

# Builders' Digest

Toronto Construction Association's Quarterly Perspective

Vol.3 No.3 Quarter 3 2009

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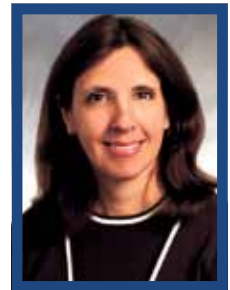
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# The Future Isn't What It Used To Be



*John G. Mollenhauer, President  
Toronto Construction Association*

**YOU HAVE TO LOVE YOGI BERRA. FORTUNATELY, YOGI WAS A BETTER ball player than he was a wordsmith. However, having said that, we almost always knew what he meant despite his propensity for Freudian slips.**

After accepting an honorary degree in his home town from St. Louis University, Berra was invited to deliver a commencement speech for the 1,900

graduates and nearly 10,000 guests who attended the graduation ceremony to hear the man who found “good things always came in pairs of three.” And what he meant by “the future isn’t what it used to be” is that history would likely not repeat itself this time around and that the road ahead would look very different than anything they had ever seen before.

I think the same can be said for our industry, particularly as it relates to procurement methodologies. In part, the permanent changes I believe are inevitable in the construction industry are a consequence of the recession. Our economic meltdown is, after all, the worst in almost 80 years and the third in a row for baby boomers. If that doesn’t qualify 2007-2009 as a historic turning point, I can’t imagine what does.

There is a great deal more than the economy, however, affecting procurement methodologies. We are being overwhelmed by new technologies like building information modelling (BIM) for instance, which will no doubt make traditional drawings and specifications obsolete in very short order and perhaps even result in returning the once popular British Master Builders’ system of tendering quantities to favour.

P-three procurement models like Infrastructure Ontario’s design-build-finance-maintain will eventually be applied to smaller projects with long-term contractual accountability replacing unorthodox maintenance guarantees. Bonding companies will insist on one set of books. Holdbacks will be administered like trust accounts. Disputes will more often be resolved outside the courts. And continuing professional development will become a “necessary” evil.

Let’s begin this discussion by talking about new technologies; BIM specifically. TCA recently joined the Canada BIM Council because we can’t afford not to. The notion that a system embracing digital, three-dimensional geometry, spatial relationship tolerances, light analysis, quantities and facility operational constraints will not replace traditional drawings and specs is absurd. Who wouldn’t prefer improved visualization, easier information retrieval and faster project delivery if the software is

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affordable and the aggregate project cost is ultimately reduced?

At the moment, the economics of the go/no-go decision tend to be made by business managers on a project-by-project basis which in this economy I can well understand. On the other hand, those who wait too long will get caught with their pants down and inevitably have to pay the piper.

There are a plethora of other new technologies that will shape post-2009 procurement protocols, and unfortunately they aren't all progressive. The reverse auction form of electronic tendering that has become popular in recent years south of the border, for example, is fraught with shortcomings. And there will for certain be confusion transitioning to new methodologies. The way forward, however, is clear and new technologies will arguably have more impact going forward than we can possibly imagine.

Thank God for Gen X and the


Millennia generation who actually understand this sh\*%. To put the technology wave in perspective for baby boomers, I am told the average Millennia generation child (currently 10 to 17 years old) will spend 23 years of their life multitasking on the Internet.

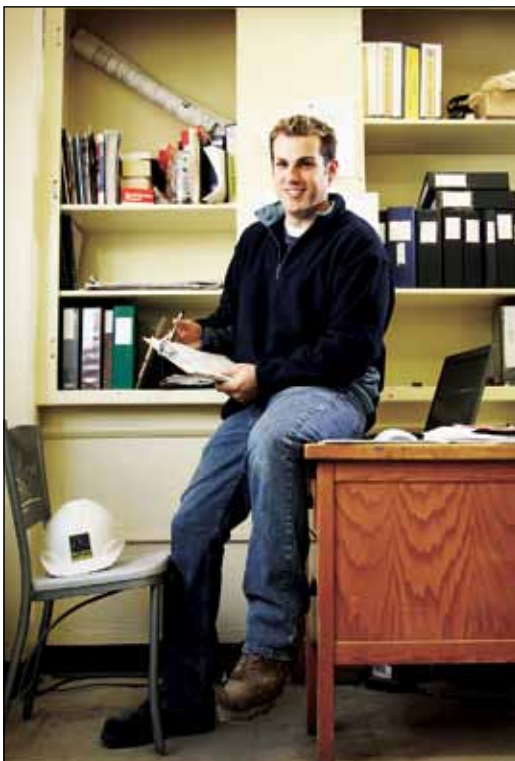
I wish I had time to elaborate on all the reasons I believe procurement methodologies are headed into an era of rapid change, but my guess is that you will be hard pressed to listen to much more of my crystal balling. And so for your sake, let's just look at the near term and identify some of the drivers that will morph procurement methodologies sooner rather than later.

Lenders are taking a more active role in the design and construction process and that is not simply because their borrowing standards are more rigorous. How can that not add process and exacerbate the cash-flow challenges that have already forced contractors into the short-

term financing business? Something has to change.

Trust has always been an issue in our industry but how can recent articles related to allegations of wrongdoing (eHealth, the Quebec provincial government, OLG and MPAC to name a few) not impact disclosure requirements and accountability? How do we cope with job closures related to strikes that are becoming more commonplace, or skilled labour shortages? Protectionist legislation is preventing us from global expansion in a world that is fast becoming flat (not to mention our productivity shortcomings and the soaring dollar). Kennedy Electric made it clear we can't go another day without Lien Act reform and HST is only the beginning of what I believe will be a long run of tax-related process changes on construction projects.

So where does it all end? In my view it doesn't, and Yogi Berra was right. The future isn't what it used to be. 



