

NewsBytes

CHICKENS PERISH

More than 32,000 broiler chickens were destroyed in a fire at a poultry processing plant in Abbotsford. Firefighters used conventional hoses to battle the blaze, but the fire spread too far away to use conventional hoses. More than 50 firefighters from six fire halls battled the blaze for several hours, said Capt. Steve Oldroyd of Abbotsford Fire Rescue Service. The 300-foot-long barn was a total loss. Damage is estimated at \$2.5 million.

FAMILY FRIENDLY

Abbotsford is among Canada's top family-friendly cities, according to a report by The Institute of Marriage and Family Canada (IMFA), which graded Canada's 33 largest cities according to five "family friendly" criteria. The first is community feel, measured by bike paths, parks and community centres, the proportion of longtime residents, how many give to charity, daily commute times and livability. The report gave Abbotsford generally A's and B's, with the exception of the



JOHN VAN PUTTEN Abbotsford News

The Abbotsford Entertainment and Sports Centre on King Road will cost the city approximately \$2.6 million in subsidies for 2009.

Deficit \$1.6M higher than the original 2009 plan

Grant GRANGER
Abbotsford News

Last fall, city hall predicted the Abbotsford Entertainment and Sports Centre (AESC) could fall short of breaking even by nearly \$3 million in 2009.

A fiscal year-end report to be considered by council on Monday night indicates the state-of-the-art facility will run an operational deficit of \$2.6 million.

Revenues fell well short of what was originally planned, while operating costs were

higher than projections for 2009.

The report shows revenues of \$2.8 million, although half of that was costs billed out to promoters.

In reality, total revenues in 2009 were just \$1.4 million, compared to the \$2.2 million anticipated.

Operating costs came in at \$5.4 million for the year. Factoring in \$1.4 million in recovered costs from promoters, the actual figure sits at about \$4 million.

The original 2009 plan called for a total of \$3.2 million in expenses, however; that didn't

include additional operating costs associated with getting an AHL hockey team into the arena.

Originally, the city had budgeted to subsidize the arena for \$1.02 million in 2009.

City finance director Judy Lewis said to help make up the \$1.6-million difference, the city has taken \$1.3 million out of its operating reserves, with \$800,000 of that coming from gaming revenue.

On top of the operational expenses the city also paid \$2.7 million in debt interest and \$1.5

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