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BACK TO YOU



Credit: Association of Manitoba Municipalities

MUNICIPALITIES CALL IN FULL FORCE FOR RESTORED INFRASTRUCTURE BUDGET

Association's convention sees push back on Manitoba's cuts to roads, bridges

More than 100 of Manitoba's municipal governments have endorsed a joint call for the provincial government to reinstate the Municipal Road and Bridge Program. The vote on the resolution was passed at the Association of Manitoba Municipalities' 20th Annual Convention this week.

"In June 2018, the Province of Manitoba announced that it is proceeding with plans to terminate the Municipal Road and Bridge Program," the AMM said in a news release Tuesday. In 2017, the program made \$14 million available to municipalities. This year, the fund was cut to \$2.25 million.

"Municipal road and bridge infrastructure is essential for a better Manitoba," stated Chris Goertzen, AMM President. "This program has very little red tape, which makes it an efficient way for municipalities to partner with the provincial government to build much-needed infrastructure in local communities across our province."

AMM members voted for a resolution calling on the provincial government "to not proceed with plans to transition the Municipal Road and Bridge Program into the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program and fully

reinstate the former funding levels for this essential municipal program."

The vote came a day after Premier Brian Pallister addressed the convention, telling the municipalities their request for revenue sharing from taxes on legalized marijuana sales was a no-go.

A number of municipalities had already set their road and bridge budgets for 2018, prior to the province's announcement funding was being slashed.

"We join with the AMM in supporting restoration of core infrastructure investment by the provincial government," MHCA President Chris Lorenc said.

"We understand the need to cut expenditures and support the government in its efforts to achieve fiscal balance, but there must be real balance – we need to see provincial revenues used to grow the economy and there's no doubt that strong core infrastructure investment helps grow the economy."

The convention also saw the AMM Cities Caucus elect Selkirk Mayor Larry Johansson as its new Chair.

Winnipeg council to release budget in February

Mayor Brian Bowman announced this week that his administration is working to release the 2019 operating and capital budgets in February, with consultation starting in December.

Bowman established a budget working group, consisting of himself, Finance Chair Scott Gillingham, the Chairs of all other policy committees, Deputy Mayor Markus Chambers, and Acting Deputy Mayor Vivian Santos.

"Preparing a budget requires an immense amount of work as well as many difficult choices," said Gillingham. "This will undoubtedly be a challenging budget year, but I am confident that with the efforts of the budget working group and extensive consultations with other members of Council as well as the public, we can bring forward a budget that will reflect the priorities of Winnipeg residents."

In a news release, the mayor said the budget working group will be tasked with preparing a preliminary budget that is balanced, limits property tax increases to 2.33%, and makes strategic investments necessary to build and position Winnipeg as its population grows toward a million people.

Provincial law requires city council to adopt a budget before March 31 of each fiscal year. It also requires the city to prepare a five-year capital forecast.

Bowman said the reluctance of the provincial government in last week's throne speech to provide certainty on the continuity of future operating and capital funding



to the City of Winnipeg is making it challenging to meet these legislated requirements.

"I've always said cities need strong federal and provincial partners to address the infrastructure deficit and build for the future," he said. "We've been able to partner on some key infrastructure projects over the last few years, including an historic program to rebuild our roads, but it's hard to budget annually as well as five years into the future without certainty on whether funding partnerships are continuing and at what level."

MHCA Committee Meetings

Rental Rates Committee

MHCA Office
December 17

MHCA Board of Directors

MHCA Office
January 23

MHCA Executive Committee

MHCA Office
January 16

MHCA request for meeting on quarry rehab program put on hold



The MHCA's request to meet with Growth, Enterprise and Trade Minister Blaine Pedersen has been put off until the completion of the department's internal investigation into the Quarry Rehabilitation Program fund.

"We respect there is an investigation proceeding, but the MHCA wants to proceed with what we see as necessary updates and improvements to the Quarry Rehabilitation Program," MHCA President Chris Lorenc said.

The program levies a per-tonne fee on aggregate producers who draw aggregate materials from pits and quarries around Manitoba. The fees are put into the Quarry Rehabilitation Fund, to pay for work to return the spent pits and quarries back to a more natural or recreational state.

Lorenc said the industry is anxious to see the investigation wrapped up as well because the department has halted the payments to contractors who have done rehabilitation work at pits and quarries.

This summer, all flow of funds from the program were halted pending the completion of the department's investigation, but no other details were released.

The MHCA sent a letter to Pedersen November 14, requesting the meeting. Deputy Minister Dave Dyson replied this week, who said all matters relating to the program are on hold.

"Should you wish to follow up on the status of the program/review, please feel free to contact Jennifer Rogers, A/Manager of Aggregate Resources and Quarry Rehabilitation at 204-945-5325."



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Improving industry through advocacy: MHCA celebrates 75 years

Andrew Snook, *Rock to Road*, November 22



The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) has been a strong advocate for the construction industry for three quarters of a century, and not just in Manitoba.

