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2009 Teddy Awards

Presented by



This year, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation honours the Canada Council for the Arts, the City of Vancouver and other big spenders for 'excellence in the art of government waste'

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Olivier Matthys, AFP, Getty Images

In Ottawa yesterday, the Canadian Taxpayers Federation (CTF) held its 11th annual "Teddies Waste Awards Ceremony" to recognize excellence in the art of government waste. CTF federal director, Kevin Gaudet, acted as the master of ceremonies at the ceremony's black tie news conference on Parliament Hill. Assisting with the awards ceremony were "Porky the Waste Hater" (the CTF pig mascot) and Samantha, a veteran government waste awards hostess.

The "Teddies" award ceremony is named after Ted Weatherill, a former senior public servant, who was terminated in 1999 for expenses incurred that were "incompatible with his position as Chairman of the Canada Labour Relations Board," according to the Office of the Minister of Labour. Each year, the CTF holds the ceremony during the entertainment awards season to recognize a government, public office holder, civil servant, department or agency that most exemplifies government waste, overspending, over-taxation, excessive regulation, lack of accountability or any combination of the five.

"Sadly, it takes weeks to sift through all the examples of government waste nominated this year," said Gaudet. "As our economy slowed down last year and people began to lose their jobs, government waste actually seemed to ramp up. Taxpayers deserve better and this ceremony is a tongue-in-cheek way of sending that message to those across the country who are spending precious tax dollars."

Other nominees included - Federal: Lori Ridgeway, Fisheries and Oceans civil servant -- \$400,000 in travel expenses - Federal: CBC Brass --first class travel and extravagant expenses - Federal: Parks Canada -- \$1.8-million toilet (two years and still not working) - Saskatchewan government: for switching college space into office space then back to college space - New Brunswick government: for its government-owned and subsidized lodge - Alberta government: for its lucrative MLA pay hike - City of Edmonton: for producing carbon footprint calculators

despite the plethora of free ones online - City of Winnipeg: for its failing boat tour service - City of Toronto: for its \$935,000 rainwater toilet - City of Oshawa: for buying a dollhouse village for \$234,000 then trying and failing to sell it

\$40,000

FEDERAL AWARD WINNER

"And the federal Teddy goes to the Canada Council for the Arts for 'Best Achievement in Special Effects with Taxpayer Dollars.' The federally funded agency spent \$15,000 last year to help bring a Belgian art exhibit to Quebec that produces a poop-like substance when fed with food. It also spent \$40,000 on a project that seeks to fly a giant inflatable banana over the state of Texas. The Canada Council literally knows how to make an art out of waste," said emcee Kevin Gaudet.

\$2,292

PROVINCIAL AWARD WINNER

"And the provincial Teddy award goes to the All Nations Co-ordinated Response Network for 'Best Makeup.' The organization is a government-funded child and family services agency in Manitoba that held a 'Spa Day' for its staff in May of last year. Tarot card readings, makeup lessons, manicures and pedicures were some of the activities at the 'workshop.' The bill for spa day was \$2,292 for the activities, but after the CTF raised a stink about the matter, the organization now has to fundraise to pay the bill. You'd think the tarot card readers would have predicted the agency getting caught," commented Gaudet.

\$193-million

MUNICIPAL AWARD WINNER

"And the municipal Teddy goes to the City of Vancouver for its 2010 Olympic athletes village fiasco. Miraculously, the City went from being in a position to receive \$193-million for allowing a firm to build condos for the athletes on city land to being saddled with \$875-million in debt and ownership of the costly condos. Ironically, the deal was originally trumpeted as 'risk free,' yet now the city owns million-dollar condos in a half-million dollar condo market," said Gaudet.

\$780-million

LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT TEDDY

After a suspenseful drum roll, Gaudet announced, "And the Lifetime Achievement Teddy goes to the 'Big 3' auto gang for 'Best Sequel to a Sequel's Sequel.' Over the past five years, as taxpayers, handed the 'Big 3' over \$780-million in grants and loans, the firms concurrently cut thousands of jobs. Like a typical crack addict, with each handout, taxpayers were promised 'this would be the last.' Obviously they just kept coming back for more," said Gaudet. "When will it end?"

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