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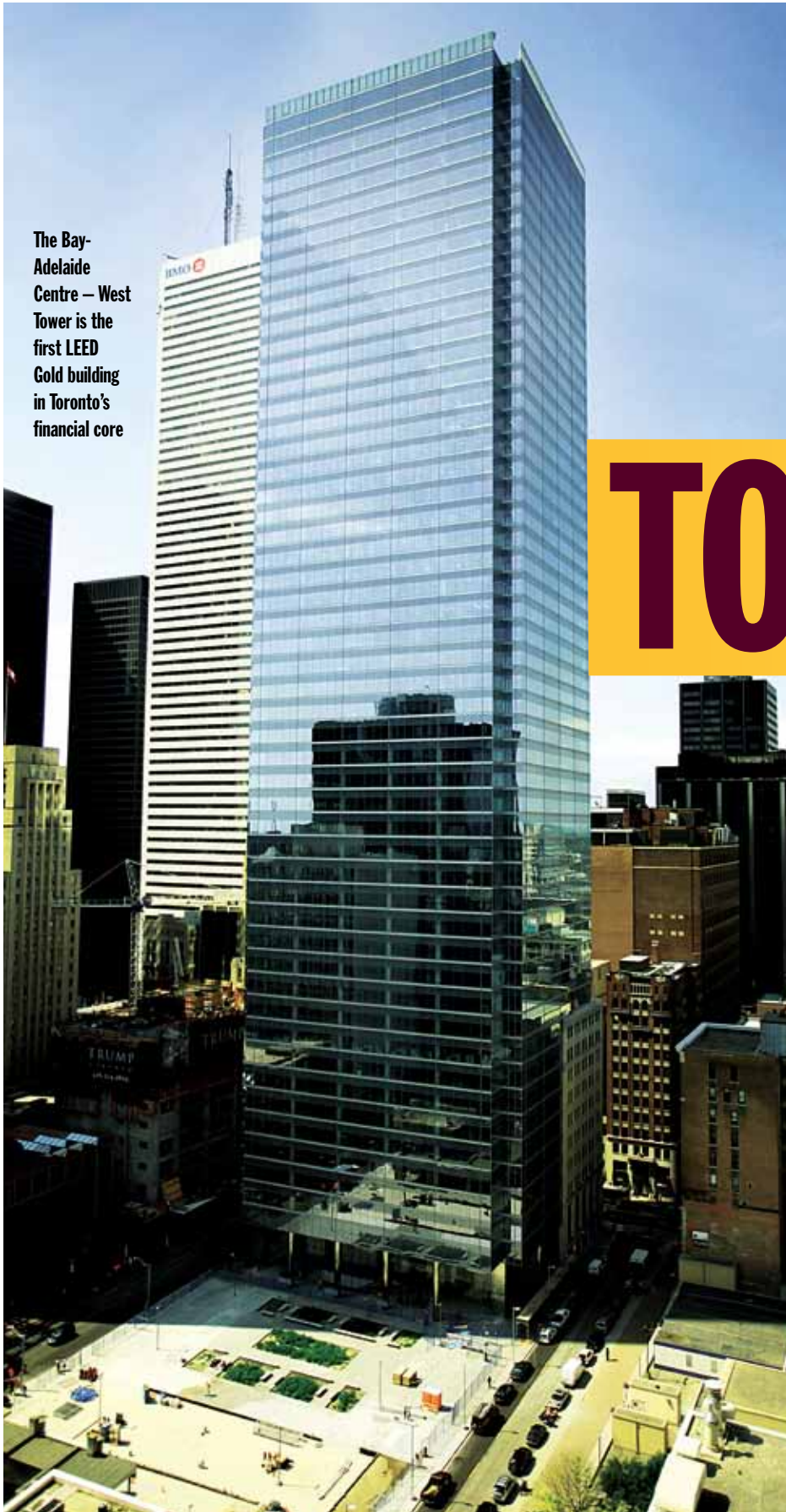
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## PROJECT PROFILE

The Bay-Adelaide Centre – West Tower is the first LEED Gold building in Toronto's financial core



Two new office towers in downtown Toronto take LEED standards to a whole new level

# TO LEED

**IN TORONTO, AN OFFICE BUILDING IS NO LONGER JUST AN** office building. The future is looking greener than ever. At least two new Toronto structures have been designed to meet LEED Canada Gold standards and they could be leading the way to a greener tomorrow.

LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) is a third-party certification for the design, construction and operation of green buildings. LEED criteria include sustainable site development, water and energy efficiency, indoor environment quality and much more.

The LEED Canada NC (new construction) designation earns points on the building itself and on occupant spaces, so the tenants must also build to LEED standards. The LEED Canada for Core and Shell designation is for buildings that earn LEED points but don't require tenants to observe LEED standards, although they may choose to do so. There are four levels of certification: Certified, Silver, Gold and Platinum.



The two buildings profiled here are helping to set the standard for LEED construction across North America.

**RBC CENTRE**

The 43-storey RBC Centre, located at 155 Wellington Street West, is the first LEED Gold NC standard office building in Toronto. This project, which cost over \$420 million to complete, opened for business on June 26 and at press time it was 75 per cent leased, according to Wayne Barwise, Senior Vice President, Office

Development, for building owner Cadillac Fairview Corporation.

Tenants of the 1.2-million-square-foot building to date include RBC, RBC Dexia, Fairmont Hotels International, Buck Consultants, a Royal Bank branch, Starbucks, International News and a national restaurant yet to be announced.

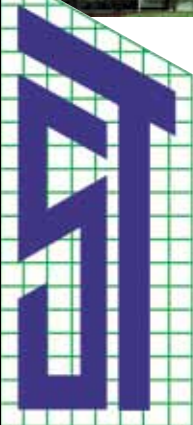
“It’s not just your typical vanilla box office space,” says Barwise. “There’s an incredible bright and airy feel. And we find that people have a lot of questions about LEED technology and

sustainability. People come here to work but also to learn more about how a LEED building really works, and the benefits of it.”

Tenants moving here are committing to the idea of a green building, and it’s also good for their bottom line, says Barwise. They save on energy costs — and also on reconfiguration and retrofitting costs for their space. The building saves about 40 to 50 per cent more on energy than buildings built to Canada’s National Energy Code standard. While it is estimated to cost \$8

# BY EXAMPLE

BY LIZ KATYNSKI



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## PROJECT PROFILE

per square foot to reconfigure typical office space, it's only \$2 here due to the open concept where all the electrical, data and HVAC wiring and ducting are under the raised floor.

Construction started in August 2007. The Centre did cost about five per cent more to build than a traditional office building would have, says Barwise, but those costs are coming down. The kinds of materials that are required are now more readily available; for example, about 80 per cent of all carpeting is now environmentally friendly.

The project recycled 99 per cent of the waste generated during construction. In addition, sediment was controlled around the job site.

The RBC Centre is part of the Enwave steam and cooling system that services

downtown Toronto. The Centre recycles storm water by collecting it in a basement cistern. This water is used for flush toilets and urinals on the lower quarter of the building – roughly the first 300,000 square feet.

Automated light sensors control interior lighting and window blinds for significant energy savings. Blinds automatically lower as required to reduce glare from outside and raise to admit optimal amounts of daylight. The building's first 10 floors have exterior sun shades on the south and west sides too.

The RBC Centre's windows are of clear glass and run 11 feet three inches from floor to ceiling. On the first 10 floors, there are smaller inset windows that open to let in fresh air. It's been many years since office buildings have

been built with windows that open — a refreshing change for tenants.

Also, to ensure fresh air, every 80 feet, a 10-inch diffuser on the floor adjusts heat or air conditioning distribution to control air quality and freshness. This creates a healthier environment with less stale air and fewer lingering germs. Adjustable heating grails run along the perimeter, flush with the floor, while exposed concrete ceilings absorb excess heat.

