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PURSUIT OF EXCELLENCE

Silver Award winners in the Vancouver Regional Construction Association's 2019 Awards of Excellence demonstrate leadership, teamwork and innovation | B2-B3



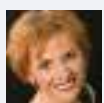
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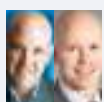
Clockwise from top left, the Great Northern Way Pavilion, Vancouver House tower, BC Place play lighting system and Salton Road pedestrian/cycle bridge are among the projects that won Silver Awards in the Vancouver Regional Construction Association's 2019 Awards of Excellence

FINDit



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Let us not seek the partisan answer, but the right answer



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CONSTRUCTION LEADERSHIP: SUSTAINABILITY IS A BIG

New Zero Emissions Building Leadership Award added

BY BRIGITTE PETERSEN

Companies that worked on **Simon Fraser University's** (SFU) new Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering (SE3P) building took home the lion's share of Silver Awards during the **Vancouver Regional Construction Association's** (VRCA) 2019 Awards of Excellence.

VRCA received 123 nominations this year, totalling a construction value of more than \$840 million. The annual awards, now in their 31st year, recognize B.C.'s top construction projects and companies in sectors ranging from industrial to commercial to institutional and highrise residential.

The \$126 million SE3P building, located in Surrey, won companies seven Silver Awards. Featuring five storeys and 20,458 square metres of space, the building was designed as a living showcase for sustainable building standards.

Other notable projects included **Vancouver Public Library** central branch renovations and the new Aldergrove Credit Union Community Centre. Submissions included university expansions and student housing, transit station upgrades, infrastructure enhancements, health-care projects and tenant improvements to office and retail spaces.

A total of 46 Silver Awards were handed out this year in 15 project categories for use of innovative techniques, new materials and exceptional project management. One winner from each category will be selected as a Gold Award winner at the annual Awards of Excellence gala.

Categories recognized general, trade, mechanical and electrical contractors, and manufacturers and suppliers who completed a project, or part of a project, in the past two years.

Describing the calibre of this year's submissions as "exceptional," awards committee chair **Bob Proctor** said companies face greater challenges each year, including aggressive time constraints, labour shortages and structures being designed during construction.

"Nominees demonstrated that through strong leadership and teamwork even the toughest project can be successfully completed," said Proctor.

General contractors

In the General Contractors over \$50 Million category, **Bird Construction** won a Silver Award for SFU's SE3P building. The company overcame numerous challenges, from completing



Companies involved in the construction of Simon Fraser University's new Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering building won seven Silver Awards | ROBERT STEFANOWICZ

a 400-seat theatre prior to the building envelope to meeting a rigorous schedule, according to senior project manager **Jerry Woykin**.

"The more unique aspects of this project included an envelope made up of curved precast panels and corresponding curtain wall system, and construction of a full-building-height atrium, which encompasses a large gathering space including stairs, seating places and tree wells," said Woykin. "The true value of this facility is the complex research and teaching facilities and associated electrical and mechanical systems that support it all."

Ledcor also won in this contractor category for the new Great Northern Way building project, while **Peter Kiewit Sons ULC** won for removal and replacement of existing rip-rap on the upstream face of the W.A.C. Bennett Dam in Hudson's Hope.

Smith Bros. & Wilson (BC) Ltd. (SBW) won a Silver Award in the General Contractors \$15 Million to \$50 Million category for major upgrades to the Commercial-Broadway SkyTrain station, the busiest transit hub in **TransLink's** network. The project included building a new platform and a new passenger bridge over Broadway, widening of the passenger bridge over the Grandview Cut and other work. SBW faced several challenges including an unexpected and significant increase in **Canadian National Railway** (CN) traffic and a large volume of design changes. Project manager **Michael van Senden** said it was the most complex upgrade SBW has undertaken in 40 years.

"Building over a live CN railway was the biggest challenge," explained van Senden. "Increased rail traffic meant construction activities in the Grandview Cut had to be shut down while trains passed through the site. There

were days our work crews sat idle for the entire shift waiting for CN to give us the 'all clear' to work."

To address this challenge, SBW engineered and installed a hoarding arrangement on the outside of the bridge envelope to allow work to continue while trains moved below.

