Toilets go high-tech
Germ-wary can thank invention for a more sanitary commode

BY LISA PEMBERTON
THE OLYMPIAN

ROCHESTER - Linda Rayment of Rochester was impressed by one of the new high-tech toilet seats at the Lucky Eagle Casino.

"I told my husband about it; I told my girlfriend about it," she said. "It was just so unreal."

Rayment is not the only one talking about the casino's new-fangled toilet seats that automatically cover themselves in a sheath of high-density plastic before each use, with the wave of a hand, or a push of a button.

"I've been inundated with comment cards," said Lucky Eagle general manager John Setterstrom.

Director of facilities Jeff Young added, "(They're saying) great concept, so much more sanitary than the old gaskets. I've heard some others saying they wouldn't go to another casino they're so excited that we have technology in the bathrooms, not just on the casino floor."

South Sound debut

The Lucky Eagle installed 24 toilet seats created by Brill Hygienic Products Inc. of Delray Beach, Fla., in its family and women's restrooms. More will be installed when the casino finishes its expansion project, Young said.

Why the excitement? Most people in this area have never seen anything like a Brill Seat, according to creator Alan Brill, who led a demonstration at the casino.

"This is the first establishment in Washington to have it," he said.

The products are in 41 casinos, 14 airports and several country clubs and high-end retailers in the United States, said Brill, who added: "6.2 million people per month sit on our seats."

The Lucky Eagle was given an exclusive deal - they're the only casino in South Sound that's allowed to have the seats, Setterstrom said.

Here's how they work: A motion-detecting sensor triggers a mechanism that pushes a sleeve of fresh plastic over the seat. Meanwhile, a razor on the other end of the device shreds the used part to prevent re-use.

Brill said he was inspired to create the product after years of being told by his parents to never touch anything in the bathroom.

"Every bathroom is the United Nations of germs," he said

"Nobody wants to touch anything in a bathroom. They won't even touch the door handle."

Brill doesn't recommend his toilet seats for men's rooms - they're not cost effective since men tend to stand up, even while using toilets, not urinals, he said.

But that doesn't mean men don't enjoy Brill Seats. Actor/comedian Howie Mandel, who is notorious for being a germaphobe, uses them in his house, Brill said.

And talk about bragging rights: Former first lady Barbara Bush parked her tush on one of the seats in the VIP area at Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport.

"She came out in amazement," Gina Giarelli, the airport's public relations coordinator, wrote in a letter to Brill.

"Mrs. Bush had never seen one like it. She even told one of the female Secret Service agents to look at it."

And in case you're worried about how all that plastic will affect the environment: The used plastic doesn't go to a landfill. It's bagged up and hauled away to be melted down and recycled into other plastic items, Young said.

On a recent afternoon, the Lucky Eagle was abuzz with talk about flushes - and not the type that's in a hand of poker.

"You press the button and you're good to go," said Roseann Sutton of Malone, outside one of the restrooms. "This is grand."

A new sleeve of plastic covers the seat of this high-tech toilet after every use. Its inventor, Brill, said his parents caution not to touch anything in a bathroom was his inspiration.