

High on Ice funding steady for next year

KEN GOUSSEAU
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

Municipal spending for the next High on Ice Festival will likely match last year's contribution, despite a \$24,000 funding cut city council approved to balance the 2008 budget.

The \$24,000 reduction to High on Ice spending in the City's 2008 budget was based on last year's \$125,000 municipal contribution to the event. However, the City's High on Ice expenses actually totaled \$100,000 last year, and organizers say the event is expected to cost the same amount this year, meaning the City's funding allocation has been trimmed, but the cost to taxpayers remains the same.

Council recently authorized \$87,000 in funding for the Fort St. John Community Arts Council to organize ice and snow carving component of the 2009 High on Ice Festival next January. The funding contribution does not include estimated city staffing costs of over \$7,000 for the event, and expenses for other

aspects of the festival, such as the ice fishing derby.

"We had a significant sponsorship package last year, of which the Arts Council was able to secure \$11,000 worth of funding," said Sarah Tittmore, the City's director of community services. "We are absolutely looking for more partners as the years go on and there are opportunities for people to give money if they want."

However, as in the past, the \$20,000 in sponsorship money the Arts Council aims to raise for the next High on Ice Festival will be put toward expanding the event, rather than reducing the cost to the City.

"The City says 'we will supply you with the basics to do the festival, as it was done last year and anything new that you want to add to make it bigger and better, you have to fundraise for,'" said Sue Popesku, the Arts Council's director in charge of High on Ice.

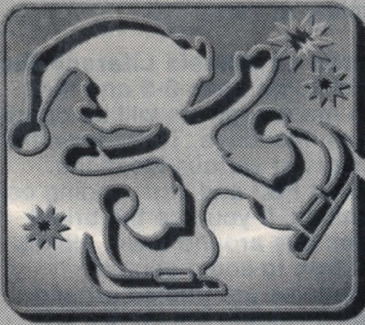
"(The City) has a budget situation right now with trying to handle a lot of expenses...so if we can hold that

line for them and get support from additional (funding) sources in order to build the festival, that just means more people coming into town (and) more benefit for the community."

Mayor Jim Eglinski said city council could examine bringing more community sponsors on board to reduce the City's costs for hosting the event, similar to the Fort St. John Airshow, which is about 85 per cent private sponsorship funded.

"We go to sponsors on a lot of other projects and it's never really been looked at with (High on Ice), though maybe that's where our future will go with it," Eglinski said. "If somebody came in and said this year we're going to try to sell sponsorships to High on Ice and there was interest, maybe that's the way to go."

City council approved the \$24,000 reduction to this year's municipal High on Ice funding allocation in May following local opposition to a 42 per cent increase in business property taxes in the City's initial 2008 budget proposal.



high on ice

January 18-20 2008



Schedule of Events:

Jan. 18 - Professional carving begins in Centennial Park!

- 1-3pm - One Block Competition
- 6-10pm - Team Competition begins
- 8pm - Comedy Night at the Lido Theatre - Live band at 10pm

Jan. 19 - Join us for an exciting day of fun!

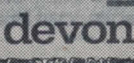
- 8am - 10pm - Professional Team Ice Carving Competition
- 8am - Dusk - Ice Fishing Derby (Inga Lake)
- 9am - 4pm - Amateur Ice Carving
- 10am - 4pm - Concessions, story telling, and more (Centennial Park)
- 10am - 2pm - Toboggan Races (Toboggan Hill)
- 10am - 2pm - Mayor's Challenge
- 11am - 3pm - Sleigh Rides (NPSS) - \$1 donation
- 8pm - Mukluk dance with live music by Flipside
- *Plus, don't miss the Mukluk Bonspiel at the Curling Club!

Jan. 20 - More family fun!

- 8am - 2pm - Profession Team Ice Carving ends
- 8am - 3pm - Ice Fishing Derby (Inga Lake)
- 9am - 3pm - Amateur Snow Carving Competition
- 9:30am - Snowmobile Poker Rally followed by Show & Shine (Centennial Park)
- 11am - 4pm - Concessions, story telling, and more (Centennial Park)
- 4pm - Award Ceremony for all Ice and Snow Carving
- 4 - 6pm - Ice sculpture viewing and celebration

FOR MORE INFORMATION CALL 311 OR VISIT WWW.FORTSTJOHN.CA

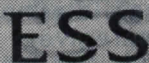

FORT ST. JOHN
The Energetic City


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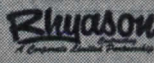



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Bruce Lantz photo

SPECTACULAR SCULPTURES

The fourth annual High on Ice kicked off last week and the three-day festival promised to be quite an event. Features included an ice fishing derby, toboggan races, a comedy night and, of course, ice carving with carvers from around the world taking part and creating masterpieces like this one. The High on Ice festival is part of the National Ice Carving Association. Other festivals are in Lake Louise and Ottawa. Results weren't available by press time but will be in next week's edition of Northeast NEWS.





Karen Simpson and Evan Saugstad work on their winning creation.



Melanie Robinson photo

From left: carvers Alexey Shchitov, Kejiro Miyata, Chan Kitburi, Dean Murray and Bonita Lampman, lead judge.

JAN 30, 2008

'Ice' fest gaining momentum

By Melanie Robinson

FORT ST. JOHN – One of only three Canadian National Ice Carving Association competitions took place in Fort St. John recently and it was a success.

High on Ice, now in its fourth year, took over Centennial Park and parts of the region from Jan. 18-20 with events featuring amateur and professional ice carving, snow carving, ice fishing derby's and Mayor's challenges.

Lead judge Bonita Lampman, with the NICA, said the festival this year was the best yet.

"This weekend was a fantastic competition," she said. "The weather stayed perfect. It was cold, it was cloudy, we had ideal conditions. We had some excellent sculptures displayed; everybody in the pro team category won a medal because they had such superb weather for carving. They had great details and the sculptures were fantastic."

High on Ice coordinator Sue Popesku agreed, saying the festival benefited by having two of the world's best ice carvers, Takashi Ito and Junichi Nakamura from Japan attend the three-day event.

"The judges said we have elevated the High on Ice in all the world's competitions by having Junichi and Tak from Japan because they're well known and ice carvers tend to follow them," she said.

Popesku said having the Japanese carvers and others go to other festivals will spread the word about High on Ice. But what carvers need to realize is Fort St. John is not as far north as it may seem.

