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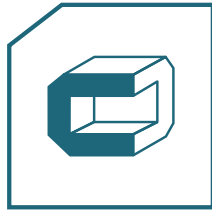
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## *On the cover*

The Wedge, located at the corner of Vancouver and Johnson Streets on land formerly occupied by the McCall Brothers Funeral Home will be an architectural first for Vancouver Island.

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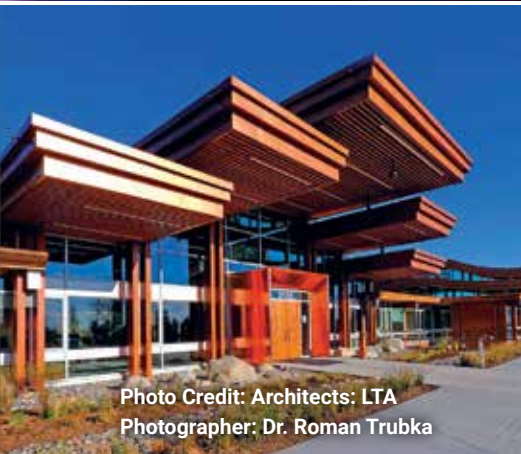


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**Our Mission:** Our mission is dedicated to promoting the interests of the Vancouver Island Construction Association's members as it provides its members with exceptional services and benefits.

## GUIDING PRINCIPLES

VICA's actions and decisions will be guided by the following principles:

**Member Value:** We are committed to ensuring the services and activities of VICA directly support the well-being and success of our member companies.

**Corporate Sustainability:** We are committed to ensuring that VICA remains viable through a strong membership base that is reflected in both the quality of its membership and the number of members.

**Financial Sustainability:** We are committed to planning and managing our finances in a financially responsible and transparent manner while focusing on prudent investments that benefit our membership and corporate health.

**Industry Advocacy:** We are committed to act in the best interest of our members and the construction industry, its stakeholders and people, and to ensure our industry remains safe, resilient and sustainable.

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VICA VICTORIA  
1075 Alston Street, Victoria, BC V9A 3S6

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5-1850 Northfield Road, Nanaimo, BC V9S 3B3

GENERAL INQUIRIES  
P: 250-388-6471 Toll-Free: 877-847-6471  
info@vicabc.ca comms.events@vicabc.ca

[www.vicabc.ca](http://www.vicabc.ca)

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---

**PRESIDENT & CEO**

David Langstaff

**MANAGING EDITOR**

Tammy Schuster  
[tammy@delcommunications.com](mailto:tammy@delcommunications.com)

**ADVERTISING SALES MANAGER**

Dayna Oulion  
[dayna@delcommunications.com](mailto:dayna@delcommunications.com)

**ADVERTISING SALES**

Gary Barrington | Brian Gerow  
Jennifer Hebert | Ross James  
Michelle Raike | Dan Roberts  
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**CREATIVE DIRECTOR / LAYOUT & DESIGN**

Kathleen Cable

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Return undeliverable Canadian addresses to:

DEL Communications Inc.

Suite 300, 6 Roslyn Road

Winnipeg, MB R3L 0G5

Email: [david@delcommunications.com](mailto:david@delcommunications.com)

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As leaders in the industry, we believe in collaborating, sharing knowledge and making it more profitable to do business on Vancouver Island. We do this through advocacy and representation on regional, provincial and national policy and regulatory issues, and through spearheading formal and informal dialogue with local governments and the construction community at large.

## WE BELIEVE IN BUILDING AN INDUSTRY FOR A STRONG FUTURE

At VICA, we value diversity within the construction sector and are proud to be the association of choice for 450-plus small and large companies from the southern tip of the island to the northern point. We are a community of skilled professionals — from owners, general contractors and trade contractors to manufacturers, suppliers and purchasers of construction services — looking to connect, grow, learn and save. Through our courses and workshops, events, conferences and our Under 40 (U40), Young Builders Network (YBN) and Women in Construction (WiC) networks, we bring the industry together to create business opportunities while promoting industry excellence.

## INDUSTRY REPRESENTATION AND ADVOCACY THAT SPANS COAST TO COAST

We are proud to be a part of the BC Construction Association (BCCA) and the Canadian Construction Association (CCA), giving our industry members a national voice on issues and opportunities that affect everyone in the construction sector.

The Vancouver Island Construction Association supports and promotes the principles of fair, open and transparent procurement processes. Guided by ethical standards and practices, we strive to foster growth and economic stability for our members across Vancouver Island, British Columbia and Canada. We share this vision with our regional, provincial and national partners.

## A VICA MEMBERSHIP IS MORE THAN JUST BEING PART OF AN ASSOCIATION

To be a VICA member is to be a member of a diverse community that shares the same vision: to build up this dynamic industry we are all proud to be a part of. Our goal at the Vancouver Island Construction Association is to connect you with the training and education, project and business development opportunities and labour you need to grow your business while saving you time and money.

Our broad membership base — comprised of women, men, young and old — brings unique skills and experience to the workforce. By coming together, we form a collective voice while contributing to the thriving construction industry on Vancouver Island.



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## MEMBER BENEFITS

### CONNECT WITH VICA

VICA events offer opportunities for you to expand your network, meet industry leaders, and learn about issues and opportunities specific to the Vancouver Island construction sector.

Our Capital Project Plan Series connects contractors with owners and offers business intelligence that is exclusive to VICA members.

Our Young Builders Network (YBN), Under 40 (U40), and Women in Construction (WiC) networks in Victoria and Nanaimo are our boots on the ground, so to speak. Through them, we promote and support the career paths of both young professionals and women looking to grow within the Island's industry. Each network has a mandate of mentorship and community involvement, extending our reach beyond our industry.

### LEARN WITH VICA

VICA offers a robust training and education program fit for everyone in the construction industry, from seasoned project managers and estimators to new and aspiring leaders and administrative staff. Through online and classroom courses, we are here to help you achieve your professional goals. Every year, we add new courses and workshops to adapt to our industry's needs. In response to the pandemic, we have pivoted to a virtual classroom offering live, online instruction — perfect for those working remotely!

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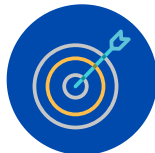
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# Q&A with VICA CEO RORY KULMALA



Video meetings, updated safety protocols, and working from the dining room table. After an unprecedented year, the Vancouver Island Construction Association CEO, Rory Kulmala, discusses change, uncertainty, and how an association creates value for its members during a pandemic.

---

**With so much of VICA's work relying on connecting with the community, what factors were necessary to continue forward momentum at a time when everything else stood still?**

One important factor for VICA was to maintain our presence within the industry. We are here to advocate on behalf of our membership and our industry, and a big part of that is upholding our voice in the industry and using as many channels as possible to ensure that we are able to continue the outreach in the same way.

Another factor was to become a focal point and a hub for our members. We did a fair amount of work at the beginning of the pandemic to provide a resource centre for our members, which included creating a repository on our website to help members find information on COVID.

A third factor was that we continued to provide training and education, which is a big part of business and individual development. We didn't lose sight that even during times of COVID. Construction has been very busy and training and education is still a key component of our members' success. We've made a concerted effort to adapt our training and education to the virtual world and that's a service that I hope our members will utilize.

**Are there any significant lessons that you and your team have learned throughout this year?**

With construction being deemed an essential service, the industry efficiently adapted in order to meet the provincial health officer's regulations.

The response was quick, work sites made changes, and companies affected processes and protocols to ensure people remained safe. The construction industry kept a lot of people working, and it demonstrated the industry's resiliency.

Like every team adapting to working in an on-line environment, working remotely really tested our technical tolerance. Being in a world where face-to-face is no longer the norm and using technology to our advantage, we changed the delivery model of our training and education and, in my case, the outreach that I do has to be done in a very different way. We're proving every day that in the current era, teamwork, development, and business can continue safely.

**What are you seeing in the industry on the Island?**

I'm optimistic, I'll start with that. Building permit applications are up, projects are being released to the market for bidding, and the pipeline of projects is not going away with the pandemic. We have infrastructure that needs to be maintained and rebuilt, and communities are growing along with the housing requirements. My forecast is that the Island's construction economy will be strong, and in 18 months' time, we will be back to where we were before COVID.

**VICA and its committees hold many events throughout the year, how has VICA maintained that connection with members and industry?**

It has been really disappointing to cancel events such as the Vancouver Island Construction Con-

ference and the Awards Gala. We provide many opportunities for engagement throughout the year and that is disappointing to not have those tangible interactions. But, as we've had to shift to the virtual world, we have seen that there is the ability to connect in new ways and remind members that we are here to serve them. Our virtual Christmas luncheon was a success with over 200 members signed up, and we raised a record-breaking amount of funds for local charities. So our members are receptive to new ideas and interested in trying them.

**The VICA team has incorporated new work practices in its offices that have enabled you to safely continue serving members. Have you incorporated any new strategies and what advice can you give when it comes to working remotely?**

There's an importance to having a routine and a process. As most people know, the virtual world can be isolating and it's easy to get caught up in it and forget that there is an outside. I remind our team to not get stuck at their desks.

I shut my computer down at a specific time and spend time with my family, walk my dog, or ride my motorcycle. This is also a good time to learn something new. For me, it's fly fishing. It gives me an opportunity to disengage and enjoy the outdoors, so I try to get out on the Sooke River at least once a week for a few hours. If I say that I'm on the other line, it's a fishing line.

**What are the main initiatives VICA will introduce or promote in 2021, why are they important?**

Now more than ever we are focusing on training and education. We run our Construct Your Future program in Victoria several times a year and we are planning

to expand the program to other regions on the island. We are looking at other innovative programs that can help our members be successful, including more virtual engagement opportunities. We have to be proactive in our approach, innovative in our ideas, and bold enough to try something that may not have worked a year ago.

**In your opinion, what is the single most important thing leaders can do for their teams and communities right now?**

Listen to your people. I work with some very talented and creative people. Most often, the ideas that they present are 100 times better than the ones I have. Our virtual Christmas luncheon was one of our team member's ideas and that's the kind

of creativity and ingenuity we need during this challenging time. Listening to feedback, ideas, and perspectives is a way to stay informed, and it allows me to convey our message as an agency who speaks on behalf of the construction industry on Vancouver Island. I think we do that well.

VICA is a pretty unique place, and I commend our industry, our board, our staff, and everyone who helps make VICA tick. We typically do what we can to support our members, but in return we have also been very supported during this time. I'm encouraged that we will get through this time of unprecedented impact, and while we won't forget 2020, we can definitely move on from it. ■



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# Q&A with VICA CHAIR JAMES CLAPP



**As the new Chair of VICA's Board of Directors and as a long-serving member of the Board, what VICA initiatives are the most important to you?**

Delivering on member value is most important to me. This is the easy answer since it encapsulates all of the VICA initiatives. These include advocacy for the industry, education and networking, project services, and the Construct your Future program, which in four years has produced 47 graduates who have secured employment with VICA members.

**What do you see as the main challenges facing the construction industry on the Island? Both from your perspective as a VICA board member and as a managing director with Wilson M. Beck Insurance.**

The number one current and future challenge for the construction industry is undoubtedly the skilled labour shortage. We have the same issue in the insurance industry. To quote Tom Fletcher from Victoria News, "British Columbia is going over a demographic cliff, with a workforce that is rapidly aging out. There is incredible opportunity in construction for young people, entrepreneurs, and skilled trades workers." It is therefore vital that we find ways to attract more people into the workforce and continue to diversify the labour pool. It

will help that wages in the construction industry continue to rise in the short term, however from a governing standpoint I think that aggressive immigration policies are key. VICA's Construct Your Future program has obviously been very effective and, as an industry, we must continually work to attract more women into the workforce.

**What unexpected, positive developments did you see take place in the construction industry in this unprecedented year?**

It was truly incredible to watch the construction industry continually adjust and work through the pandemic. Construction is an industry that is already very regulated in terms of ensuring the safety of the public and anyone on site. I understand from my clients and through VICA that adjustments were made, and comfort levels were identified with employees which seems to have strengthened teams and maintained productivity levels. VICA itself did an excellent job adapting and I am extremely proud of how well the VICA staff have managed their operations during this time. On a personal level, my firm has been working with a skeleton crew at the office with the majority working from home. I am elated with how they have adapted and continue to provide our clients with great service all while working from the safety of their home offices.

