



Beautiful athletic park rising from former gravel pit; [Final Edition]

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Inside Business: Commentary - People Business News in Brief

I do a lot of driving around this city and figure I'm familiar with most areas, especially the northwest, where I live. But I must admit that until I chatted with my alderman, Gordon Lowe, at Bruce Green's retirement party, I was unaware of the work that had been done near the Spy Hill Landfill to develop Inland Athletic Park.

As luck would have it, I was introduced to Dave Clark, manager resource development of Inland Aggregates, at the splendid Calgary Burns Club banquet and arranged to visit him at his office to go over the plans.

Clark is a Scotsman from Glasgow who emigrated to accept a job in the construction industry in Saskatoon. He made the move to Calgary in 1968 and has been working for Inland for the past 31 years.

He tells me it was back in 1980 that Inland started to explore for a gravel deposit along 69th Street N.W. In 1983, crushing crews and machinery processed the first tonne of gravel from a new pit along a large strip of land it had purchased along 112th Avenue. Since then, some 12 million tonnes of aggregate have been extracted from the site to help many Calgary communities in the construction of municipal infrastructure, commercial structures, residential subdivisions and homes.

Then, as the pit got deeper and the cost of extracting gravel got more expensive, Inland moved its plant to another location a little further to the northwest and began plans to reclaim the land. In 1998, with a lot of input from Joanne Kerr, who was the ward alderman at the time, the idea of using it as a sports park was created.

Inland pulled together all the stakeholders including provincial and civic government departments and utility companies. After extensive negotiations around the use of the land and the design of Stoney Trail and the intersection of Sarcee Trail, Inland gave up the rights to part of its gravel lease to accommodate the intersection design and built a screening berm between its pit and the neighbouring community of Citadel.

It sold its ownership of the lands to the city and agreed to provide the major portions of engineering, design and project management and certain construction services at cost.

A joint effort between Inland and the City of Calgary Parks Department, the result is the multi-functional 22-hectare regional Inland Athletic Park. It's an enormous facility that includes two rugby/football fields, one major and four national-size soccer pitches, two lacrosse fields, two baseball diamonds and even a cricket pitch, plus parking for 455 vehicles.

During our long winter months, good use will be made of a tobogganing hill and skating on the lagoon. The water area is fed by storm water from the commercial subdivision to the west of 69th Street and by a sophisticated watering system will be used for irrigation purposes.

A lot of dirt from the excavations for the extended leg of the northwest LRT line and other nearby land developments was distributed over the land but it is still some 25 metres below the road surface which means less impact on adjoining communities.

No one wants a gravel pit in their backyard, but there are great benefits to be had after reclamation. Good examples in this city are the land where the new Colonel Belcher now sits along Bowness Road, the Calgary Auto Mall, Carbon Park and the community of Riverbend, which were all built on former gravel operations.

The park that Clark's company transformed into Inland Athletic Park not only provides a huge expanse of green but will provide health and wellness benefits to a huge number of users for many years to come.

San Diego is a nice place just to visit anyway but the trip to California by Nadine Nicholson, vice-president of the Calgary chapter of International Association of Business Communicators, last week was a special treat. On behalf of her fellow members, she accepted the award as the International Chapter of the Year. She says the comment she heard most often at the gathering was that IABC/ Calgary is leading the way in chapter management.

The award is a testament to the hard work its volunteer board and portfolio put into the local organization in financial management, community and educational involvement and professional development. IABC/Calgary, which was also recognized as Large Chapter of the Year, is one of 13 chapters in Canada it currently has a membership of over 500 professionals and students.

The best snow conditions in 38 years are making businesses in the Lake Louise area happy, but the good folks at **Lake Louise Inn** have a lot more to smile about. It has just opened its newly renovated one and two-bedroom suites that have two-person Jacuzzi tubs, 32-inch flat screen TVs in living rooms and bedrooms and fireplaces in the kitchens.

Construction has started on a new spa, and renovations will commence on Legends Restaurant in April: with the addition of the new suites, the mountain resort will now boast 247 rooms.

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