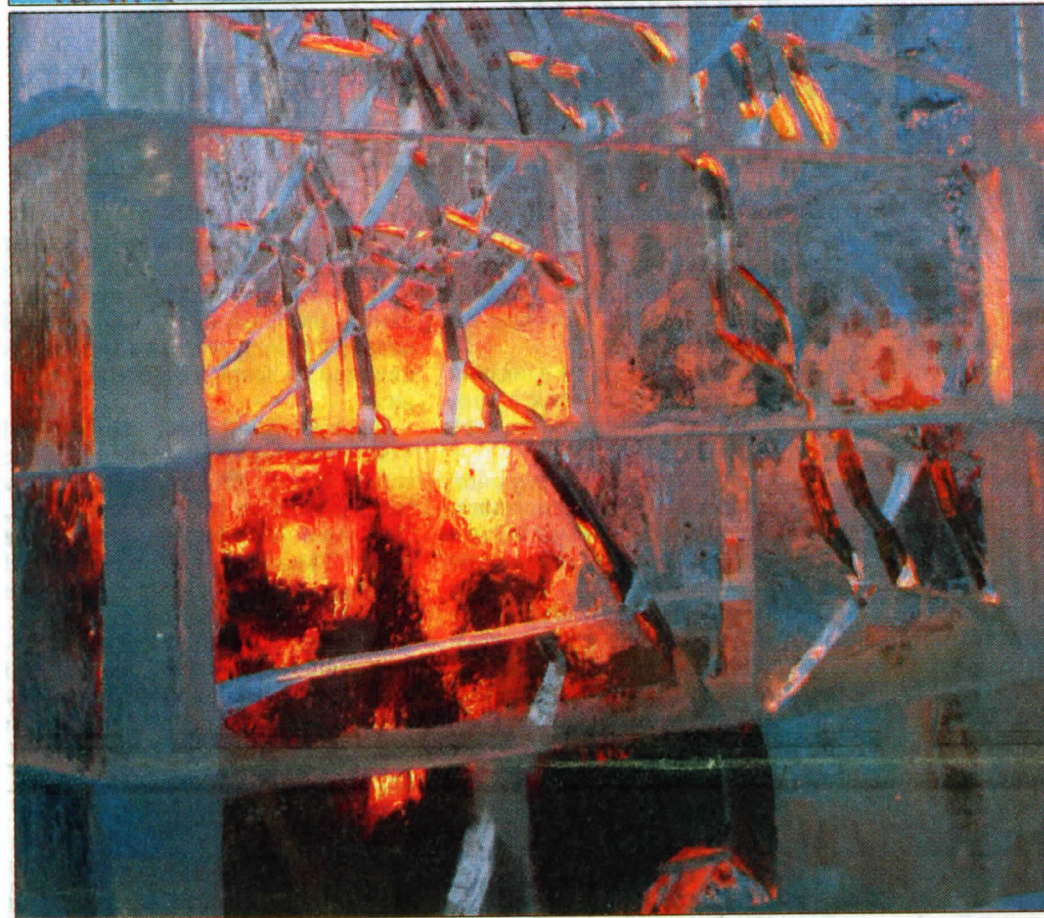
"That's our biggest stumbling block," she said. "People think 'Oh the trip, it's so far north'. Well really it's 1 1/2 hours plane fare from Vancouver."

New this year was the addition of local carver Jesse Forrester to the list of professionals taking part in the event. Forrester, who carved with world renowned carver Peter Vogelaar, placed fifth in the abstract category, earning him and Vogelaar a bronze medal for their work.

"Peter and I work well together," he said. "There are obviously some things I can bring to the table as well as Peter so he looks after the artistic part of it and I kind of look after the mechanical part of it so it's teamwork."

Both the Japanese team and Forrester plan to attend the festival next year. Ito, who had never been here before, said he enjoyed the conditions for carving throughout the weekend.

"It's still new here, only fourth year, so a lot of people don't know," he said. "This year we'll go out and hopefully get some good word out and people will come."



Aleisha Hendry/A

FRIGID FLAME

(Top) One of the ice sculptures depicting the northern wind at the fourth annual High on Ice competition at Centennial Park. For the finale, a Fire and Ice display had a bonfire blazing inside an ice tower. See story on A8.

Ice festival set

FORT ST. JOHN – This year's High on Ice Festival, Jan. 18-20 is promising to be an exciting event. The event, in its fourth year, will feature activities for all ages ranging from ice/snow carving to ice fishing, toboggan races, a comedy night and a Mayor's Challenge.

“When you live in the north, you can be restricted by the things that you can do,” said spokesperson Chandra Wong, “and the best way to enjoy living in the North is being able to do stuff outside. High on Ice allows people to get outside and enjoy living in the North.”

This year's theme, ‘Celebrate Canada in the North’, marks BC's 150th anniversary and is featuring ice carvers from Japan, Russia and the US. New are an intermediate level for ice carvers and the introduction of a sport similar to baseball - ‘over-the-line’.

For more information visit www.cityfsj.com or call the Fort St. John Arts Council at 787-2781.

“It's a great opportunity to spend time with your family,” Wong said.



Melanie Robinson photo

Local ice carver Jesse Forrester stands with his family and potential future ice carver, Caellum Forrester at the kick-off to High on Ice last Thursday. Jesse will be competing with world-renowned carver Peter Vogelaar throughout the three-day event.



Melanie Robinson photo

Takashi Ito, originally from Japan but now living in Victoria, receives his jacket from the High on Ice Committee at the kick-off to the fourth annual event in Fort St. John. Teams from around the world, including Japan, Russia and the United States were competing in the event.



