

Fake ice under consideration

Albert Kramberger
editor@transcontinental.ca

val businessman hopes milder winter
play into his hands as he hopes to
municipalities to invest in synthetic
promoting for outdoor rinks.

s from about 40 municipalities took
stration of EZ Glide 350, an artificial
made from a polymer compound, at
l Golf Course parking lot last Wed-
omoter Françoise Bilodeau said the
synthetic ice panels he is licensed to
bec are suitable for hockey and figure
ining and public skating outdoors.

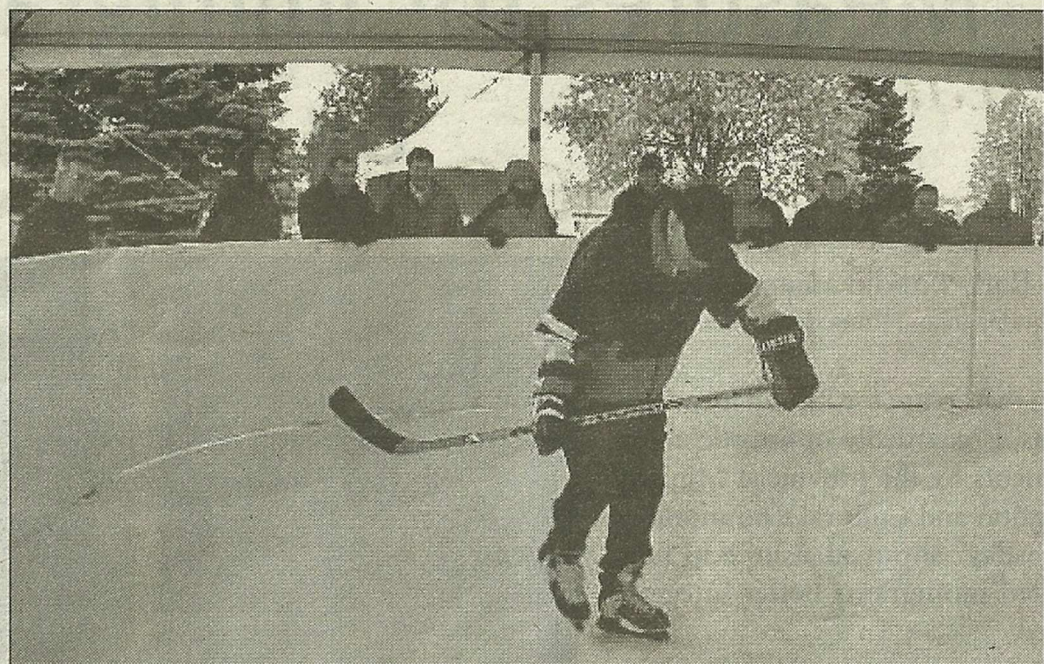
product, which lasts 20 years, is
ible to use for outdoor rinks now
eather in recent years doesn't allow
han three weeks of ice on outdoor
said. "There are also no power bills
not refrigerated and there's hardly
enance."

Since it requires about 15 per cent more effort for skaters to move on it than regular ice, the synthetic ice surface is not recommended for hockey games, only practices. "It would probably be very hard on the players to play a game on it," Bilodeau said.

Dorval Mayor Edgar Rouleau, who plays Dorval Oldtimers hockey, donned skates to try out the synthetic ice surface last week.

"A lot of cities are looking at alternatives for our outdoor rinks since we had only about 25 days (of useable outdoor ice) last year," he said. "For the last five to seven years it's been very difficult to maintain outdoor rinks."

Bilodeau said last Friday he has about 20 meetings set up as a result of last week's demonstration in Dorval. "Three cities have it in their 2009 budgets but nothing has been signed yet," he said. He said the synthetic ice costs about \$18 to \$24 per square foot, depending on the exchange rate. A full-sized hockey rink would cost about \$360,000 but



Dorval Mayor Edgar Rouleau skates on synthetic ice surface last Wednesday.

the panels can be made to fit any size or configuration, he said, adding homeowners could consider the artificial ice for their backyards.

Rouleau estimated a refrigerated outdoor ice rink facility would cost the city about \$1 million. "So there's a possibility of a big economy," he said.

Rouleau said while he wants to test the product out some more, he thinks the synthetic ice could be installed on one of the

city's public skating outdoor rink
come next year.

Bilodeau mentioned since
Island municipalities, including
open to installing synthetic grass
soccer and football, he will be
them on synthetic ice, which he a
be moved from location to locati
cial events.

For more information, check
website at www.glacesyntheticque.ca.