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NEWS: Around the Arctic April 17, 2013 - 4:02 pm

Communities reap money from North West Co.'s bag program

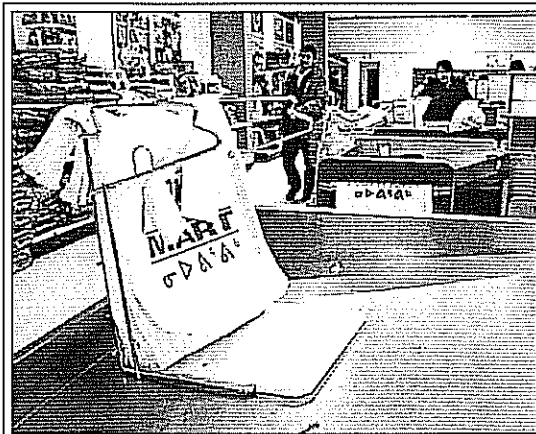
Charge of 25 cents per plastic bag to be returned to 31 Nunavut, Nunavik communities

NUNATSIAQ NEWS

There's been 67 per cent reduction in the number of plastic bags sold in Nunavut and Nunavik Northern and Northmart stores since the North West Co. starts its "Greener Tomorrow" program, the company said April 16.

The program, launched in January 2011, is aimed at reducing plastic bag consumption by providing each household with two free reusable bags.

To date, the 31 Northmart and Northern stores participating in the program "have eliminated more than four million retail plastic bags from the communities," the company said in a news release.



The sale of plastic bags at Northern and Northmart stores is adding up, says the North West Co., which is planning to hand out cheques in 31 stores in Nunavut and Nunavik next week. (FILE IMAGE)

The stores are still handing out about two million plastic bags.

But now the money that people spend on plastic shopping bags at Northmart and Northern stores stays at home.

"This amazing achievement would not be possible without the dedication and support of the Nunavut and Nunavik communities participating in a Greener Tomorrow," says Christine Reimer, North West Co.'s president of Canadian sales and operations. "Your commitment to make your communities a greener place to live sets an example of eco-consciousness all of us can learn from."

In an effort to encourage customers to switch to the more environmentally-friendly reusable bags, Northern and Northmart now charge 25 cents for plastic bags. All proceeds from plastic bag sales go directly back into the community.

To date, \$497,000 in plastic bag payments has gone back to communities in Nunavut and Nunavik for programs such as community clean ups, youth initiatives, school breakfast programs, beautification projects and scholarships.

In Iqaluit, this meant \$65,480 helped several projects including an elders land program at Inukshuk High School and a greenhouse project at Aqsarnit Middle School, while in Salluit, \$20,230 helped projects like the Angluitit women's group with outdoor activities, camping, picnics and a healing circle.

The North West Co. plans to officially hand out the cheques April 22 at 4 p.m. in the 31 participating stores throughout Nunavut and Nunavik.

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