When the MHCA was founded in 1943 out of the Prairie Roadbuilders Association, members of industry across Western Canada had some big plans on their minds to grow the industry throughout the region and improve stability. Several key members believed the MHCA should champion a national highway program to help better connect Canadians across the country. By the 1950s, the association made a renewed push for that program; and by 1962 the association's advocacy efforts came full circle with the opening of the Trans-Canada Highway – partially constructed by its own members.

"A country cannot trade together if it is not connected together," says MHCA president Chris Lorenc during an interview at the association's office in Winnipeg. Lorenc's knowledge of the association's work and history is arguably as good as anyone's within the MHCA. He has been the president of the MHCA for 27 years.

"I'm a very lucky person. I get up every morning and can't wait to get to work," he says. "The scope of our work is so broad."

Having an earned 'presence, profile and impact' reputation as the recognized voice of and for the heavy construction industry in Manitoba, the MHCA continues to advocate for sustained investment in core infrastructure, and seamless, multi-modal transportation systems.

The MHCA works with other associations across Canada to tackle topics that go beyond its provincial borders. Helping create the blueprint for Canada's national highway program isn't the only way the country, as a whole,

has benefitted from the hard work of the MHCA. One of the proudest achievements of the MHCA, in Lorenc's opinion, was helping people understand the importance of the terms "infrastructure" and "infrastructure deficit," from industry stakeholders at the federal, provincial and municipal levels to the general public. He says many important policies have been built around these terms since their inception – like strategic investment in infrastructure, for example.

The MHCA advocates for strategic investment of infrastructure program budgets based on six principles for sound investment in core infrastructure (streets, highways, bridges, land drainage, water distribution and wastewater treatment systems).

Those principles are:

1. **Permanent, strategic and sustained:** Infrastructure investment should be set out in permanent multi-year plans;
2. **Focus on economic growth:** Evidence shows that investment in strategic infrastructure has defined returns to the economy of up to \$1.60 for every \$1 invested (Finance Canada, 2011);
3. **Embrace innovation:** Adopting new, better ways to build or maintain infrastructure will get more value out of the infrastructure budgets;
4. **Harness private-sector partnerships:** The private sector is the source of ingenuity;
5. **Funded by dedicated revenue streams:** Taxpayers must be able to follow the dollar, to know how much is invested, and for what purposes; and
6. **Review annually:** Annual review of investment programs ensures accountability, discipline to purpose and allows for adjustment to benefit from emerging circumstances and lessons learned.

By promoting the importance of strategic infrastructure investment, all levels of government, the construction industry and the general public have a better understanding of the term.

"People now better understand why infrastructure is important, better than anyone in the last 25 years," Lorenc says.

Always looking ahead

The MHCA sets itself apart by focusing on the big picture and changing with the times. One example of this progression as an association – in a male dominated industry – was the naming of MHCA's first female Chair,

Colleen Munro, back in 1995-96. Munro was the first woman to be named chair of a heavy construction association in Canada.

The MHCA is also very active when it comes to promoting safe-work practices and procedures within the industry. The industry and association run and support the WORKSAFELY education and training program. In the 30 years of its operation, trend lines continue to show a significant reduction in the frequency, duration and severity of injuries, making the industry vastly safer and more attractive.

"We are very focused on the big picture, I think that's what sets us apart," Lorenc says.

Canada's construction industry has certainly noticed and acknowledged the MHCA's efforts and accomplishments over the years. The MHCA has been recognized for its advocacy efforts on more than one occasion. During the 2011 CCA Annual Convention, for example, the MHCA was presented the 2010 CCA Member Association Award of Excellence "for demonstrating outstanding leadership and excellence in achievements;" as well as

the CCA International Business Award, "which recognizes the outstanding activities, programs or accomplishments of a Canadian-based business or association active in the construction industry in the area of international business or trade."

The legacy that the association has built over the past 75 years is one that Lorenc is very proud to be part of.

"We punch way above our weight... we have added value to the development of public policy, and that's something we're very proud of," he says. "When you can say that legitimately, it's a heck of a feeling. It is a huge source of personal satisfaction and personal pride. I've never regretted leaving the law practice to join the MHCA. Since starting in 1991, it has been incredible to have worked with every Manitoba premier, provincial ministers, Winnipeg mayors, municipal leaders, successive federal ministers. I've had the privilege of serving 13 MHCA Chairs and working with every board since starting. I have learned from each Chair and every board member. The MHCA is a great organization supported by a great team in its staff. It's been wonderful."

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Looking for the green path ahead

Colin Fast, Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce, November 19



When the provincial government announced in early October it was cancelling its planned carbon tax, Manitobans were left wondering what the federal government would do in response, and how this would impact Manitoba's plans to reduce carbon emissions.

On October 23rd the first part of that question was answered as Ottawa announced its "backstop" carbon tax plan for those provinces that have declined to adopt their own carbon tax, including Manitoba, Ontario, New Brunswick and Saskatchewan.

Starting in April 2019, a carbon price of \$20 per tonne will be added to various categories of fuel.

In Manitoba the fuel charge on gasoline, in 2019, will be 4.42 cents per litre and the charge for natural gas used in home heating will be 3.91 cents per cubic metre. The average cost impact for a household in Manitoba is estimated at \$232 in 2019.

The federal government will rebate most of the reve-

nue raised from the carbon tax directly to Manitobans through Climate Action Incentive payments. The average household will receive about \$336 in incentive payments in 2019.

