



STAFF PHOTO/MIKE BARRETT

Works crews across York Region are preparing for winter. Richmond Hill plow operators Steve Duthie and Mike Fleury, in loader, are ready for the first signs of snow.

## Ready for winter's worst

BY CHRISTOPHER DOURIS  
Staff Writer

A small army stands ready to defend us against the worst onslaught, prepared to do battle on a moment's notice.

Backing up these staunch defenders is a fleet of more than 375 hardy vehicles and an arsenal of more than 241 million pounds of weaponry.

When Mother Nature's fury flies this winter, 10 roads departments will answer the clarion call and meet the invader head-on.

Their vehicles, placed end to end, would line Yonge Street for more than two miles, from Steeles Avenue almost to Hwy. 407. The sand and salt, 109,600 tonnes of it, is roughly equal to the amount of garbage buried at the Maple dump in one month.

The largest battlefield is on the regional roads. York Region's battalion is responsible for a 964-kilometre road network.

To keep those roads clear and traffic moving when the snow flies, there are 20 combination sanders and plows in the Newmarket yard, 17 working out of Maple and 13 in the Markham yard.

Over the course of the winter, they will move the region's 29,000 tonnes of salt and 6,500 tonnes of sand on to the major arteries that criss-cross the region's 678 square miles, according to Brian Harrison, the region's director of transportation design and construction.

Guarding our south central flank falls to Italo Brutto, Richmond Hill's director of maintenance and operations. The town has 835 km of roads, the second-largest network in the region. All of them are paved, with the exception of Bethesda Sideroad, which is still gravel.

"We're ready for anything, right now," Brutto said. "The contractor's trucks go on standby Nov. 19, but they're just a phone call away."

First blood this season was drawn by Mother Nature in a surprise attack the first week of November. Hit particularly hard were Georgina and King Township.

Georgina engineer Bob McLaughlin said his crews had to deal with as much as eight inches in the Nov. 3 snowfall.

Getting off with a light kiss from Mother Nature last year was Newmarket, where roads supervisor Ken Bishop said the town uses a 10-per-cent salt with sand mix and maintains 3,500 tonnes of the mixture in a dome. Last year, his warriors had to plow the town's roads 27 times, which was close to half the 50 trips they made the previous year.

The dome was topped up in January and then again six weeks ago, Bishop said, and it only required 1,800 tonnes to top it up.

"I don't think we used 2,500 tonnes of sand (last year)," Bishop said. "I hope it's like that this winter, too. It saves everybody money."

A battalion of plow operators has been on standby in Markham since Monday, Paul Ingham of the roads department said. "We're ready," he said. "All of our combination units are fully prepared and in our yard now."

The town is paying a daily rate to keep trucks on standby, beginning Monday.

However, the sidewalk crews and graders won't be on the job until Dec. 1. "We're watching our pennies," Ingham added.

Markham supplements its plowing fleet with 10 front-end loaders to clean bus stops and standing areas, and other equipment to take care of wide streets and cul-de-sacs.

With only about 170 km of roads to maintain, Whitchurch-Stouffville's sand and salt requirements aren't in the big leagues compared with the region, or the three southern towns.

"We're pretty close (to full readiness)," works supervisor Dennis Chartrand said. "We're replenishing the stockpiles today."

Aurora operations manager Ken Lauppe said his town has 170 km of road surface and will require 2,000 tonnes of salt and 2,500 tonnes of sand.

## Delay of dog bylaw appeal sparks anger

BY JOAN RANSBERRY  
Staff Writer

Anger and tears dominated a Stouffville meeting held to determine if a 90-pound dog has to be muzzled.

For the second time in as many weeks, dog owner Parshad Amin of Ballantrae asked a three-member town committee to delay hearing why he's challenging the muzzle section of the new municipal dog bylaw. Amin's lawyer was unable to attend Tuesday's meeting.

When Amin's Rhodesian ridgeback attacked another Ballantrae resident, Amin was ordered to put a muzzle on the champion show dog when it was off the owner's property.

The committee, chaired by Councillor Judy Scala, agreed to extend the hearing to Nov. 29, giving Amin a chance to have his lawyer in place.

"This is a very important piece of legislation for this municipality. Mr. Amin has a right to a lawyer," she said. "We have to make sure we do this right."

When Amin's dog bit Helen Hartai, she was riding her bicycle near her home. "I looked up and this huge brown dog was bounding towards me," Hartai said. "The dog was coming twice as fast as I could go."

The dog's teeth tore into Hartai's thigh. The wound was treated at Markham Stouffville Hospital.

Hartai told the committee she was very disappointed, once again, to arrive at a hearing only to find out the case will not include Amin's input. "This has dragged on since June 13," she said. "It's cost me three days' pay and a week of injury. It's inconceivable to postpone it again."

She told the committee that the plan is to "delay, delay, delay" until she can attend, thus putting the dog owner in a favourable position.

By setting another hearing date, it gives Amin more ammunition to build his case," said Zoltan Hartai, the victim's husband and a witness to the attack. "The process is lopsided," he said.

When Donna Trempe, mother

of Stouffville's Courtney Trempe, 8, who killed by a dog in 1998, found out the committee wouldn't hear from the dog owner, she broke down.

"Why can't they refuse him?" Trempe said. "Why can't they deal with this and deal with it now? Why can't they either muzzle or put the dog down? Why is this dragging out?"

Helen Donaldson of Richmond Hill was also upset. "People don't realize the system is failing us," Donaldson said.

In February, Donaldson's 12-year-old Pekinese was killed by a pit bull. Charges against the bull owner were dropped, Donaldson said.

*'What's it going to take to make people responsible?'*

A petition, calling for measures to protect people against vicious dogs and signed by 20 residents of Iroquois Court in Ballantrae, was presented to the committee by Ron Warne.

The Ballantrae subdivision is now divided on the dog issue, Hartai said. "I've lived there 22 years, but now I don't feel safe to go around the subdivision. We're afraid. Others are expressing deep concern for the safety of their children. I can't understand why an animal has taken over our subdivision."

Five months ago, Whitchurch-Stouffville adopted a bylaw restricting the comings and goings of dogs, particularly dogs that have been officially identified as vicious. All vicious dogs must be muzzled when off their owner's property.

Trempe joined the crusade for tougher dog laws after her daughter was killed by a bull mastiff.

She said she's tried to work with the system, including taking a wait-and-see approach in the hopes that justice would prevail.

"Not anymore," Trempe said. "I'm getting angry. What's it going to take to make people responsible?"

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