

Promising Practices



Non-profits

Ottawa Bluesfest lessens its carbon footprint, ramps up recycling

To the citizens of Ottawa, the Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest is one of the most anticipated and celebrated events of the summer. The massive outdoor concert attracts thousands of fans every year and showcases an incredibly diverse range of musical and comedy acts over the course of the 12 day event.¹

From its humble, one-stage beginnings in 1994, the Bluesfest has become Canada's fastest growing outdoor music festival, to the point where Billboard Magazine has named it one of the top ten music festivals in the world. In 2007, a new festival site located at LeBreton Flats Park adjacent to the Canadian War Museum, offered five stages.

The event is organized by the Ottawa Bluesfest organization, a registered charity since 2000, whose mandate is to provide a world class event that showcases local, regional, national and international musicians.² Further objectives include the creation the art of music, the building of audiences and the establishment of a musical community, including the creation of an educational program within schools in Ottawa promoting an appreciation for the Blues, called *Blues in the Schools*.³

In addition to these charitable works, it seems that Ottawa Bluesfest is also environmentally conscious. For the past three years the organization has been recognized by the Recycling Council of Ontario with an **Award for Waste Minimization**.⁴ Bluesfest

has worked with sponsors, specifically Rothsay Biodiesel, in order to ensure the event is run in a sustainable way.

In 2010, this partnership with Rothsay Biodiesel resulted in an annual **reduction of the festival's CO2 emissions by 26,000kg**.⁵ This reduction was achieved through the use of recycled cooking oils in place of diesel fuel. The event was powered by seven generators, all running on a B90 blend of Rothsay Biodiesel. This fuel is a unique renewable fuel, made by converting animal fats and recycled cooking oils to a combustible fuel. This environmentally sustainable alternative fuel reduces greenhouse gases and can be used in any diesel engine, without any modification, whatsoever.⁶

In order to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions, the organization also provides a supervised bike parking lot to encourage concert goers to travel by bicycle to and from the event.⁷



The Ottawa Bluesfest has implemented numerous recycling and waste minimization programs.

The Bluesfest organization also utilizes an innovative recycling container called the ClearStream Cycle Max. The container uses a clear bag, which is re-usable. The transparency of the bag discourages the disposal of non-recyclable material and field tests have shown

that the system greatly reduces the amount of litter sent to landfill sites.⁸

In addition to these recycling initiatives, the event also utilizes **compostable beer cups** made of corn. Of the approximately 200,000 cups that are used each year, 99% are disposed of properly and composted rather than sent to the landfill.⁹

Since some of these initiatives, such as the compostable beer cups, require the active participation of the attendees themselves. To inform the patrons, the festival has created a **volunteer “Green Team.”** The participation of the patrons in the recycling programs is essential, and this it is this team’s job to give all concert goers every opportunity to participate.¹⁰

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References:

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- ² Ibid.
- ³ The Town of Blind River. “Be a green power producer.” Website text. www.blindriver.com/site/welcome/index.php?pid=289. Accessed March 2011.
- ⁴ Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest. “Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest: Greening Facts.” Website text. <http://www.ottawabluesfest.ca/green>. Accessed March 2011.
- ⁵ Marketwire. “Rothsay Diesel Reduces CO2 Emissions at Cisco Ottawa Bluesfest.” August 12th, 2010. Website text. www.marketwire.com/press-release/Rothsay-Biodiesel-Reduces-CO2-Emissions-at-Cisco-Ottawa-Bluesfest-1304178.htm. Accessed March 2011.
- ⁶ Ibid.
- ⁷ Supra reference 4.
- ⁸ Ibid.
- ⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰ Ibid.

