

March 2011 Re-launch Issue

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When Environmentalism and an Entrepreneur Meet

by Dan Veniez

Buddy Boyd, is the founder of Gibsons Recycling Depot, the first and largest non-government funded resource recovery park in British Columbia. Unlike taxpayer funded recycling operations, Gibsons Recycling is a business. It doesn't take a penny from government. It employs people from the community it serves. Its employees pay taxes. The company pays taxes. And unlike government recycling efforts, this is a cost effective and efficient operation.

As Gibsons Recycling informs us, modern society has developed what can be described as cheap, transportation-based "Integrated Waste Management" systems. This has not worked as the long term (and now short term) costs become more and more obvious. Shipping increasing waste and recyclables overseas for processing is not only expensive it exports jobs and stifles innovation and new age technologies. And the carbon footprint is tough to quantify, but it is massive.

Zero waste is a whole system approach to addressing these problems. Zero waste saves money, leads to innovation, creates jobs, involves far less transportation, and solves landfill problems.

Zero waste operations are gaining broader acceptance as new technologies are developed that allow the system to be used economically on a small scale. On the Sunshine Coast, arguably one of the places with one of the most environmentally aware populations in Canada, options for recycling, garbage collection, and landfill use are being currently debated.

Zero waste is an idea whose time has come.

Like any entrepreneur, Buddy has run up against ardent and powerful defenders of the status quo. He continues to fight entrenched interests opposed to common sense solutions to a big societal challenge. He does so with a passion and steadfastness that some of us call admirable. Others believe his relentlessness and zeal are pains in the posterior.

Well, if he is, Canada needs more "pains" like Buddy Boyd.

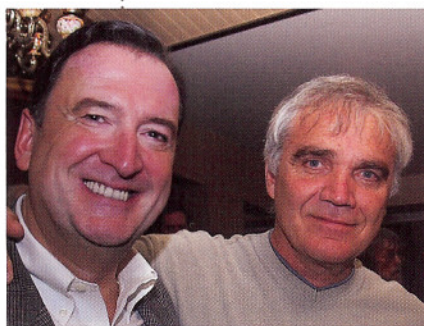
Gibsons Recycling is an example of a home-grown "national champion" that

we have a responsibility to support and nurture. And as an

entrepreneur, Buddy Boyd is a powerful change agent. By definition, that frightens and intimidates those with a strong vested interest in the status quo. However, governments have much to learn from front line innovators like Buddy. And as taxpayers, we should all insist that they do.

Through his example, he is showing that there's absolutely no contradiction whatsoever between building a prosperous economy and leaving our planet cleaner for future generations.

In fact, in the 21st century, they are inextricably linked. Firms like Gibsons Recycling and trail-blazing entrepreneurs like Buddy Boyd are a fundamental and urgent necessity if Canada is to be the productive, competitive, innovative, and clean economy that we surely must become. ❖



Dan Veniez (left) and Buddy Boyd.