Bike parking and showers are available, encouraging greener modes of transportation. As well, a green roof with roof plaza allows employees to enjoy sunshine and fresh air.

"The design scale of the building responds to the street scale," says Gregory Waugh, Senior Associate Principal, Kohn Pederson Fox Associates (KPF) — the design architects for the project — and the RBC Centre project manager. "There's an artistic poetry in how it meets the skyline with the lantern on top."

Constructing a large building to LEED standard without confirming all the tenants in advance is unusual, says Josh Chaiken, Senior Associate Principal, KPF. Chaiken was the design lead on the RBC Centre.

"On every project we do, LEED standards are considered. Of course, it depends on what the client wants and what they can afford to put into it. Also, future tenants may be dissuaded from moving in due to unfamiliarity with such a building or increased cost. This is a new market. Businesses have to get used to it. It isn't always an easy sell."

Obtaining LEED certification may be good PR, but it's also about doing what's right for the environment, Chaiken says. "It's important for companies to say they're doing the right thing — and then do the right thing. And as energy gets more expensive, [LEED certification] also gets more attractive."

As prime tenant in the building, RBC was very interested in having a cutting-edge space, says Chaiken. They hired Sweeny Sterling Finlayson & Co. to develop some of the architectural specifications in order to achieve this goal.

"This development is at the forefront," says Chaiken. "It's essentially a specialized building."

**The RBC Centre raised floor accommodates electrical, data and HVAC wiring and ducting. Also visible here are the "light shelves" that raise and lower automatically to admit or block natural light as required**



Originally the entire project included mixed office, residential and hotel. However, it was then divided into two projects, and now the RBC Centre is connected to a larger complex including the Ritz-Carlton Hotel and condominiums.

One of the most interesting things about the RBC Centre is the feeling you get when the ideal conditions allow you to see right through the building via the wall-to-ceiling windows, says Chaiken. "It feels as if the floor slabs are floating."

This is the first downtown office building to include 100 per cent emergency power backup. With four generators on the roof, three will continue to run the building at full capacity in the event of a power failure. The fourth is a redundant backup.

PCL Constructors Canada Ltd. were project managers. Other participants included: Halcrow Yolles as structural engineer; Enermodal as LEED consultant; Anpro Environmental

Group for excavation; Deep Foundation Contractors Ltd. for shoring and casings; Allnue Structures Ltd. for the framework; Gilber Steel Ltd. for rebar supply; CMB for concrete; Modern Niagara Toronto Inc. for mechanical; Plan Group for electrical; Antamex International for the windows; and ThyssenKrupp Elevator Inc.

### THE BAY ADELAIDE CENTRE - WEST TOWER

The Bay Adelaide Centre - West Tower, located at 333 Bay Street, is the first LEED Gold building in Toronto's financial core. The \$540-million project was started in July 2006 and completed in June 2009. LEED application was made in September 2009 and is now underway. There are future plans for an East Tower of 43 storeys at 900,000 square feet and also built to the LEED Gold standard.

"We're LEED Gold Core and Shell. We don't tell tenants to build to LEED Gold, but they're doing it anyway," says Ryk Stryland, Senior Vice President,

Developments, Canada and the U.S., for Brookfield Properties, owners of the building.

As this went to press the building was about 73 per cent leased. Tenants who have moved in or will soon include Brookfield Properties, KPMG, Fasken Martineau, Heenan Blaikie LLP and Goodmans LLP.

The Bay Adelaide Centre - West Tower is 51 storeys high, totalling 1.2 million square feet. The concourse level will include 40,000 square feet of retail space and three large skylights to bring natural light below ground.

There are many important considerations for obtaining LEED certification, says Stryland. "There are a whole range of things you could do, and points associated with them. It depends on the level of certification. For each one, there are mandatory and optional items to achieve degrees of energy efficiency."

For example, the wood used should be certified by the Forest Stewardship Council Canada (FSC) as coming



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## PROJECT PROFILE

from farmed or renewable resources. A green roof should include reflective material. And potable water consumption should be minimized.

“We needed 39 points to earn LEED Gold, and we submitted 41. There’s an excellent minimum standard,” says Stryland.

Energy efficiency is measured by comparing energy consumption to the National Energy Standard. The West Tower energy consumption is 40 per cent below that standard. But that’s really only a 20 to 25 per cent saving over the current stock of office buildings, Stryland says, noting that most office buildings in the city have upgraded to energy efficiency with about a 20 per cent savings over the requirements of the National Energy Standard.

On this project, 50 per cent of construction waste by weight was recycled or salvaged. Recycled content was also used at about a seven per cent cost above that of non-recycled materials. These materials included a large amount of steel. Ten per cent of building materials were made or

extracted within 800 km of the site, and half of the wood used — by cost — was FSC-certified.

### AVAILABLE LIGHT

Sensors determine when light is required and adjust it accordingly. Lobby lighting features auto dimming to compensate for natural lighting from outdoors.

Such features don’t come cheap, but there’s a sure payback. So while the auto dimming equipment in the lobby cost \$80,000 to install, the cost is expected to be recovered in energy savings within two years, says Stryland.

Ninety per cent of the interior gets natural daylight. The view is open with the minor exception of small columns every 30 feet around the perimeter. Windows start 14 inches from the floor and run to the ceiling to maximize natural lighting. “This is a healthy, bright and liveable space, designed to increase work productivity,” says Stryland.

There are about 10 lighting zones per floor, with lighting provisions including one fixture for every 80 square feet

and 26 sensors per floor. Savings will be passed on to tenants who pay their share of utilities consumed in the building. “This is a direct savings for our tenants, not for us,” says Stryland.

Rainwater collected in a large cistern in the basement is used for landscaping, and supplies low-flow toilets and urinals on the lower 20 floors. Drainage into city sewers has been reduced by 25 per cent, so more water drains into the ground and is purified there naturally.

There are 26 HVAC zones along the perimeter of most floors, and seven to 10 more for each floor’s interior. Five carbon dioxide sensors per floor indicate when more fresh air is required and it is then supplied automatically.

A friend of Stryland’s who works in the building has dubbed it “the casino,” referring to the fact that many casinos supply extra oxygen to heighten the patrons’ sense of well-being. The building doesn’t actually do this, but it does provide fresher air than most old office buildings.

“She feels as good at the end of the day as she did at the beginning,” Stryland says. “She isn’t as tired as she was working in other buildings. To me, that’s the biggest compliment.”

The lobby boasts a 28-foot six-inch ceiling, with interior walls of high-honed Statuario marble and suspended sheets of glass. Elevator lobbies are made with Sapele mahogany veneer panels, and the floor features Ipanema Beige granite with a honed finish.

