

2012 Teddy Waste Award Nominee

Background Information

Federal Nominees

Up in Smoke (Winner)

Agriculture Canada Tobacco Transition Program

Nominated for: Worst Performance by a Federal Department in a Supporting Role

Production cost: \$284 million

This year's big-budget spectacular is an epic multi-generational saga of family secrets, greed and skulduggery in tobacco country.

It all starts with Agriculture Canada attempting to get tobacco farmers out of the business. To do so, they [offered government cheques](#) large to any farmer willing to shut down their tobacco farm and walk away.

Unfortunately, the [Auditor General's fall 2011](#) Report revealed that Agriculture Canada's \$284 million giveaway not only failed in its goal of reducing the number of active tobacco farmers in Canada, but in fact, their numbers [more than doubled from 118 in 2009 to 251 in 2010](#), the year after the multi-million dollar payout.

One big reason the program failed: more than half the 1,000 recipients of big federal cheques were not actually active tobacco farmers. Oddly enough, adult children whose parents who received big cheques ended up leasing land and equipment from their folks and going into the tobacco business. Or adult children left the tobacco business and leased the land and equipment to the parents. Some tobacco entrepreneurs got even more creative: "A variety of other business relationships existed, such as between brothers, sisters, grandparents, and in-laws, all of which met the terms and conditions of the program under the Funding Agreement," noted the A-G.

Who couldn't use millions of taxpayer dollars to shuffle the ownership of your farm equipment, on paper at least, to another member of your family? A lucky strike indeed!

Links

http://www.agr.gc.ca/cb/index_e.php?s1=n&s2=2009&page=n90105

http://www.oag-bvg.gc.ca/internet/English/parl_oag_201111_03_e_35935.html#hd4d

<http://www.betterfarming.com/online-news/audit-takes-aim-tobacco-buyout-4672>

Deal of the Century or The Hunt for HMCS Corner Brook

Department of National Defence

Nominated For: Worst Performance by a Semi-Buoyant Naval Vessel in a Supporting Role

Production Cost: \$3 billion

[When the HMCS Corner Brook collided with the ocean floor off the coast of B.C. in June](#), it wasn't the first mishap for Canada's fleet of second-hand British subs. Since the Chrétien government scored the deal of the century, picking up the four diesel-powered behemoths for \$750 million, repair costs have surpassed \$1 billion, and the eventual tab is forecast to rise to as much as \$3 billion. One of the vessels, the *Chicoutimi*, was damaged in a fatal fire on its way here from the U.K. [The Chicoutimi has seen only two active days of service since we it was purchased 13 years ago](#). With the *Corner Brook* out of action until 2016, and two other subs not expected to go into service until 2013, Canada's submarine fleet will have exactly one operational vessel this year – if all goes well. Thankfully, Canada no longer suffers the humiliation of having a smaller operational submarine fleet than the West Edmonton Mall – the mall has taken its fleet out of service completely.

Links:

<http://www.lookoutnewspaper.com/top-stories.php?id=596>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/story/2011/10/27/submarines-british-nuclear.html>

The Nutty Economic Development Agency

Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency

Nominated for: Worst Performance by a Corporate Welfare Provider

Production cost: \$190,000

New Brunswick is grappling with obesity issues – [30 per cent of the population seriously overweight, compared to 18 per cent in the rest of Canada](#). The Atlantic Canada Opportunities Agency (ACOA) is always looking for ways to help.

This year, ACOA provided \$190,000 in funding to Mrs. Dunster's Donuts of Sussex, New Brunswick, for [a new cold storage halocarbon freezer system](#). Unlike its trendy competitors, the distinctive apple-shaped Dunster's donut retains its unique rich flavour, because it is the only commercially produced donut still on the market made with pure lard.