Graham Design Builders LP also won a Silver Award in this category for the Aldergrove Credit Union Community Centre project, which involved constructing a new, 70,000-square-foot, two-storey building and **Otter Co-op** Outdoor Experience water park on the Fraser Highway.

Built as a destination facility for Aldergrove's downtown core revitalization, the project includes an arena of 500-plus seats, an NHL-sized ice surface with tilt-up panels, running track, fitness centre, outdoor water park and other amenities.

The project included a number of sustainable features, including heating of the pool water with a boiler plant and solar panels, as well as rainwater management and harvesting, storm retention and water table infiltration. Wood and brick from the former Aldergrove Elementary School, which had been located on the same site, were repurposed for various components.

The big challenge for this project involved laying the underground piping and conduits, which included 70,000 feet of rink piping, 18,000 feet of pool piping, 3,700 feet of sanitary, sewer and water piping, and 90,000 feet of electrical conduit.

"Proper co-ordination with our experienced partner trades and use of Revit modelling allowed us to perform our work avoiding any conflicts and rework," said project manager **Jasman Cheema**.

Also winning in this category were **JJM Construction Ltd.** and **QM Environmental** for the Middle

cycle bridge project; **Peter Kiewit Sons** for the Highway 99 Ten Mile Slide advanced anchor work; and **Metric Modular** for the **Trinity Western University** Jacobson Hall student housing facility.

Tenant improvement

SBW also won two awards in the General Contractors Tenant Improvement category for rehabilitation work at the Kitsilano Pool and renovations on levels 8 and 9 at the Vancouver Public Library central branch. **Chandos Construction** won in this slot for its work on the Boston Pizza Stadium District project.

Trade contractors

Silver winners in the Trade Contractors over \$4 Million (Director's Trade) category were **Carion Construction Ltd.** for work on the Vancouver House project; **Glas-tech Glazing Contractors Ltd.** and **Syber Concrete Forming Ltd.** for work on the SFU SE3P building; and **Vancouver Pile Driving Ltd.** for dock work on the G3 Terminal Vancouver project on the North Shore.

Winning in the \$2 Million to \$4 Million (Founder's Trade) category were **Alliance Scientific Inc.** and **Surespan Structures Ltd.** for work on the SFU SE3P building;



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FOCUS OF WINNING PROJECTS IN AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE

BOB PROCTOR, CHAIR, VRCA AWARDS OF EXCELLENCE COMMITTEE

Nominees demonstrated that through strong leadership and teamwork even the toughest project can be successfully completed

and Glastech Glazing Contractors for glazing and glass work on the Commercial-Broadway SkyTrain station upgrade.

Taking home awards in the \$1 Million to \$2 Million (President's Trade) category were **Horizon Landscape Contractors Inc.** for work at the Aldergrove Credit Union Community Centre; **Spearhead Inc.** for its involvement in the Great Northern Way Pavilion project; and **Spectrum Painting & Restorations Ltd.** for work at **Parq Casino**.

Winners in the Trade Contractors up to \$1 Million (Chairman's Trade) category were **ESC Automation** for work on the West Village Park and District Energy Centre project; **Keith Panel Systems Co. Ltd.** for developing the exterior panel system for the facade at the Great Northern Way Pavilion; and **Westcoast Cutting & Coring** for work on the Vancouver Public Library project.

Mechanical contractors

Modern Niagara Vancouver won

twice in the Mechanical Contractors over \$9 Million category for work at a new forensic laboratory at **RCMP E Division** headquarters and mechanical work on the Valleyview Hospital project. **Division 15 Mechanical Ltd.** also placed in this category for work on the SFU SE3P building.

Canstar Mechanical Ltd. took home a Silver Award in the \$3 Million to \$9 Million category for the Aldergrove Credit Union Community Centre. **Trotter & Morton Building Technologies Inc.** won two awards in this category for the **Vancouver Island University** Health and Science Centre project and the West Village Park and District Energy Centre project.

Black & McDonald Ltd. also won two awards in the Mechanical Contractors up to \$3 Million category for renovations at the Vancouver central library and the Vancouver General Hospital Centre of Excellence for Simulation Education and Innovation project. Division 15 Mechanical also won in this slot for the first phase of the

Northeast False Creek District Energy System with two steam-to-hot-water conversion stations for the Parq Casino and Rogers Arena South Tower buildings.

