

Calgary Construction Association (CCA) and the Provincial
Glaziers Association of Alberta (PGAA) Skilled Trades and
Apprenticeship Act (STAE) and the Designated Trades and
Restricted Activities Regulation (DTRA) Review Committee and
the Alberta Trade Contractors Council (ATCC) Update for the
GAMA AGM/Dinner Meeting-2023-11-09

A lot has happened since our last meeting in September.

From a Calgary Construction Association (CCA) perspective, the core elements remain the talent pool, which in many ways addresses the Skilled Trades and Apprenticeship Act (STAE) and the Designated Trades and Restricted Activities Regulation (DTRA) and supporting the ongoing implementation of the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act

On 2023-10-18 and 19 the CCA had a booth at Buildex. The CCA Workforce Solutions Booth featured the CCA, as well as Women Building Future, Trade Winds to Success, and Momentum, all focussed on trades and workforce. This was a great networking event with a plethora of industry seminars. Additionally, Bill Black, President and COO of the CCA, hosted a panel discussion on Builder Workforce that was kicked off by Labour Minister Matt Jones. The outcome was really that the talent pool issues we are facing today started forty years ago with schools closing shops and starting to pound into youth and their parents that the only way to have a good career was to get a university education. This was the slowest moving train in history, but it has finally arrived and it will take us years to walk it back.

However, we need to start now, have a clear and concise message, and appeal to both parents and youth on the fact that construction provides a worthy, satisfying and viable career path, that while life is a life-long learning process, a three or four-year apprenticeship leads to a well paid job with little to no student debt, and the start of a career where you can write your own ticket.

CCA has hired Tammy Amstutz as our new Director of Workforce Strategies to help navigate the many programs currently in force and to help our members and industry fill open positions and encourage youth to see construction as a positive vocational choice. Tammy started November 1.

On 2023-10-24 Lois Innes, the CCA Chair, and I sat in on the first of four industry engagement sessions on the Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act (PPCLA), with Service Alberta.

In the wake of the provincial governments rubber stamping the Dow exemption (get to set the invoice period, all else remains as per the ACT-pay in 28 days to GC, pay in 7 to subs, pay in 7 to sub-subs) to the PPCLA, they are now trying to win back support from industry.

The government expressed their opinion that the PPCLA is an industry tool, and that industry must use the tool to be successful. There is a fear that subtrades are too afraid of damaging their perceived relationships with general contractors to lien them and pursue adjudication. If someone is not paying you according to the law, is it really a good relationship? The government appears to be ready to sign on to the PPCLA as well, although this may mean a need to re-write the Public Works Act (PWA) which in many ways flies against the PPCLA. Try slapping a lien on the legislature.

There may also be support for the PPCLA with surety companies and banking institution pushing subtrades to have their payment terms lived to.

On 2023-10-26, the CCA Executive met. We had an update on a very upbeat 2023, for CCA with memberships, revenue, events, attendance, and sponsorship all up, year over year. Influence and media attention, moreso than Build Works (previously always the top reason people joined or stayed) became the driver for CCA. Bill Black, President and COO, is now sitting on five City of Calgary advisory committees including Business, Buildings, Social Procurement, C of C Liaison, and Climate, while Frano Cavar, Director of Government Relations, sits on the Heritage Calgary Committee. A lot of work, but influence and advocacy in action. This is the CCA's value to members today.

The CCA team met with the Green Line team on 2023-10-30 to discuss their queries on manpower and procurement, and to help to bring industries perspective on the best approach to dealing with this mega-project, in a heated market, where manpower is already an issue.

Over the period 2023-11-02 to 05 our CCA board met in Banff for our annual retreat. On Friday, Clive Thurston, past chair of the Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA) joined us for a full day session on how the OGCA over twenty years became **the** solitary voice of industry in Ontario, leading to a review of all major tenders, identifying risk and mediation action to all untoward clauses and aspects. In the years since Clive has left OCGA, their influence and value to members has declined. CCA wants to use this knowledge to help us to step forward and add value to members as well as better plan succession to reduce the possibility of losing our momentum.

From the PGAA-Skilled Trades and Apprentice Education Act (STAE) and the Designated Trades and Restricted Activities Regulation (DTRA) perspective, over the course of the past two months, our team has met to review the Skilled Trades and Apprentice Education Act (STAE) and, more in depth, the Designated Trades and Restricted Activities Regulation (DTRA). We have assembled a survey to industry as a whole, to a) inform industry of these two documents, and b) find out, as requested by Skilled Trades and Professions, how the Act and the DTRA are perceived. Results of the survey will be used to gauge the PGAA's response to the STAE and the DTRA and suggestions for changes to this legislation.

