BY DOUG CLARK
The Spokesman-Review

For the record, I don't make a habit of wandering into ladies' lavatories. (OK, there was one embarrassing time at a certain downtown hotel. But that was an accident. Honest. I was in a rush. I wasn't looking where I was going and ...)

But on Monday afternoon — after being assured it was uninhabited — I ventured into one of the bright and shiny women's bathrooms at Northern Quest Casino in Airway Heights.

I was there for a different kind of business: to eyeball the latest advancement in toilet seat protection.

Alan Brill — owner of Florida-based Brill Hygienic Products Inc. — led me to a stall and opened the door. He stepped in and waved his hand in front of a green, wall-mounted sensor. Voila!

A sheath of clear plastic revolved around the encased toilet ring. And stopped, offering the user a fresh and clean sitting surface.

That's right.

No more fumbling with flimsy toilet ring wraps.

No more trying to cover the seat with patchwork of TP.

No more touching anything.

Well, other than your own toilet paper, of course.

Brill said he is converting all the seats in the Quest women's restrooms. Two women's bathrooms at the Spokane International Airport already have been fitted with Brill seats as a dry run to see how local users react, he added.

"Who the hell wants to sit on a public toilet seat that somebody else has sat on?" Brill asked.

That works for me. Every study I've ever seen shows that the average public bathroom is filthier than Howard Stern's mind. Which is no mystery. Too many idiots still don't wash their hands. Then they go and spread their germ-yuck on everything they touch.

I will say, however, that the Northern Quest facilities are hardly typical. The cleaning staff should be given medals for keeping these potties pristine.

But it's no wonder why Brill seats or similar products are fast becoming fixtures at airports, casinos and even some department stores across the land.

"Six million, two hundred thousand people sit on our seats on a monthly basis," said Brill, a former New York public relations man who built his business out of a lifelong aversion to public restrooms.

Some fannies are more famous than others.

Take the letter Brill received from the Louis Armstrong New Orleans International Airport. It tells of former first lady Barbara Bush's glowing reaction after test driving one of the automated Brill seats during a visit.

"She loved the Sanitary Toilet Seat!" the letter gushed. "Mrs. Bush had never seen one like it. ... She left the airport quite impressed."

There is, alas, a downside to this toilet tale. Brill doesn't do men's rooms.

The reason?

Too many members of my gender are swine.

I'll put it bluntly. Some men use the public toilet stalls for urinating WITHOUT LIFTING THE SEAT!

No revolving plastic cover can change the ways of such louts.

Then there's the whole Larry Craig sext-ing issue, but that's an entirely different men's room health menace.

I liked Brill immediately and not only because he let me hold his genuine 1996 New York Yankees World Series championship ring, given to him by a friend in the Yankees organization.

I admire the ingenious way he does business. Brill said he installs his toilet seat apparatus free of charge. He makes his bottom line selling the plastic rolls.

"We don't have a contract with anybody," he said, explaining that any organization that falls out of love with his product is free to cancel at any time.

So far, he added, nobody's taken the seats out.

Brill's high-tech products are U.S.A. made. Assembly takes place at his plant in Delray Beach, Fla. Even the recyclable, high-density plastic he uses is made here because, "I don't want to have to worry at night that somebody caught a rash on their tushies."

A sense of humor isn't mandatory for a toilet tycoon, but it helps. Brill, who has posed for countless publicity photographs in restroom stalls, says he's heard just about every bathroom pun and joke there is.

His favorite, he said, was when someone told him his company was "No. 1 when it comes to No. 2."

No doubt about it. That Alan Brill's the Donald Rump.