

# Lt. Gov. tours Gibsons Recycling

## Environment

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Guichon and Boyd inspect a batch of GRD's finished compost.

B.C. Lt.-Gov. Judith Guichon spent a big chunk of Tuesday afternoon exploring the Gibsons Recycling Depot (GRD) and its Resource Recovery Centre.

Guichon took an interest in the work being done at the Centre after meeting Buddy Boyd at an Earth Day event in Victoria this spring.

“It really means a lot to [co-owner] Barb [Hetherington] and me and our staff that you could be here today,” Boyd told the lieutenant governor at the start of the two-hour tour. “Hopefully what we can take away from this is telling other communities, and the world, what we’re doing here in Gibsons – because this [Resource Recovery Centre] is really incredibly unique,” Boyd added. “There are none of these in British Columbia, but

the opportunity for us to create economic development by tapping into things that people don't want – their discards – is really a golden opportunity for any community.”

Guichon has a history with recycling and resource recovery.

“I was very happy when I heard Buddy's talk [in Victoria], because in about 1990 a couple of friends and I started a recycling society in our community [near Merritt]. We were all three farm gals from out of town, and we went into town and started a recycling society,” Guichon said.

“We bought a compactor. We took cardboard, we took newspaper, we took good paper. We had barrels and took glass and we had axes and we smashed the glass in the barrels ... We did that for quite a few years and we held these recycling days in Merritt ... then the regional district put in what they call recycling – which is everything in one bin. We let the regional district take over and, unfortunately, I look at what you've done here in the time since, and I think ‘Oh my, we should never have stopped.’”

One of Guichon's initiatives as lieutenant governor is called Stewards of the Future, which she said is a good fit with the ideals Boyd is trying to promote through his zero waste programs. Boyd has been invited to speak to a group of students in the program.

“I'm deeply pleased to see our town working, and on track, to become the first zero waste community in Canada,” Boyd said. “I feel very optimistic that we're about to turn a corner here and do something no other community has ever done.”

During the tour, which also included interested members of the public and several Gibsons councillors, Guichon got a firsthand look at things like the Gibsons Recycling Depot's styrofoam processor, a machine for turning glass into aggregate, the industrial composter (which Boyd said takes in as much as 100 kilos of material a day from local residents, restaurants and grocery stores), and the Zero Waste Store.

Guichon was also shown the new electric bicycle and trailer that will be used for a pilot project to collect compostables door-to-door in part of Lower Gibsons. The program is being offered free to some residents every Wednesday in July. Boyd plans to decide the next steps after seeing how the pilot project goes.

Boyd also had a surprise in store – one of the centre's newest initiatives, which he calls the Artisan Zone, where artisans can use material that comes into the centre to create new products.

Right now, Boyd is working with Wayne Harjula of Mellon Glass in Langdale. Harjula has set up a kiln and glass blowing rig right at the Resource Recovery Centre, where he makes embossed mugs and jugs using glass bottles brought in for recycling. Boyd said the next partnership he wants to start is with a metal worker.

“This is a great place for mentoring, and that kind of stuff,” Boyd told an obviously impressed Guichon. “And every community has this [raw material] – it's waste.”

“It's potential,” Guichon jokingly corrected him.

Guichon had a surprise of her own, which she delivered earlier: a reading from Gabriola Island poet Naomi Wakan's collection *Sex After 70*, which Guichon had just received as a gift. Guichon said the poem “Gammon” – which explores some of the ways Japanese internees during the Second World War made do with found objects at their camps – speaks to the ideas of zero waste.