

Local news

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Local 503

City's youth survey earns praise

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Staff reporter

Your survey is on the right track, the keynote speaker told more than 200 delegates attending the opening session of the Youth Matters conference here Thursday.

"Cities like Prince George that listen and hear what youth are saying and figure out how to work with them and temper their ideas with wisdom, have a tremendous future," Seattle pediatrician Dr. Robert Aldrich said following his opening-day speech at the College of New Caledonia.

He was commenting on the results of a youth survey which revealed drug and alcohol abuse and peer pressure were the main problems identified by the 4,491 youths aged 12 to 17 who responded to a survey conducted by the Mayor's Advisory Committee on Youth.

Although the survey results also revealed the city's youth want more activities, Aldrich said he was surprised by their switch from athletic to more social and cultural activities.

"That's a wonderful thing to have happen because

it's a step toward the citizens establishing more social and cultural activities," he said.

When asked to identify the three activities they enjoyed most, 4,279 of the respondents included social and cultural activities, 2,983 included non-team sports and 1,654 included team sports.

The youth conference concluded at noon today after delegates heard a summary of the workshops dealing with teenagers and politics, youth rights, developing self esteem, resisting negative peer pressure and communication.

During his speech, Aldrich used Seattle as an example of a city which has paid attention to its youth. Seattle, too, began a move toward a more youth-oriented city by conducting a survey, he said.

He urged Prince George to follow Seattle's example by establishing an action committee to develop a five-year plan based on the survey results, build awareness of the positive contribution youth make to the city and begin lobbying for the things the city requires to make it a healthy safe environment in which to raise children.

In Seattle, the survey led to the establishment of the KidsPlace program by the YMCA, the Junior

League and city council, a program which places logos on buses and businesses identified as safe places for youth.

Safety was one of the major issues identified as concerning the youth of Seattle.

As a result of the Seattle survey, city council there established six task forces which produced 31 recommendations acting on the needs and problems identified by the youth. The mayor has appointed youth to the board of directors responsible for the operation of Seattle Centre, an amusement park which the city's youth had identified as one of their favorite city-owned sites.

Seattle also established a commission on children and youth, which Aldrich described as a "very powerful commission" with its own budget.

"They produced a youth policy plan which is being used by the city council as a sort of Magna Carta to see if the city's planning and budget fits that policy," he said.

As a result of the efforts of the commission, the city produces an analysis of its budget to show where money is being spent on children and youth.

On the positive side, Seattle youth identified the

importance of the beauty of the city's parks as well as helping the poor and needy.

Aldrich says wherever he goes he finds an upwelling of youthful support for the underprivileged and the environment.

"I don't know what that means, but obviously something is happening in the minds of youth," he said.

The results of the Prince George survey released Thursday did not include information on these issues. The committee expects to present a full report on the survey to city council here in September.

Seattle's KidsPlace program and efforts to include youth in civic activities has attracted the interest of more than 100 cities in North America and 16 cities in Europe. The Japanese cabinet invited Aldrich to come to that country to explain the program to them.

An international meeting of all cities with KidsPlace activities is being planned for 1990, Aldrich said.

"I hope to see representatives from Prince George there," he said.

Ski development gets initial okay

Fraser-Fort George Regional District directors have taken a first step towards installing a large water and sewer system at the Powder King Ski Hill area in the Pine Pass.

Directors gave first three readings Thursday to a bylaw which would allow borrowing of \$351,440 from the Municipal Finance Authority for the construction, which is expected to go ahead this summer in conjunction with a day lodge and condominium project.

Under a specified taxation area, the money is to be paid back annually by Powder King ski development (\$55,000 the first year) and other users of the service.

Before approving final reading next month, directors want to hear advice from FFRGD's lawyer on an agreement between Powder King developer Peter Graham and the province of B.C.

Graham said the general terms of the agreement are that the province has agreed to take over the operation should it fail as a private operation. In such a case, the province would either offer it to another company or operate it itself.

Graham was reluctant to allow the business agreement to become a public document at the meeting Thursday, but agreed to hand it over to the board's solicitors, Wilson and King.

FFGRD director Bob Headrich (Tabor Lake-Stone Creek electoral area) opposed the bylaw, fearing that if the project fails, the taxpayers will be stuck with the cost of the sewer and water system.

"If taxpayers are going to be involved in this Azu project, they should know what's in the agree-

ment," Headrich said.

FFGRD does have a letter from the Ministry of Crown Lands confirming the ski agreement with Powder King.

Plans for Powder King include an 80-bed, hotel-day lodge complex estimated at \$3.3 million along with condominium units and a residential subdivision entailing 14 single-family cabins.

The old Azu Village ski lift is to be added to a triple chairlift and two T-bars now in operation.

In the past four years, the area about 200 kilometres north of Prince George has attracted about 50,000 skiers annually, with about 80 per cent coming from outside this regional district.

Facilities now include a group of trailers — nicknamed Chateau Atco — to accommodate overnight stays, day lodge, ski shop and rental facility.

Planner leaves district

Derek Trimmer, Fraser-Fort George Regional District director of planning, has resigned his position after 11 years of service.