There’s preferred parking for Auto Share participants who choose to rent a car rather than owning one. Auto Share cars are usually fuel-efficient hybrids so the program is good for the environment too.

EllisDon Corporation was the general contractor. Other companies included WZMH as architect, Halcrow Yolles as structural consultant, The Mitchell Partnership as mechanical consultant, and Mulvey & Banani International Inc. as electrical consultant. | **ED**

# THE MAIN EVENT

BY ROMA IHNATOWYCZ

Part of a mega-lineup of five building-oriented shows, Construct Canada is going strong, with some help from the booming green building market

WHILE TRADE EXHIBITIONS ACROSS THE COUNTRY ARE FEELING THE PINCH OF THE economic slowdown, Construct Canada is holding strong and growing. Last year's attendance at Canada's largest building and construction show was up to more than 23,500 visitors, and booth space continues to sell out each year. At the event this year, which takes place December 2 to 4 at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre, there will be over 1,050 exhibitors representing 30 different categories.

"When you're in your 21st year, people know where you are and what you are. We've been in the industry for a

Construct Canada 2008: exhibits, seminars, round tables and social events make the perfect mix



## CONSTRUCT CANADA

**“The largest Christmas party in the country”: TCA’s 2008 Christmas luncheon drew well over 2,000 guests**

while,” says George Przybylowski, Vice President of MMPC Expositions ULC, which owns and organizes the annual event. “We’ve been maxed out with exhibitors for years.”

Construct Canada’s longevity gives it a strong edge. However, in speaking with exhibitors and attendees it is clear that there is more than just a long history moving things along. The event consistently meets the needs of professionals in the market, and this includes large numbers of builders, contractors, consulting engineers and architects. The exhibition is constantly evolving and improving to ensure that its offerings are always top of the line, notes Przybylowski.

While often referred to as Construct Canada, the massive exhibition is actually five shows in one: Construct Canada for the construction industry, HomeBuilder and Renovator Expo, Property Management Exposition (PM Expo) and the smaller Design Trends and Property Management exhibitions. Each event has its own section and all are colour-coded to make it easier for attendees to find what they’re looking for. Key sponsors are Reed Construction Data as title sponsor; the Toronto Construction Association as principal association sponsor and Astley Gilbert as platinum sponsor.

One of the biggest draws at the event is the varied mix of sessions, presentations, roundtables and hands-on demonstrations that are spread over the two days. There will be 450 speakers in total addressing the crowds during 200 different sessions. Seminars touch on everything from best practices for the design and construction of buildings, to their retrofit, maintenance and management. Educational program streams include legal and regulatory and risk management issues, building envelope solutions, and project design and smart business practices.

Of particular interest is the event’s fifth annual National GreenBuilding Conference, where approximately 150 presenters will highlight environmental building trends in the industry, touching on hot topics like energy efficiency and sustainability. Green



building is one area that keeps generating attention year after year, and event organizers do their best to make sure the issue is widely addressed.

“If I look back over the last 10 years, to see how Construct Canada has progressed, there has been this huge market transformation that has occurred with respect to environmentalism. It’s moved towards being a common denominator in everything. Everybody has stepped up to the plate. There is a greater awareness and expectation,” says Przybylowski.

“The introduction of new technology in the construction industry is extremely incremental,” he adds. “It’s not like a car show where all of a sudden someone rolls out a spectacular new model. If you look at buildings designed and built over the last 20 years, very little has changed in fundamental ways. But what has changed, and where there has been movement, is in more and more products and services that are geared towards making building greener.”

While not all of the green products and services being highlighted at the show may fall in line with a designation system such as Canada’s LEED program, they do all focus on contributing to the construction of sustainable and environmentally friendly

structures. “They’re focused on how we can make sure that the indoor work environment and air quality are going to be at a certain level, for instance, because tenants are demanding more and more about the kind of workplaces they want to occupy,” says Przybylowski.

Gaining attention this year is a special session dedicated to ‘Greening the Gardiner.’ It looks at various options to make one of Toronto’s main highways a more environmentally friendly structure, including building a self-sustaining green roof above it, with pathways and city and lake vistas. “This has hit the news already,” says Przybylowski. “We’re looking at Toronto’s green ribbon options and what can be done as an alternative to eliminating the Gardiner Expressway. David Crombie [former mayor of Toronto] and three architects will be involved in that presentation.”

Another green presentation looks at bringing cost-effective natural lighting systems to reality. A breakthrough in this area is a new sunlight illumination system that takes natural-spectrum daylight and pulls it in for a multi-floor building. “Sunlight is being collected and pulled into the building as required to provide energy and additional light where there isn’t as much daylight. You



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## Key presentations at Construct Canada 2009

### International Architectural Roundtable

#### Radical Pragmatism: New Modes of Architectural Practice

This session examines the creative drive for evolving global practice in today's market. It looks at new modes of practice emerging from traditional approaches to design, as well as the effects of advanced research, collaboration and advocacy on the industry.

Roundtable participants: Jan Christiansen, City Architect, Copenhagen; Gordon Gill, Partner Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture; Andrew King, Design Principal, Cannon Design Architecture Inc.; Joshua Prince-Ramus, President, REX; Ian Chodikoff, Architect and Editor, *Canadian Architect*.

#### Winning the War for Young Talent and Succession Planning: Recruiting, Retaining, Developing & Engaging the New Workforce

In this session, one of North America's leading voices on employee retention and generational values brings practical ideas and insight to help companies win the talent war. Attendees can learn the five keys to keeping young talent, best practices for mentoring upcoming talent, ways to keep talented boomers working longer and the keys to creating a culture where talented people rarely jump ship.

Speakers: Dr. John Izzo of The Izzo Group, plus three senior executives.

### Greening the Gardiner:

#### Toronto's Green Ribbon is a Viable Option

A session that looks at the 'Green Ribbon' proposal to build a seven-kilometre green roof for the elevated stretch of the Gardiner Expressway in Toronto. Is it feasible? What would happen to traffic flows? What would it cost and who should pay for it?

Speakers: David Crombie, Chair, Toronto Lands Corporation; Les Klein, Founding Principal, Quadrangle Architects Limited; Janet Rosenberg, Founder and Principal, Janet Rosenberg & Associates; Ken Tanenbaum, Executive Vice President, Kilmer van Nostrand Co. Limited; John van Nostrand, Founding Partner, Planning Alliance.

can reduce your electrical energy needs by 75 per cent. It's really fantastic stuff," says Przybylowski.

Other topics on the green agenda include geothermal energy, green roofing options, and photovoltaic or thermal solar energy feasibility. With 27 presentations planned for the GreenBuilding Conference alone, new developments in green construction will be well covered.

