

# Synthetic Ice Can Save Municipalities Millions

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Where will the money come from to build all these multi-million dollar rinks? At a time when many local governments are strapped for cash the average tax payer is not always interested in spending \$10 - \$50 million for the next rink project. Also, at a time when child obesity is raging and communities need to encourage more forms of activity sports associations that use rinks are forced to maintain or even shrink their membership to avoid reductions in available ice times.

So what is the solution?

Part of the municipal solution is to research and investigate high quality synthetic ice companies that provide very high performance and safe synthetic ice solutions. These rinks can literally save any municipality millions of capital and operating dollars by complementing, deferring or even replacing existing mechanically refrigerated artificial ice arenas.

Several manufacturers of synthetic ice have developed excellent products that are very realistic, but chances are it will never completely replace real ice. However it should become part of the overall mix for rink infrastructure moving forward. Some municipalities are very progressive in their thinking and have taken steps to run pilot projects in their communities. The Regional Municipality of Wood Buffalo in Northern Alberta for example received support from their council to run a series of synthetic ice pilots - with great success. As a result of those pilots they have decided to tender a complete ice surface for the Archie Simpson Arena in Fort Chipewyan. This is a very unique situation in that this surface is a gravel base and they rely on mother nature to create the natural ice surface for 6 months of the year. Synthetic ice panels will be placed over the gravel base and then water will be added and frozen during the winter months. Spring and summer skating will then take place on the synthetic surface.

Hopefully this project paves the way for many more like it, so it will be an interesting one to follow. The best companies offer a 10 year warranty because they know they have a great product. This provides great protection to the municipalities' investment for the taxpayers. Some manufacturers offer a completely UV stable product. These products can then be used outdoors. Life expectancy for the premium products is 20 - 25 years where everyday use is expected.

Synthetic ice is not the complete answer for solving North America's rink issues but it certainly needs to be taken seriously.

**Author Resource:-** For more information on synthetic ice and hockey training products please visit <http://www.IcePro.ca> Tim Oldfield at IcePro offers expert advice and free estimates for your home or commercial rink project - regardless of size or application.

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