Electrical contractors

Western Pacific Enterprises Ltd. (WPE) won three Silver Awards, one in each of the electrical contractors categories. The Coquitlam-based company placed in the Electrical Contractors over \$8 Million category for delivering full electrical works at the new Stanton Territorial Hospital in Yellowknife. This project, the largest in the Northwest Territories' history, replaced the old hospital and doubled capacity.

Much of the work, including design, prefab, testing and management, was completed in Coquitlam, according to project superintendent **Ace Johnson**. Consultants and contractors from across Canada worked on the project, calling for many on-line meetings.

"This project was a great success in WPE's eyes as it allowed us to showcase our years of developing health-care-specific build methods and design management tools," said Johnson.

F&M Installations Ltd. also won a Silver Award in this category for replacing the aging John Hart

Generating Station in Campbell River, and **Houle Electric Ltd.** placed in this slot for electrical construction, security, and networks and infrastructure for a new patient care tower at Penticton Regional Hospital.

In the \$2 Million to \$8 Million category, **Canem Systems Ltd.** won for its involvement in the SFU SE3P building project; Houle Electric won for replacing the field of play lighting system at BC Place stadium; and WPE took home a Silver Award for upgrading and replacing the main switchgear and retail distribution equipment in the Pacific Centre mall.

In the Electrical Contractors up to \$2 Million category, **Allteck Line Contractors Inc.** won for its involvement in the Seton River 60L021 Structure Relocation project, **Status Electrical Corp.** got a Silver Award for electrical work during a major infrastructure project at the Vancouver International Airport, and WPE won for integrating new electrical systems at the Lougheed Town Centre food court.

Manufacturers and suppliers

Silver winners in the Manufacturers and Suppliers category were **Con-Tech Systems Ltd.** for work on the Highway 99 Ten Mile Slide advanced anchor work project;

Marcon Metalfab for design-build work on the Salton Road pedestrian/cycle bridge; and **Modu-Loc Fence Rentals LP** for providing barriers for a 47-storey, mixed-use **Thind** Metrotown development.

Going for gold

One Silver Award winner from each category will be honoured with a Gold Award during the Awards of Excellence gala on October 28 at the Vancouver Convention Centre West.

VRCA will also present Outstanding Achievement awards to companies and individuals demonstrating commitment to the industry and community. Categories include: Lifetime Achievement; Education Leadership; Outstanding Woman in Construction; Innovation and Productivity; Safety; VRCA Member of the Year; U40 Excellence in Construction; and Construction Workplace Health and Safety. One individual who has made significant contributions to the industry and the association will also receive a VRCA life membership.

New this year is the Zero Emissions Building Leadership Award, recognizing an individual or company helping the industry understand how to design and build to zero-emissions building standards. ■



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MILESTONES: VRCA CELEBRATES 90 YEARS OF

From an informal collection of builders and tradespeople to the largest regional construction association in B.C., VRCA has come a long way in nine decades

BY PETER CAULFIELD

The Vancouver Regional Construction Association (VRCA) – the largest regional construction association in British Columbia – is celebrating its 90th anniversary in 2019.

VRCA president **Fiona Famulak** says 90 years in business is a key milestone and is worth making some 90-decibel noise about.

“Our success is a testament to the boards of directors who have charted VRCA’s path throughout its history and to the members who have supported the association over the years,” said Famulak. “VRCA is as strong as it’s ever been, and we’re excited for the future.”

Deep roots in the Lower Mainland

VRCA traces its roots to the



The Vancouver Regional Construction Association (formerly the Amalgamated Construction Association of British Columbia, or ACA) this year celebrates nine decades of supporting the construction industry. Pictured here are recipients of the first ACA Life Membership Awards in 1966: from left, standing, are Tom Clark, Albert Armstrong and Bill Terry; seated are Jack Sigurdson and Charles Bentall | VRCA

1800s, when a collection of builders and tradespeople came together and created an informal builders’ exchange. However, the exchange closed its doors during

the First World War when the value of building permits issued plummeted.