There are also numerous other presentations taking place at the show, such as the International Architectural Roundtable, which this year focuses on radical pragmatism. The roundtable will bring together renowned architectural talent from around the globe and will delve into new modes of practice emerging from traditional approaches to design. There's also an International Interior Design Roundtable planned that will look at local influence on global design.

The master presentation this year is dedicated to succession planning, which remains a major concern for construction professionals across the country. "This is an ongoing challenge," notes Przybylowski. "For all the years we've been doing this show, people have been asking us, 'How do you find good people?' and 'How do you keep them when you find them?'"

Complicating this dilemma are the new needs and demands of the younger X and Y generations, who are entering the workforce with very different mindsets than their baby-boomer parents. Employees in the industry need to understand them, and to help them in this area speaker Dr. John Izzo of The Izzo Group will share his expertise. Izzo is an expert on leadership development, succession planning and developing young talent in the workplace. Joining him in his presentation will be three senior executives.

"These are kids that ask, 'What is your sustainability policy at your company?' 'What sort of environmental practices do you initiate?'" says Przybylowski. "John Izzo is fantastic. He's done leadership for many years, he has a network television program, and he's written books on the topic. We couldn't bring in a guy better suited so it's going to be a great session."

### THE SOCIAL SIDE

Not everything is dedicated to work at the two-day event. There are also specially sponsored lunches, such as a CEO breakfast organized by Reed Construction Data. Topping the list is a massive Christmas luncheon organized by the Toronto Construction Association, which brings together more than 2,000 industry professionals to network and connect with their peers over lunch. Przybylowski describes it as "the largest Christmas party in the country." The luncheon takes place on the Friday.

The Toronto Construction Association has long been involved with the Construct Canada show, both as a sponsor and exhibitor. It has had a booth at the show since 1989 and is currently principal association sponsor. "Construct Canada is considered the biggest show in the country and no one wants to miss this one," says David Froese, Membership Coordinator at the TCA. "There are also international guests. I've seen exhibitors there from mainland China."

TCA's booth at this year's event will be enlarged to 500





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# CONSTRUCT CANADA

square feet (from 400 in previous years), providing the association with a better opportunity to highlight its products and services. The show represents an important forum to generate new membership and retain current members, who now number 2,200. It's one of the most important and valuable networking events where the TCA gets the word out about the benefits of membership to industry professionals.

"It's an opportunity to make contact and reconnect with members," says Froese. "This year we're going to try to encourage people to sign up right there and then. But there's more to it than that. You have to get out there and show yourselves, show that you're still part of the industry. A lot of it is maintaining the profile of your organization. It's not an event that we would miss."

The TCA booth showcases the organization's Electronic Plans Room, which Froese calls its biggest pull strategy. It provides information on what plans are available, the speci-

fications, the drawings and who is bidding on what project, allowing attendees to access information on what is happening in the GTA market, and what opportunities are available for construction professionals.

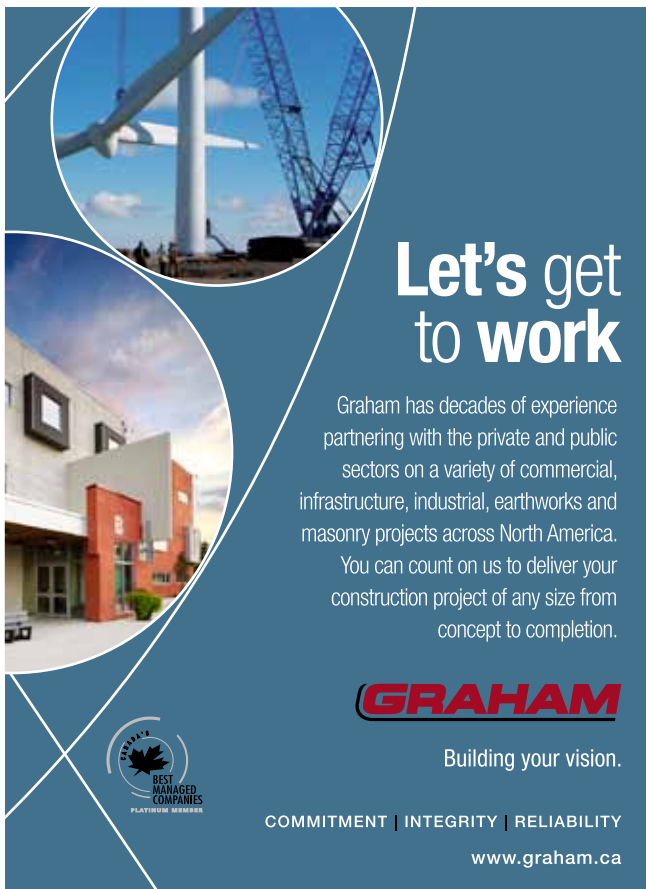
To help exhibitors such as the TCA, the Construct Canada website — [www.constructcanada.com](http://www.constructcanada.com) — acts as a 'go-to' site for all the information that exhibitors and attendees need. For exhibitors, an Exhibitors Success Centre provides information on how to maximize booth potential. They can access this information from the comfort of their office, rather than having to attend an onsite seminar somewhere.

"They're actively trying to help exhibitors maximize their potential," says Froese of the show's organizers. "At the Exhibitors Success Centre you can click on different video links right from your office in order to improve the experience in your booth without having to travel somewhere. It saves travel time."

The site provides pull-and-push selling tips, some of which may seem obvious, i.e., show your product in your booth, and some, more subtle, such as opting for stools rather than chairs so attendees can more easily lean on them. "It sounds silly, but there are a lot of booths out here that miss the obvious," notes Froese.

Improving the show's website has been part of an ongoing effort to improve accessibility for exhibitors and attendees. Today, the URL provides all the information attendees and organizers need to get the most out of attending and exhibiting at the event. More than 80 per cent of attendees are now booking online.

Says Przybylowski: "If you go to [www.constructcanada.com](http://www.constructcanada.com), it will give you everything you need to know: profiles on the exhibitors in advance, categories of exhibits so that you can plan your visit accordingly, and it also gives you seminar and conference information. It's all there." | **ED**



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# MEETING OF THE MINDS



YCEC helps young construction executives get to know each other while doing outreach work for Habitat for Humanity and other good causes

## YCEC builds young construction executives' confidence, fosters long-term contacts

BY GREG ENRIGHT

**THE CHALLENGES FOR A YOUNG EXECUTIVE BEGINNING THE CORPORATE-LADDER CLIMB IN ANY INDUSTRY** are many: finding one's place within a company; dealing with a new network of partners, customers and colleagues; and all the while trying to learn as much as possible about one's chosen field. The learning process can be made more difficult by the age gaps that exist between those breaking in and the older, more experienced execs who've already learned the ropes and who sit in the corner offices.