Trimmer is leaving Prince George to assume duties as an organizational analyst with the province's Ministry of Municipal Affairs.

He said his job involves working with communities around the province as well as broad policy such as will arise from new regional district legislation. His resignation is effective June 16.

Trimmer joined the FFRGD staff in 1978 as a planning technician. Four months later he was promoted as planning assistant to then-planner Yvonne Harris.

In 1981 he became the FFRGD planning officer with senior responsibilities and one year later, replaced Harris as director of planning.

Chairman Colin Kinsley said Trimmer's strength has been in giving assistance to rural and unincorporated areas.

"He's very well respected and will be missed by the rural residents," Kinsley said.



TRIMMER

AREA GETS CELLULAR PHONES

Prince George will get cellular phone service next year as part of a five-year, \$100-million expansion program announced Thursday by B.C. Cellular.

The cordless phones will be introduced to the city in 1990 and to Dawson Creek and Fort St. John the following year, said Michelle Gaudette, B.C. Cellular's marketing communications manager.

In 1992, transmitters will be put in place to deliver cellular service along the highway corridors from Fort St. John to Prince George through to Kamloops, Gaudette said.

But cellular phones won't replace Autotel, a BC Tel service used extensively in the forestry industry, which allows mobile phone calls on a limited number of channels in the Prince George region, she said.

"Autotel is not going to disappear by any means — it will ultimately replace two-way radios."

B.C. Cellular, a wholly-owned subsidiary of B.C. Tel, is expanding along the main business and recreation corridors in B.C., said company chairman Lynn Patterson at a press conference in Vancouver.

The expansion will create 1,000 new jobs by 1993, Patterson said.

The company currently serves Greater Vancouver, the Fraser Valley and southern Vancouver Island.

Starting in June, corridor service will be extended to Duncan and Campbell River on Vancouver Island, Kamloops and the corridor from Vernon through Kelowna to Penticton in the Okanagan. Staff will increase to about 200 from 60.

Despite the high cost of cellular phones, which range from \$900 to more than \$2,000, B.C. Cellular has grown rapidly since its startup in January, 1986.

There are an estimated 25,000 to 30,000 cellular phones in B.C., stated Gaudette. By 1993, the number is expected to climb to 140,000, she said.

Cantel, B.C. Cellular's only competitor, has not announced any plans for the Northern Interior. Cantel was selected by the federal government in 1983 to offer cellular telephone service across Canada in competition with local telephone companies.

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Coal mine's president optimistic about sales

Japanese steel mills will continue to need metallurgical coal from British Columbia for the foreseeable future, says Paul Kostuik, president of Quintette Coal.

Responding to reports the Japanese are using more low-quality coking coals to make steel, Kostuik predicted they will continue to

need B.C.'s coal until well into the next century.

"Quintette's and B.C.'s coals are of extremely high quality," Kostuik admitted Thursday, but "until the economics of new steel-making technology are straightened out, they are going to be required for blast furnace use."

In any event, Quintette, a \$2-billion mine at Tumbler Ridge, isn't affected because it has long-term contracts to supply coal to the Japanese until 1998, he said.

Minoru Hashimoto, managing director of NKK Corporation, Japan's second-largest steel-maker, warned a Canadian coal conference this week that a new system of making steel will eliminate the need for hard coking coal.

B.C. Mines, including Quintette, produce mostly this kind of metallurgical coal.

But Kostuik, in a telephone interview from Vancouver, said various countries have been working to reduce or eliminate coking coal in the steel-making process for several years.

"It's not a new technology; it's been going on since 1980 and before," he said.

Japanese steel mills have been able to use more low-quality coking coal for their steel furnaces precisely because of the high quality coal they're able to get from B.C., he said.

However, under the current blast-furnace technology, they've reached a threshold as to how much low-quality coal they can use, Kostuik said.

The move to eliminate coking coal altogether is a completely different technology that could take 20 years or more to develop economically, he said. "These technologies in application are a long way down the road."

Kostuik said Hashimoto in making his remarks is engaging in "gamesmanship and astute buying practices." NKK Corp. is one of the lead Japanese steel companies that look after buying coal from Quintette, which is 10-per-cent owned by a consortium of Japanese steel firms.

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Board backs '911' service

Fraser Fort George Regional District members are fully supportive of a move to bring the 911 emergency telephone system to Prince George.

Directors agreed Thursday to join with Prince George city council in a cost-sharing project to investigate capital and operating costs to establish the service throughout the regional district as well as within city limits.

The 911 number has been designated throughout North America for access to emergency service through a central answering point. Fraser-Fort George chairman Colin Kinsley said persons, including children who find the number easy to remember, can call ambulance, police, fire and emergency aid — without confusion — regardless of familiarity of telephone numbers or the community.

When FFRGD director Art Kaehn (Woodpecker-Hixon electoral area) suggested maybe another number would be easier, it was pointed out the 911 number is not only known internationally, but can be dialed through feeling in the dark or by sightless persons.

"The nine is at one end of the telephone dial and the one is at the other end," said director Jim Scott (Crooked River-Parsnip electoral area).

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