



BBQ CATERING

Last Minute Winter Fun For Car Manufacturer

In mid December, 2002, we were asked to take on the last minute planning of the annual Winter festival for an Ontario car manufacturer.

The event was to take place at the employee's recreation centre on company property near the car assembly plant. The festival had never been held there before and involved some serious logistical challenges. Although it had an indoor hockey rink the building was far too small to host the expected crowd of 2000. Equally sticky, the rec centre had too little parking.

Rec Centre Expanded.

We decided to surround the rec centre parking lot with tents to create an inner courtyard. The tents, closed at the back but open to the newly created courtyard, would give shelter from wind and snow. Inside the tents could be seating for up to 1000. Tent heaters would keep these guests cozy.

Since the courtyard was open to the sky many activities that could not take place indoors would seem perfectly natural outdoors.

Parking Problem Leads to Fun Solution

Our plan for the Winterfest eliminated what little parking there was at the Rec Centre, although there was plenty of parking at the client's main manufacturing plant 1/2 mile away. Moving 2000 guests over even this short distance could have presented real problems. Buses were an obvious answer that we rejected immediately.

School buses could have been an instant turn off for kids. Loading & unloading time would have added unwanted delays in merely getting the party started.

To give guests a fun first impression of their day we turned to horse drawn hay wagons. A fleet of wagons ferried guests all day long back & forth from the parking area to the rec centre. Many guests with young children rode the wagons more than twice, just for the fun of it. Our total lift capacity was 400 guests at any one time; more than enough to keep the crowd flowing.



Food Service for 2000

10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Breakfast

- Waffles
- Sausages
- Toasted bagels
- Syrup, jam, cream cheese, butter

Lunch

- Chili, crackers
- Tomato/pasta soup
- Sliced beef tenderloin
- Jumbo hot dogs
- Westphalia sausage on a poppy seed bun

- veggie dogs
- German style home fries, bacon, onion & spices in giant fry pans

Dessert

- Warm cinnamon buns & cookies

All Day

- hot chocolate, coffee, tea, hot apple cider, milk, fruit juice boxes, assorted pop, bottled water
- popcorn

Thank you

"Given the short notice you had to co-ordinate the entertainment and food for our Winterfest, it came together amazingly well.

Although our number of guests doubled a few days

prior to the event, you were able to take that in stride and serve our Associates a wonderful, as well as plentiful menu. We are still receiving many compliments on the quality as well as the quantity of

food. Your layout of the food stations was a great one as we did not encounter any lineups.

The entertainment was also a big hit. The variety you provided, figure skat-

ers, wagon and pony rides, arts and crafts, etc. were well received. Again, I would like to "Thank you" for helping us in making our Winterfest a great success."





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Outdoor Fun

As guests arrived at the event by hay wagon a range of attractive sights & sounds caught their attention outdoors.

Marshmallow Roast. Using concrete blocks to protect the asphalt, a large fire pit had been built outside the main entrance to the building. This was surrounded by benches made from hay bales. Folk singers with guitars & banjos drew guests of all ages into a sing along. Using sharpened dowls 4 feet in length, young kids were able to safely roast marshmallows under senior teen supervision.



Lumberjacks. A manufacturer of chainsaws helped sponsor a display of lumberjack skills that allowed kids to help safely saw logs by hand. Several chainsaws were later used as prizes for the slap shot & ice fishing contests.

Ice fishing. A television fishing host made a guest appearance at the Winterfest. A fishing hut had been set up early in the morning and guests saw demonstrations of the latest ice fishing techniques.

Pony rides. To avoid delays we set up three rings, each with 8 ponies. A petting zoo was stationed next to the pony ride lineup so that kids were able to look at rabbits & kangaroos while they waited.

Ice carving. Carvers worked on a huge 700 lb. block of ice throughout the morning. By 11:00 a.m. one of the cars made at the plant began to take shape in the ice.

Rescue Dogs. The O.P.P. canine rescue unit put on a display of search & rescue in the snow. Kids were given additional demonstrations of winter safety.

Naturalists Display. The local conservation authority set up a display of wood craft & paleontology to explain their activities at conservations areas & parks in the surrounding area. They also displayed & explained samples of animal bones, flowers & trees to a steady stream of visitors.

The various activities were set up as a circuit so that guests could move smoothly from one station to another. Crowding was avoided at any one place even though we typically had up to 1000 guests sauntering from spot to spot.

The strength of these outdoor attractions, together with some outdoor food stations, helped reduce traffic inside the building and kept it from feeling overcrowded.

Indoor Fun

Even before we laid out entertainment inside the building we wanted to **decorate** it & make it feel special. The main arena lights were dimmed over the ice and 1000 feet of **white rope lights** were attached to the top of the glass surrounding the skating surface. Hundreds of large coloured **balloons** were suspended from wires over the ice.

Indoors, a youngster's **arts & crafts** area was set aside, presided over by a crew of senior teens. At noon, **clowns** arrived to make animals from balloon, paint faces & juggle.

Family skating began at 10:00 a.m. and was popular until 2:30 p.m. when the ice was cleared for a demonstration of **slap shooting** by the former captain of the **Toronto Maple Leafs**. (Guest appearances of this sort are arranged through the NHL Old Timers Association).

The hockey star then invited guests to skate with him to try their own hands at slap shots. The appearance of a hockey star was a hit. For the many Leafs fans this was a chance to see one of their heroes up close. Even more popular was the chance to actually skate with him, get an autograph, and simply bask in the glow.



At 3:15 p.m. we cleared the ice, dimmed the arena and lit the ice with spot lights. **Figure skaters** from a local figure skating school, starting with kids younger than 10 demonstrated their training. Older students followed suit. Many of the student skaters came from families with at least one parent employed by their host. For these parents it was a proud moment to see their kids perform before friends & coworkers.

The student skaters were followed by Olympic caliber skaters supplied by **Skate Canada**. These skaters gave the audience a series of thrills with top caliber ballet.

Guests recognized instantly that they were being treated to a very special day. Their employer had made every effort to make them feel special and privileged to work for such a thoughtful company. That was the point of the exercise.