



**REGIONAL DISTRICT of OKANAGAN-SIMILKAMEEN
PRESS RELEASE
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RDOS Making Strides in Reducing Ecological Footprint

Ecological Footprint, carbon emissions, waste reduction, global warming – all buzz words in the environmental movement gripping the world. Externally, the RDOS is actively involved in reducing our region's carbon footprint through our various recycling, composting and air quality initiatives. However, within the ranks of RDOS employees and Directors, much is being done to reduce the organization's impact.

Several initiatives including low flush toilets, composting, recycling and programs such as "Bike to Work Week" and "Turn it Off Challenge" have all helped to cut back on emissions at the RDOS.

Restrooms in the RDOS building have been retrofitted with low-flush toilets, urinals with infrared flush valves and motion sensitive taps to reduce water usage. Before the low flush units were installed, water usage per month averaged 1600 cubic feet. Since the water-saving units were installed, water consumption has been reduced to 708 cubic feet per month.

As the initiator of many of the waste reduction programs in our region, it's not surprising that the RDOS has multiple recycling and composting practices in place. Since 1991, the RDOS has been using the services of Penticton Paper Shuffle to recycle office paper. In 2006, a comprehensive recycling program was started in the office to divert all accepted household recyclables, such as boxboard, plastics and tin, as well as a composting program for organic waste produced in the office. Additionally, batteries and light bulbs are recycled and obsolete computers are auctioned off or recycled. The RDOS also has a Directive to eliminate the use of purchased water bottles and Styrofoam in the office.

In 2007, the RDOS joined the BC Hydro "Turn It off Challenge." For four months, the RDOS cut back on power usage by turning lights off when leaving the room, turning computers and monitors off when not in use and lowering office temperature slightly. Although the challenge has ended, the habits have remained both in the office and at home for employees and directors. The HVAC system is monitored remotely so that it is turned off when the building is unoccupied. Currently, the RDOS is involved in a pilot project with Destination Conservation with the goals of improving sustainability and reducing natural resource consumption within the RDOS office building.

In another power-saving initiative, Information Services staff have been working on server virtualization, which reduces the amount of physical servers being used, thereby reducing power consumption and subsequent E-waste.

Finally, the RDOS encourages staff to think about the environment not only in the office, but in all aspects of life by promoting events such as "Bike to Work Week" happening this year May 31 to June 6. Additionally, the RDOS Wellness Committee encourages employees to make environmental commitments, such as composting, walking, biking or carpooling and having power smart appliances at home.

RDOS Vice-Chair, Tom Chapman commends staff at the RDOS, "Think globally, act locally! RDOS staff is doing just that. By committing to the environment in their work and home spaces, they are setting a wonderful example and proving that every bit counts."

To learn more about how you can make a difference, check out the RDOS website at www.rdos.bc.ca or call Patty Tracy at 250-492-0237 or toll-free 1-888-610-3737.



T. Chapman
RDOS Board Vice-Chair

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