CARVING IN CANADA

Aleisha Hendry/AHN

Ilya Filimontsev and Alexey Schihtov from Moscow, Russia, discuss one of their ice sculptures that is taking shape in Centennial Park. The sculptures will be ready for the High on Ice carnival next week.



Aleisha Hendry/AHN

BUILDING BLOCKS JAN 17, 2008

Arena staff member Bob Corbett runs the forklift to stack blocks of ice for a massive ice sculpture for this weekend's High On Ice Winter Carnival.



Aleisha Hendry/AHN

(L-R) Second place winner Alexey Schihtov, and first place winners Takashi Ito and Junichi Nakamura, show off their medals at the awards for High On Ice on Sunday.

Carving competition winners from around the world

ALEISHA HENDRY
ALASKA HIGHWAY NEWS

American and Japanese sculptors took first place in the main events over the weekend at the fourth annual High On Ice B.C. Ice Carving Competition at Centennial Park.

Junichi Nakamura and Takashi Ito won the Realistic category, while Dean Murray and Chan Kitburi placed first in Abstract.

"I think the level of talent was definitely higher this year," said Murray, who along with Kitburi competed at last year's event. "We're excited about our win, especially since two weeks ago we were thinking about doing a different piece, but then we changed our minds at the last minute."

In Realistic, second place went to Alexey Schihtov for his depiction of a Canadian Mountie on horseback. Third place went to Tom Pitt for his icy Sasquatch that's looking to hitch a ride.

In Abstract, second place went to Keijiro Miyata and third went to Ilya Filimontsev, who both showed their take on northern winds. Fourth place went to Larry McFarlane for his stylized wolf howling at the moon. Fifth place went to Peter Vogelaar and Jesse Forrester for their evolution of travel in the north.

Forrester, the only local to take part in the professional event, is looking forward to doing it all again next year.

"It feels pretty good, but as always, some things didn't go exactly as planned. We were hoping to maybe have accomplished some things that we didn't. Overall, for my first professional event, I'm quite pleased," said Forrester, who was also a site manager and helped with many of the commissioned pieces that can be seen around the park.

For the first time there was also a single-block challenge for the professionals. First place went to Peter Vogelaar, second to Miyata, and third to Filimontsev.

"This weekend was a fantastic competition," said lead judge Bonita Lammman. "We had some excellent sculptures displayed...all the sculptures were fantastic."

In the intermediate amateur category, Dave Diehl and Randy Jordan took first place, Sonja and Miles Butts and Julie Foster took second, and Suzon Anne Tremblay, Laurie Petrucci and Aleisha Hendry took third.

In the Mayor's Challenge, Chetwynd defended its title for the fourth year in a row, while Fort St. John took second and Taylor third.

In Sunday's snow sculpting event, Suzon Anne Tremblay, Marjolene Gauthier and Aleisha Hendry got the top nod, and Bruce Kosugi and the NEAT team took second.

All sculptures can be seen at Centennial Park for as long as Mother Nature allows them to last.



HIGH ON ICE

Winter Carnival
2008

Fort St. John



British Columbia Ice Carving Championship



1st Place - Abstract
2007 High on Ice

Sculpted by:
Ilya Filimontsev

Photo by Aleisha Hendry

January 18 - 20, 2008

FORT ST. JOHN
BRITISH COLUMBIA
CANADA

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Photo by
Aleisha Hendry

1st Place - Realistic
Sculpted by Alexey Shchitov
2007 High on Ice



Fort St. John Community



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Sanctioned by National Ice Carvers

The centre includes two ice rinks, including an NHL-sized rink and, Eglinski adds, an expandable rink to accommodate Olympic hockey if needed. The second floor of the facility features a raised speed-skating oval.



Fort St. John's annual High on Ice festival attracts ice sculptors from far and wide and helps locals celebrate their community and the winter.

were not, as a city, open enough to them and discussing things with them before they happened.”

At the top of the demands from residents was a call for more recreational spending.