Links:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/story/2012/02/23/nb-health-council-report-obesity.html>

<http://www.acoa-apeca.gc.ca/eng/Agency/mediaroom/NewsReleases/Pages/3294.aspx>

Miracle on Ice

National Capital Commission

Nominated for: Classiest Dressing Room Ever

Production cost: \$5.2 million

Growing up in Canada, many of us have experienced the chilly sensation of sitting on a patch of ice as we lace up our skates on a lake or a pond. Enterprising pond-hockey enthusiasts have developed a wide range of engineering solutions, from a 2 by 4 on cinder blocks all the way to a full-on plywood skate shack. But the National Capital Commission (NCC) has taken things to a whole new level. The federal agency is also responsible for managing skating on the Rideau Canal. To help skaters brave the elements over the short skating window on the scenic waterway [\(this year's skating season lasted 28-days\)](#), the NCC bought [seven portable heated skate shacks at cost of \\$750,000 each](#).

Taxpayers lacing up their skates in more humble surroundings in other parts of Canada need to understand that they have an obligation to support fellow skaters in the national capital in a style befitting their status. As NCC

spokesman Jean Wolff pointed out: “the NCC wanted something that befits the canal as an icon of the capital.”

Sure, you can buy a pretty nice house on a pretty big lot in most any parts of Canada for \$750,000. But would that house have radiant heating panels in the ceilings, fluorescent and LED lighting and suction system toilets? Or light-coloured wood window frames accented by charcoal-coloured flooring? And matching charcoal accents in the curving steel roof? You can keep your house, Canadian taxpayers.

Links:

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2012/02/24/ottawa-rideau-canal-closed.html>

<http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/ottawa/story/2011/11/13/ott-rideau-canal-chalets.html>

Provincial Nominees

21 Not-So-Angry Men - And Women (Winner)

Alberta: The Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing – Legislative Assembly of Alberta

Nominated For: Worst Ensemble Cast Performance

Production Cost: \$261,000

Many of us, at some point in our lives, have been asked to sit on a committee of some sort: helping organize the fun night at our kids’ elementary school, running a casino night for a sports team or serving on the board of a charity. It’s generally a thankless task, with lots of work and no pay. Now imagine the exact opposite situation. [As outlined on page 23 in our recent submission to the commissioner reviewing the pay of Alberta MLAs](#): The *Standing Committee on Privileges and Elections, Standing Orders and Printing*, a duly constituted committee of the Alberta Legislature must do some important work, because it currently has 21 members – the largest committee in the Legislature.

What’s more, in 2008 MLAs voted to change the way they get paid for committees, from a small stipend for each meeting they attended, to a flat, guaranteed \$1,000 per month for each MLA.

Overall, the tab, just for fees paid to these MLAs for serving on this committee for one year, comes to \$261,000.

Unfortunately for taxpayers, this committee last met shortly after they change the pay rules in 2008. In fact, it’s been [1,206 days since their last meeting](#) – or in MLA talk – 39 months.

Links:

<http://taxpayer.com/sites/default/files/Reversing-the-Kowalski-Legacy.pdf>

<http://www.assembly.ab.ca/committees/privilegeselections/index.html>

The School of Rock – no, make that *Roch*

Yukon: Supreme Court Justice Vital Ouellette

Nominated For: Worst Performance by an Activist Judge

Production Cost: \$15 million

In a remote northern territory inhabited by 35,000 people, covering nearly half a million square kilometres, where 30 per cent of the students are aboriginal, no elected school board would be likely to build a \$15 million French high school for just 41 French-speaking students - unless they were ordered to do so by a justice of the supreme court. Taxpayers, meet Mr. Justice Vital Ouellette, your worst nightmare.

[Mr. Justice Ouellette also ordered a multi-million dollar expansion to the existing French language school, to accommodate an arts studio, space for a student radio station and separate classes for every grade.](#) Maybe the judge relied on his hands-on experience as chair of a minority-language school board in Alberta, when he was writing out

the details of his order.

Judge Ouellette found that Yukon's government violated the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedom's protection of minority language education. Yukon is planning to appeal the judge's order, even if it means pushing Justin Trudeau over to the separatist side.

Links:

<http://news.nationalpost.com/2011/07/28/court-orders-yukon-to-build-15m-school-for-41-francophone-students/>

Occupy BC Hydro – money for the 99 per cent

British Columbia: BC Hydro

Nominated For: Worst Performance by a provincial government monopoly

Production Cost: \$42.3 million

One multi-billion dollar corporation has heeded the message of the Occupy Wall Street movement.