While getting a bigger rebate than what you're paying in carbon tax sounds great for individuals, the math is less positive for business owners.

The federal government is setting aside approximately 10% of carbon tax revenue – \$190 million over five years – to support small and medium-sized businesses, schools, hospitals, colleges and universities, municipalities, not for profit organizations, and Indigenous communities. It's unclear how that funding will be delivered at this point.

But the bottom line is that businesses will be subsidizing the cost of rebates to individuals. And this additional tax burden creates concerns about economic competitiveness, especially for firms that sell into the United States, which has no carbon pricing at all.

On December 6th, Premier Brian Pallister will deliver his third annual State of the Province Address in front of 1,300 business and community leaders at the RBC Winnipeg Convention Centre. We'll be looking for him to comment on the federal carbon tax plan and the ongoing dispute over this issue.

But equally as important, The Chamber audience wants to hear about Manitoba's path forward on addressing climate change, how the Province will incentivize businesses that are taking steps to improve the efficiency of their operations, and how we can build a green economy in our province.

Manitoba, Ottawa clash over flood-prevention project

Dylan Robertson, Winnipeg Free Press, November 28

The \$540-million project aimed at preventing devastating floods in Manitoba's Interlake region seems suddenly gummed up, devolving into finger-pointing, just five months after Ottawa ponied up cash for one of Canada's largest disaster-prevention endeavours.

"If this continues, we won't get that outlet built; it will take years," Premier Brian Pallister told reporters Tuesday, marking a fresh clash with the federal Liberals over the Lake St. Martin and Lake Manitoba outlet channels.

Meanwhile, communities most in need of those canals claim federal consultations have snubbed their towns, while local reserves are warning the province the project could imperil fish stocks.

Tory MP James Bezan (Selkirk-Interlake) said the breakdown started this month when the Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency (CEAA) started forming a technical advisory group on the project.

He said that could only happen by order of federal Environment Minister Catherine McKenna, but McKenna's office described it as an arm's-length decision.

In any case, Pallister's office said more than 70 people are involved in the advisory group, including remote northern communities. On Monday, he cited Nelson House, which sits hundreds of kilometres downstream from Lake Winnipeg.

Bezan said the CEAA hasn't invited most of the flood-affected towns that need the channel outlets, nor some of the affected reserves, such as Lake Manitoba First Nation.

"It really is strange," Bezan said. He said the channels will affect Lake Winnipeg's water levels, but only by increasing the natural flow by a negligible amount.

"It's more red tape; it's going to slow down the approval processes. And we could be in for another flood in the next couple years."

Pallister accused the Liberals of "changing the rules in midstream to broaden the consultation requirements" with less than 60 days of actual consultations being done over the past 12 months, the total timeline Ottawa said to expect for federal reviews.

The premier speculated the Liberals were being overly cautious after a federal court ruled in August that Ottawa had botched its consultations on the Trans Mountain pipeline.

Pallister had raised a similar concern Monday, while claiming Toronto lawyers were "coming to Manitoba and treating our people as pawns" by offering Interlake communities cash payouts for threatening to delay the projects. The premier refused to name which communities he was talking about.

On Tuesday, federal Infrastructure Minister François-Philippe Champagne insisted the project is going ahead smoothly.

"We believe in the project," Champagne told the Free Press. He noted it's the first project the Liberals approved under their Disaster Mitigation and Adaptation Fund, and it was accounted for in their first budget in spring 2016.

"This is one of our poster-child projects," he said. "We have shown the level of urgency, the level of commitment in this project and we'll continue to do so until it's completed."

'It's more red tape; it's going to slow down the approval processes. And we could be in for another flood in the next couple years.'

- Tory MP James Bezan

Last Friday, the province announced it had commissioned two engineering firms to design and construct the outlets.

That news surprised Treaty 2 First Nations, which includes communities that were flooded in 2011. They claimed in a news release contaminants will spread among the linked lakes, imperilling the fish that reserves rely on for food and their livelihoods.

The reserves decried a lack of consultation from either level of government, scheduling a Tuesday evening press conference to warn the projects "will cause tremendous damage" to their communities.

McKenna would not speak to the project, but said in general her government overhauled consultations by giving Indigenous people and provinces more of a voice.

McKenna's office said it has long expected Manitoba's contractors to submit an environment impact assessment next year, which would receive regular scrutiny.

Manitoba NDP Leader Wab Kinew said Pallister has only himself to blame for the current situation, because he "rushed" to announce the lake outlet project.

After June's historic funding announcement, numerous local chiefs came forward saying they hadn't been invited to the event. Kinew speculated Tuesday they weren't adequately consulted.

Can Volvo and Skanska create the world's first ultra-low emission quarry?

Michael Holder, GreenBiz, November 26



For decades, Vikan Kross quarry just outside Gothenburg has been excavated for granite and aggregates, producing around 1.25 million metric tons of material each year for use in the construction, asphalt and cement industries. And, just like any other mining site around the world, a raft of diesel-guzzling heavy machinery traditionally has been used to carry out the hefty, load-bearing work.