Nowhere is this reality more evident than in the construction industry. Not unlike most sectors, power has traditionally rested with those who have paid their dues and who have hit at least their mid-fifties. For many executives in their twenties and early thirties, breaking down the age barrier and gaining a toehold in circles of influence can be as daunting a challenge as building a skyscraper.

"As a younger person, trying to establish yourself in an older industry can be tough," says Lindsay Lorusso, a 26-year-old Marketing Director with WASTECO, a Brampton, Ont.-based waste and recycling

collection outfit. "When I started here I was one of the youngest people. You're dealing with a lot of older people who have been around for a while, and it can be intimidating."

Fortunately for Lorusso and other construction industry leaders in her age group, an organization exists to help lessen the anxiety and challenges associated with establishing ties with more seasoned associates. The Young Construction Executives Club (YCEC) is open to all up-and-comers 35 years of age and under. It allows them to share their experiences, have some fun and establish connections with others within the wider construction industry whom they wouldn't meet through their regular day job.

A large part of the YCEC's mandate is promoting network relationships within the construction industry, says YCEC Chairman Joe Perry. These efforts often take the form of casual events where members can relax and get to know each other, along with their goals and needs. Pub nights and family skating events are but two examples of such outings.

"We have a lot of social events that we organize and plan just to get as many people out as possible to network, and to get everybody involved and excited about the construction industry," Perry says.

Although it depends on the event, he adds, much of the advice and knowledge that gets passed on from member to member takes the form of simply trading stories and sharing similar experiences. For members, getting together for a drink or a pickup hockey game with people at the same stage of their careers helps build confidence, Perry says.

"When you have a lot of people close to your age, you can discuss similar issues and concerns. Even though we have a wide range of different companies in the construction industry represented in the YCEC, we all have similar challenges, like moving up in the company, or fitting in when most of the industry is looked upon as being very grey-haired."

For longtime YCEC member Jason Hanna, the annual family skate event is a notable social highlight on the club's calendar. Held at a local arena in Brampton, Ont., the event runs for two hours, with the first 60 minutes devoted to parents and their kids and the second being a pickup hockey game between YCEC players and TCA members over 35.

"We call the TCA team 'The Cougars,'" laughs Hanna, who is able to brag a bit, at least so far: in the three years the game has been played, the "young guys" are ahead of the "old guys" two wins to one.

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““ *The TCA  
President and Vice  
President attend all  
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they bounce ideas off us,  
trying to inject a younger  
perspective into their  
decision-making  
process* ””

—Joe Perry, YCEC Chairman

### FIRM FOUNDATIONS

Founded in 1994, the YCEC was also established to develop a more formal forum to help members build industry contacts and leads. Perry, 33, a project manager at EllisDon Corp., has found this aspect of the club to be especially helpful throughout his young career.

"As you're networking and meeting

people, you begin to build your list. I've run into many people in my career where I needed help in various areas of construction, and I was able to tap into those contacts and get some assistance. It's been a positive experience for that," he says.

The networking possibilities were what piqued Lorusso's interest in the YCEC when she first heard about it. Despite the fact that she just recently joined and has only attended a few meetings, it's clear to her that the club is ideal for shaking a greater number of hands and handing out more business cards.

"My understanding of [the YCEC] was that there was a huge opportunity to be part of a club where connectivity was paramount," Lorusso says. "I love that it is exclusive to ages 35 and under; it's an outlet that lets us connect to different environments."

Hanna agrees. "Definitely, a lot of it is the contacts, the networking," says the Operations Manager at All-Canada Crane in Mississauga, Ont. "I've made a lot of friendships with people from different areas through some of the social activities we do, like the family skate day. I wouldn't have met these people, such as those in the architecture or engineering side of it. I've gained a greater appreciation of what they do."

Hanna has also seen how much confidence members gain when it comes time for them to go back to their jobs and carry out tasks such as conducting their own meetings. "That can be an intimidating experience for some," he says.

In addition to the networking element, the club acts as a disseminator of information about the industry to help keep busy, young executives in the know about what's going on in the construction world. "We provide information that will benefit the members career-wise and then hopefully they can take that information back to their company," Hanna says.

The other major plank in the YCEC's mandate involves promoting education among its members.

"We like to consider the club as kind of the next generation of

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New YCEC member Lindsay Lorusso and YCEC Chair Joe Perry work the phones during the annual TCA membership campaign

construction executives,” Perry says. “We have a lot of leadership-development-type courses and we work closely with The Construction Institute of Canada to promote courses and continued education.” Some of the topics available for study through The Construction Institute include Construction Law, Managing Risk in Tough Economic Times and Planning and Scheduling for Contractors.

Anyone 35 years of age and under in an executive role within the Greater Toronto Area construction industry is welcome to join the YCEC, which now boasts a membership of nearly 400. Membership is free; prospective members simply have to fill out a form and are immediately added to an email list of news and events. Meetings are held six times a year and are spread out evenly so as to occur approximately every two months.

The gatherings are important not only for sharing ideas between members but also for contributing to industry discussions with those outside the YCEC.

“The TCA President and Vice President attend all YCEC meetings and they bounce ideas off us, trying to inject a younger perspective into their decision-making process,” Perry says.

At the top of the YCEC is a leadership committee of 10 to 15 members responsible for planning activities, coordinating with other TCA committees and outside organizations, and ensuring the club’s continued growth.

Perry says there are no strict rules for joining. Rather, if there’s an interest on the part of a member, they can voice that interest and be invited as a guest. “Then, after a few meetings and if everyone is OK with it, they would be invited to join [permanently],” Perry says. He adds that he and his fellow committee members are currently drafting more rigid guidelines for the process. “We want to make it more of an application process and bring more of a structure into it.”

Although the TCA encompasses a wide range of groups from across the entire construction industry — from



architects to contractors to legal services — Perry says membership in the YCEC is fairly evenly distributed with no one or two areas accounting for a huge chunk of representation. The same goes for the guiding committee, the makeup of which the YCEC leaders have some control over.

“We like to have it that way,” he says. “When members leave, we add new members. We like to keep a balance between the trade industry, general contractors, and other groups. We like to have someone from a law firm sitting on the committee, for instance.”

### REACHING OUT

While the YCEC does a great deal to help foster the careers of its members, it also places a big emphasis on helping out the communities in which those members work and raise their families. These public outreach endeavours take many forms, including tree-planting activities in Toronto and building homes through Habitat for Humanity. Hanna participated in the former activity two years ago and still

derives satisfaction from the work he and his fellow planters carried out.

“You feel good when you’re done, and every once in a while you drive by where you planted the trees and see how they’re doing. It’s a very rewarding experience,” he says.

The YCEC also conducts a Christmas food drive for the Daily Bread Food Bank, which is organized as a competition with sister organization Young Leaders Group, a part of the Hamilton Halton Construction Association. It’s a relatively new event that last year garnered 6,000 food items for needy families.

