



North Columbia Environmental Society Green Business Award

Flowt Bicycles & Skis

www.flowt.org

Being an elite athlete means having an excellent ability to focus on a goal, and that is exactly what Brendan MacIntosh seems to be doing with his goal of having his bike shop be waste free and environmentally friendly. Flowt Bikes and Skis in downtown Revelstoke will meet that goal if MacIntosh has his way.

Flowt opened its doors for business a year ago and owner/operator MacIntosh hasn't looked back. Being environmentally friendly isn't simply about recycling cardboard either. Flowt always promotes bike use instead of car use; a simple choice in a town like Revelstoke. Bike to Work week is coming to Revelstoke in 2009 and Flowt along with the Revelstoke Carshare Cooperative, Parks Canada, and the local cycling club, will be a part of the promotion and organization of the week. "We also try to support and promote other green companies; both of our major brands, Trek and Specialized, have strong environmental programs in place. We also make a lot of little choices about reducing packaging, like buying bulk tubes and chains instead of prepackaged ones," said MacIntosh. Flowt worked with Greener Footprints to become bag free this year, one of the first businesses in town to do so. Flowt also uses non toxic biodegradable solvents in all their cleaning and bike repairs. Best of all for the customer is the fact that Flowt always tries to fix things instead of just replacing parts whenever they can.

Starting a new business in a small town is always a risky endeavor, but MacIntosh didn't hesitate in making all his business choices good ones. When asked why add this level of expense and time to his business plan, MacIntosh commented, "I read about what is going on in the world. I have a child. It's crazy how complex our earth system is, and how difficult it is to predict the outcome of our environmental choices. I drive a car, so I contribute to the problem, but I want to minimize my impact wherever I can."

MacIntosh goes above and beyond the norm when thinking about the environmental impact of his business. "Recycling is made difficult for businesses. It's too bad we can't recycle tires and tubes. It's also too bad that recycling some plastics requires storing them for six months until the next recycling fair. Also, as a small business, it is difficult to source all products. I always ask distributors questions about environmental policies and Labour practices, but I don't have the resources to investigate every product," explained MacIntosh.

If you think recycling plastic is as challenging as riding in the ice, the job of finding rubber recycling is much tougher. MacIntosh hasn't found a company to do it yet but he is hasn't given up. If you know of a use for all the worn out and ruined rubber of Revelstoke, drop by and talk to MacIntosh!

Flowt is a well rounded business; helping kids with broken spokes, giving free maintenance courses a few times a year, leading 2 group rides per week in the summer, volunteering with the Revelstoke Cycling Club, organizing the Lantern Ski at Mt MacPherson, helping out with the Mt Revelstoke Steamer road race every fall, and by donating to many other community organizations.

MacIntosh and Flowt Bikes and Skis are leading the pack in the race for the smallest small business footprint, and making it fun along the way.