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**What motivated you to become involved with VICA, and what has your involvement looked like over time?**

I started at my firm in 2003, and since we specialized in construction insurance and bonding, many of our clients were members of VICA. My firm was heavily involved with VICA as well. My manager at the time (now partner) Carole Bissett was a VICA board member for 12 years and served as Chair in 2014/2015, so that obviously inspired me. When the Young Builders Network (YBN) started, many of my clients and friends were involved, so it was obvious that I participate. My experience with the YBN helped me understand the issues facing my clients and gave me insight into how VICA functioned. As my age advanced, and with a new genera-

“ It was truly incredible to watch the construction industry continually adjust and work through the pandemic. ”

tion of strong leaders joining the YBN, it seemed like a natural progression to run for the Board of Directors, and I am grateful for the opportunity to become the new Chair.

**What advice would you give to someone who is considering joining an association such as VICA? Or joining the VICA Board?**

I would certainly encourage companies and professionals who are part of the construction industry to join an association and get involved where possible. Before considering running for the VICA Board, I would encourage individuals to partici-

pate and gain experience through one of the committees of the Board. These include Women in Construction, Young Builders Network, and the Trade, Civil and General Contractor Committees. VICA continues to advocate for our industry and provides a variety of opportunities for members to grow through education and networking. I would encourage anyone looking to join the board to consider a leadership role in one of these committees. I personally spent many years with the Young Builders Network - this was a great experience and served as an excellent way to prepare for the board. ■

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# WHAT WE LEARNED FROM 2020



British  
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By Chris Atchison, President, BCCA



Chris Atchison.

The construction industry is used to dueling. In fact, we thrive on it. We go where others don't, every day, facing down myriad risks inherent in the work we do. Whether its extreme weather, physical hazards on a job site, opaque procurement documents in the office, late payments, labour or supply shortages, equipment malfunctions, biased political moves, new taxes, tariffs, or demonstrators, we face challenges every day. And we prevail. And we build.

Risk, carefully calculated and balanced, is part of the construction life. Each day as owners, as employers, as skilled trades-

people we look it in the face and weigh our choices based on experience, knowledge, and instinct. We know that the decisions we make affect our families, the projects for which we hold responsibility, the workers we employ or work alongside, and the British Columbians who will live and work inside the structures we build.

If there are miscalculations along the way, we learn from them. It's when we achieve our goals and stand back to recognize a job well done, that the payoff comes.

This has been a year for risk like no other. We added pandemic to our list of challenges. And we learned a few things.

Most obviously, we learned how to manage the risks of COVID-19 on our job sites and continued as essential workers throughout the pandemic. This doesn't mean that our industry escaped unscathed. Contractors already struggling to make ends meet were pushed into closure, projects were cancelled or delayed, costs got bigger and margins smaller, workers lost their jobs, a handful of sites had COVID outbreaks. It was stressful. But overall, we iterated, we kept going, and we did it safely.

We learned how well we can collaborate. The level of competition in this industry is legendary and can be our Achilles heel: sharing what works for us helps our competitors, and so it doesn't come easily. But during COVID-19 that melted away like the snow in spring. Larger contractors with more resources willingly published protocol guidelines and best practices. Industry associations and stakeholder groups came together to amplify each other's work, everyone pitched in, communicated, and served for the greater good.

British Columbians learned something about the construction industry. Thousands of employees from other sectors had to stay home, and if they walked their dogs past a job site they saw our teams going to work every day. They saw our skilled tradespeople deemed essential continue to earn, contribute, and provide for their families. The role of our industry as the #1





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...when there is a political benefit to acting, there is no force so strong as that of political will.

employer in B.C.'s goods sector, our massive contribution to the provincial economy was on display, and we have benefitted from that. Despite the challenges of this year, we have seen an influx of new entrants through BCCA's workforce development programs such as the Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP).

We learned how quickly governments can act when it determines there is a need to do so, but also how ideology can get in the way. When there is a protection that is required to secure the health and safety of a large portion of the population, and when there is a political benefit to acting, there is no force so strong as that of politi-

cal will. It will move mountains to achieve what it seeks, and this year that resulted in a stronger NDP government for B.C.

To close, I want to leave you with what the team at BCCA learned – or, more accurately, had reaffirmed. The uniqueness of our role as the only provincial representative of the industry at large. We are an apolitical, non-partisan organization that seeks only to ensure the productivity and resilience of B.C.'s industrial, commercial, and institutional construction industry. We are here to work collaboratively with the governments that the voters choose. Ideology has no role.

I'm going to say it straight. BCCA is here for the employers, regardless of their labour affiliation. Every day, as president, I have the opportunity to discuss issues such as prompt payment, compulsory trades, community benefits, and industry culture with contractors who use union workers – whether they are building trades or progressive unions – and those who run an open shop. Here's the thing: for the most part, they agree on the big issues. They want the same things, and they look to us to help them get there.

So, we're all heading into 2021, in many ways stronger and smarter than we were before. We don't know what new risks are in store or what fresh opportunities are on the horizon. But we do know that infrastructure spending is one of the main keys to restarting the economy post-COVID-19, and we know our industry is ready to get the job done.

BCCA is working with our provincial government to represent you. To get prompt payment legislation passed, to ensure that skills training is accessible via a system that is relevant and productive, and to improve the culture of our industry so that all workers can thrive regardless of age, gender, ethnicity, or race.

We know that you will be here too, starting down new challenges and risks, and together we'll get the job done. I send you all my best wishes for a safe, healthy, and rewarding 2021. You deserve it. ■



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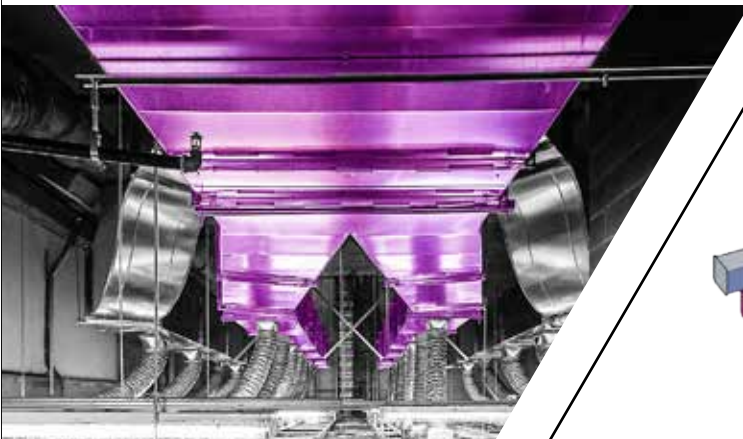
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# Reaching new heights



*Tresah West, a 12-storey mass-timber residential high-rise offering 179 residences; Tresah East, a six-storey, wood-frame building offering 66 residences.*

## Tresah raises the bar for mass-timber construction

By Melanie Franner

A new residential project located in the heart of the Mayfair District has the potential to mark a new milestone for mass-timber technology. The Tresah project consists of two components:

Tresah East, a six-storey, wood-frame building offering 66 homes featuring ground-level townhomes; Tresah West, a 12-storey mass-timber residential high-rise offering 179 residences, including work/live spaces. It will feature exposed wood ceilings and beams, and the two buildings will share an underground parkade.

“Both buildings are of different scales yet have a shared architectural expression, characterized by richly coloured, brick-clad bases and luminous warm white facades,” says developer Mike Geric Construction.

Work on Tresah East began in November 2020 and is expected to be completed in March 2022, while work on Tresah West will commence in October 2021, with an anticipated finish date of December 2022.

### Experience counts

RJC Engineers is the official structural engineering firm on the project, complementing their existing mass timber project portfolio.

“Mass timber is a fast growing segment of the construction industry,” says Leon Plett, managing principal, RJC Engineers. He adds that in anticipation of an immi-



The Tresah development will be noteworthy for several reasons, not the least of which is the mass-timber construction technology itself.

Recent revision to the 2020 National Building Code, B.C. has allowed early adopters in certain jurisdictions to use encapsulated mass-timber construction for up to 12 storeys. As such, Tresah will be one of only a few 12-storey, mass-timber construction projects currently in the works or in the approved pipeline in Victoria.

“In terms of engineering, I liken the difference between mass timber and concrete as the difference between playing with Lego and Play-doh,” says Plett. “Concrete is like Play-doh, in that it can be molded or flow into any form. Mass timber is more like Lego in that you use the same form over and over again for maximum cost effectiveness, while still enabling creativity.”

The Tresah development will be noteworthy for several reasons, not the least of which is the mass-timber construction technology itself.

The two primary mass-timber technologies to be used in the project are cross-laminated timber (CLT) and glue-laminated timber (glulam, GLT). The former is fabricated from laminating lumber in perpendicular layers, resulting in strong panels



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One of the more interesting features of Tresah is the use of exposed wood versus encapsulated wood within the suites themselves to heighten the living experience for the homeowners. RJC Engineers has sought out the services of GHJ Consultants Ltd. for help with the approval process.



#### **On the ground**

Although Tresah will be the first high-rise, mass-timber construction project for Farmer Construction Ltd., it definitely won't be the last. "It's a relatively new form of construction. But we're



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putting in the time now to become experts in the methodology of mass timber construction,” says Gerrit Vink, president, Farmer Construction. “We decided it was time to take the leap and invest in mass timber. We need to be a fully diversified company so that we can continue to satisfy the increasing needs of our clients.”

One of the key benefits of mass-timber construction (in addition to sequestering carbon) is the lightness of the construction itself. Plett estimates that the use of this type of construction in this particular project means that the building will be 30 per cent lighter. As such, the caissons can be smaller – which becomes very significant for this development, in particular, because of the site’s soil conditions.

“One of the challenges on this project is the marine clay soil,” says Monty Fitz, general manager, Don Mann Excavating. The company is responsible for excavating the entire underground parking lot – an area approximately 58,000 square feet or 1.5 acres in size. “Marine clay is very hard to work with; it’s very sticky, and it is very soft and unstable.”

As a result, Don Mann Excavating will import blasted and crushed rock to use as platforms for the excavating work. The company started on the site in November 2020 and hopes to be finished by late March 2021. “We have cleared the site and built the access roads for the shoring crew,” says Fitz, who estimates that his company will remove approximately 4,000 boxes of fill from the site.

One of the key benefits of mass-timber construction (in addition to sequestering carbon) is the lightness of the construction itself.

Concrete reinforcing company, Tycon Steel Inc., has been charged with the supply and install of the rebar for the underground parking lot. The company expects to start on the project in February 2020 and anticipates that the work will take between seven to eight months to complete. “We’ve estimated about 700 tons of rebar for this project,” says Dan Seel, president, Tycon Steel Inc. “And we anticipate the need for between five to seven crew members.”

The fact that the project will include the mass-timber construction high-rise will not affect Seel’s work on the site. “I would describe it as a fairly typical project,” he says. “It’s a relatively flat space with a short lift so I don’t anticipate any challenges.”

#### New heights

With work on Tresah already underway, the City of Victoria is set to become home to a leading example of mass-timber construction. It’s a new standard for the region’s construction industry, one that will set the bar for more projects to follow. ■



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# The Wedge high-rise *already earning rave reviews*



By Jim Timlick

*The Wedge's unique, 15-storey cantilevered design will be an architectural first for Victoria.*

**W**hen construction of The Wedge residential and commercial tower is completed in early 2023, it will be one of the most talked about new buildings in downtown Victoria.

In fact, the \$50-million project had already generated considerable buzz before there were any shovels in the ground, receiving a ringing endorsement from the Pacific Coast Builders Conference which awarded it the Golden Nugget Award for the Best On-The-

Boards Multifamily Community this summer.

“Receiving the award solidifies the importance of what we’re doing and how we like to push the boundaries of architecture. We have never liked building boxes,” says Dan Cox, president of project development at Cox Developments and a co-owner of Blackrete Builders, the construction manager for the project. “On top of that, we’re actually bringing this unique design to reality when many of these Best-On-the-Boards projects never make it to construc-

*The Wedge* has been designed to be one of the most sustainable developments to be built in downtown Victoria and will include several eco-friendly features.

RJC Engineers has been retained as building envelope and energy consultants for the new 16-storey high-rise tower. The project is part of the first group of high-rise buildings in Victoria to fall under the City of Victoria's BC Energy Step Code which requires a level of energy efficiency in new construction that goes above and beyond the requirements of the BC Building Code.

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- A comprehensive thermal comfort study was carried out to ensure occupants comfort levels are not affected, and several passive cooling strategies such as windows designed to fully open without restrictors were determined to meet the criteria of the BC Energy Step Code.

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*Birdseye view of the exaction site with the mid-century modern chapel maintained in the design.*

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tion. I think it shows we're moving in the right direction when we receive acknowledgement like this."