The YCEC’s community endeavours are not limited to charitable activities. An important cause for the club, according to Perry, is talking to students and ensuring they have a clear image of what the industry is all about, who is part of it, and the types of opportunities that are available to future graduates within it. To that end, the YCEC each year operates a booth at the Future Building Show, a three-day, construction-only, hands-on career exhibition designed to give students, teachers, educators and the general public a positive look



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at occupations available in Ontario's construction industry.

Perry says such efforts are designed to eliminate misconceptions about the construction sector and help the public understand just how much it has to offer anyone looking for a rewarding career. "You want to get the message out there, get them educated," he says, "and show them how much money they can make in this industry as well."

In a similar vein, the YCEC also visits schools to talk to students about the industry. "I even spoke to a Grade 3 class once, which seems a little young, but they say it's not a bad age to target," he says. "You show them a video of the SkyDome being built and they're very interested in that."

### BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

The progress the YCEC has made since its inception results from its members' efforts to improve it and to set new and loftier goals. The situation is no different today. Perry, for one, would like to see the club increase its activity in the advisory area: raising its voice to present viewpoints and solutions around the construction industry's most pressing issues.

"We discuss some things that come up, but I think [advisory work] is something that we can improve," he says. One issue Perry thinks the YCEC should address is how young people, faced with a decision about what career path to follow, regard the trades. "It's about creating that interest, and I guess we've been changing the image of construction," but more work is required, he says.

Also, Perry adds, when economic conditions take a turn for the worse, "we should probably have more discussion of what happens to companies during a recession."

For her part, Lorusso is hoping to play a role in recruiting more women into the YCEC.

"The boys are a laugh, but I'd also like to see more girls involved. There are a few now and those numbers seem to be growing," she says.

Lorusso has found that in a male-dominated industry such as construc-

tion, a bit of well-intentioned feistiness can go a long way.

"From the get-go I tried to get in there and not let the boys intimidate me. Women have a lot of things to bring to the table as well as men. And knowing some of the male members of the YCEC, I'm sure they won't mind if more females join," she says with a laugh.

An ongoing challenge for the YCEC, as with many similar organizations in other industries, is attracting new members.

"We're always reviewing the best ways to do that," Perry says. "Everyone is

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““ For many executives in their twenties and early thirties, gaining a toehold in circles of influence can be as daunting a challenge as building a skyscraper ””

busy. I am too, and you have to have an interest in putting in that time outside of work. It's a challenge. We are still getting participation, which is a good thing. Attendance has been decent, so we're in good shape right now. But we deal with the issue at every meeting."

Some effective methods for getting potential members' attention include creating an eye-catching poster and adding a lot of pictures to the club's site. Topics of interest tend to shift over time, with green building and building information modelling (BIM) being hot topics with younger executives these days. And safety is one topic that consistently strikes a chord.

Some members have expressed an interest in increasing the club's age limit to 40, but the thinking is hardly universal. Other similar groups in the province use that number as their cutoff age, such as the one in Ottawa.

"There was some negative feedback about that idea," Perry says, "so we like to keep the number low to ensure those in their twenties feel comfortable."

Those members approaching the age of 35 who might not want to leave the club need not despair, however. Hanna has recently launched a YCEC alumni group that will allow former members to remain in touch and to contribute in different ways. Perry believes the group's members will be able to play a key role in passing along knowledge to new YCEC recruits.

"We could do the whole mentorship aspect, where maybe we can team up an alumni member with a new committee member. We could give them a little heads-up about the committee and make them feel comfortable," he says.

### AMPLE REWARDS

For Perry, the YCEC has brought many rewards, a number of which he didn't know would materialize when he filled out his membership form.

"Going into it, I didn't know I'd be the club's chairman, but I think that's a personal drive by me to be the best not only in my company, but in the committees I'm on. I have a lot of interest in the industry and I want to broaden my contacts and move up. I've met a lot of good people."

Not only has membership benefited Perry personally, but it's also been good for his employer's business.

"New members have contacted me who wanted to do work with EllisDon, so I passed them on to get a price quote. I've also been approached by a lot of people [within my company] and you almost become a known member. People come to me to find out more information about what the YCEC is and what we do."

Perry admits that being an active member in the club does require a commitment of time that he could be using for other purposes, but for him the investment is well worth the return.

"On average, it's not really a lot of time that I put in: about six hours a month," he says. "That comes out to a couple of hours a week, so it's not overwhelming." | ■



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David Kusturin, Vice President of Program Management for Waterfront Toronto, speaks to TCA members

**The TCA's Tuesday sessions featuring public-sector owners give members detailed information on winning public-sector work, while cementing relationships with valuable clients and partners**

**WHEN TIMES ARE TOUGH, GOOD PREPARATION GOES A LONG WAY. THAT'S THE** rationale behind an unprecedented series of educational sessions staged by the Toronto Construction Association for its members this fall. With the economy still stumbling, public-sector infrastructure agencies at all three levels of government have been stepping up their investment in infrastructure projects to the tune of tens of billions of dollars, vastly expanding the stream of public sector opportunities for construction firms.

Viewed as a tough sell in the past due to stringent fair-competition guidelines and procedures, public-sector work hasn't always been the first choice for construction companies. But the sheer scale of the investments now being brought forward, coupled with a slowdown in other markets, has compelled a rethink, and more and more construction firms are showing interest. The task many of them now face is to get up to speed on the rules and real-life practice of getting the jobs.

"When there was lots of private-sector work, many contractors would avoid the public-sector owners

because contracts were very one-sided with onerous clauses and they were viewed as tough to deal with,” says TCA Executive Vice President Kim McKinney. “Today, many public-sector owners have adopted industry standards, are more transparent and are willing to assist contractors in how to pre-qualify to get on their bidders’ list. More bidders results in more competition and better pricing.”

For their part, McKinney says, contractors have to be more flexible and willing to follow the proper protocols in terms of documentation for prequalifying or for obtaining security clearances, “otherwise they’ll be left on the sidelines while their competition gets in on the action.”

The TCA has responded to these market realities by inviting representatives from public-sector agencies to visit the association and give members a detailed, inside look at bidding on public-sector projects. Over a period of a few months, representatives have been speaking at weekly sessions at TCA headquarters, telling members how they structure bids, and what interested firms should do to increase their chances of bidding successfully.

“Over the years we’ve had different agencies like Infrastructure Ontario in to speak to our members,” McKinney says. “But we’ve never had a focused series of consecutive information sessions all geared at helping our members find construction opportunities. We felt there was a need to help our members understand the vast opportunities that

are out there with the public-sector owners and buyers of construction services.”

