



Summer buys

Hygiene to emissions modelling

by Catherine Morrison

Now that fall is in the air, Canadians are buttoning up their loosened collars and buckling back down to work. Even if the business of government seemed to slow down during the summer, public sector purchasing, the kind that keeps the whole machinery humming, never takes a break.

Governments keep on ordering – “hygiene products,” for example. The City of Edmonton was ordering cases of toilet paper, facial tissues, toilet seat covers for the ultra cautious, recycled paper towels, lint-free wipes, 100 percent cotton rags and floor squeegees, not to mention other “hygiene” related products not usually discussed in mixed company.

Nor, apparently, does the on-going need for live laboratory animals diminish during those lazy, hazy days. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency in Burnaby, British Columbia, ordered up for July delivery, “various types of laboratory animals” for marine bio-toxin testing, to take place throughout the next year.

BC had a Request for Proposal, closing in July, for incarceration cages to be built and installed in 14 Ministry of the Attorney General-owned 2002 Chevy Suburbans. Apparently, the ministry wants to keep prisoners safe while they are being transported to and from dates with the judicial system – an improvement over rattling around loose in the back of a police cruiser.

July saw Defence Construction Canada (DCC) receiving bids for the collection of landfill monitoring data as part of the DEW Line cleanup project in the Cape Hooper DEW Line site in Nunavut. The joint Canada-US Distant Early Warning (DEW) Line, established during the cold war era, is known to have left a legacy of toxic waste in the North. In 1998, the Department of National Defence and the Nunavut Tungaavik Inc (NTI) signed an agreement to undertake an environmental clean-up of 15 DEW Line sites and facilities within the Nunavut Settlement Area.

Under the agreement, an Environmental Working Group (EWG) was established, with both parties represented by qualified engineers and/or scientists with expertise in environmental remediation and clean-up in northern climates. Also, Inuit representatives will work with the EWG in identifying Inuit use of the area, wildlife patterns, and past events and occurrences that may have had an impact on landfills (i.e. dumping, hazardous waste storage, natural occurrences) and assist in scoring a risk-assessment matrix to be used in defining the monitoring and clean-up process.

In Ontario, where the summer heat was close to brain-frying intensity this year, Cancer Care Ontario found itself in need of a branding strategy. Seems the Cancer Services Implementation Committee, established in the summer of 2001 by the provincial Minister for Health and Long-term Care, discovered in the course of its work that the “image and/or brand of Cancer Care Ontario was either poor or non-existent.”

“Developing a branding strategy,” including the creation of a “unique visual identity” – what used to be known as a logo and matching letterhead – appears to be the first step in carrying out the committee’s

mandate to recommend ways to improve the integration and quality of cancer services in Ontario.

When the temperature is stuck in the stratosphere, the issue of climate change tends to poke its nasty little head around the corner of our collective national consciousness, taking the edge off that refreshing dip in the lake or pool-side micro-beer.

So, it was somewhat comforting in June to see National Resources Canada (NRCan) purchasing the continuing use of an economic model used to assess economic impacts of policies for reducing greenhouse gas emissions – widely seen as the chief villain in climate change.

Energy 2020 is a proprietary model developed in the United States and provided in Canada by the Canadian Energy Research Institute of Calgary, Alberta. NRCan describes Energy 2020 as a “dynamic behavioural model of the Canadian and US economy” that analyzes the impact of trading emission permits between parts of Canada, between Canada and the US, and internationally.

Emissions trading is a keystone in Canada’s attempts to meet the requirements of the 1997 Kyoto Protocol. The May 2002, *Discussion Paper on Canada’s Contribution to Addressing Climate Change*, describes emissions trading as a system under which companies are issued one emission permit for each tonne of green house gas (GHG) they emit, and one that encourages “greater energy efficiency through the innovation and creativity that comes from utilizing the market.” Reduce your emissions and you can sell your permits to a dirtier company. If you find it too expensive to reduce your emissions, you can buy extra permits from a clean company. There might be an auction, for example, with permits going to the highest bidder – the discussion paper doesn’t say whether it might be eBay or not.

It does speculate that such a system “could cover up to 80 percent of Canada’s total GHG emissions.” Whether the system would eliminate that percentage of our emissions is not made clear. Which is kind of what you found yourself wondering as the temperature soared and the summer haze took on a chewier quality than you remembered from days gone by.

But it’s autumn now; there’s a crispness in the air and the business of government purchasing goes on. ♪♪

Catherine Morrison, a writer based in Chelsea, Quebec, has been published in the Ottawa Citizen and the Globe and Mail’s print and online editions, as well as in Canadian Consumer, Asia Pacific Magazine, the Edmonton Journal and C.A.R.P. Magazine. She was a full-time writer/broadcaster for CBC Network Television and CBC TV and Radio, Winnipeg and a contributing editor and columnist for Winnipeg Magazine.

If you know of unusual and interesting public sector purchases, either by the nature of the good or the nature of the purchase, please contact us at: (800) 575-1146, fax us at: (613) 688-0767, or email: info@summitconnects.com