The site is Skanska's oldest and largest quarry in Sweden, but for the past 10 weeks or so, the construction and engineering giant has been piloting new electric and autonomous machinery at the site — including excavators, crushers and load carriers — in the hope a new wave of clean technologies can cut costs, emissions and air pollution. The plan is to turn Vikran Kross into the world's first emissions-free quarry.

"This is the first time anything like this has been attempted in the quarrying industry and, if successful, it could serve as a blueprint for transforming the efficiency, safety and environmental impact of quarries around the world," Skanska Sweden CEO Gunnar Hagman said in August, just before the 10-week pilot got underway.

Dubbed the Electric Site project, it is a collaboration with transport giant Volvo which was first announced in 2015 and has been backed by \$22.3 million of investment, with the Swedish Energy Agency and two Swedish academic institutions, Linköping University and Mälardalen University — also involved.

Research had suggested the project would be able to reduce CO2 emissions from the quarry by 95 percent, while also cutting total operating costs by as much as 25 percent.

"Based on the measurements we have seen so far, we believe we could even go up to a 98 percent reduction in CO2 emissions," says Uwe Muller, chief manager for the project at Volvo Construction Equipment. "We are not fully there with all the results, but on energy consumption, we believe there is scaling potential to reduce energy costs by up to 70 percent. On automation, too, we believe we can reduce operating costs by 40 percent. Then the third tranche of costs is the machinery, which

is to be figured out. We expected to go a bit higher on machine costs, but overall with the reduction in the other two cost streams, we believe a 25 percent reduction in overall costs is doable."

Nevertheless, the project has not been without its challenges, and with a number of issues still to iron out, the pilot has been extended until the end of the year.

Drawing on the Volvo Group's electromobility and automation expertise, the project has seen each stage of the quarry's operations electrified as far as possible, from excavation to primary crushing, and transport to secondary crushing. The companies say a "negligible" amount of diesel fuel is still required, but overall a surprising number of heavy-duty processes can be electrified.

In addition to a fully electrified conveyor belt being installed at the site, Volvo developed three new prototype mining and construction machines specifically for the project. These were introduced alongside new work methods, processes and site management systems drawn up by Skanska to ensure the highest efficiency throughout operations.

Firstly, there is an electric-diesel-hybrid, 70-metric ton capacity excavator named the EX1.

The second prototype piece of machinery on site is the LX1, a wheel loader which is again an electric-diesel hybrid, although this time including both electric motors and an energy storage system with a "significantly smaller" diesel engine.

And finally, eight battery-electric HX2 autonomous load carriers ferry material around the quarry.

Clearly, though, with diesel fuel still being used on site, Vikan Kross is not a completely zero-emission quarry, and eradicating fossil fuels altogether at the site remains a significant challenge.

None of the machinery is yet commercially available, but the auto giant hopes in future to ramp up development of zero and low emissions mining equipment for the industry, explains Müller.

Both the electric-hybrid excavator and loader machines potentially could be brought to market fairly quickly, he says, but the complexity of the technology means the autonomous vehicles are likely to take longer.

It could be some time before ultra-low emissions quarry mining becomes widespread. "We aren't talking about months here — there are still some years to go," Müller acknowledges.

This is an abridged version of the story. To read the full report, [click here](#).



Celebrating 75 **GROUND BREAKING** years in 2018

HIGHWAYS BUDGET CUTS PUT OUR ECONOMY ON ROUGH ROAD

MANITOBA'S ECONOMIC GROWTH POTENTIAL HAS BEEN STUNTED SINCE 2016 BY SHORT-SIGHTED FISCAL POLICY. HERE'S THE ECONOMIC CASE THE MHCA PUT BEFORE PREMIER PALLISTER IN SEPTEMBER, IN A REQUEST TO RESTORE THE HIGHWAYS CAPITAL BUDGET.



The MHCA supports the government's focus on growing the economy, investing smartly in strategic infrastructure as part of that strategy, and reducing the deficit.

It is well-documented that investment in strategic infrastructure provides amongst the highest return on investment (ROI) of public sector dollars, facilitating sustained economic growth, investment, jobs and generating new revenues to government, which assist achieving a fiscal balance objective.

While the degree of the ROI varies, dependent on the type of infrastructure, the value of strategic infrastructure investment return to the GDP is unchallenged.

Finance Canada - Report to Canadians (2011) states every \$1 invested in strategic infrastructure returns \$1.60 to the GDP.

A Conference Board of Canada analysis (2014) of the GDP impact of \$1.05 billion infrastructure investment showed a return to Manitoba of \$1.36 billion, the largest effects via personal/disposable income, cascading impact on retail sales and the corresponding direct and indirect taxation revenues.

Other such reports arrive at similar conclusions.

The point is the ROI of public-sector dollars is real. The extent of that return can be refined via an update of the Conference Board of Canada's Manitoba analysis.

The larger effect of infrastructure investment is in its impact on trade, which accounts for 53% of Manitoba's GDP.

That fact illustrates why eight Manitoba business and stakeholder groups joined MHCA in publicly calling for strategic, sustained investment in Manitoba's transportation infrastructure system. Trade is at the heart of our GDP; transportation infrastructure are the arteries that keep the goods and commodities flowing.