Public-sector owners are much different to deal with than their private-sector counterparts. When working with the private sector, it’s usually fairly easy to know whom to deal with for construction jobs. But many public-sector owners are so large that it can be difficult to determine how they procure construction, which in turn makes finding the right contact time-consuming and complicated. “Without guidance through the maze of government departments dealing with construction procurement, the small contractor is lost,” McKinney says.

““ We felt there was a need to help our members understand the vast opportunities that are out there with the public-sector owners and buyers of construction services ””  
 — Kim McKinney, Executive Vice President, TCA

TCA member interest in the infrastructure sessions was strong throughout the series



## INFRASTRUCTURE SESSIONS

The sessions got underway on Tuesday, September 22 with a presentation from Metrolinx and the TTC. They have since been followed by Defence Construction Canada, Ontario Realty Corporation (two sessions), Waterfront Toronto, Infrastructure Ontario, and Public Works and Government Services Canada. Representatives from GTA municipalities, as well as from colleges and universities have been invited to speak at future sessions as these two sectors represent huge construction opportunities in infrastructure work over the next few years with the stimulus funds from all three levels of government.

### A TWO-WAY STREET

“The public-sector owners truly want to get their message out to the industry, and they want to be transparent,” McKinney says. “Our members are looking for those opportunities and many don’t know where to turn.” The TCA, he says, can help guide them around the bureaucracy and give them the right contacts and advice.

“The education is a two-way street,” McKinney says. “The public-sector owners are learning from the industry on what is acceptable practice and the industry is learning how to deal with the public-sector owners.” McKinney cites the example of the Ontario Realty Corporation (ORC), which chose to adopt standard contracts like CCDC 2 – 2008 and OAA 600 – 2008 after consultations with the construction industry.

The sessions have exceeded expectations. McKinney says that they have averaged more than 60 people per session – noting that the ORC made two presentations at an off-site venue, with each exceeding 150 attendees.

Chris Welch, TCA board member and Director of Business and Client Development for Safetech Environmental Ltd., has attended almost all of the Tuesday sessions. For him, they’re a chance to get accurate information about doing

“*The playing field always changes, and maintaining existing contacts and developing new ones minimizes your business loss risk and maximizes new opportunities*”

— Chris Welch, Director of Business and Client Development, Safetech Environmental Ltd.

business with the public-sector owners involved straight from the organizations themselves, instead of relying on second- or third-hand hearsay. They also provide details about upcoming opportunities, including details on when projects will be launched, and enable firms like his to meet clients face to face and develop a stronger working relationship. And, as you might expect when so many people from the same industry are brought together, the sessions also offer an excellent opportunity to meet and network with other attendees, many of whom are potential business partners.

For Welch, the information gleaned in the sessions was of benefit even for firms who have worked with these agencies before. “We’ve done this kind of work before, but things change and we don’t want to be left on the sideline because the process has evolved,” he says. “So yes, absolutely there were things that I learned.”

Welch was especially interested in what ORC had to say about what they were looking to see in specific sections of their RFP documents. “They aren’t looking to be flooded with information. In other words, give them what they ask for and nothing more. This kind of detail can help bidders avoid being disqualified over a misunderstanding of what was to be submitted,” Welch says. “Another big point was not to ‘qualify the bid’ — don’t load it up with exclusions, limitations, conditions, alternatives, etc.

“The playing field always changes, and maintaining existing contacts and developing new ones minimizes your business loss risk and maximizes new opportunities,” Welch says. “You need to keep ‘feeding the funnel.’”

All of the speakers have given their own contact information to attendees, becoming valuable contacts that can answer questions and provide help one on one. Contacts like that, along with the inside information and the networking with industry peers, ensure that these presentations aren’t just a one-time benefit but will pay off well into the future. | **ED**



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### Public Sector Construction Project Opportunities

For further information please contact Barbara Mirsky at [bmirsky@tcaconnect.com](mailto:bmirsky@tcaconnect.com)

<b>Colleges and Universities</b>	TBA
<b>Municipalities</b>	TBA
<b>Construct Canada</b>	Wednesday, Dec. 2 to Friday, Dec. 4, 2009 Location: Metro Toronto Convention Centre
<b>TCA Christmas Lunch</b>	Friday, Dec. 4, 2009 Location: Metro Toronto Convention Centre Tickets on sale
<b>TCA 142nd Annual Meeting</b>	Thursday, Jan. 28, 2010 Location: Woodbine Race Track
<b>TCA Gala Dance, Mardi Gras</b>	Saturday, Feb. 13, 2010 Location: Liberty Grand Entertainment Complex Registration and sponsorship info to come Fee: \$325
<b>TCA's 28th Annual Ski Day</b>	Friday, Feb. 26, 2010 Location: Alpine Ski Club, Collingwood, Ont. Fee (estimated): TCA members \$150; non-members \$300.00
<b>TCA's Members' Day XIV</b>	Wednesday, May 12, 2010 Registration opens Dec. 1, 2009

*For further information please contact Mary Thorburn or Mary McBride. Tel: 416-499-4000, Ext. 114/104 •  
Fax: 416-499-8752 • Email: [mthorburn@tcaconnect.com](mailto:mthorburn@tcaconnect.com) or [mmcbride@tcaconnect.com](mailto:mmcbride@tcaconnect.com)  
Toronto Construction Association, 70 Leek Crescent, Richmond Hill, ON L4B 1H1*

## Young Construction Executives Club

<b>YCEC Annual Pub Night</b>	Thursday, Nov. 5, 2009 Location: Madison Avenue Pub 14 Madison Avenue, near Spadina and Bloor, Toronto
<b>YCEC Food Drive</b>	Thursday, Nov. 26 to Thurs. Dec. 17, 2009
<b>YCEC Family Skate Day &amp; Hockey Game Powerade Centre, Brampton</b>	Saturday, Jan. 23, 2010 12:00 p.m. to 1:10 p.m. Family Skate 1:20 p.m. to 2:20 p.m. Hockey Game

*For further information please contact Lenore Villeneuve at 416-499-4000 ext. 113 or email at [lvilleneuve@tcaconnect.com](mailto:lvilleneuve@tcaconnect.com) • [www.tcaconnect.com](http://www.tcaconnect.com)*

## The Construction Institute of Canada

<b>Workshop: Understanding the Pitfalls of Tendering</b>	Oct. 26, 2009 to Nov. 9, 2009 Mondays 8:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.
<b>Seminar: Construction Liens &amp; Trusts</b>	Thursday, Nov. 19, 2009
<b>Course: Managing Risk in These Tough Economic Times</b>	Jan. 11, 2010 to March 15, 2010

*For further information please contact Roxanne Drisdelle at 416-499-4000 ext. 116 or email at [rdrisdelle@tcaconnect.com](mailto:rdrisdelle@tcaconnect.com) • [www.tcic.ca](http://www.tcic.ca)*

# Builders' Digest

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