BC Hydro handed out performance bonuses to 99 per cent of its employees, including \$840,000 for executives, \$31 million for management and professional staff and \$10.5 million for unionized employees.

After all, BC Hydro made a profit of \$589 million last year – thanks to outstanding management and execution, at least from 99 per cent of its staff. But also, thanks to the 4.67 per cent price increase the monopoly charged its customers - just double the inflation rate. And also, it turns out, thanks to some [fancy-pants accounting tricks the BC Auditor General spelled out in a recent report](#) that allowed BC Hydro to push \$696 million of debt into future years. Now that's performance: a magic show of sorts, but still a performance.

It's unknown just what horrible things the 1 per cent did to get left off the bonus list.

Link:

<http://www.bcauditor.com/pubs/2011/report8/bc-hydro-audit-rate-regulated-accounting>

A Clockwork ORNGE

Ontario: ORNGE air ambulance service

Nominated For: Worst performance by a provincially-backed investment banking deal

Production Cost: \$25 million and searching

A Clockwork Orange nearly got it right: the monumental 1962 novel and the 1971 Academy Award nominated film depicted a futuristic world terrorized by a rampaging gang of narcissistic sociopaths, wreaking havoc at every turn. Fast forward 40 years and the true story contains not as much violence (or as many false eyelashes) but even more destruction than portrayed in the movie.

A \$275 million investment banking deal backed by the Ontario government lies in tatters, with receivers running a network of associated companies. [Forensic auditors say \\$25 million is unaccounted for](#). The [Ontario provincial police are investigating 'financial irregularities' at the company](#). The most senior executives of the ORNGE air ambulance service have been terminated, the board of directors replaced by the provincial government. Before it collapsed, [ORNGE paid \\$8.8 million to the law firm of its counsel, Alfred Apps](#), who was also serving as president of the Liberal Party of Canada while he helped structure the company's complicated finances.

As bad as things sound, this one reminds us of the federal sponsorship scandal. Stay tuned for the sequel. Alex – from the movie – would probably call it a “real horrorshow.”

Links:

<http://www.thestar.com/news/canada/politics/article/1136628--25m-in-orng-e-money-unaccounted-for>

<http://www.thestar.com/news/article/1126222--orng-e-paid-lawyers-11-million?bn=1>

Municipal Nominees

Snow Day (Winner)

City of Montreal – Villeray, Quebec

Nominated For: Worst Performance by a Snow Removal Device on a City Street

Production Cost: unknown

After [this Youtube video went viral](#) we knew we had a winner from Montreal. This one is *funny*. There's lots of corruption and lots of taxpayer rip-offs happening in Montreal. But they're not funny. Freeway overpasses collapsing on people – that's not funny. Chunks of the Olympic Stadium falling down – o.k., kind of funny, but also a bit of-fensive – it's not in good taste to continually mock a city's civic monument. Even [the escalator to nowhere](#) – again, o.k., also very funny. But not as funny as this Youtube video taken of Montreal sidewalk snow plows driving up and down sidewalks with their blades down on dry, clear pavement, pushing not one single flake of snow.

Of course, all this hilarity unmasks [the sordid world of bid-rigging, sabotage, and intimidation](#) rife within the seedy world of snow removal in Montreal. Sad stuff. It makes you very angry, when you stop laughing about it.

Links:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SWzbEn-aXMQ>

<http://m.en.canoe.ca/news/CNEWS/Canada/2011/12/21/19154601.html>

<http://maisonneuve.org/pressroom/article/2011/dec/9/maisonneuve-exposes-rampant-bid-rigging-montreals/>

Slip Slidin' Away

City of Winnipeg, Manitoba

Nominated For: Worst Screenplay Adaptation from a Weather Report

Production Cost: \$5,000

The City of Winnipeg demonstrated that it clearly has more taxpayer money than it knows what to do with [when it gave a grant of \\$5,000](#) to launch a daily walking condition bulletin. The daily bulletin will provide the entire city, with a population of 663,000 and an area of 464 square kilometres, with a single, citywide, daily assessment of general walking conditions, breaking conditions into one of four general categories: easy, moderate, difficult, or hazardous. There is no specific information for any given street, walking path or neighbourhood, just the *entire* city.

