be the athletes' village.



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After the Games are over, the village could become student housing, redeveloped as condominiums or whatever else is deemed appropriate.

This assumes the Athletes Village is built with a long-term vision in mind. If not, it will probably be one of those temporary ATCO trailer monstrosities.

Now before the letters and e-mails start rolling in about how the environmentalists are going to ruin everyone's sporting fun by making everything and everyone Zero Waste focussed, there is a precedence to examine.

The 1994 Winter Olympic Games in Lillehammer, Norway, were environmentally friendly. In fact, they strived to be the first "green" Olympic games ever.

For information on environmental issues of the Lillehamme Olympic Games check out www.american.edu/TED/LILLE.HTM.

A four point plan was developed to ensure eco-friendliness during the lead-up to the 1994 Olympic Winter Games. The points were as follows.

First, companies were instructed to use natural materials wherever possible.

Second, emphasis was placed on energy conservation.

Third, a recycling program was developed for the entire winter games region.

Finally, the fourth point was a stipulation was made that the arenas must harmonize with the surrounding landscape.

It is not within the scope of this column to comment on points one, two or four.

The gentle reader will have to form his or her own opinion on that large metal building blotting the viewscape at the top of Two-Mile Hill.

The third point about recycling is currently of interest.

Recycling programs don't necessarily mean just recycling.

They must also incorporate reducing, reusing and composting initiatives.

An example from the Lillehammer Games involved composting.

One million plates and three million utensils were made from a potato-based starch.

Once used, they were not washed like ceramic or metal plates for reuse or recycled like plastic cutlery into another plastic product.



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Instead, they were turned into animal feed or compost.

Collecting all the resources that can be recycled or composted opens another opportunity for a legacy.

The venues for the games will be spread out.

Going from site-to-site to remove recyclables and compostables will require a number of specialized vehicles.

These vehicles could have sub-compartments inside them for different recyclable items.

They could also have hydraulic lifts to move items.

An example could be plastic bins of compostable material. Not only could the vehicles be a legacy, but plastic compost bins could also be as well.

The bins last virtually forever, don't spill and are animal proof.

This could mean certain locations would not have to use the bio-degradable compost bags.

Once the games are over, the vehicles and bins could then be used to collect similar items from sites around Whitehorse and neighbouring areas.

Eventually, the Whitehorse compost pick-up program could get away from the bio-degradable bag system and go over to plastic compost bins.

The 2007 Canada Winter Games could become the catalyst to ensuring Whitehorse and adjacent communities establish this and similar programs.

Planning is already underway to deal with the reuse, recycle and composting challenges the Winter Games will provide.

A Green Committee is being established, and volunteers are needed to serve on it. Let's make the 2007 Canada Winter Games a zero waste event.

Contact the Raven Education Coordinator at 667-7269 or education@ravenrecycling.org for more details.

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