To say The Wedge will push boundaries might be a bit of an understatement. Its unique, 15-storey cantilevered design will be an architectural first for Victoria. Beginning on the second floor, each subsequent floor will extend out an additional two feet from the floor below it. This will give the eastern-facing front of the building an angled appearance and make it look like its hovering over its own foundation.

Cox says the tower's one-of-a-kind look was the brainchild of Douglas Austin, founder and CEO of San Diego-based project architect AVR P Skyport.

"Out of nowhere, Douglas said he had a dream one night of what he thought the building should look like. The next morning, he sent us a sketch and it fit with our philosophy to push the envelope as much as we can with architecture, so we said let's do it," says Cox.

The project is located at the corner of Vancouver and Johnson Streets on land formerly occupied by the McCall Brothers Funeral Home. Civic leaders and community members advocated to have the on-site chapel, designed in 1955 by famed Victoria architect John Di Castri, retained and repurposed as part of the project. The cantilever design helps make up for the lost density at the base of the building that results from preserving the chapel.

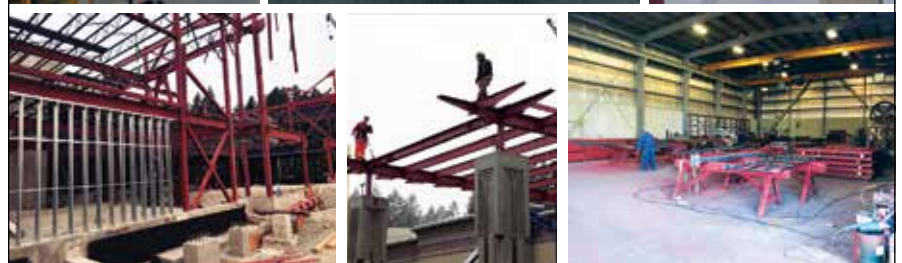
"The property held a lot of meaning for many people," says Cox. "It was really important for the neighbourhood and the city to retain as much of the building as possible."

Trevor Weber, president and CEO for Blackrete, says even though the angled design of the tower's front is something that's never been done in Victoria, it's a welcome challenge. He says it's buildable in terms of its constructability, thanks in part to a highly-skilled local workforce and engineering team being overseen by Victoria-based RJC Engineers.

*With the small lot size, the cantilever design of the building allows the chapel to be incorporated into the design.*

Weber says one of the more challenging design aspects of the project is the cantilevered slab edges and 82 degree racked columns. As a result, Blackrete designed custom-made steel formworks assemblies which are being manufactured by Alliance Engineering Works in Victoria.

Another challenge posed by the proj-



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Excavation on the site began in August and was scheduled to wrap up by the end of the year. Weber says his company has been fortunate that the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't caused any delays so far and doesn't see it resulting in negative schedule impacts for this project, at least not until interior finishing work begins.

ect's unique design, according to Cox, is that it will require considerably more shoring to ensure there is no damaged caused to the chapel during construction of the tower.

When it opens, The Wedge will feature 93 rental units with commercial space on the main floor in the heart of Victoria's Harris Green district. There will be a variety of one, two, and three bedroom suites that will range in size between 460 and 1,481 square feet and offer a spectacular view of the Juan De Fuca Strait.

The development has been designed to shadow LEED Platinum Certification and will feature several eco-friendly features such as a water conservation system and on-site power generation. In addition, each unit will have its own heat recovery ventilator (HRV) system designed to recover up to 60 per cent of the heat that would typically be lost in many older buildings.

"The fact that you can recover much of the heat loss is better for the end user, the environment, and of course the cost of the building," says Doug Paterson, senior project manager for Blackrete.

The project's original plans called for a huge solar panel array on the tower's roof that would have been one of the first such installations on Vancouver Island. Those plans have since been shelved, Cox says, after it was determined there simply aren't enough hours of sun in the area to warrant proceeding with the installation.

Excavation on the site began in August and was scheduled to wrap up by the end of the year. Weber says his company has been fortunate that the COVID-19 pandemic hasn't caused any delays so far and doesn't see it resulting in negative schedule impacts for this project, at least not until interior finishing work begins.

"We have a unique company which offers a construction perspective from both the construction and development side," says Cox. ■



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# Lessons in leadership

## Two perspectives, one goal

By Melanie Franner



*Kristin Tangen Steffins at work on the job site and at play with her partner Dean Steffins.*

### The merging of realities

Following her dreams by entering the world of science, Kristin Tangen Steffins attained a PhD from UBC in microbiology before pursuing a program manager position in supportive care for prostate cancer research. Steffins never lost that love of science, but she soon grew to add construction to her list of passions.

“I have always been fascinated by the process of building,” says Steffins. “I see a lot of parallels to cell structures and function-homologous features.”

This latter passion eventually led Steffins to partner with Dean Steffins on the creation of the Banyan Group of Companies Ltd., a holding entity for Banyan Construction Ltd. (construction management/carpentry), and Banyan Structural Ltd. (concrete and masonry). All in, they have a staff of 63 people.

In 2020, Steffins saw the comingling of both her passions. “COVID-19 brought about a bizarre intersection of my past and present careers,” she says, adding that her unique background enabled her to react quickly and confidently. “Even though my career path has changed, I have continued

to keep up on recent research and stay connected to past colleagues. And I continue to be passionate about science.”

This served Steffins well, as she quickly took the lead to develop and implement comprehensive policies and procedures to protect the workers at Banyan. She also was quick to team up with other companies and leaders through VICA.

“We are grateful that VICA organized meetings with local general contractors and construction managers at the onset of the pandemic to share information and to help us connect,” she says. “These meetings proved invaluable to us.”

Working with VICA also enabled Steffins to share her company’s comprehensive policies and procedures with the greater construction community. “I have been able to act as a resource to the industry and our team in answering scientific questions about the disease – genetics, transmission, pathology, epidemiology, and vaccine development.”

Steffins is far from considering her accomplishments over. She and her partner have many ideas that they hope to launch in the future, including humanitarian ef-

To say that 2020 was an unusual year is an understatement. It was truly a challenging, discouraging, and difficult time for most Canadians, if not the world. But life – and work – carried on for the most part, and some people in all sectors and walks of life rose to new heights by channeling their expertise and capitalizing on their experiences. But here now, are two industry leaders who share their perspectives on change, leadership, community, and how their experiences helped them navigate COVID-19.



*Donna Hais lives by her own standards to walk the walk and talk the talk.*



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forts that will capitalize on her scientific background and Dean's 30+ years in construction.

Until then, the pair will continue to try to make the construction industry a better place for its workers by tackling issues such as taxation burdens, unfair procurement, and lack of skilled and underrepresented workers.

They will also remain focused on making the Banyan Group of Companies a great place to work. "We have valued our employees from day one and continue to consider them our most important asset," she says. "The most rewarding part of this business has been when we have team members tell us that they love working for Banyan."

Looking back on a career that has been driven by two distinctive passions, Steffins is quick to urge others to follow their own dreams. "Do what you love and know that there will be a way to make it a career," she says. "Have faith that, with hard work and a positive attitude, the opportunities will present themselves."

### Carrying on a tradition

For Donna Hais, construction seemed to be in her blood. Her family's history with R.W. (Bob) Wall Construction is a long and respected one. And although Hais pursued a university degree that was designed to take her away from the family business and into law, she soon found herself back in the family fold.

"The thing I love most about my job is that it is so eclectic," she says. "No two projects are the same, and no two clients are the same. The job is constantly changing so there is always a learning curve."

Hais has long since made her mark in the Vancouver Island construction industry. In addition to her role as CEO and general manager of R.W. (Bob)Wall Construction, Hais also serves as board chair for the Nanaimo Port Authority. She has served as president of both the Nanaimo Executive Association and the Nanaimo Chamber of Commerce.

Hais is also the winner of the 2014 Community Leader of the Year award. She continues to be active in Rotary, is involved with the



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Nanaimo Young Professionals, her church, and the private school that her children attend.

Of course, working in the family business comes with its own set of pressures. Hais says her goal is to keep actively working on her vision and to live up to what she talks about. "Life is a matter of knowing what your priorities are," she says. "If you set them up and are true to them, then you will be able to accomplish a lot."

Hais believes there is still more work to be done in public perception. In particular, she laments the fact that the construction industry is not held in as high esteem among many of the public, particularly those who may be suited to work within the industry.

"I think the general populace can be more understanding of the importance and value of our trades," she says. "People need to realize that our industry offers good, high-paying jobs."

Being proactive and following through is something that takes vision, determination, and patience. And one of her projects, building an urgent primary-care centre to support the Nanaimo Regional General Hospital, has taken 25 years to come to fruition. Construction of the Colville Medical Centre is now well under way which will offer supportive services for patients, medical staff, and visitors of the hospital.

While perseverance is a necessity in her career, so too is the ability to react on a moment's notice. When COVID-19 hit, Hais was among the first of those who offered her services by volunteering to sit on the City of Nanaimo's Mayor's Task Force on recovery and resilience.

"I think our City was very forward thinking in putting together a task force to develop recommendations," says Hais, adding that some of those recommendations have already been implemented. "You always need visionaries, even after the pandemic."

With over 30 years of experience in the construction industry, Hais has certainly earned her stripes – and then some. Driven by her need to "walk the talk", she will undoubtedly continue to leave her mark

on both a long and established family history – and a strong and economically sound city.

"To be a good leader, you first need to listen," says Hais. "If you really listen, you will recognize that there are a lot of

people out there, and that all you really need to do is connect them. Everyone has something of value to add."

"I don't consider myself a great leader," concludes Hais. "I just have a great team." ■

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# HOW THE **COVID-19** **CRISIS RELIEF PLAN** HELPED THE MENTAL AND FINANCIAL WELLBEING OF THE CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



By Arthur Chung

As the COVID-19 pandemic evolves we remain committed to reducing the mental and financial burden facing the construction industry. It is well-known that financial stress and mental health are connected. Add on the layer of a pandemic and we have a recipe for increased anxiety in the populous. It is imperative for us to support construction industry employers, their employees, and their families during these times of uncertainty by providing a variety of mental health resources through our Employee and Family Assistance Program and through our COVID-19 Crisis Relief Plan.

## **Mental health resources**

We provide our members with quality mental health resources as stress, anxiety, and depression increase through the pandemic. Our Employee and Family Assistance Program helps our members access counsellors to discuss their problems, provide actionable solutions to manage symptoms of stress and anxiety, and help them plan their financial futures through the Credit Counselling Society. We also provide access to a series of webinars on various mental health topics related to COVID-19 to plan administrators.

More recently, we introduced our members to BEACON, which provides guided digital therapy and Stronger Minds, a free set of modules for self-help. We are proud to announce that guided digital therapy is now covered under our plans.

## **COVID-19 Crisis Relief Plan**

The COVID-19 Crisis Relief Plan was a temporary measure to help our members maintain benefits for their employees and their families through premium and plan administration relief. The plan was introduced on April 1 in anticipation of decreased access to health and wellness services. We understand that business priorities are changing in order to manage costs, sustain operations, and keep employees working. We also understand the stress of the looming uncertainty surrounding the economic effects of the pandemic, so we acted quickly to help our members. Through the Crisis Relief Plan, we implemented significant rate reductions with extended health care rates reduced up to 40 per cent, and dental rates reduced up to 70 per cent. This

helped reduce the financial burden on our members, resulting in saving an aggregate of \$2.7 million dollars in the first four months of the pandemic.

We are thankful for the support of our regional construction associations for helping us share mental and financial health resources with the construction industry when needed most. We are also grateful to our plan members for allowing us the privilege of taking care of their teams throughout these unprecedented times.

For more information on benefit plans offered by the BCCA Employee Benefit Trust visit [bccabenefits.ca](http://bccabenefits.ca), email [info@bccabenefits.ca](mailto:info@bccabenefits.ca), or call 1-800-665-1077.

*The BCCA Employee Benefit Trust (EBT) was established over 50 years ago with the mission to look after the health and wellbeing of employees in the construction industry. As an organization responsible for the lives of 7,000 employees under 500 employers, we continue to work towards this end, particularly during these unprecedented times. ■*

We provide our members with quality mental health resources as stress, anxiety, and depression increase through the pandemic.

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# Family business succession

## Key considerations for transitioning to the next generation



Doug Tyce, CPA, CA MNP

If you own and operate a family business, part of your long-term strategy is to determine who will run the business when you decide to step back from the day-to-day demands. Transitioning the business to your children may be a very attractive option for a whole host of reasons – both personal and financial. But keeping the business in the family also adds complexity as you seek to balance the overlapping roles and expectations of family members. To get you started, here are a few key questions to consider.