In 1929, Vancouver’s construction industry came together

again and formed the Building and Construction Industries Exchange of British Columbia, establishing a direct lineage to today’s VRCA. The exchange’s

earliest members helped build some of Vancouver’s greatest landmarks, including the Marine Building, the Lions Gate Bridge and the Hotel Vancouver.

The organization maintained its original moniker until the 1960s when it was renamed three times in four years, with the last being in 1966, when the association added new members and became the Amalgamated Construction Association of British Columbia (ACA).

The ACA brought general and trade contractors from Vancouver and Victoria together with the Heavy Construction Association of British Columbia to be the voice of construction for the province. Following the creation of the BC Construction Association three years later, ACA shifted its focus to Vancouver and the Lower Mainland.

In November 1999, ACA became the Vancouver Regional Construction Association.

Today, VRCA serves more than 700 general and trade contractors, manufacturers, suppliers and professional services providers operating in the industrial, commercial, institutional and highrise residential construction industry. Its members are small, medium-sized and large

BIV EVENT



Vancouver Club | November 18, 2019

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SUPPORTING THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY

FIONA FAMULAK, PRESIDENT, VANCOUVER REGIONAL CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Our success is a testament to the boards of directors who have charted VRCA's path throughout its history and to the members who have supported the association over the years

businesses that are both union and non-union. Together, they build vibrant communities, state-of-the-art buildings and essential infrastructure not only in the Lower Mainland but across B.C. and Canada, as well as internationally.

In recent years, VRCA members have been involved in such well-known projects as the Vancouver Convention Centre West, the BC Women's and Children's Hospital redevelopment project, the Parq Casino and Emily Carr University. Current projects include the Royal Columbian Hospital redevelopment and Vancouver International Airport expansion.

The construction industry is an important part of the provincial economy. With \$205 billion in proposed construction and \$114 billion in construction underway, B.C.'s construction industry is the crown jewel in Canada's construction landscape.

In 2018, the industry contributed \$21.1 billion to B.C.'s gross domestic product, which amounted to 8.6% of the provincial GDP. Construction is also the largest employer in the province's goods sector, employing 242,500 men and women from across B.C.

VRCA's strategic focus

In 2017, VRCA's board of directors developed a three-year strategic plan laser-focused on supporting the association's members and building for the future. Since 2017, the association has been delivering on seven strategic goals that help VRCA to:

- foster a culture of continuous learning in the industry by providing world-class technical and non-technical education and training (education);
- foster an environment that encourages collaboration, innovation and adoption of standard practices in order to promote fair, open and transparent business practices across the industry (advocacy);
- facilitate connections and opportunities across the construction industry by providing a range of business-oriented programs, services and support, including networking opportunities (facilitation);
- optimize the use of VRCA's building as an educational and promotional tool for construction best practices;
- achieve full recognition as the premier construction centre of excellence in Canada, thanks to VRCA's programs, services and

advocacy work;

- lead by example, by adopting best-practice board governance and operational processes and procedures that support the delivery of VRCA's vision and mission; and

- achieve long-term financial viability through exceptional leadership.

"We believe that excellence, underpinned by a culture of learning and innovation, is a critical factor for the survival and prosperity of VRCA's members and B.C.'s construction industry as a whole," said Famulak.

Education

Famulak describes education as a bridge to excellence.

"We want to foster a culture of continuous learning across the industry by offering world-class technical and non-technical training," she said.

Recently, VRCA commissioned an industry-wide education needs assessment. Its purpose was to define an optimal set of courses, structures and delivery formats to enable B.C.'s construction industry to take on the new challenges facing it.

Andrea Ringrose, VRCA's education manager, says that of the many courses the association offers, the most popular ones right now focus on foremen skills: for example, Planning for Foremen, and Lead to Succeed: Leadership Skills for Foremen.

New this year are Hiring in a Labour Shortage, and Love Them or Leave Them: Employee Retention. Both have been well received by members.

Looking ahead, Ringrose says there will be more courses that enable VRCA members to prepare for green and zero-emission building requirements.

Facilitation

The construction industry depends on connections: connections to people, bidding opportunities and ways to save money.

"We therefore want to help forge connections and opportunities across the industry by offering a range of business programs," Famulak said.