In all discussions since 2016 with MI ministers

on the Highways Capital program, MHCA has consistently advocated for strategic, sustainable investment — not spending — in transportation infrastructure. The context? The government inherited a ~\$6-billion transportation system (highways, roads, bridges & structures) investment deficit.

At Budget 2018's \$350 million, the Highways Capital program does not reflect a sound capital-asset management plan. That level will add \$50-75 million annually to the ~\$6-billion investment deficit, facilitating its exponential growth. Further, it impairs sound fiscal investment in an asset that underpins Manitoba's economy.

The MHCA respectfully urges the government, heading into Budget 2019, to:

- Solicit, in partnership with the business community, from Canada West Foundation (or similar institution) an estimate of ROI from trade-transportation investment strategy, and the lost value of delaying this strategy (compound effect on Manitoba's infrastructure investment deficit)
- Restore MI capital program to a minimum \$500 million, annually, 2019-24
- Accelerate MI's service-delivery review and transition in-house service delivery to the competitive market
- Release the report on the transportation system infrastructure investment deficit (understood to be ~\$6 billion), with annual and five-year rolling budgets to support a capital-asset management strategy.

Manitoba faces challenges to achieve sustainable levels of investment in infrastructure. Governments ignored for decades sound advice from the private sector, compounding the infrastructure deficit's growth. The government inherited this but has opportunity, with the public's trust, to address it.

The MHCA strongly recommends the government appoint a panel to review existing funding structures to strike a new funding model. Its considerations could include:

- Dedicating a portion of the PST, all rev-

enues from road-related fuel taxes and fees to the Highways Capital and the Maintenance & Preservation programs, as base funding.

- Given a ~\$6-billion transportation system investment deficit, identifying and allocating a minimum maintenance and preservation budget to stem its exponential growth. (Consider policy that lays out a reasonable multi-year target to resolve the deficit, to get to sustainable annual funding levels).
- Identifying a minimum annual capital program tied to best economic return on investment objectives — trade-enabling infrastructure — harnessing in the process federal-match funding and appropriate P3 opportunities.
- Merge trade and infrastructure into one ministry - Trade & Infrastructure - to maximize ROI and ensure that trade-enabling investment is a pillar supporting growth in Manitoba's regional, national and global trade profile.
- Adopting the six guiding principles for strategic infrastructure investment, embraced publicly by Manitoba in November 2016, namely: a permanent program; focused on greatest economic ROI; embraces innovation; harnesses partnerships with the private sector; funded by dedicated revenue streams; and annually reviewed for adjustment and assurance of discipline to purpose.
- Taking advantage of the Winnipeg Metropolitan Region strategic transportation plan (and others like it) that would support provincial investment priorities in the strategic trade network that promotes economic growth.
- The delivery of programs contemplated above through a new, stand-alone utility, with contractual funding and delivery objectives set by government as a matter of public policy.

The above is offered to advance government objectives of growing the economy and restoring fiscal balance.

To read the full MHCA November 15 supplement in the Winnipeg Free Press [click here](#).

Get the most out of each gallon - fuel efficiency tips

CONEXPO - CON/AGG, November 21

Fuel is one of the greatest operating costs for any contractor who owns heavy equipment and/or trucks. Working in a way that can save fuel can end up saving a lot of money.

"At the most basic level, optimizing fuel efficiency comes down to delivering the right amount of fuel and air to the combustion chamber, in the right form and at the right time," says Alex Eden, product marketing manager, Perkins. "As an end-user, the easiest way to save fuel is to make sure the machines on your jobsite are operating at maximum efficiency by selecting appropriately sized equipment powered by fuel-efficient engines and run by properly trained operators."

To reduce fuel use, you have to know how and when fuel is being wasted. To gain that knowledge, examine the top five fuel usage influencers in off-highway applications:

1. Idle time
2. Operator technique
3. Jobsite set up
4. Equipment selection and configuration
5. Technology

Telematics data

To get good, actionable data, it helps to have your machines equipped with telematics. Telematics provides dozens of points of data on a machine so that you can gain valuable insights that will help save fuel.

"Telematics provides site personnel with fuel information such as idle time fuel consumption, working time fuel consumption and fuel efficiency," says Jason Hurdis, market professional, Caterpillar. "Having this information allows site personnel to better understand their operations and make continuous analysis of individual machines, operators, and jobsite setup to improve and sustain fuel efficiency."

"When telematics first was introduced on earthmoving equipment, one of the first benefits realized was for the equipment owner or fleet manager to identify wasteful use of equipment and correct it," says Brad Stemper, product manager — excavators and wheel loaders — Case Construction Equipment. "Telematics provides data and insights that allow stakeholders throughout the business to drive greater fuel efficiency."

Idle time

Idle time is usually the largest contributor to fuel inefficiency. According to Hurdis, idling contributes between

15-45 percent of all fuel-saving potential. "Idling is the first place that people start managing fuel consumption," he says.

To decrease idle times, operators can take advantage of fuel-saving technology, such as auto idle. "Some idle management systems automatically reduce engine RPM to idle RPM or below normal machine idle RPM. Using these systems can reduce idle fuel consumption to less than one gallon per hour," says Hurdis. Also popular on modern construction equipment, auto shutdown shuts down a machine if it idles for a preset period of time.