### What is your timeline?

How much longer do you want to work in the business before retiring or stepping back? The earlier you start planning, the more options you have available. It's also important to consider how you see yourself transitioning from the business. In other words, what does "retirement" look like to you? Do you see yourself making a clean break and never working again, or gradually reducing your hours and role in the business? Your eventual successors will want to know this.

### Who will take over?

In my 20-plus years as a business advisor, I've found there are two major causes of struggle and failure when it comes to

succession. First, do your children have the aptitude, knowledge and skills required to successfully lead the company? Before beginning any succession conversations, consider what the business needs and what criteria you would use to pick a successor if none of the individuals involved were family. Then you can objectively evaluate your children to determine who is best qualified, and/or identify any gaps in their leadership and management abilities that need to be addressed.

After you've identified a potential successor, you need to address the next big question: do they share the same vision for their future? You can't force succession planning on your children, and not every child wants to take over the family business. If you've never asked, make it a priority to start the conversation. If it turns out none of your children are interested, it's good to know this up front so you can pursue a different exit strategy, such as selling the business to a key employee or a third party.

On the other hand, if you're fortunate to have multiple children active in the business, you'll need to determine who is best qualified to lead the company, and who may be better suited to other roles. As a business-owner parent, you need to treat your children fairly, but this does not mean they all deserve equal responsibil-

ity in the company. The best thing for the business and the family is to match your children to the roles where they are best suited to succeed.

### What about children not actively involved in the business?

It's equally important to talk openly with children who are not involved in the business. What are their goals? Were do they fit in? How might they be impacted by decisions around the family business? Again, the key here is to seek fairness, not equality. In many cases, this can be achieved by balancing your estate plan, such as providing those children with a larger share of your non-business inheritance such as property, RRSPs, and savings. Dealing with this up front is critical to maintain family unity and avoid conflicts down the road.

Your succession plan is a key part of the long-term success of your family business and there are no short cuts. The best way to secure the future of both your business and your family is to start early, strive for open and honest communication, and seek fairness for all parties.

*Doug Tyce, CPA, CA is a partner with MNP and lead's the firm's Real Estate and Construction practice on Vancouver Island. For more information, contact Doug at 250-734-4368 or [doug.tyce@mnp.ca](mailto:doug.tyce@mnp.ca). ■*

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# Tenders and requests for proposals

## A distinction with a difference



By Tyler Galbraith, Jenkins Marzban Logan LLP

While many tenders and requests for proposals proceed in generally the same manner and have generally similar outcomes, the choice of procurement process matters. Notably, the legal obligations owed between the parties differ markedly depending on whether the process is a tender or a request for proposals. Accordingly, the procurement model chosen can have sig-

nificant (and potentially unintended) consequences depending on which process is used and how clearly the procurement documents are drafted.

The rationale for the tender process is to replace negotiation with competition. In a tender process, the parties intend to create contractual relations through the submission of a compliant bid. However, a request for proposals process is a non-binding invitation to enter into negotiations and is

based on the presumption that submitted proposals will be used for further negotiation potentially leading to a contract.

The offer to negotiate which forms the basis of a request for proposals is generally not considered to give rise to contractual relations meaning Contract A can only be formed in a tender process. Whether Contract A is formed depends of the precise language and intention of the procurement documents. The label or name

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placed on the process will not be determinative. The court will look only to the substance of the transaction in the context of the procurement documents in order to determine whether the parties intended to enter into contractual relations.

Factors the court will consider in determining whether the process was a tender or request for proposals include the irrevocability of the bid, the formality of the process, the scope of any permitted negotiation, whether there was a deadline for submissions and for performance of the work, whether there was a requirement for a security deposit, whether evaluation criteria were specified, whether there was a right to reject proposals, whether there was a commitment to build, whether compliance with specifications was a condition of the tender, whether there was a duty to award Contract B (the construction contract) and whether Contract B had specific conditions not open to negotiation.

Why is this important? The courts have

The courts have held that the integrity of the tender process should be protected where under the law of contract it is possible to do so.

held that the integrity of the tender process should be protected where under the law of contract it is possible to do so. This means that where Contract A arises, and subject to the express terms of the procurement documents, the owner will be obligated to accept only a compliant bid and to treat each compliant bidder fairly and equally in the process, the bid will be irrevocable for a set period of time and the owner and successful bidder will be obligated to enter into the construction contract. However, these obligations will not arise in a request for proposals process as there is no contract to ground enforceable obligations between the parties.

Accordingly, an owner procuring work

should decide in advance the type of procurement process best suited for its project and ensure that the procurement documents are drafted in a clear and unambiguous way consistent with that decision. A bidder should review the procurement documents in detail to ensure that it understands what contractual commitments, if any, it is making by submitting a bid. Where the procurement documents are uncertain, a bidder should seek clarification from the owner regarding the intention of the procurement documents. Simply put, the parties do not want to leave the determination of the process to the court and be surprised by the obligations (or lack of obligations) owed. ■



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# *\$10-million renovation for* Victoria's Government House



By Mark Halsall

British Columbia's capital city has a rich heritage that's exemplified in the picturesque gardens and historically significant structures found throughout Victoria. One of them is Government House, home to the Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia since 1865.

The building that stands at 1401 Rockland Avenue in Victoria today, though, is not the original Government House. That one burned down in 1899 and its replacement was also destroyed by fire nearly 60 years later.

The current Government House has the original stone 'porte cochere' on the front of the building, and the rest of structure is very similar architecturally to previous Government Houses as it was built to resemble its predecessors.

Not much has been done to the 60,000-square-foot building since it opened in 1959, which is why it is undergoing \$10-million worth of needed renovations. The project is focused primarily on infrastructure upgrades, so the aesthetics of the building, which was designated a National Historic Site in 2002, will remain unchanged.

While the grounds and some outlying buildings remain open to the public on the site, Government House itself is closed during construction. Victoria-based Kingsview Construction Ltd. is the general contractor for the project, which started in August 2020 and is expected to wrap up in August 2021.

*Opulent chandelier collection stored safely during renovations.*

Kingsview Construction Ltd. is owned by Cameron Barnes and Todd Pickard, who are construction manager and site superintendent respectively for the project. Barnes says the first task was packing up items for storage and making arrangements for moving Lt. Gov. Janet Austen and her staff out of Government House and into another location, which turned out to be quite a big job.

“We had to get all kinds of specialty items relocated. There were antiques and potentially millions of dollars’ worth of artwork, and we had to build specialty crates for each piece,” says Barnes. “That took quite a bit of time, but once the client was moved, all of the work has gone very well.”

Much of the scope of the renovation work revolves around mechanical and electrical upgrades. MGM Mechanical Limited is the sub-contractor for the mechanical work, which includes installing a new fire suppression system and replacing a gas boiler and other improvements to the HVAC system.

The electrical work, which includes overhauling the main electrical system, installing a new emergency generator, and upgrading all of the lighting, is being performed by Thomis Electric Ltd. The project also includes an upgrade to the security system that’s being done by Paladin Technologies.

Barnes believes there’s no question Government House was due for a face-lift. “The building is very dated. It really hasn’t had any sort of infrastructure within the walls put in or significant upgrades made since the rebuild after it burned down,” he says. “It’s exciting to be part of a high-profile project like this and the challenges that come along with it.”

He also notes that preserving the integrity of the interior design is an essential consideration for everyone working on the project — not an easy task considering there are plaster walls and

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Barnes says in rooms such as the Royal Suite, where the Queen stays when visiting Victoria, the finishings are particularly opulent.

all kinds of finely detailed architectural work found throughout the building.

Barnes says in rooms such as the Royal Suite, where the Queen stays when visiting Victoria, the finishings are particularly opulent. “Ripping them all



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apart and then having to restore them to their pre-existing condition is definitely a unique aspect of this project,” he says.

Lee Kupiak of Thomis Electric Ltd. agrees that maintaining the integrity of design and retrofitting a historical building like Government House is a complex undertaking.

“As we go along, there have been challenges with some existing site conditions,” say Kupiak. “I think our past experience doing complex renovations has enabled us to problem solve more efficiently than another contractor who’s not quite as familiar with that style of work.”

Kupiak says it also helps that Kingsview Construction Ltd. has assembled a great team of sub-trades to work on the project. “Everyone is on the same page, so it’s going smoothly,” he says. ■

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# New water treatment plant nears completion

By Melanie Franner



What began with a Water Definition Study in 2015 by the Comox Valley Regional District (CVRD) is fast becoming a reality in 2021. Despite a few challenges along the way, including the COVID-19 pandemic, the new \$126-million Comox Valley Water Treatment Project remains on schedule for completion in summer 2021.

“We are well advanced in construction now,” says Charlie Gore, manager of capital projects, water and wastewater, CVRD. “We are about 75 per cent completed, and we are going to start commissioning activities in early 2021.”

## Safe and secure

The water treatment project will be a game changer for the Comox Valley region. It will eliminate the need for turbidity-related boil-water notices, remove the risk of viruses and bacteria in the drinking water, and provide a secure supply of reliable, high-quality drinking water for decades to come.

“Initial plant capacity is sized for approximately 15 to 20 years of community

growth,” says Gore. “But it has been designed with expansion in mind, for approximately 80 years of growth.”

Central to the undertaking is the CVRD’s milestone partnership with the Komoks First Nation. “The partnership with the Komoks First Nation is a cornerstone of the project,” says Gore, who adds that they have been instrumental in the effort to obtain permits and grant funding throughout the project.

## Design-build the method of choice

CVRD is working with Aecon Group Inc. on the design-build of the treatment plant project. As such, the contractor’s scope of work includes both the design (subcontracted to Stantec) and construction of the project, including the marine pipeline and intake, raw water pump station and transmission main, water treatment plant, and the treated water transmission main.

“One of the more interesting aspects about this project is the number of stakeholders involved,” says Jamie Abernethy, project director, water infrastructure, Aecon. “The project itself spans over 10 kilo-

metres. It involves different property lines and different contracts, which translates into having to manage a number of relationships.”

To date, Abernethy and his team have overseen the following construction achievements:

- 8,000 m<sup>3</sup> of concrete poured
- 1,300,000 kg of rebar installed
- 2.7 km of 42” pipe diameter HDPE
- 3.8 km of 42” diameter carbon steel
- 26,000 diameter inches welded
- 125 m of 60” diameter carbon steel micro tunnelled (marine pipeline)
- 60,000 m<sup>3</sup> of material excavated

Other milestone achievements that occurred in 2020 include micro-tunnelling for the marine intake, completion of the raw water transmission main, completion of cell 1 (Clearwell), completion of the process area structural, completion of Island Highway Crossing, and completion of Marsden Fibre Conduit Install (2.5 km).

“The biggest milestone moment will be the 30-day performance test at the end of the project,” says Abernethy. “That’s the real moment of success.”

Hazelwood Construction Services Inc.,



one of the subtrades involved in the water treatment project, is responsible for the installation of the carbon steel pipe that runs from the water treatment plant all the way to the Comox Valley distribution header. “It’s approximately five kilometres of steel pipeline in total,” says Paul Noel, general manager, Hazelwood Construction Services Inc. “We started in April 2020 and expect to finish in January 2021.”

Noel also notes that the project has its own set of challenges. “There is a lot of work involved on BC Hydro’s right of way,” he explains. “There is also the proximity to BC Hydro’s penstock, which requires extra care, as it is partially above ground.”

The environment also plays a significant role in the work, with Hazelwood Construction Services focused on mitigating environmental impacts.

Ketza Pacific Contracting Ltd., another local subtrade that is involved in the project, is charged with the architectural build outs (except for mechanical/electrical, and cladding/roofing) in the public lobby and administration building of the pre-engineered metal building.

“We’re doing all of the interior work, such as the steel studs, painting, carpentry, drywall, doors and windows, ceilings, Glulam, structural steel, and millwork,” says Tyler Schofield, president, Ketza Pacific. “We started in October and expect to be done in summer of 2021.”

Although Ketza Pacific isn’t used to being a subcontractor – the company usually assumes the role of general contractor – it is adjusting well to the new situation.

“Aecon wanted someone local who had access to the local trades,” says Schofield.

### Near completion

Although the pandemic did have some productivity impacts due to self-isolation and physical distancing, the new Comox Valley Water Treatment Project remains on time and on budget. This, in large part, is due to the workforce being approximately 99 per cent local, a statistic that Abernethy and his crew worked hard to achieve. “Thankfully, the pandemic did not impact the level of interest in this project,” he says. “We have had no shortage of interest from local subtrades and have

been able to get some excellent contractors on board with us.”

Workers on the project have also strived to give back to the community through a number of other initiatives, such as volunteering for watershed work, donating time to the foodbank, supporting local families, and helping maintain the region’s famous bike trails.