VRCA offers:

- more than 20 events each year that connect 4,000 leaders from across the industry;
- access to more than 4,500 bidding opportunities through its BidCentral platform; and
- an employee benefits plan that

is tailored specifically for construction companies.

"As the industry's one-stop shop for programs and services, we help members save time so they can focus on their businesses," said Famulak.

Advocacy and innovation

VRCA's approach to advocacy is multi-pronged.

In addition to advocating for its members at all levels of government to ensure that good public policy is in place to support the industry and business in general, VRCA proactively engages with procurers of construction services and a range of industry stakeholders, as well as students, teachers and the general public to promote understanding of the construction industry and the business environment in which it operates.

For example, to help address the looming skills shortage, VRCA has been engaging with students and teachers through its school outreach program, a volunteer-led initiative that explains and promotes the many career opportunities in construction to students. Since the program began in 2015, VRCA has made the case for a career in construction to more than 5,500 young men and women in the Lower Mainland.

The construction industry is also being challenged to respond quickly and in a way that uses the latest technology and innovations.

Helen Goodland, VRCA member and consultant specializing in innovative solutions for the construction industry, says VRCA has been a leader in predicting the tools its members will need in the future and advising them how to make the most effective and efficient use of them.

The association has been an eloquent and effective advocate for transforming the design and construction value chain toward cost-effective, attractive, zero-emission buildings.

As the industry's hub, VRCA hosts Canada's first and only Zero Emissions Building Exchange (ZEBx).

ZEBx is a collaborative platform that strengthens the public, private and civic capacities for zero-emission buildings in Vancouver and B.C., facilitates knowledge exchange and catalyzes action to accelerate market transformation.

Anniversary celebration

VRCA is marking its 90th anniversary in a number of ways.

"The key event will be an anniversary gala in February 2020, where we'll celebrate our past and share details of future plans," said Famulak, adding that over the course of the year the association is incorporating anniversary themes in some of its bigger events including its annual golf tournament, Awards of Excellence gala and Christmas luncheon.

In addition, VRCA will be celebrating its members' milestones.

"Throughout the year we will be profiling association members who are also celebrating key anniversaries," said Famulak. ■

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OUTREACH: INFRASTRUCTURE SERIES CREATES WIN-WIN OPPORTUNITY FOR CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES, CLIENTS

October 22 event will feature Vancouver International Airport and its 20-year expansion plan spanning projects from tenant improvements to new parkade and terminal expansion

General and trade contractors as well as manufacturers and suppliers in Vancouver's industrial, commercial, institutional and highrise residential construction industry have a new opportunity to meet and develop relationships with procurers of construction services.

The Vancouver Regional Construction Association's (VRCA) newly launched Infrastructure Series is a member-exclusive opportunity designed specifically to provide procurers of construction with an opportunity to share with VRCA members details of their capital and maintenance programs, upcoming projects and how to access the bidding opportunities.

The second event in the series, scheduled for October 22 in Richmond, will see Vancouver International Airport (YVR) at the podium.

YVR is Canada's second-busiest airport and one of the fastest-growing international airports in North America. In 2018, YVR launched an ambitious 20-year expansion plan that includes up to 75 projects that will transform the airport in order to meet its goal of servicing 29 million passengers annually by 2020.

Projects at YVR range in size from tenant improvement projects that improve dining options to major projects such as the new parkade and terminal expansion.

Don Ehrenholz, YVR's vice-president of engineering, says his organization is actively looking for opportunities to build relationships with contractors able to deliver the small-to-medium-sized construction projects



Don Ehrenholz, YVR's vice-president of engineering, says his organization is actively looking for opportunities to build relationships with contractors able to deliver small-to-medium-sized construction projects | SUBMITTED

planned for the coming years.

"YVR has a number of larger projects that garner a lot of attention, but we also have hundreds of smaller projects every year," Ehrenholz said. "I think there is a perception most of the work at the airport is either too big or too specialized for most contractors. I am hoping to undo that perception and interest more small contractors to consider work at YVR."

