

Charities go all out for remaining pennies

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The race is on among charities to snap up Canadian pennies remaining in circulation after the copper coin was axed from production Friday.

Variety the Children's Charity of B.C. and the ALS Society of B.C. have both initiated campaigns to grab as many of the remaining coins as possible, a number estimated to be in the billions.

"Many charities want to hunt for as many pennies as people would give," said Carla Jones, Variety's marketing director. "One of our corporate partners, Buy-Low Foods, have offered us coin tins in all of their outlets. So we're grabbing a hold of the bandwagon really, so we're getting more of the pennies going out."

Wendy Toyer, ALS B.C. executive director, said an affiliate with her organization got wind of the penny's demise two years before the fact, and has since collected over \$8,000 worth of the coins to



The end of penny production could translate into a gold mine for charities. FILE PHOTO

support patient caregivers. "If everybody had, say, a jar of pennies lying around somewhere and they donated it to the ALS Society of B.C., that would be hugely significant in helping us care for

people living with ALS," she said. "We'd be very happy to take the pennies off their hands. We'd be happy to roll them. Every penny counts." The Small Animal Rescue

Society of B.C. is advertising two upcoming bottle and penny drives, July 22 and Oct. 21, at the Burnaby Bottle Depot at 6893 E. Hastings St. "We usually have four (drives) a year and that's one

of our main fundraisers along with the bottle drive," said SAR B.C. volunteer Lisa Hutcheon.

"It's probably a good quarter of our funds."


But what happens when the penny well runs dry?

"We did shift our traditional penny drive to be called a 'coin drive,' and over the last few years we've been collecting all coins, not just pennies," Variety's Jones said.

"I'm sure many charities would be seeing this as an opportunity in the short term. Certainly, in the long term we don't see this as a problem going forward. Like any charity, the bigger the donation the better."

Likewise, SAR and ALS fundraising organizers expect to ask for "nickels and dimes" donations going forward.

According to the federal government, eliminating the coin's production is expected to save taxpayers \$11 million annually.

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