In the end, the Comox Valley Water Treatment Project will stand as a shining example of success in both community co-operation and local involvement. ■



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# 2021 VICA Course Calendar

VICA is proud to provide essential skills training for the construction industry that allows members to GROW, LEARN, CONNECT, and SAVE while boosting bidding, leadership, technical, safety, and fundamental skillsets.

## January

Project Close-Out  
January 13 & 14 | Live-Online

Managing Shop Drawings, Samples & Submittals  
January 13 | Live-Online

Construction Industry Ethics  
January 14 & 15 | Live-Online

Gold Seal Info Session  
January 14 | Live-Online

Estimating Material Takeoff  
January 18, 20, 25, 27 & February 1, 3, 8 & 10 | Live-Online

Mastering Change Order Management  
January 18 & 19 | Live-Online

Lead to Succeed W. 1-1 Coaching  
January 19, 21, 26, 28 | Live-Online

Read the Contract: CCDC 2 Deep Dive  
January 20 | Live-Online

Construction Drawings 101  
January 21 | Live-Online

Bidcentral: How to Find & Win Opportunities  
January 21 | Webinar

Responding to an RFP  
January 21, 22 & 25 | Live-Online

Planning For Forepersons And Crew Supers  
January 26 & 27 | Live-Online

Non-Standard Contract Clauses  
January 27 - 29 | Live-Online

## February

Project Close-Out  
February 2 & 3 | Live-Online

Construction 101  
February 2, 3, 4 & 5 | Live-Online

Supervisory & Management Skills  
February 8 - 11 | Live-Online

Project Delivery Methods  
February 9 - 11 | Live-Online

Gold Seal Info Session  
February 11 | Webinar

Project Planning for Success  
February 11 - 12 | Live-Online

Construction Industry Ethics  
February 18 - 19 | Live-Online

Planning For Forepersons & Crew Supers  
February 23 - 24 | Live-Online

Effective Construction Meetings & Meeting Minutes  
February 25 | Live-Online

## March

Construction Estimating:  
Role of an Estimator  
March 1, 3, 8, 10, 15, 17, 22 & 24  
Live-Online

Cm-Lean Program  
March 2 & 3, 9 & 10, 16 & 17, 23 & 24  
Live-Online

Construction 101  
March 2 - 5 | Live-Online

Gold Seal Info Session  
March 11 | Live-Online

Effective Construction Meetings & Meeting Minutes  
March 22 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Project Close-Out  
March 23 & 24 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Responding to an RFP  
March 25, 26 & 29  
Live-Online | Info & Reg

Construction Estimating  
March 29 - 31 & April 1  
Live-Online | Info & Reg

Mastering Change Order Management  
March 30 - 31 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

## Spring 2021

Gold Seal Info Session  
April 8 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Construction 101  
April 13, 14, 15 & 16 | Live-Online  
Info & Reg

Lead To Succeed W. 1-1 Coaching  
April 13, 15, 20 & 22 | Live-Online  
Info & Reg

Effecting Meetings & Meeting Minutes  
April 15 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Project Planning For Success  
April 19 - 20 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Project Account & Cost Control  
April 26 & 27 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Planning For Forepersons & Crew Supers  
April 27 & 28 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Mastering Change Order Management  
April 28 & 29 | Live-Online | Info & Reg

Effecting Meetings & Meeting Minutes  
May 3 | Live-Online

Project Management  
May 3 - 6 | Live-Online

Project Planning for Success  
May 04 & 05 | Live-Online

Gold Seal Info Session  
May 13 | Webinar

Planning For Forepersons & Crew Supervisors  
May 18 & 19 | Live-Online

Project Close-Out  
May 26 & 27 | Live-Online

Construction Business Management  
May 31 & June 1 - 3 | Live-Online

## Summer 2021

Construction 101  
June 1 - 4 | Live-Online

Trade Contracts  
June 9 & 10 | Live-Online

Gold Seal Info Session  
June 10 | Webinar

Project Close-Out  
June 14 & 15 | Live-Online

Construction Law  
June 14 - 17 | Live-Online

Responding to an RFP  
June 17, 18 & 21 | Live-Online

Trade Contracts  
June 9 - 10 | Live-Online

Mastering Change Order Management  
June 23 - 24 | Live-Online

Gold Seal Info Session  
July 8 | Webinar

Gold Seal Info Session  
August 12 | Webinar

## Fall 2021

Gold Seal Info Session  
September 9 | Webinar

Gold Seal Info Session  
October 14 | Webinar ■

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# Delivering a *strong workforce*

By Deb Draper

## The continued success of the Construct Your Future program

In response to member feedback regarding the skilled labour shortage on Vancouver Island, the Vancouver Island Construction Association (VICA) launched a free training program geared toward preparing young adults ages 17 to 29 for a career in the construction industry. Two years later, under the direction of program coordinator, Sharlot Beatty, the program

was redesigned and renamed Construct Your Future (CYF) with the continued mandate to connect willing workers with employers in the construction industry.

“Most of our people who finish the program will start as material handlers and labourers with the explicit expectation that they are working toward an apprenticeship after three to six months,”



says Beatty. “We are very strong in our messaging that this program helps launch a career in construction not just a job in trades.”

Construct Your Future focuses on providing young adults with an orientation to the construction industry along with safety certification. This year, the CYF team pivoted their entire delivery model to address COVID-19 and now delivers instruction through online seminars and independent work done in an online platform.

Participants learn industry vocabulary, trades math, personal development, and are taken on tours of job sites. The program is kept small – about 10 students per session four times a year – which means it can be responsive and flexible, and it can adjust according to employer feedback. An example of this feedback came when new hires who were not used to the physical demands of construction work, were struggling to make it through the day (let alone an entire week). Upon learning this, VICA supplied each participant with fitness equipment to conduct at-home workouts, and it now conducts online fitness sessions each morning.

Certificate training takes up another portion of the eight-week program with approximately half of the instruction completed online, while others are a blended format with online theory and in-person practical application.

Work experience is an important component of the program

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VICA Vancouver Island Construction Association

The advertisement features a yellow background with a black banner at the top containing the text 'CONSTRUCT THEIR FUTURE'. Below this, in white text on the yellow background, is 'SUPPORT • HIRE • LEARN MORE' and the website 'WWW.VICABC.CA/CYF'. A circular inset image shows two construction workers wearing hard hats (one yellow, one white) and safety vests, looking upwards. The VICA logo is positioned vertically on the right side.

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and participants attend at three different companies to complete a two-day work experience within a variety of trades. “We have great support and uptake from our members in the construction industry; they are always very willing and happy to host work experience,” says Beatty. “When our students return from these work sessions, they post photos and videos on our FaceBook page about what they did, what they learned, and what the work entailed.”

Participants also receive one-on-one training on valuable practical skills such as material handling, proper lifting techniques, and fastening ratchet straps from DurWest Construction Management. They also participate in speed interviewing events, completing approximately 12 hours of interview practice plus further time spent perfecting their cover letters and resumes.

Beyond training and experience, the program supplies everything required to

pursue a career in construction including work boots, pants, and PPE. Participants are also paid a training wage while in the program and on work experience, and provided with financial support for groceries, internet, and travel.

“One hundred percent of those who finish our program become employed in construction, generally finishing the eight-week program on Friday to start their new jobs on Monday,” says Beatty. “There is a lot of work for our grads because they’re ready to work and know what they want to do.”

To date, the VICA program has helped more than 300 young adults embark upon a career in the construction industry. And with its recently renewed two-year contract with the Ministry of Advanced Education and Skills Training, who funds the program, CYF is ready to run another eight cohorts beginning in February.

With 10 years of experience developing and administering industry training pro-

grams, Beatty says CYF stands out as the most successful. “The fact that it’s focused on one industry makes it a lot easier to give people what they want and need,” she says. “We are also fortunate to have the support of VICA members who provide good jobs and great work environments.”

For more information about the Construct Your Future program, contact Sharlot Beatty at (250) 800-1162 | sharlot@vicabc.ca or visit vicabc.ca.

**Certificates earned through Construct Your Future**

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# The new CCDC documents

## CCDC

By Eric Lee

Following a very well-attended online training series in November, the Canadian Construction Documents Committee (CCDC) published some exciting new documents. This included two brand new documents, the Master Specification for Division 01 General Requirements and the CCDC 31 Service Contract Between Owner and Consultant, and an updated version of the CCDC 41 CCDC Insurance Requirements. The most noteworthy of our new publications was the new 2020 version of our flagship document, the CCDC 2 Stipulated Price Contract.

This new CCDC 2 will bring some

very important changes to the Canadian construction industry. The standard contract has seen significant modifications to many key sections, including updated insurance clauses, new language to account for provincial payment legislations, provisions addressing early takeover by the owner, and, most importantly, the new “Ready-for-Takeover” project milestone which will set a new standard for construction projects here in Canada. This milestone will be the new trigger for warranties and the handover of care, custody, and control of the work. This recognizes that substantial performance does not always mean the project is ready for the owner’s use, while still allowing the

contractor to receive their holdback in a timely fashion (as that will still be tied to substantial performance as defined in the relevant legislations).

As this new document does have some very important changes, we will continue to sell the previous edition of the CCDC 2 and its copyright seals until the end of 2021 to give the industry ample time to review and adjust to the new version.

As for the other new documents, the Master Specification for Division 01 General Requirements, much like the 2018 Division 00 document, is a fully editable specification template. The Division 01 is meant to be used as either a template or a reference document, containing helpful spec notes which provide guidance to the user on intended uses and identifies areas that require coordination with other contract documents. While the Division 01 document was tailored for use with the new CCDC 2, it can be used with any other contract form, including non-CCDC contracts.

Adapted from the ACEC 31, the new CCDC 31 Service Contract Between Owner and Consultant has been updated to bring it in line with the CCDC library, which includes similar language and provisions as used in other CCDC documents.


We look forward to the industry’s adoption of these new documents, particularly the new CCDC 2 with the Ready-for-Takeover milestone. While the new CCDC 41 is available as a free download from our website (ccdc.org), the new documents may be purchased through VICA. ■



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# Building great business and good community TOGETHER



By Dianne Hawkins, CEO, Comox Valley Chamber of Commerce

Construction is, and will continue to be, a vital part of the future of the Comox Valley. The women and men who build our communities are also our neighbours, friends, and loved ones. So

when we speak of the construction industry in Comox Valley, we are referring to the people who sponsor our youth sports leagues, give generously to charity, and provide good-paying jobs.

Recent building reports show a significant increase in construction during the third quarter of 2020, which was above the second quarter of 2020. The Comox

Valley surged 123 per cent, Strathcona was 52 per cent higher, and the Capital Regional District saw a 42 per cent jump. Impressive!

These numbers, however, do not tell the whole story. The COVID-19 pandemic has put a strain on all industries with construction being no different.

Through Comox Valley Chamber virtual round tables, featuring City of Courtenay representatives and our construction members, and our monthly meetings with the Canadian Home Builders Association of Vancouver Island, we have identified some of the challenges the construction industry in Courtenay is facing.

While projects are still moving forward, the pandemic has altered timelines, project milestones, and completion dates. Production changes such as rescheduling sub trades on jobsites to maintain social-distancing practices and ensuring sanitization procedures, although necessary, have a real effect on timelines.

Permits are still moving forward throughout municipalities, but there is concern with the lack of public hearings and the way in which projects move forward until such time as people can gather again to share their voices. While we have heard it is helpful to be able to submit drawings electronically for permits, there is still concern with the length of time it is



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taking for approval without public hearings. Public hearings are an integral part of planning the changing landscape of a community.

An indirect result of the pandemic, and one that was predicted although we are just seeing the result of it now, is the supply chain. A temperature check in April showed that most suppliers were in a good position, however, the factory closures overseas are now affecting local suppliers. As supply dries up, price goes up.

Even local supply, such as lumber, has seen a dramatic price increase. One member mentioned that they are recommending clients have a 10-14 per cent contingency in their budget for each project. This is leading to longer time frames between clients receiving and signing onto projects and some clients not moving forward at all.

With that said, construction is still moving forward despite the hurdles. It is a testament to the resiliency and determination of business owners and entrepreneurs on Vancouver Island. They are strong, they adapt, and they keep on keeping on.

Many thanks to the City of Courtenay staff for participating in the call as well as our construction members. For assistance with advocacy in your area, contact your local Chamber of Commerce, we are here for you. Join the people who get things done. ■



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# HeroWork Radical Renovation

The ripple effect of giving



In past years, a Radical Renovation performed by HeroWork would typically take place over a series of weekends on a work site buzzing with local contractors donating time and resources for the good of a charity. In 2020, the goodness in kind was stretched over a longer period of time to accom-

modate COVID-19 safety restrictions, but the outcome was the same — a beautifully updated facility that will enable a greater community outreach.