The Infrastructure Series launched in July with presentations from Partnerships BC and BC Infrastructure Benefits Inc. (BCIB). Partnerships BC shared details about its role supporting the provincial government and public bodies to procure construction and the process it follows. BCIB presented details on how it is operationalizing the



Launched last year, YVR's ambitious 20-year expansion plan includes up to 75 projects that will transform the airport in order to meet its goal of servicing 29 million passengers annually by 2020 | SUBMITTED

DON EHRENHOLZ, VICE-PRESIDENT OF ENGINEERING, VANCOUVER INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

There is a perception most of the work at the airport is either too big or too specialized for most contractors. I am hoping to undo that perception and interest more small contractors to consider work at the YVR

provincial government's Community Benefits Agreement, which is being applied to the construction of key infrastructure projects in the province, and responded to VRCA members' myriad questions.

The series has been embraced enthusiastically by VRCA members, with more than 100

industry professionals representing more than 60 companies attending July's launch event.

"Our members' response to the Infrastructure Series has been fantastic," said Fiona Famulak, VRCA president. "Our members told us that it would be helpful for them to understand owners' procurement plans so that they

can plan accordingly.

"Our overall goal is to help all parties achieve their business goals. By bringing owners and industry together, we're facilitating a dialogue that helps each party understand the opportunities and any challenges. It's a win-win."

VRCA's Infrastructure Series featuring YVR is October 22, from 7 to 9:30 a.m., at the River Rock Casino. Tickets are \$49 and available only to VRCA members.

To learn more about VRCA membership, visit vrca.ca/membership. Information about construction projects at YVR is available at yvr.ca/construction. ■

CCA report provides outlook on five key areas for industry

Industry Trends Report 2019 offers insights on workforce, technology, market forces, procurement and the future of associations in construction



BY MARY VAN BUREN

The independent and anticipated *Industry Trends Report 2019* was released by the Canadian Construction Association (CCA) in August of

The off-loading of risk from the owner to the contractor and continuing downward pressure on price is an unsustainable model

this year.

The report, developed in partnership with Abacus Data, a leading Canadian polling and market research firm, provides an overview of the key trends currently impacting the construction industry and provides insights both on their context and on how the

industry perceives their impact over the next five to 10 years.

Dozens of interviews with expert representatives from the Canadian construction industry, as well as a thorough review of industry literature, informed this unique report. Issues were categorized into five key themes: workforce, technology, market forces, procurement and the future of associations.

Workforce

As baby boomers retire and there is a smaller demographic to replace them, combined with fewer Canadians who see the construction industry as an attractive or

viable career, the industry will have trouble maintaining a large enough workforce to keep up with construction demand.

The industry predicted this would become an issue, and individual employers and construction associations have been working with schools and institutions to spark interest in construction as a viable career opportunity.

It is clear, however, that the industry would benefit from a sustained national campaign to show how construction is a fit for everyone – from engineers, drone pilots and carpenters to architects and lawyers and everything

in between. CCA has recently published a business case for diversity in the workplace and is working on campaigns to reposition the image of the industry as an inclusive sector with diverse career opportunities.

Technology

Compared with international construction firms, Canadian contractors are falling behind on the development and acquisition of cost-saving technologies that may help fill labour shortages and augment the productivity of their workforce.

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The adoption of building information modelling, advanced software, the internet of things, 3D printing and drones will grow over the next five to 10 years.

A key barrier to innovation is the requirement for low-cost bidding on projects. Public procurement and the scrutiny on public spending, as well as market competition for private-sector projects, tend to force a race to the lowest-cost bid, which results in less investment in innovation. Adopting new technologies, processes or materials can increase risk, which is usually downloaded to the contractor. Investment is even tougher for smaller and micro firms, which need to be clearly shown the financial benefit.

Project owners and government can assist with innovation by allowing for higher margins and other incentives to promote company reinvestment in innovation.

Market forces

Some believe that as projects grow in scope and complexity – for example, billion-dollar public-private partnership projects – only the very large firms will be able to compete. This will squeeze out mid-size firms from competition. Megaprojects are also creating a capacity gap that is going to attract more international competition.



The construction industry will continue to adopt increasingly sophisticated technology, but the sector also faces significant barriers to innovation | RAWPIXEL.COM/SHUTTERSTOCK

It is therefore important for the government to help domestic firms grow. If all levels of government were to announce clear timelines and investment commitments, simplify consultations and assessments and secure more access to foreign markets, it would positively affect the industry outlook.

