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Aldermen criticize blue box promotion

By **BILL KAUFMANN, SUN MEDIA**

Last Updated: 18th April 2009, 4:59am

Spending half a million dollars on blue-cart recycling promotion is a waste of city dough, say two aldermen.

Ald. Ric McIver noted house-dwelling Calgarians have no choice in being part of the curbside recycling campaign and the blue recycling carts now being delivered should simply come with instructions on how to use them.

Currently, a one-time \$500,000 expense is bankrolling a multimedia awareness campaign that includes a TV ad depicting a spontaneous blue-cart block party.

"We don't need to promote it -- it's already a fact," said McIver.

"Why not just stick operational instructions inside them? It'll target the exact audience we need to target."

He said one of the prime ingredients in the long-awaited recycling effort was its cost-effectiveness.

Ald. Diane Colley-Urquhart said the carts already come with instructions but nonetheless agreed with McIver.

"Maybe they filmed the block party on a Sunday on Memorial Drive," said Colley-Urquhart, ridiculing what she deems another alderman's frivolous notion of closing the main artery to traffic on summer weekends.

She noted the recycling program is already costing ratepayers \$8 a month, "though I expect that to be just the beginning. I'm sure there'll be a move afoot to increase it in future."

But Ald. Joe Ceci said there's nothing gratuitous about the ads promoting a vitally important initiative.

"It's necessary -- every time you change from one system of expectation to another, it'd be foolish to believe everyone gets that, you need to communicate in a number of different ways," he said.

McIver said it would be nice to halt the promotion expenditure now, if possible.

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