

Happy New Year

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## Igloo competition will include world-record bid

By Madeleine Leclerc

While preparations are in the final stages, organizers of the 2nd annual igloo building competition to be held in February during the Grand Falls

Winter Carnival are already busy freezing thousands of ice blocks and storing them in a trailer.

Details surrounding the event will be released on Jan. 10.

"For engineers, igloos represent exactly what their profession is all about - using imagination to solve practical problems and make our world a better, safer place in which to

live. Most people are familiar with the engineering triumphs of the ancient Egyptians, Greeks, Mayans, Aztecs and Chinese. From constructing pyramids and the Parthenon to building aqueducts, canals and cities on lakes, these ancient civilizations are widely recognized for their remarkable displays of ingenuity," stated Eric Ouellette, who with other members of the Association of Professional Engineers and Geoscientists of New Brunswick (APEGNB) organized last year's igloo building competition.

"What people don't know is that Canada's Inuit people were also using their ingenuity to survive in a much harsher and more unforgiving climate - a virtual desert of ice. From this fierce world of blizzards and biting cold, the Inuit invented an environmentally friendly, structurally stunning and amazingly cozy residence from just ice and snow - known as the igloo," Ouellette writes on his website.

As a way to celebrate Canada's ancestral engineering history and showcase engineering principles in a fun and memorable way, the Northwestern branch of the APEGNB is proud to host the second igloo building competition Feb. 15 to 17 at Centennial Park in Grand Falls.

A total of 10 teams participated in this past February's event.

"We had been hoping for 20 teams," said Ouellette, an engineer with Gemtec Ltd. "However, the calibre of their work and their contribution towards making this event a success surpassed our wildest dreams."

Judging of the best igloo was made by the public.

The Falls Construction Ltd. team from Grand Falls won top honours while second place went to the Restigouche Construction Co. Ltd. team and third place honours were awarded to the Université de Moncton, Ed-

mundston campus team.

"Many of the teams which participated last February have told us they expect to be back next month," he added.

Ouellette's group will be attempting to beat the Guinness World Record with a bigger igloo this year.

"Our first igloo measured 10 feet in diameter and had an inside height of seven and a half feet," Ouellette said. "It was built using approximately 440 blocks of snow and weighed 1.5 tons. The Guinness record boasts an igloo which has a diameter of 24 feet and an inside diameter of 12 feet. I strongly believe that we can do better than that. Our goal is to build an igloo which is 12 and a half feet high with a 25-foot diameter base."

Towards that end, Ouellette and a small team of volunteers have been devoting many hours to filling 400 four-gallon square pails with water and letting them freeze. The blocks are then stored in a trailer located next to Ouellette's office in St. André.

"We began freezing blocks at the end of November. So far, we have approximately 1,500 blocks and we are hoping to have at 3,000 blocks in order to beat the world record. We are only a small crew to work on the block-making process and a lot of that depends on the cold weather. When the temperature is too warm, the ice doesn't freeze up and the blocks have a tendency to crack. Then, it's back to square one. If we had more volunteers to help out, we could finish the blocks a lot quicker. We plan on starting to build the igloo several days prior to the start of the Winter Carnival," he added.

Anyone interested in helping to build blocks or volunteer their time during the igloo building competition can contact Eric Ouellette at 475-5654 or visit [www.igloocompetition.ca](http://www.igloocompetition.ca)



### Another 1,500 to go

As of last Friday, Dec. 28, Eric Ouellette was sitting on 1,200 blocks of ice stored temporarily inside a trailer, while another 300 blocks were in the stages of freezing in 4-gallon pails outside. Ouellette is hoping to reach 3,000 ice blocks in an effort to break the Guinness World record for the largest igloo. (Madeleine Leclerc photo)