The survey is in progress, with assistance from the Alberta Construction Association (ACA), who have graciously volunteered to assist the PGAA in getting the survey out to a very broad swath of industry and to correlate the results. The PGAA has supplied a list of over 180 members of GAMA and GTA, along with another 180 non-members. Further the ACA has compiled a list of home builders and renovators that will increase this list by a further 800 plus names.

We met last week, with Ken Gibson of ACA and Mark Hoosein, CEO of the Alberta Construction Safety Association (ACSA). In adding two questions on behalf of ACSA, we will be able to access their database of over 8,000 involved with glazing or window installations. Even with duplications, this should still see us reaching out to 7,500 plus individual companies.

Our survey is set to be sent out on the following dates:

- 2023-11-01
- 2023-11-08 yesterday, and again
- 2023-11-15

We will also be holding a virtual town hall 2023-11-22 from noon until 13:00 to answer any queries that may arise from the STAE, the DTRA, or the survey. We will be asking that the survey be completed and returned by 2023-11-29, after which we will be able to correlate the data. Please take the time to read the documents and let us know how these pieces of legislation will affect your business?

The goal is to be able to provide industry input and recommendations for changes, to Skilled Trades/AIT. As they are in the process of training 140 to 180 (depending on whose numbers you believe) new inspectors who will soon be in the field to enforce the Act and the DTRA.

Of late, there has been a lot of waffling on how they intend to enforce the act, with no desire to change the verbiage therein, and that is not acceptable.

Many thanks to our team of Jim Brady, Stuart Cantrill, Richard Munro, and Lisa Ledbury.

Recent rumblings from the Skilled Trades and Professions or AIT suggest that they will be enforcing the act differently than written, i.e. allowing labourers to be 'deemed qualified' as registered apprentices. This is not the way the regulations are written and we believe that the regulations need to match what the officers will be enforcing.

From the Alberta Trade Contractors Council (ATCC) perspective, on 2023-10-06 the ATCC met. Karen Rutherford, Executive Director of the Alberta Roofing Contractors Association (ARCA) had attended the Global Apprenticeship Summit in Ottawa, 2023-09-28, on behalf of the ATCC. She walked us through some of her key findings.

The summit featured people from around the world, including Australia, New Zealand, and Switzerland who are leaders along with Alberta globally, and from over 50 other countries. Alberta is still a leader here but, we need to be progressive to stay that way, particularly, in light of the demographic and educational work/changes over the past four decades, leaving us with a shortage of skilled trades today.

Based on this summit and the findings of the United Nations (UN)-International Labour Organization (ILO) General Conference report R208-Quality Apprenticeships recommendation, 2023 a number of key focus items were identified:

- Employers (80 to 90% of training) need to be apprenticeship sponsors, not post secondary institutions (PSI). This keeps industry and labour focussed on need, not courses available.
- Testing must be a component of all education.
- Competency assessments and aptitude testing should be conducted by PSIs
- PSIs need to be closely monitored by government and industry. This is where we need the PAC/LACs back.
- English should be the universal language of apprenticeships
- Opportunities exist and are starting to be explored with the neuro diverse.
- Prison training is yielding excellent results in many countries
- Providing tools and PPE goes a long way.
- Celebrating the success of all apprentices, not just the top achievers
- Involving more women in trades
- Starting trades and construction promoting in junior high
- Focussing on low-income areas
- More support for immigrants and marginalized populations

- 20% of Canadians dyslexic/ADD is also huge-support these groups

On the afternoon of 2023-10-24 the ATCC held a long-awaited Meet and Greet with Advanced Education Minister Rajan Sawhney, who is the head of Skilled Trades and Professions and Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT). Karen Rutherford is a constituent of Minister Sawhney's and after correspondence from the ATCC had gone unanswered Karen went to one of Minister Sawhney's events and met with her, to arrange this meeting.

We tactfully presented industry issues, particularly the imbalance with the current STAE board (slanted to PSIs) and hit on key issues where we need change. We agreed to forward several items on to Minister Sawhney and her staff and to hold another meeting (TBD) in about a month. ATCC asked that Minister Sawhney repopulate the STAE board and provided some resumes for replacements.

On 2023-11-03, during a regularly scheduled industry zoom meeting, ADM Mike Fernandez and STAE Chair Ray Massey announced that going forward AIT will be utilizing the individuals who have registered with the TACE Program, now called My Skilled Trades Network, in place of the old PAC/LACs that previously worked as the conduit from industry to government.

This would appear to be a hugely bogus replacement for the PAC/LACs. Industry has no control on who signs up for the My Skilled Trades Network, no ability to meet and discuss issues and what is best for our industries, the STAE board can then pick and choose what input they choose to take and act upon, and there is zero accountability to STAE or back to industry.

I have proposed a special ATCC meeting and that we should respond to Minister Sawhney, to the STAE board, and to the Skilled Trades/AIT team, that this is an unacceptable replacement for the PAC/LAC structure. We need to deal with this sooner rather than later. CCA is committed to supporting this.