HeroWork, founded in 2011 by Paul Latour, is a charity that transforms other charities through comprehensive renovations that enables a charity to better serve

their clients. HeroWork gathers resources from the construction community in the form of time, expertise, funding, and in-kind supplies to deliver two Radical Renovations projects each year.

The most recent renovation, completed in November, was of the Y's Young Moms Program located in the Kiwanis Victoria Family Centre. The program offers safe, stable, and affordable housing for young mothers (aged 16-29) and their children under the age of five years.

"It was a sad older building with a lot of good happening inside the doors," says Marlena Salvador, philanthropy & communications manager, HeroWork. "What the Young Moms and Kiwanis Victoria does is amazing, but the building definitely needed an upgrade, so we're really very excited to have been able to do that."

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The program allows young women the opportunity to build their independence while developing skills to help them transition successfully to independent living with their children. Programming includes counselling and parenting supports, education and pre-employment training, interactive workshops, weekly drop-ins, as well as activities for parents and children.

In addition, Young Moms also provides programming that serves approximately 60 other families from around the community.

The transformation of the facility included the design and construction of two new two-bedroom basement suites, a refurbishment and refresh of the eight existing suites, and a reimagining and rebuild of the family free store. It also included the design and construction of an outdoor nature playground, low maintenance landscaping, an expansion of the parking lot, as well as repair and upgrade to the worn and weathered details around the building.

In the basement, tree roots had grown into and broken the foundation bringing moisture into the area. After sealing the foundation, a new custom storage area was constructed along with the facility's free store, which provides the community with diapers, new and used children's clothes, and other family necessities.

Two brand new two-bedroom suites were added to the upgraded basement

## VICA MEMBERS WHO CONTRIBUTED TO THIS HEROWORK RADICAL RENOVATION

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- Butler Concrete & Aggregate Ltd.
- Camosun College Women in Trades
- Centra Windows Victoria
- Five Star Paving Co.
- Lewis Sheet Metal
- Method Engineering & Building Services Ltd.
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In 2020, HeroWork was named one of Canada's Top 100 Recovery Projects by the Future of Good, an initiative that recognizes organizations that create inspiring projects that help people and communities get back on their feet. For more information, visit [futureofgood.co](http://futureofgood.co).

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level and features include new cabinetry supplied by Benson Cabinetry & Millwork. Although the company has contributed to volunteer efforts before, this was their first time participating in a Radical Renovation. "It's so important to support our community, so when this project came up, I messaged HeroWork right away and asked how we could help," says Natalie Benson of Benson Cabinetry & Millwork.

"It's one thing to want to do something for the community, but it's another thing to rally, organize, and administer a project," she says. "To build momentum and take something from concept to inception is not an easy task. It's no different than starting a business."

With the ripple in full effect, Benson

says she then reached out to her contact at Colonial Countertops who supplied and installed the countertops for the new suites.

Updates to the exterior of the house included creating an outdoor adventure play area suitable for toddlers to explore and have fun. "The landscaping teams turned a giant dust bowl into something quite spectacular," says Salvador. "It's pretty special."

The project did feel the impact of COVID-19 restrictions as significant coordination was implemented in order to manage the number of people on site at any given time. Salvador says she was confident it would be completed, but the challenge was maintaining that sense of connection and excitement that generally

happens when 60 to 100 volunteers would attend on the site at once. By adhering to safety protocols, it meant the project would be completed in six months as opposed to the usual six-week schedule.

"We have such a strong and dedicated troop because they keep coming back, and the generosity of the folks who get involved just really fills the tank," says Salvador. "It's a crazy and cool experience to go through, and more families will be helped because of it."

The next Radical Renovation project, taking place in the spring, will be The Salvation Army Addictions & Rehabilitation Centre on the corner of Johnston and Wharf Streets. Providing over 140 beds and preparing more than 15,000 meals per month, this facility requires a substantial overhaul to its commercial kitchen along with various upgrades and repairs throughout the facility to help increase their shelter capacity.

Salvador believes that it's important to do good especially during a pandemic when human spirits need uplifting. "Giving makes us happy and it's good for our health. It promotes cooperation, social connection, and gratitude which is one of the keys to happiness," she says. "And then, of course, giving is contagious. Our work is about strengthening communities by transforming charities through a ripple effect of giving. It's powerful."

For more information about HeroWork or to get involved with the next Radical Renovation, visit HeroWork.com. ■

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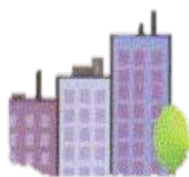
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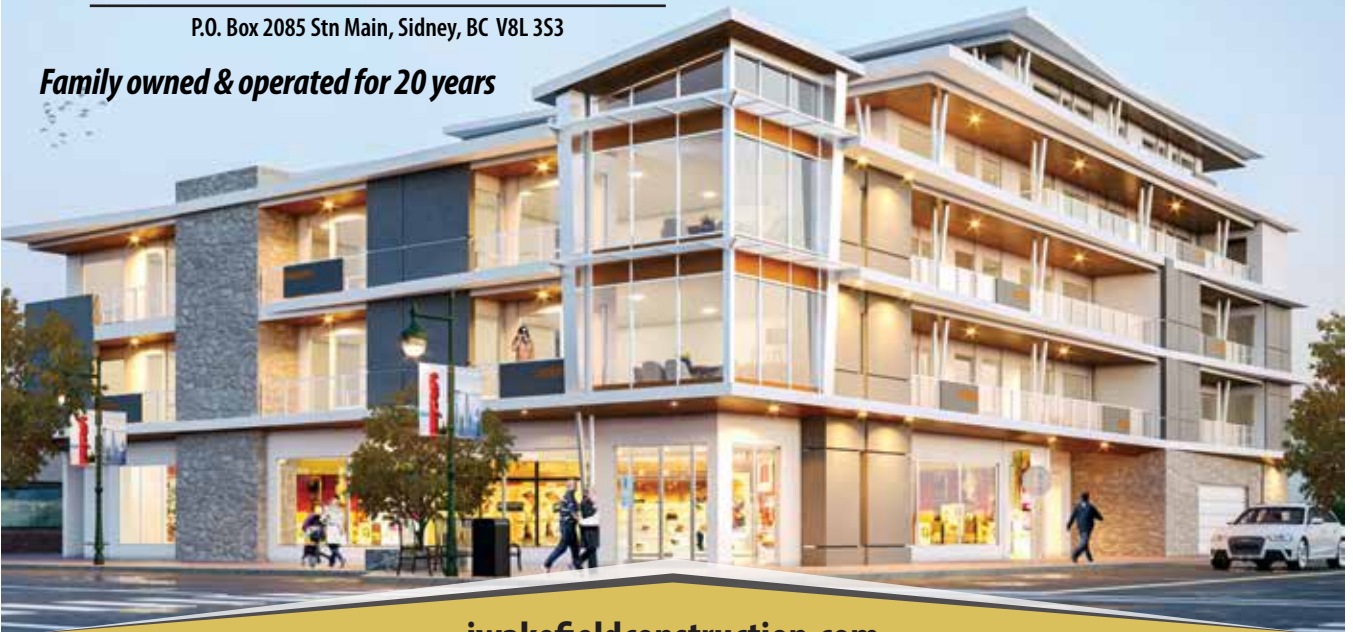
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## **Occupational profiles at the heart of the program**

The Gold Seal Certification program consults adult learning professionals, industry experts, and groups of volunteer industry practitioners to devise occupational profiles. These profiles define the knowledge, skills, and abilities that construction professionals working in Gold Seal designations should possess regardless of company field, size, or location.

"We recommend that potential applicants read the profile before applying to identify the areas they are less familiar with, or don't currently perform," says Chanel Roberts, CCA's manager of education and Gold Seal Certification program. "There is a lot of variety from one company to another, different backgrounds, etc., so the applicants need to acquire these competencies through training, research, or discussing with colleagues and peers before taking the exam."

## **Updating the standard**

The latest review concluded in September 2020 and resulted in updated occupational profiles, question banks, and sample questions for all designations. Some of the changes include:

- More granular details to capture a fuller range of tasks and activities;
- Some profiles (e.g. the superintendent) saw a significant increase in role requirements;
- Language was aligned with CCDC and industry standard terminology;
- Ethics competencies were developed for all occupational profiles and ethics-based questions were added to all exams;
- The "construction safety coordinator" designation was renamed "construction safety practitioner" to better capture the breadth and higher expectations for the role.

"The importance of ethics cannot be overstated," said Scott Mugridge, chair of

the Gold Seal committee. “The Construction Industry Ethics course has been a mandatory requirement for all GSC applicants for a number of years. Adding ethics-related competencies and exam questions further highlights the behaviour that we want to see in the industry.”

### Practical exam

Unlike some other types of certifications, you can't become a GSC by reading a book. The Gold Seal exam tests the candidates against the knowledge, abilities, and skills defined in the occupational profile and the applicants answer the exam questions based on their experience and learning acquired through education and training.

The latest update round brought changes to the exams as well. The Gold Seal exams have been online for a few years already, requiring exam writers to use their own computers. While procured at local construction associations in the past, due to COVID-19, exams are currently being written at the applicant's home or in their office using our learning management system. The questions – between 150 and 180 depending on the designation – are multiple choice. Applicants are emailed their results within two weeks. Those who pass will receive their certificates in the mail, while those who do not pass receive a breakdown of how they did in different sections and can re-write the exam for an additional fee.

### Get a head start on your application

This is a perfect time to learn more about the program and to see if you qualify. Visit [goldsealcertification.com](http://goldsealcertification.com) to register for our monthly webinar, review requirements, and to read up on the exam. The occupational profiles and sample questions can be found on the Gold Seal exam page. The Gold Seal team is only an email away if you have any questions – let us know at [goldseal@cca-acc.com](mailto:goldseal@cca-acc.com)! ■



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# It's a hard insurance market, now what?



Over the past year, business owners have likely seen their insurance rates, premiums and deductibles increase, while coverage levels have decreased. The overall process of renewing their insurance program has become more difficult and time consuming.

The insurance industry is currently in a hard market. This part of the insurance market cycle is due to substantial losses over a number of years resulting in the need to charge more for the risks insurers assume from the buying public. This is a simplistic explanation of a much broader issue for the industry.

After the financial crisis in 2008, it was safe to assume that there should have been a correction in the insurance industry as the world's largest insurance company and several other firms would have gone bankrupt without a US government bailout. The exact opposite is what occurred. As interest rates declined to historic lows around the world, capital flooded into the insurance market, looking for a safe investment that would return at a reasonable rate. The insurance industry became flush with capital looking to be deployed into the marketplace. This caused historic competition for business among insur-

ance companies. Rates went down and coverage broadened. Multiple insurers would bid on risks and, in doing so, undercut one another. The traditional underwriting of risk ostensibly disappeared.

On the surface, the end buyer seemed to benefit. Buying insurance was cheap and easy. Competition meant that rates likely did not increase on par with the rate of inflation. Historically, insurers made money from both their investments and underwriting. As safe investments returned at lower and lower rates, underwriting at a profit became more critical. Once underwriting profit left the industry, the industry had to correct the market cycle and start charging more for insurance.

It is safe to suggest that readers of this article have raised the cost of their services over the past decade. The cost of conducting business naturally goes up over time, which means that if a company wants to enjoy the same profit margin or an improvement year over year, the cost of services rendered or capital deployed would also increase to the end user or purchaser.

In the insurance industry the exact opposite has occurred. Profit became de-

pendent, in part, on investment income rather than being driven purely by profit from underwriting or core business operations. Are there any contractors who made a profit simply by investing their money versus profiting from their core business? I think we all know the answer to that rhetorical question is "no".

Over this same period of time, the insurance industry has grappled with an increase in the frequency of catastrophic incidents such as hurricanes, typhoons, forest fires, and other natural disasters. New and evolving risks such as cyberattacks, pollution liability, director and officer's liability, increasing litigation costs, and other large losses have made things worse. This year has brought in another unexpected challenge in the form of COVID-19. The industry was not prepared for the fallout from a global pandemic which both increased claims and reduced premiums from businesses being shut down or operating at limited capacity. Increased losses, combined with stagnating premiums and capital leaving the insurance market could only lead to one place: a hard market.

The local business owner may say "I am claims free, I do not operate outside of Canada, so why should I pay more?" Simple macroeconomics suggests that what goes down must eventually go up and that is exactly what is happening.

