

ICE STORM: WHAT YOUR ASSOCIATION DID FOR YOU

As you all know, January 5th, 1998 was the beginning of the worst series of ice storms we have suffered from in recent memory. All golf courses situated in the black triangle and beyond, sustained an incredible amount of tree damage, if not tree loss. As one superintendent located in this triangle, I was overwhelmed by the devastation that this storm left behind. We struggled with the reality and pondered the future. One question arose: where do we begin?

Considering the magnitude of the storms devastation, the Federal Government initiated a Federal Relief Program that would come to the aid of businesses that were affected by this storm. After numerous conversations with Mr. Ronald Dugay, executive director of the Quebec Golf Club Manager's Association, we came to the conclusion that someone had to approach the Federal Government. With his help, I contacted Madam Carmen Castonguay, project officer, Human Resources Development Canada for the St-Jean District.

My initial plans were to apply for this program for my club and then forward all pertinent information to the other clubs in need. The Federal Government however did not see it that way. They requested that a governing body from the golf industry file a collective application for all concerned golf courses in the St-Jean District. As the Q.G.S.A. is considered a governing body, it was decided that the Q.G.S.A. take an active leading role in the development of this relief program and took it upon itself to file this collective application on behalf of all clubs in the St-Jean District. I must point out, at this time, that this procedure was not requested in all districts. I am aware that many of you were successful in obtaining a federal relief package on your own.

I must admit that the bureaucracy involved was at times overwhelming if not frustrating. We did however manage to come to an agreement with the Federal Government and on March 13th, I signed a contract on behalf of the Q.G.S.A. and the golf courses in the St-Jean District with Mr. Claude Bachant, the Federal Deputy responsible for the St-Jean riding. Once completed and accepted, we went to work on the same program for clubs in the Chateauguay region, the Ottawa Valley and finally for clubs on the West Island. Our received funding from this program were more than appreciative.

The basis of the program was initially set up to put able bodies to work, and assists clubs with the added expenses related to this unforeseen labour. We managed to get all of the labour costs attributed to the clean-up, most of the security equipment including boom trucks and some cost related to professional tree climbers. I cannot speak for all clubs involved in this monstrous clean-up, I can however speak for Pinegrove Golf and Country Club and we are most appreciative of the professionalism and efforts the Quebec Golf Superintendents Association extended on behalf of its members.

I cannot end this report without mentioning the individual who made all of this possible. Many of you may know but don't realize how hard our secretary, Miss France Perron, worked for the development of this program. She spent countless hours on behalf of your Association, gathering the necessary information, dealing with the bureaucratic red tape and ensuring that every clubs needs were properly dealt with. Without her diligent work, the task at hand would have certainly seemed insurmountable.

Yours sincerely,

Tim Harkness
President Q.G.S.A.