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Radio contest gets locals all fired up

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Saskatchewan residents are debating a Vancouver radio station's controversial contest, which some people say promotes Prairie stereotypes.

The online contest, launched by CKNW News Talk 980 host Philip Till, asks listeners to complete the following sentence: "You know you're from Saskatchewan when. . ."

Responses have included cracks about gopher pie, barnyard animals and Saskatchewan residents' lack of knowledge about cappuccino. The winner receives two tickets to the Junos and return airfare for two.

The response from Saskatchewan residents has been varied.

Some people are indifferent, some are offended and others have attempted to rain on the station's fun, as evidenced by posts on Till's blog.

Some Saskatchewan residents completed the sentence "You know you're in Vancouver when . . ." Here are some of the comments seen on Till's blog Friday:

- Stanley Park is being logged by Saskatchewan forestry workers; * After buying a house all your groceries come from the food bank; and
- You place an emergency order for snow shovels from Saskatchewan.

"Not every resident of Saskatchewan is looking for a way out. I'm not sure why everyone in B.C. and Alberta believes that," said one posting.

At a press conference on Friday, Industry Minister Eric Cline -- who provided the prizes for the contest -- mentioned his favourite comment about Vancouver.

"I liked the one about you can throw a stone (in Vancouver) and hit three Starbucks," he said.

Cline has taken some heat from members of the Saskatchewan Party, who say going on Till's show on Thursday and supporting the contest opened the door for demeaning comments.

"We have to be big enough to roll with the punches and let people have a joke at our expense," said Cline.

But some people aren't as cheerful.

"It's a put-down," said a worker at a barbershop on Central Avenue. The topic came up quite a bit on Friday morning, he said.

The remarks were annoying, but not offensive, said Jo Speed, who was working at the Broadway Roastery on Eighth Street on Friday.

"It's pretty ridiculous how there's so much controversy about this, because people in Saskatchewan make fun of themselves all the time," she said.

Speed said it was just a joke and everyone should get over it.

Cline agrees, saying the publicity wasn't bad at all. Cline said it gave him a chance to tell B.C. residents about Saskatchewan's cost of living, availability of jobs and economic growth.

"I'm not concerned with the fact that people may want to have a little bit of fun with it," he said. "I think any discussion about Saskatchewan is a good thing."

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