



## Recycled tires cushion playground falls

*Environmentally friendly playground and recreational surfaces, made from recycled tire granules, are setting new standards for safety and accessibility – not to mention good old fashioned fun.*

**Vancouver, September 17, 2008** – Educators from East Kootenay School District No. 5 today unveiled an innovative approach to physical education with the official opening of three unusual playgrounds at elementary schools in the communities of Fernie, Sparwood and Elkford. Each of the new, outdoor play areas features a five-inch thick “pour in place” rubber surface made from BC scrap tires that cushions falls, creates fun and makes the playground accessible to people of all ages and levels of ability.

Unlike traditional playground surfaces made from pea gravel or wood chips, the solid crumb-rubber surface is completely wheelchair and walker accessible.

“When you set foot on one of these surfaces, it feels as if you are standing on a firm mattress,” says Frank Lento, the retired educator who facilitated the design and development of the three playgrounds. “The children find the cushioning effect so much fun they flock to the playground at every opportunity. These facilities will advance the quality of our physical education program and assist us in achieving the goal of 30 minutes of exercise for each pupil each day.”

According to Lento, the recycled tire granule surface was chosen because it provides superior safety and accessibility. “A child falling on this surface is much less likely to be injured than on a traditional surface. Also, pupils confined to wheelchairs or who use crutches now have complete access, which means they can participate fully in play and experience the joy of physical activity and exercise.”

Another advantage of this ultra-modern playground surface is its durability. Like the tires it is made from, the surface is highly resistant to cold and heat and has a much longer life span than either gravel or mulch. Recreational surfaces made from recycled tire granules are also easier to clean and maintain.

Funding for the installation of these environmentally friendly playground surfaces in the East Kootenay region was provided in part by financial support from the Elk Valley Coal Corporation and a grant from Tire Stewardship BC (TSBC), the not-for-profit organization that manages BC’s tire recycling program.

The TSBC grant is a pilot project to test the feasibility of offering similar financial support to communities across British Columbia that want to use BC recycled tire surfaces for playgrounds or other recreational facilities, such as athletic tracks, artificial turf fields and community arenas.

“The grant program under consideration is patterned on the ones currently available in Alberta and Saskatchewan,” explains TSBC Executive Director, Mike Hennessy. “Our goal is to spread the benefits of tire recycling to communities across the province, so that people of all ages and circumstances can use – and enjoy – these innovative and durable recreational surfaces.”

The planned grant program will be funded from eco fees paid by BC drivers when they purchase new tires and will likely be officially launched in the spring of 2009. To qualify, applicants will need to demonstrate that the grant will be used towards the purchase and installation of BC tire recycled products and that their facility is fully accessible to everyone.

Those interested in learning more about recycled tire products and Tire Stewardship BC can do so by visiting [www.tirestewardshipbc.ca](http://www.tirestewardshipbc.ca). Information about the planned grant program will be posted once details have been finalized.

“The TSBC grant to East Kootenay School District No. 5 is a classic example of how people and communities gain from products made from BC’s recycled tires,” says Hennessy. “When BC scrap tires are diverted from landfills and recycled into marketable products, such as recreational surfaces, all British Columbians benefit.”

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