This leads to the question, "what should I do to mitigate my costs"? The answer is to communicate with your broker early to identify and understand any potential issues with your renewal. If you have been with the same insurer for more than five



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years and are claims free, you should expect a renewal that comes in with a reasonable rate increase. There are always exceptions to this rule.

The renewal process with your broker should begin well before it has in past years – we suggest 60-90 days. In a hard market, underwriters require more detailed information and spend more time reviewing submissions. It is important to be aware that in the absence of detailed information, underwriters will often assume the worst. Therefore, robust submissions will yield the most competitive terms. To assist your broker, complete and return any requested paperwork giving as much lead time as possible. This will allow your broker extra time to negotiate terms and navigate any challenges the market may present. If you have had claims over the past few years, understand why these losses occurred and come up with a plan to prevent them from occurring again.

I am sure you would agree that it is important for contractors to not only use the right tool, but also the best tool for each job. The correct tool is not always the cheapest off the shelf, but over years saves a company time and money. This is also true in selecting your commercial insurance broker. Insurance coverages and policies are very specific to each contractor and trade. Without experience working with a variety of contractors and construction professionals, important coverages can be missed, exposing a company's assets.

Wilson M. Beck has built their team with experienced experts who can assist construction companies with their insurance and bonding needs. Our Victoria office has the most experienced construction insurance and bonding team on Vancouver Island, and has access to industry leading professionals who work for the group's network of offices across Western Canada. We work with

each contractor and professional starting at the bidding phase all the way through to project completion and warranty period. We only work with financially stable insurers and surety companies that support and understand the construction industry in order to ensure that our clients have the best coverage available.

*James Clapp is a partner at Wilson M. Beck Insurance Services Inc., specializing in construction insurance and surety. James has been working in the insurance industry for over 20 years.*

*A.J. Winters is an assistant vice president at Wilson M. Beck Insurance Services Inc., specializing in construction insurance and surety. A.J. has been working in the insurance industry for over 11 years.*

*Carole Bissett is the managing director at Wilson M. Beck Insurance Services Inc., specializing in construction insurance and surety for over 30 years. ■*



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# Notices of Project in residential construction

## Safe work practices in residential construction

By Jaret Swanson

**WORK SAFE BC**

If you're an employer, you're responsible for creating and managing a healthy and safe workplace. Before starting work on a construction project, you may be required to submit a Notice of Project to WorkSafeBC. For any construction project that is estimated to cost more than \$100,000 including labour and materials, or that is designed in whole or in part by a professional engineer (excluding pre-engineered or pre-manufactured components), you will need to submit a Notice of Project (NOP) to WorkSafeBC. It's free and takes about approximately 15 minutes to complete on your smartphone or computer at [worksafebc.com/residential-construction](http://worksafebc.com/residential-construction).

Understanding when and who needs to submit a NOP is the first step to ensuring your project runs smoothly and that health and safety is considered prior to its start. The NOP must be submitted at least 24 hours before work on the project begins.

### What about asbestos or other hazardous substances?

In most cases, it's the owner or prime contractor who is required to submit the NOP. If your project involves working with or near hazardous substances, including asbestos, lead, mould, radiation, or other biological or chemical agents that may expose workers to risk of occupational disease, a separate NOP-H will need to be filed by the qualified abatement contractor that has been retained for the project. WorkSafeBC requires a minimum of 48 hours' advance notice to be provided in cases where work involves hazardous substances.

### How do I submit?

In 2019, WorkSafeBC streamlined the online submission process after consultation with employers. The new process introduced a customized form for construction (NOP-C) and integrated Google maps, allowing employers to place a pin on the map to indicate the location of a work site. You also have the option to upload attachments, receive a printable confirmation that you can print and post at your work site, and you can leave a session mid-completion without the form timing out.

### Planning and scheduling leads to a healthy and safe workplace

Failure to plan and supervise for safety have been identified as key factors that can lead to unsafe acts or conditions in the construction industry. Help to prevent workplace injuries, illnesses, and diseases by planning and scheduling all work activities before demolition, excavation, and construction begin.

### For more information

Visit [worksafebc.com/residential-construction](http://worksafebc.com/residential-construction) where you can submit an NOP and find more information on safe work practices in residential construction.

*Jaret Swanson is a manager in Occupational Health and Safety Consultation and Education Services at WorkSafeBC. ■*

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# Safety *and* hearing loss prevention



## Connect Hearing has it covered

By Deb Draper

The Connect Hearing Industrial Department has been providing mobile hearing testing for more than 35 years, helping industry ensure healthier and safe work environments. “We have four provincially certified industrial audiometric technicians on the Island,” says Ken Foley, industrial division manager, Connect Hearing, Vancouver Island. “Our door-to-door mobile service is still operating under the current COVID protocol.”

That means everyone must wear masks while in the mobile-testing truck. “Normally we test two people at a time,” says Foley. “These days we have only one person enter the truck and get them settled in the testing booth before bringing in a second person. We practice social distancing as much as possible, and our technicians wear both masks and face shields.”

Wiping down the equipment, headsets, and response buttons inside the booth was a regular precaution performed prior to COVID-19, but now staff also sanitize all the high-touch spots such as railings and door knobs.

One change that is not COVID-related is that Connect Hearing is no longer offering custom hearing protection, a service they had always provided but due to a change in regulations, the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of B.C. has deemed it to be a restricted practice. Now, anyone wanting a better fit for custom hearing protection must book an appointment with a registered hearing practitioner or audiologist.

“It’s unfortunate because about 90 percent of custom hearing protection has previously been done through industrial companies,” says Foley. “We’re hoping that the College will decide to offer a certification course on the procedure so that we can once again deliver custom hearing protection to our clients.”

Meanwhile, Connect Hearing has recently consolidated the industrial division office so it is now based out of Vernon, B.C. However, it is still business as usual on Vancouver Island with the Connect Hearing technicians ready to work wherever needed.

For more information about Connect Hearing or to find an office near you, visit [connecthearing.ca](http://connecthearing.ca). ■

One change that is not COVID-related is that Connect Hearing is no longer offering custom hearing protection, a service they had always provided but due to a change in regulations, the College of Speech and Hearing Health Professionals of B.C. has deemed it to be a restricted practice.

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Connect Hearing

# VICA's *Annual Christmas Luncheon* goes virtual

For almost two decades, the annual VICA Christmas Luncheon has been the kick-off for the holiday season. This festive affair features friends, foods, laughs, and cheers as we celebrate the past year's successes. While the merriment and celebration are an important part of the luncheon, ultimately the driving force behind this event is the opportunity to give back to our communities through charitable donations.

As we were unable to host in-person events, some might have thought we would have forgone this year's celebration. However, knowing that 2020 was one of the most difficult years for families in need, we had to persevere and find a way to support the community. So, keeping on-trend, we pivoted using virtual means.

Abiding by COVID protocol, we had catered lunches delivered to each of the participating member companies throughout the island. After everyone had enjoyed their lunch, we all hopped on Zoom for some kind words from Rory, a game of virtual bingo, and prize raffle draw. The Zoom meeting went as well as one could imagine with plenty of, "oh you're on mute" moments and some technical mishaps, but hey, it is 2020.

Most importantly, through event sponsorship, registration, and prize raffle, VICA members raised over \$13,000 for our Kids in Need initiative — \$500 more than our 2019 total! The money raised was then distributed to inner-city schools in Victoria and Nanaimo, helping families in need through the holiday season and throughout 2021.

In addition to the funds raised through our virtual luncheon, \$12,625 was donated in cash and toys through our annual Toy Drive. This amount almost doubles last year's total with 34 member companies participating. The donations were distributed to CFAx Santa's Anonymous, the Lady-smith Resource Centre, Nanaimo Toy Drive, and Holiday Hamper Drive in Courtenay.

While 2020 had its share of lows, our 2020 Christmas Luncheon will hopefully be remembered as the silver-tinsel lining which brought members together and demonstrated the charity of the construction industry. ■



# BC CONSTRUCTION STAT PACK

FALL 2020

**#1**

Construction's Rank as an Employer in BC's Goods Sector

**\$220B**

Value of Proposed Construction Projects in British Columbia

**\$112B**

Value of Current Construction Projects in British Columbia

**8.9%**

BC Construction Industry Contribution to BC's GDP

## WORKFORCE TRENDS

## 5-YEAR TREND

**25,817**



Number of construction companies in BC (92% have less than 20 employees)



**15%**

**205,500**



Number of employees in BC's construction sector



**2%**

**178,600\***



Number of construction trades workers in BC's labour force



**0.9%\*\***

**\$59,141**



Average yearly wage of BC construction employees (\$12.5B cumulative yearly wage)



**2%**

**24,387**



Number of construction job openings in BC due to retirements and expansion by 2029



**24%**

**8,408**



Number of construction jobs in BC that will be unfilled due to labour shortages by 2029



**44%**

**18.2%**  
(69,700)



BC youth unemployment rate and number of unemployed youth (15-24 yrs. old)



**60%**

**6%\***



Percentage of the construction trades workforce in BC that is female



**30%\*\***

## BC CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION PROVINCE-WIDE EMPLOYER SERVICES:



For more insight, visit us at [www.bccasn.com/stats](http://www.bccasn.com/stats)

\*Most recently published statistics from 2019  
\*\*One year trend

# The Young Builders Network



*The newly minted Young Builders Network (pre-COVID).*

For the last seven years, VICA's U40 Committee faced overwhelming feedback from VICA members regarding their committee name and what it represented.

"The committee has always been about supporting the younger generations in the construction industry and giving everyone an opportunity and platform to network, learn from experienced mentors, and give back to the community," says A.J. Winters, chair and long-time member. "With this said, the hard cut off of 40 years old has been a challenge and obstacle that did not reflect the inclusiveness that this committee represents. The committee members wanted the name to identify the support for the young generation in the industry while also welcoming all ages to participate."

The committee has always welcomed all ages to its popular events such as the Charity Casino Night and the Builders on the

Barge music festival. These events have become very successful thanks to the support of all VICA members.

So, VICA's U40 executive team worked together to rebrand and rename themselves. "The new name, Young Builders Network, better reflects that we are an inclusive committee, and that we welcome all demographics of the construction industry," says Jayna Wiewiorowski, vice-chair. "It was so disheartening to hear VICA members say that they would not attend one of our events because they weren't under 40."

The committee has not only changed their name and logo, but they have welcomed some new members including a new addition to their leadership team. Jessica Sidhu, a project manager with Kinetic Construction has recently stepped into the committee's secretary/treasurer role. "As a young professional, building and maintaining relationships is impor-

tant. Construction is about collaboration and getting results, which wouldn't be possible without solid relationships," says Sidhu. "The Young Builders Network has been a great way to meet new people and stay connected with existing colleagues, and the events are diverse and engaging. Because construction is my world for the next 40 years, I want to make it enjoyable and successful. The encouragement and inspiration that comes out of this committee has personally made me a better leader. I'm excited to be taking on the secretary/treasurer role this year to help the committee continue to grow and contribute to the shared goal of bettering the construction community through inclusion."

Despite the circumstances of 2020, the Young Builders Network was still able to host their Charity Casino Night which raised \$30,000 for Help Fill a Dream and a socially distant Charity Ghost Walk which raised \$2,000 for Another Brick in Nepal. The committee continues to grow its network and executive members who continue to work hard behind the scenes (virtually these days). They recently launched a podcast available on Spotify, "The Builders and the Tools", in which the hosts interview construction leaders around the Greater Victoria area and dive into personal stories with guests about their careers and what it took to get to where they are at today.

The committee has a variety of virtual events on the horizon and they look forward to welcoming all ages to join them.

To learn more about VICA's committees, including U40 Central Island, visit [vicabc.ca](http://vicabc.ca). ■

# Women in CONSTRUCTION



VICA's Women in Construction is a committee whose mandate is to promote and support female participation in the construction industry. With chapters in Nanaimo and Victoria, WiC hosts events that provide an opportunity to network, learn about local projects, and have some fun. Events include site tours, education and career panels, fundraising and team building events that bring a diverse group of women (and occasionally men) from accountants to engineers.

But how does a committee focused on making connections maintain its connection with members and the community during a pandemic?

"We made it our mission to continue creating valuable events," says Kathy Price, chair of WiC Victoria. "With the commitment from our executive team, we all agreed that our network and events are so vital to our mental health; we simply were not willing to let our members down. Our members are the backbone, they provided us with patience, encouragement, and we really want to thank them for that this year."