Procurement

The off-loading of risk from the owner to the contractor and continuing downward pressure on price is an unsustainable model. Contractors are increasingly being expected to take on all the risk associated with a project, particularly by public owners. This

could lead to increased bankruptcies, project defaults or contractors not taking on government projects.

The industry believes that when it comes to procurement and risk, the disparity between owners and contractors needs to be bridged to enable more fairness, more equitable profitability and more innovation.

The future of associations

Associations must be a strong voice for the industry and the central information hub for all audiences. Associations exist to advocate on behalf of the industry at the municipal, provincial and federal levels, as well as

provide a suite of services to help members improve their knowledge, grow their businesses and collaborate through shared contract documents.

Many firms do business in more than one city or province. It's helpful to have a pulse on what is happening nationally, and national associations provide this service to their members.

CCA believes passionately in the sustainability and vitality of Canada's construction industry and the industry's pivotal role in building a better Canada. The world is changing, and the industry is changing with it. We are facing new challenges, and we need to adapt in order to compete

globally.

Industry Trends Report 2019 was created by the industry for the industry. We see this report as an important member benefit, providing you with insight into emerging trends so you are better informed to help position your company for the future. ■

Mary Van Buren is president of the Canadian Construction Association. Email her at mvanburen@cca-acc.com if you have any feedback or comments on how CCA can serve you better. Hear what is going on by subscribing to CCA's newsletter at bit.ly/ccasubscribe, by following @ConstructionCAN on Twitter or by looking up the Canadian Construction Association on LinkedIn.

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Let us not seek the partisan answer, but the right answer

Rather than aligning with any political party, VRCA's role is to monitor public policy and ensure its application is in the industry's best interests



If partisan politics were set aside, perhaps we would see an end to the large policy swings that typically accompany a change in government

BY FIONA FAMULAK

In the week before the federal election was called, a colleague shared with me a quote that made me think about the challenge of electing the best people to represent us in Ottawa. "Let us not seek the Republican answer or the Democratic answer but the right answer. Let us not seek to fix the blame for the past – let us accept our own responsibility for the future."

The quote came from **John F. Kennedy** before he became the 35th president of the United States. Kennedy was a great orator who valued the importance of public service and challenged Americans to ask what they could do for their country.

Its message resonated with me. It's crucially important that our politicians, both current and future, put partisan politics aside and do what's right for all citizens – not just those who have their ear.

Sadly, that's not how politics appear to work these days. And that's why choosing who will represent us in political office – be it federal, provincial or municipal – has become increasingly difficult.

Today's politics see us go through periods where the new government actively undoes the work of the previous government because it believes its predecessor's policies aggrieved one group of supporters or another. Such actions create uncertainty, dampen investment and slow the economy.

If partisan politics were set aside and friends were not rewarded for supporting political campaigns, perhaps we would see an end to the large policy swings that typically accompany a change in government.

With those swings eliminated, we'd enjoy a more stable business climate, which in turn would inspire greater investor confidence. That's not only good for businesses but is also good for the men and women employed by those businesses. It creates opportunity, delivers good-paying jobs and ensures people enjoy a good standard of living.

It's natural for people to ask which party the **Vancouver Regional Construction Association (VRCA)** endorses. Our response is always the same – VRCA is non-partisan, meaning the association itself does not support one party over another.

Therefore, rather than aligning with a specific political party, VRCA's role is to monitor public policy – developed by any government – and to ensure that its application is in the best interest of the construction industry and/or business as a whole. If public policy serves industry and business generally, we will applaud it. If not, we will call it out and seek collaborative solutions, regardless of which party is in power. VRCA exists to serve its members. Our members expect nothing less.

In June 2019, the **Canadian Construction Association (CCA)** launched *construction4cdns.ca* to help construction stakeholders

acquaint themselves with the issues facing our industry so they can demand politicians take action.

CCA identified four pillars of focus: strengthening investor confidence, infrastructure planning, supporting innovation and attracting a skilled workforce. While the pillars were derived from a national viewpoint, the details behind each one resonate here in B.C.

For example, CCA wants the federal government to remove any further regulatory delays to the Trans Mountain pipeline expansion project in order to strengthen investor confidence. VRCA agrees: the delays, often arising due to the lack of transparency around the government's stakeholder engagement process, are undermining confidence and have the potential to negatively impact investment over the long term.

