

## Winter 2007

The largest single sporting event in the Yukon's history is about to arrive in Whitehorse and all I can think about is how do you feed 2000 athletes, coaches and mission staff three meals a day for two weeks during the Canada Winter Games. The logistics are unbelievable!

Gene Batten, the coordinator of Culinary Arts and manager of Cafeteria Food Services at Yukon College, sat with the original bid committee for the games and is the co chair of the Canada Winter Games Food Services. In his own words "...we have a strong team and are really confident of the people we have in the kitchen".

Speaking of the kitchen, it's going to be up at Yukon College. Werner Holder, the current instructor for Culinary Arts and the Executive Chef for the games, has about 40 years experience around the world and will be overseeing the kitchen up at Yukon College.

To put this in some sort of perspective for the viewing audience, imagine ordering up around 3000 dozen eggs for your get together. I know on our farm with twenty 3-year-old laying hens that produce about 6 dozen egg on a good week....well, you do the math. Add to this about 5600 litres of milk, 1260 kilograms of ham, 250 kilograms of shredded cheese, 315 kilograms of lettuce and 1200 kilograms of stir-fry vegetables and you have a small idea of what's cooking. Keep in mind this is only for a small portion of the meals being produced!

Gene has most of the ordering together but what happens once it arrives? This isn't something you can just put in your freezer. Reefer vans will be on site to ensure proper cooling and storage. Move this food into the kitchen and who's going to help cook it? 6000 meals a day is not a great thought to wake up to.

This is where Tracy English, the administrative assistant and in charge of supporting chefs/students, gave me some idea of how this food operation will work and what it will actually provide in benefits....beside excellent food for the athletes.

The highlight of this whole operation is based on the help that is currently at the college and those who will be arriving to pitch in. 65 chefs and instructors are coming from 4 community colleges' culinary departments in British Columbia. Add 7 more chefs from the College's culinary program and support staff and you have about 80 people with food on their minds. It's going to take at least this many when you run a kitchen 24/7 with the food available from 6 am to 11 pm. Room and board for all of these chefs is a whole other story, Tracy is going to be busy!

In addition to all of this, no athlete will get a 'box lunch', a first for the games. At least 4 remote food services will be set up at sporting venues like Mt Sima so athletes can get fresh wholesome food in between their events without having to travel back to the main cafeteria at the college. Wholesome you ask? A nutritionist is on staff and all of the meals offered will have nutritional values calculated. They'll also be prepared for any last minute changes. Nothing is being sidestepped or taken for granted.

This event is going to provide hands-on training for food preparation, never to be experienced in any regular learning environment. Add to that networking with instructors from other institutions and this is an opportunity aspiring chefs will take to the bank.

Amazing perhaps but trust Yukoners to take it in stride and do an incredible job of organizing and making it work. Another thing that you may not realize, is that for all other Canada Winter Games the food services were contracted out. Here in the Yukon....we do it ourselves!

I know I am an advocate for local production. If this was an extreme sport midsummer I would be all over it

trying to get my chickens to produce a few more eggs and planting more lettuce. Mid winter? Hats off to Yukon College and the capable staff for a job well planned.

Talk to me about Real Food – Tom Rudge