Examine the patterns in your machine's idle times. If a machine idles for short periods of time (a few seconds to a few minutes) frequently throughout the day, that probably means that machine is at the bottleneck in the workflow, and the operator has to wait for another operator to complete a task before continuing work. In which case, either machine selection, material location or some other jobsite factor will need to change in order to reduce idle time.

However, if a machine idles for several minutes at a time or more, infrequently throughout the day, that probably means the operator is not shutting down the machine when on break, when exiting the machine, when talking on the phone or when having their work interrupted for a longer period of time. In which case, the operator will need to be spoken to regarding company's expectations, so the operator can take the necessary steps to decrease idle time.

Operator technique

How an operator uses a machine has a large influence on fuel efficiency. According to Hurdis, next to idling, it has the greatest fuel savings potential. Small changes in behavior can have large effects on fuel use.

"On excavators, operator behavior has a big influence on fuel consumption," says Matt Mclean, product manager, wheeled excavators, Volvo Construction Equipment North America.

One easy way that operators can save fuel is by using the appropriate work mode. Work modes provide different power levels, so it's easier for operators to match the power needed to the application at hand. One of these modes is an "eco" mode for maximum fuel savings.

"We generally see operators run machines wide open because they want to use the full extent of the machine's power—but the vast majority of operations can be completed without that machine at full throttle, says Stemper. "Operators should learn how each operating mode affects each machine and operate accordingly to get the

greatest fuel efficiency out of each machine.

"An easy way to conserve fuel is to have operators take the time to learn and use the proper work mode. For example, many operators tend to select the highest setting available even though Volvo engines are designed to achieve the highest torque at the lowest possible RPM," says Mclean.

Jobsite set up

In order to set up a jobsite to optimize fuel use, a company needs to examine a lot of data, including equipment capacities, the number of each machine on site, equipment and material locations, terrain and more.

"Jobsite workflow is important, especially when you have equipment that is dependent on the action of the machine/crusher/screener/plant that comes before it," says Stemper. "That machine has a cycle. Whatever can be done in the setup of a job to shorten that cycle and to minimize idling (so that as much fuel burn is going towards productive work as possible) will have significant improvements on fuel efficiency."

Telematics offer the potential to gain the insight into how job set up influences fuel use. Telematics monitoring services provide reports on data, such as travel time, idle time and work mode frequency, which can help identify bottlenecks and lead to better decisions about which machines to use, how many machines to use, where they should work and more.

Equipment selection and configuration

Choosing the right sized machine for the job comes first. You always want the smallest machine that is capable of doing the job. Larger machines will consume more fuel.

"Know your application, where and how the machine will work, and buy it at the horsepower and operating capacity that best fits the work—that's large enough to complete the work you do, but not so large that you have considerable wasted energy," says Stemper.

Important to the goal of greater fuel efficiency is the trend of producing more power and more compact engines. "The move to greater power and torque density means physically smaller engines operating at lower speeds," says Eden. "The increased performance delivers both packaging and fuel economy benefits. In a recent application, for example, moving from our 4.4- to our 3.6-litre engine yielded a 10 percent fuel saving with no sacrifice in machine performance."

Once you select the right machine, how you can configure it can also lead to fuel waste. Eric Yeomans, product manager, wheel loaders, Volvo Construction Equipment describes an easy way to save fuel on haulers. "Run a 6x4 configuration whenever possible instead of 6x6. By

running in 6x4, the operator saves fuel and reduces tire wear. A 6x6 configuration should only be engaged when running in incredibly muddy or challenging conditions."

Beyond the size of the engine and configuration, Stemper advises you identify other machine elements that create drag and prevent work from being done efficiently. "Are the cutting edges on all your loader buckets dull? Are your bucket teeth worn or damaged? Are filters clogged and causing the engine to overheat? All of these things create drag on the operation, which leads to lower fuel efficiency," he says.

Technological advancements

Besides the technologies mentioned above and a few engine and transmission advancements that don't need any operator interaction, there are a few other technologies that help improve fuel efficiency. Understanding the fuel-saving technologies on your machines will help you get the most fuel-efficient use out of them.

"Some construction equipment has built-in features and systems that automate control systems, traction aid devices, transmission shift points and engine-hydraulic interactions, all of which the operator can select to enhance their performance and improve fuel efficiency. Recent features added to construction equipment such as performance modes which adjust engine horsepower, hydraulic power, hydraulic speed and rimpull can improve fuel efficiency," says Hurdis.

Machine guide technology helps improve fuel economy by reducing work needed to complete a task. For example, Volvo's Dig Assist system for excavators and

Load Assist system for wheel loaders, provide accurate data that allows operators to avoid work as a result of having data that is approximate.

"Dig Assist allows the operator to know digging depths and provides a real-time, 3D view of the machine's movements. Load Assist shows the operator the bucket's payload within +/- one percent accuracy in real-time—reducing instances of reloading and reweighing," says Yeomans.