Similarly, on the basis of unprecedented demand for construction services, particularly in B.C. and Ontario, both CCA and VRCA are concerned about the forecasted skilled labour shortages over the coming decade. We want to see government increase funding for career and technical training programs and to promote the industry as an employer of choice to new Canadians and under-represented groups.

I urge you to visit *construction4cdns.ca* and take two minutes to type in your name, address and postal code to generate a prewritten letter to your member of Parliament or election candidate.

VRCA's advocacy efforts don't always involve us making requests of governments. Sometimes, we simply need to acknowledge our alignment with their direction and support it. Case in point: Metro Vancouver has also created a list of election priorities, at the top of which is sustainable infrastructure funding. Specifically, the regional district wants the federal government to commit to providing permanent, predictable and sustainable funding sources for infrastructure projects to meet the needs of a growing population in Metro Vancouver.

This makes sense to us. The construction industry also wants a long-term plan for infrastructure spending that spells out the commitment of all levels of government. This will also allow industry an opportunity to plan and forecast labour needs.

While CCA is challenging federal politicians to act on issues facing our industry, I will go one step further and challenge all elected officials, regardless of jurisdiction, to do what's best for their constituents and not just their friends.

After all, they are elected to represent all of us. ■

Fiona Famulak is president of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association, which represents general and trade contractors, manufacturers, suppliers and professional service providers that operate as both union and open-shop employers in B.C.'s industrial, commercial, institutional and highrise residential construction industry.

B.C. lags behind in push for prompt payment on construction projects

Builders Lien (Prompt Payment) Amendment Act receiving first reading in legislative assembly is a welcome development



BY NORM STREU AND CHRISTOPHER HIRST

BC appears poised to catch up with other jurisdictions and pass reasonable protections to ensure timely payment on construction projects.

B.C. has been a global laggard when it comes to legislation to ensure prompt payment. Legislation addressing delayed payment is in place in Ontario, the United Kingdom, the European Union and the vast majority of the United States. While prompt-payment legislation has been discussed in British Columbia for some time, action has been slow in coming.

Why is prompt payment important? Delayed payment by an owner to a contractor affects not only the contractor but all subcontractors that have bills to pay and workers to compensate. Delayed payment has the

most severe impact on small and medium-sized companies and can lead to significant financial stress, can prevent business growth and opportunity and may ultimately lead to insolvency. Even for larger companies, unnecessary delays to payment can have a significant negative impact on their ability to hire new workers and grow.

On May 28, 2019, the Builders Lien (Prompt Payment) Amendment Act received first reading in the B.C. legislative assembly. The proposed legislation, which was introduced as a private member's bill by Liberal MLA **Mary Polak** and needs to gain the support of the majority of MLAs to pass, contemplates the following payment structure on construction projects:

1. Payment is to be made by an owner no later than 28 days after receiving a "proper invoice" from the contractor.

2. Once a contractor has received payment of a proper invoice, the contractor must "no later than seven days after receiving payment, pay each subcontractor who supplied services or materials under a subcontract with the contractor that were included in the proper invoice."

3. If an owner does not pay some or all of an invoice, the contractor is required to pay its subcontractors no later than 35 days after giving the invoice to the owner.

4. The obligation, however, to pay down the contractual line does not apply if a "notice of non-payment" is provided by the contractor, which must state that the amount is not being paid due to non-payment by the owner and is to include an undertaking to refer the matter to adjudication no later than 21 days after the notice of non-payment has been given to the subcontractor.

5. Finally, subcontractors who have received full payment have parallel obligations to pay their subcontractors within seven days.

The draft bill does provide for the opportunity to dispute an invoice, provided that notice is given in the prescribed form and within defined and tight timelines. The notice of non-payment must specify the amount of the proper invoice that is not being paid and must detail all the reasons for non-payment.

Prompt-payment legislation is well overdue in B.C., and the Builders Lien (Prompt Payment) Amendment Act is a welcome development. ■

Norm Streu is president and chief operating officer of the LMS Reinforcing Steel Group. Christopher Hirst is managing partner and leader of the construction and engineering group at Alexander Holburn Beaudin + Lang LLP.