Price says that from the shift she was seeing in her professional career at Knappe Projects Inc., she knew that virtual events were going to be the way forward. So the WiC committee jumped right in hosting virtual site tours of the McKenzie interchange and the Site C Dam, a Pecha Kucha information event, a Meet-the-Exec social and a "CanDIYstruction" gingerbread house building contest for WiC's Christmas Social. During a safer time, WiC was also able to host a physi-

cally distanced outdoor walking tour of Old Town. In February, the committee is holding their annual Power Women Panel where they host women from the non-profit housing sectors.

Jessica Sidhu, project manager at Kinetic Construction Ltd. and vice-chair of WiC Victoria, says that while the committee was overcoming the challenges of technology, there were some positive aspects to this change in situation.

"Attendance was more than we expected, even with everyone experiencing Zoom fatigue," says Sidhu. "Using conferencing platforms opened up more possibilities for educational events in the future. Through all of this, the executive committee learned new skills and our members supported us by attending our events and providing feedback"

Flattening the curve in the community meant steepening the learning curve when it came to technology. Sidhu says adjusting from in-person events to virtual tours and webinars took time and patience when creating digital content and

managing conferencing platforms.

"We identified gaps in our technical skills and worked together to elevate our proficiency in the different programs we now relied on for events. There was a lot of effort involved in creating videos, slide-shows, and scripts. Virtual events were a new challenge because the content needed to be finalized in advance and there was less room to improvise," says Sidhu. "Our executive committee handled the challenge with enthusiasm."

Price says she applauds WiC's executive team for leaning in, reaching out, and standing up to the challenges they faced and creating these valuable events this year.

"We have heard from our members, and they were grateful for our persistence. We rely on our sponsors and supporting VICA staff to effectively run our committee, it is only with them we have been able to keep on," says Price. "We are looking forward to the day when we can all meet again for a social networking event."

For more information about WiC in Victoria or Nanaimo, visit [vicabc.ca](http://vicabc.ca). ■

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## MEET YOUR BOARD



**JAMES CLAPP**  
*Wilson M. Beck Insurance Services*  
Chair

James Clapp is a construction surety insurance broker with 18+ years of experience and over 150 clients across B.C. and Alberta. He spends the bulk of his time reviewing tender and contract specifications, ensuring his clients understand and comply with insurance and bonding requirements; alerting clients to any onerous conditions. As a former surety underwriter, James also brings a strong background in construction accounting.



**CHRIS LYONS**  
*Omicron Construction Ltd.*  
Vice Chair

Chris Lyons is the senior project manager for Omicron Construction in Victoria. He has 12 years of experience in general contracting followed by five years of experience in integrated development, design, and construction. During his career, he has worked on renovations, multi-family residential, commercial, and institutional projects as a contractor, developer, and design builder. Chris has also been involved with the VICA Young Builders Network since its inception and is the past chair.



**KATE ULMER**  
*Herold Engineering Ltd.*  
Treasurer

Kate is a registered professional engineer and the manager of Herold Engineering's Victoria office. She has over 15 years of experience as a structural consultant and works on a wide variety of local institutional, commercial, and residential projects including new builds and seismic retrofitting. Kate volunteers with the Women in Construction executive committee, the City of Victoria Civic Heritage Trust Conservation committee, and the Engineers and Geoscientists B.C.



**STUART CUTHBERT**  
*Mazzei Electric*  
Secretary

Stuart is the director of operations with Mazzei Electric. He has been working in the construction industry for the last 16 years, predominantly in supply, sub-contracting, and manufacturing. Over that time Stuart has had the opportunity to work with operations across Canada, the USA, Japan, South America, and the UK. Now overseeing branches in Victoria and Nanaimo, he brings an appreciation of the whole breadth of the construction community on the Island and beyond.



**ROGER YAGER**  
*Knappett Projects Inc.*  
Past Chair

Roger is the vice president of Knappett Projects and has been involved in the construction industry for nearly 25 years. With his experience in all facets of the industry, Roger brings a unique perspective and understanding of current issues to the Board. Very involved in both VICA and BCCA, Roger serves as Chair for VICA S&P committee, is a BCCA director, and chair of the BCCA S&P committee.



**BARCLAY ELLIS**  
*Trades Labour Corporation*  
Victoria  
Director

Barclay has been the president of Trades Labour Corp. Victoria, a blue-collar staffing agency, for the past 10 years. He was born and raised on Vancouver Island and is very proud to give back to his community. For the past five years, he has served on the VICA Young Builders Network (YBN) Executive committee in the role of events & communications director. VICA YBN's events include the Annual Charity Casino, which has raised over \$50,000 for local charities, and Builders on the Barge, which brought together 200 construction personnel for a day of live music and networking.



**PAUL GRAY**  
*Farmer Construction Ltd.*  
Director

Paul is a 'born-and-bred' Victorian. He has spent the past 13 years working at Farmer Construction and has recently become one of the company shareholders. His experience working at Farmer alongside previous board members — Brian Scroggs, Barry Scroggs, and Gerrit Vink — has given him an enormous appreciation for the long-term impact our industry has on the surrounding community. Paul has a natural desire for organization, process, and procedures, and is currently working at Farmer as chief estimator. As a VICA director, he plans to look at issues in the industry to support and encourage fair and realistic procurement practices both for GCs and subcontractors by owners and consultants.



**DAVID LEWIS**  
*Alpine Insulation*  
Director

David became one of two owners of Alpine Insulation in 2013 and has worked largely in the commercial side of business since then. Over the course of his professional career, he has participated in board governance from a variety of viewpoints. He understands the value associations can bring to their membership in terms of tangible rewards from health benefits and insurance programs, as well as from a strategic standpoint in terms of policy development and lobby work. He also understands that directors are effective by providing strong, clear, focused guidance and a commitment to work at the committee level.

## MEET YOUR BOARD



**MARK LIUDZIUS**  
*Kinetic Construction Ltd.*  
Director

Mark Liudzius is the executive vice president, director of operations, and chair at Kinetic Construction where he has been since 1997. In addition to being a member of ASTTBC, Mark is also a LEED AP and has his GSC in project management. He has been a member of various committees for BCCA and VICA for several years. Mark started out as a carpenter and has gained extensive industry experience throughout his career. He mentors and coaches junior staff members for guidance and career development.



**SCOTT TORRY**  
*AFC Construction*  
Director

Scott is a project manager with AFC Construction in Courtenay. He has a diverse background managing commercial, industrial, and residential projects from both mechanical and general contracting perspectives and over 30 years of experience in the construction industry on Vancouver Island — which is also his place of birth. Scott is the current chair of the Civil Contractors Council and, as such, is committed to ensuring that Island civil contractors are well supported by VICA. Prior to volunteering on the VICA Board, he volunteered on the Comox Valley Airport Commission for seven years.



**BYRON TARB**  
*Tarby Construction Inc.*  
Director

Since moving to Nanaimo in 1997 from South Africa, Byron immediately found comfort within the welcoming community of his beautiful town, in particular amongst the construction industry. Through the VICA Board, he hopes to continue contributing to a growing and developing community which has offered him so much. As a carpenter by trade, complimented with a Bachelor's of Management and a PMP designation, Byron obtained both practical and managerial knowledge to be an effective board member. With over twelve years of project management experience in diverse industries, he aims to leverage his knowledge to develop strategic and creative solutions.



**CHRIS WILLIAMS**  
*Houle Electric*  
Director

Chris Williams is the Victoria branch manager at Houle Electric and has risen through the ranks there for the past 20 years. Chris was born and raised in Victoria and has been actively involved in the enormous growth and change in the construction industry on the Island as a construction electrician, estimator, and project manager with Houle. He has shown his support for VICA as an active leader of Houle's dedicated support to VICA, as well as his energetic participation in the VICA Young Builders Network for the past six years, the last three as part of the leadership team.



**MORLEY WILKINS**  
*Campbell Construction Ltd.*  
 Director

Morley Wilkins is a Chartered Accountant who, prior to joining Campbell Construction, worked in the public sector at BC Transit and articulated at the CPA firm Trenholme & Company. He has an MBA from the University of Victoria and brings over 10 years experience in strategic planning, information technology, and risk management. Morley also volunteers as a CPA mentor and provides future students support and insight that can help broaden their mindsets.

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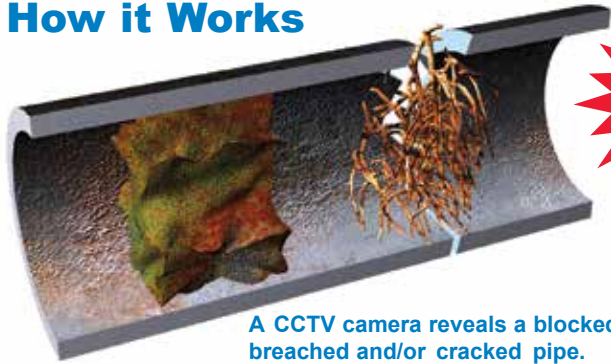
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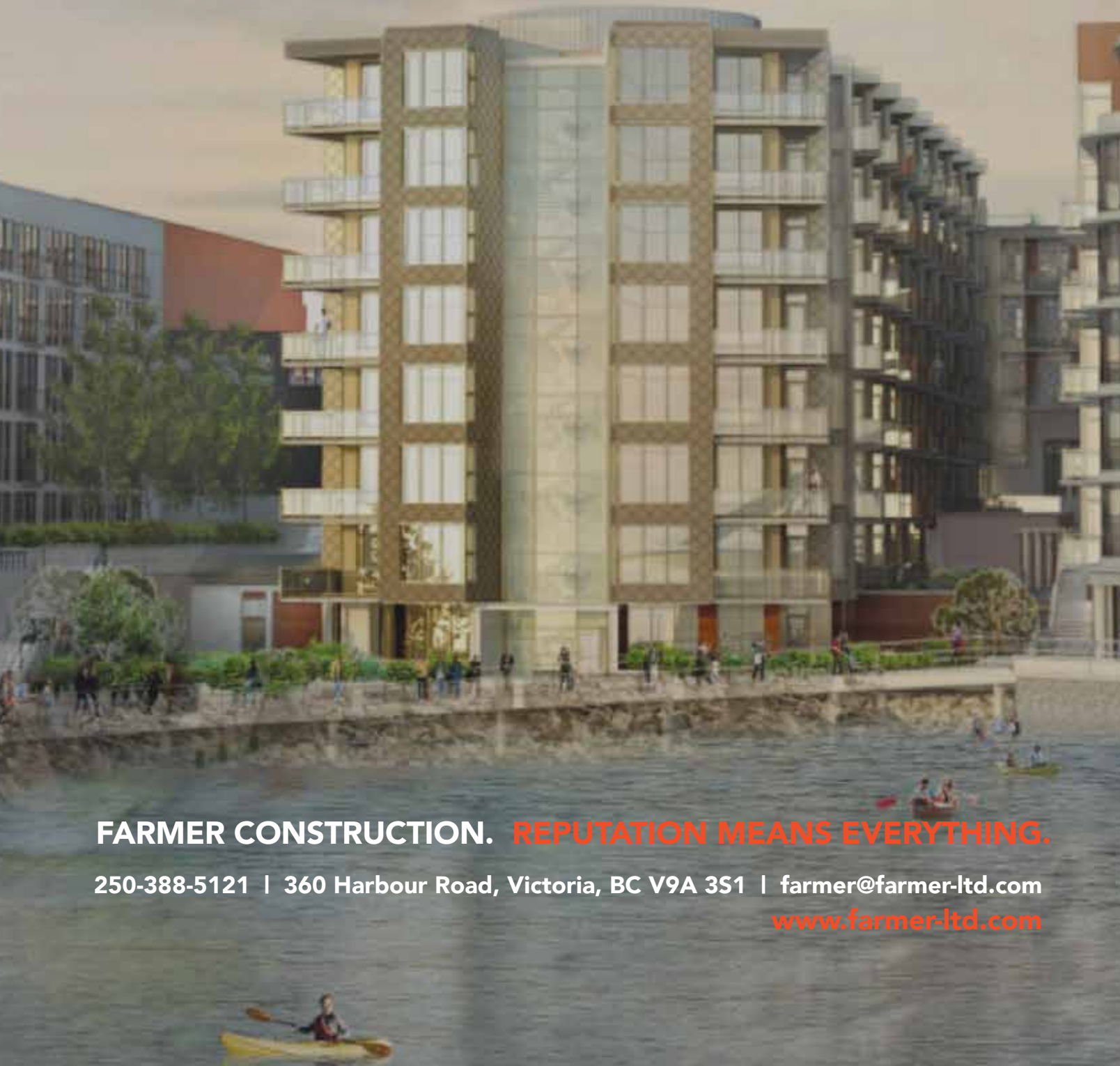
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