Volvo loaders come with two other technologies designed to save fuel: an "eco pedal" applies a mechanical push-back force in response to excess use of the accelerator and Volvo's OptiShift technology integrates a lock-up torque converter and a Reverse-By Braking function. "It can also save up to 20 percent more on fuel compared to standard models," says Yeomans.

So, by tracking how much fuel is being used in which applications, the amount of idle time and other machine data, you can determine when your fuel is being wasted. Combine this knowledge with a complete knowledge of all the fuel-saving features of your machines, and you will be able to get the most out of each gallon.





Celebrating 75 **GROUND BREAKING** years in 2018



Don Leitch is president of the Business Council of Manitoba. He will be addressing the Annual General Meeting of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association on November 16.

GETTING TRADE ON THE ROAD IN MANITOBA

BY DON LEITCH

This is a time of much economic uncertainty. That's no secret to anyone. The rising price of goods and job-security anxiety are the wingmen of economic uncertainty.

That's how global-trade disputes hit home in a personal way.

We're all still trying to figure out what the new NAFTA – USMCA – really means, and doesn't mean, for Canada's trade prospects. We're trying to figure out how we'll diversify, something we have talked about for decades.

What is certain is we have to look for, develop and seize opportunities.

The new, revised Trans-Pacific Partnership being ratified now by its signatories holds immense potential for Manitoba. It is one of the largest free trade agreements in the world. Canada will get greater access to Japan, Australia, Chile, Mexico, New Zealand, and in developing Asian markets, including Malaysia, Singapore and Vietnam.

Manitoba has shown that with the right foundation and planning, it can compete in global trade. Trade supports 53% of our provincial economy — that's some \$37 billion worth of 'business.'

But to compete, we have to get the foundation right.

As President of the Business Council of Manitoba, I am concerned about our ability to capitalize on those and other emerging trade opportunities, and about the implications of that for our economy.

There are four critical things companies look for when locating or looking to expand — people, power, water and transportation.

We have talented people and have shown we can trade, recruit and attract more.

Although we are facing increases to our hydro

rates, due to the past decade of development our rates remain very competitive, and will continue so.

And we have an abundance of water. We need to ensure a sustainable, reliable supply. That means well-maintained water and sewer infrastructure. That requires long-term planning and investments — we have to take the opportunity presented by the large federal commitment for infrastructure and sign cost-shared project agreements. Green infrastructure is a priority for them.

And, what of transportation?

This is where the rubber hits the road, or hits the ditch.

Everything rides on a road. Our goods may eventually move by rail, water or air, but getting them from the point of production to the customer will always rely on roads. Good roads pave the way for strong trade. Prosperity.

The strongest case for public investment, for high-value return to the economy has been proven, time and again, to be our investment in core infrastructure. There is an immediate lift to the economy, from the surge in employment and the local sourcing of materials. But there also is a long-term return, from the impact on the GDP, most noticeably from increased productivity and trade.

That's why there isn't an economist, investment advisor or business owner who doesn't recognize the critical role that good roads and strategic infrastructure investment play in economic growth and moving goods, services and people.

We at the Business Council are keenly aware of Manitoba's debt and deficit position. We strongly advocate for prudent fiscal management. But economic stewardship is not just about controlling costs and cutting the deficit. Strong fiscal policy has economic growth as its complementary goal.

Reduced expenditures across government

affect many sectors, some immediate, some longer term. Reducing investments in infrastructure of all types, including long-term cuts to the highways budget, hurts economies. The City of Winnipeg developed a large infrastructure deficit. Reduced investments have an impact on the people commuting to jobs and on the shipment of goods they produce to markets.

The Business Council has also advocated for a comprehensive, provincial infrastructure-investment strategy. There is no multi-year plan to guide sustained investment in our strategic, trade-transportation assets, our highways and our regional roads. These are the arteries that keep our economic heart pumping.

In my circles, you don't do business without a multi-year plan. You don't scope a budget without knowing where you should be five years forward, and how you get there. Simply put, that's the "infrastructure" plan of any business hoping to stay in business.

The Business Council has endorsed and supported the call by nine leading Manitoba business groups for the provincial government to make sustained, strategic investment in infrastructure a real, immediate priority.

We need to plan now to ensure Manitoba capitalizes on the trade potential at our doorstep. Trade uncertainty will continue as we try to diversify. But we must diversify.

In Manitoba we can do that. We have shown we can compete and succeed.

But we need government to play its role: alongside prudent fiscal management, it must develop and successfully implement its growth strategy, and commit to sustained, innovative investments in infrastructure.

We need to get the building blocks right, lay them down. Pave the road.

It leads to economic growth and prosperity. **]]**

To read the full MHCA November 15 supplement in the Winnipeg Free Press [click here](#).



Celebrating 75 **GROUND BREAKING** years in 2018



Carlo Dade is director of the Centre for Trade and Investment Policy at the Canada West Foundation. He is co-author of "Building on Advantage: Improving Canada's Trade Infrastructure," part of a multi-year research project on Western Canadian trade infrastructure, and lead author of the background paper for the 2014 New West Partnership Premiers' Infrastructure Summit.