You're thinking we found this in the Onion. No, honest, we found it in the Winnipeg Free Press.

"Hm. It's Winnipeg. It's February. It's snowing. It's minus 30. There are gale-force winds. I'd better go online and check the walking conditions..."

The online commenter said it best: "I have had this service for years, myself... it's called a 'window'. I look through this device and I can see whether new snow has fallen, or if there are melting/freezing conditions. I encourage everyone to obtain one of these. It has been a God-send whenever I have wondered how the sidewalks will be when I venture out."

Links:

<http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/City-to-launch-daily-walking-condition-bulletin-139459138.html>

Peace Bridges of Madison County

City of Calgary, Alberta

Nominated For: Worst Performance by an Expensive Engineering Structure in a Supporting Role

Production Cost: \$25 million and counting

[With construction 15 months behind schedule and over budget](#), Calgary taxpayers following the progress of the pedestrian Peace Bridge will harken back to the 1995 classic *The Bridges of Madison County*, and perhaps question who is playing the role of Clint Eastwood and who is playing the role of Meryl Streep.

The question now is whether the city can complete the [expensive piece of public art](#), seemingly modeled along the lines of a Chinese finger puzzle for less than it cost Eastwood to make the movie – about \$35 million.

Links:

<http://www.calgaryherald.com/entertainment/Architect+denies+culpability+Peace+Bridge+woes/6195884/story.html>

Why not just Roll up the Rim instead?

City of St. Albert, Alberta

Nominated For: Worst Performance by a City Government in a Competing Role

Production Cost: \$280,000

In a tough economy, local businesses pay the taxes and provide the jobs that keep a city alive. So it must puzzle the coffee shop operators of St. Albert, Alberta, when they consider their taxes dollars at work - against them. City Council decided to get into the coffee shop business themselves.

[They purchased a Starbucks franchise](#), hoping to prop up a money-losing city-owned recreation centre with the profits. Of course the city didn't mention the plan to the small business owner who operates a *Booster Juice* location in the same recreation centre, paying rent and taxes to the city.

We haven't heard yet if City Council is planning to expand its retail operations. Why not branch out with a new Jiffy Lube location, a Herbal Magic outlet and a nail bar?

Links:

<http://www.stalbertgazette.com/article/20110713/SAG0801/307139983/0/sag>

Lifetime Achievement

Extremely Loud and Incredibly Expensive

Former Bloc Québécois leader Gilles Duceppe

Nominated for: Lifetime Achievement

Production cost: \$41.8 million

After losing his seat in Parliament in May, Bloc leader Gilles Duceppe walked away with a guaranteed, indexed, annual pension for life of \$140,765. If he lives to age 80, Mr. Duceppe will collect \$2.9 million - his surviving spouse will get \$84,459 annually for life once he's gone.

When Quebec voters said goodbye to 45 of their 49 Bloc MPs, [the losers walked away with \\$1.6 million in severance payouts](#), and \$1.6 million in annual pension benefits: a staggering \$41.8 million lifetime pension package: the gift of a grateful nation for a lifetime of service. Not to mention \$23.5 million in direct taxpayer subsidies to the Bloc Québécois from 2004 to 2011, from the soon-to-be-cancelled \$2 vote tax.

After Duceppe left office, it came to light that he had secretly paid the Bloc party executive director, for seven years, from the budget of the Parliament of Canada. Duceppe also billed the taxpayers for the services of an author who wrote, and later published, a book on the history of the Bloc ([20 Years in the Name of Québec - \\$19.95](#)).

No word yet from the Bloc on sharing book royalties with Canada's taxpayers, who financed the project – another hallmark of Mr. Duceppe's lifetime of achievement in boosting federal spending.

Links:

<http://taxpayer.com/sites/default/files/CTFMP-PensionReport-WEB.pdf>

<http://www.livresquebecois.com/livre.asp?id=isdisdyabobfpesa&/0/le-bloc-quebecois-20-ans-au-nom-du-quebec/marie-france-charbonneau>