TRADE, HIGHWAYS AND INVESTMENT – THEY'RE INTIMATELY CONNECTED

WHAT MANITOBA CAN LEARN FROM KANSAS ON INVESTING IN HIGHWAYS, TRADE ROUTES

BY CARLO DADE

The link between investment in trade-enabling infrastructure and trade is, as the term implies, self-evident. Also self-evident is the link to wider economic growth and prosperity that comes from expanding trade, or what in a province like Manitoba where trade accounts for over half of GDP, could more simply be called 'earning money.'

Trade infrastructure enables money to be earned to pay for those things the province needs and wants. Research shows a positive impact from investing in trade-enabling infrastructure. A 2012 study published by the San Francisco Federal Reserve Bank found \$1 in federal highway grants was equated with at least an increase double the amount to a state's GDP. In Manitoba, the Conference Board of Canada forecasted similar investment would spin-off \$1.16 to the GDP for every \$1 expended.

If one is concerned about spending on education and health care, then the first priority for the public and government is to do what is necessary to ensure, or better, increase, the money on the table for these programs. Done correctly, investments in trade-enabling infrastructure can also be education-enabling, and health-enabling.

This, at least, is the theory.

In Manitoba, this theory was put to the test in 2013 with a decision to invest the equivalent of one percentage point PST increase in what was defined as core infrastructure, which included trade-related infrastructure and also flood mitigation projects for a total investment of \$5.1 billion over five years. The Conference Board estimated that this would raise provincial GDP during this time period by two percent, or \$6.3 billion. After the first year of the planned program, the Conference Board tested its estimates and found the \$1.04 billion invested in core infrastructure in 2014 actually increased GDP by \$1.31 billion. So, about \$1.30 return for each \$1 invested.

While only two of the five years were rolled out as planned, that is enough time to crunch the numbers to see if this actually worked, and if it

did produce positive impacts what if anything could be improved. Conversely, if the projected outcomes fell short then what went wrong and needs to be changed. This is a priority.

But while waiting for the numbers to come in, a cautionary tale of what happens when infrastructure investment faces extreme cuts is in order. This warning came, from of all places, Winnipeg this summer during the annual U.S. Council of State governments mid-west meeting held in town.

From 2011 to 2017 Kansas moved close to US\$2 billion from its highway fund to cover budget shortfalls caused by its now-infamous experiment to effectively cut its corporate tax to zero. The state cut a dozen highway expansion

for states and local governments, the recently enacted Tax Cuts and Jobs Act (TCJA) will lower investment in our nation's infrastructure. This runs counter to President Trump's repeated desire to tackle the major problems associated with America's crumbling infrastructure through increased investment. The impact may be large and immediate enough to swamp the short-term impact of any infrastructure package Congress can put together in the immediate future."

That says a lot. It also tells us what we need to do in response. If the Americans are going to try to become more competitive by cutting taxes and we do not want to match them in a race to the bottom, then we are going to have to assure that there is a return on the revenues our governments

IF ONE IS CONCERNED ABOUT SPENDING ON EDUCATION AND HEALTH CARE, THEN THE FIRST PRIORITY FOR THE PUBLIC AND GOVERNMENT IS TO DO WHAT IS NECESSARY TO ENSURE, OR BETTER, INCREASE, THE MONEY ON THE TABLE FOR THESE PROGRAMS. DONE CORRECTLY, INVESTMENTS IN TRADE-ENABLING INFRASTRUCTURE CAN ALSO BE EDUCATION-ENABLING, AND HEALTH-ENABLING.

projects and was essentially reduced to funding highway maintenance. All in a state that, like Manitoba, is reliant on moving products from rural areas and a few urban centres to markets outside the state. Kansas came to this summer's meeting in Winnipeg in dire straits. What was supposed to be a genial breakfast roundtable to exchange ideas on state infrastructure devolved into a crisis intervention and brainstorming by Canadian and American lawmakers on how to help Kansas dig out.

That is the cautionary tale. But there is also a tale of opportunity in this.

The Trump administration is looking to inadvertently repeat part of the Kansas experiment by also retarding infrastructure spending. As the Brookings Institution noted in a 2017 examination of the President's tax-cut plan on infrastructure:

"By increasing the cost to finance infrastructure

take in and spend, to assure that it makes us more competitive. If the Americans are going to dig a hole for themselves on infrastructure, we need to dig a different sort of hole; one that is shovels in the ground to build advantage, investing money to make ourselves more competitive where the Americans will not. Given the other hurdles that the Americans have placed and will continue to place before us, this is imperative. Especially as we in Canada have opportunities in new, multi-country trade agreements that open Asia and Europe to our firms while the Americans do not. This advantage over the Americans will not last forever; we must act now to capitalize on the opportunity at hand.

But first, Manitoba needs to know the results of the 2013 experiment to learn, to improve targeting and the return on investment, and guarantee money invested in difficult times does what is needed. >>>



Don Hurst
Director of WORKSAFELY™
Education and Training

Get ready for new hazardous-material handling rules

Back to you

On December 1, employers that use, handle, store or dispose of hazardous materials in the workplace must be done revising their WHMIS programs to comply with the new WHMIS 2015/GHS rules.

Most importantly, your workers will need training. Your WHMIS 2015 education and training strategy must ensure your workers can answer these questions about all controlled products they work with:

- What are the hazards of the product?
- How do I protect myself from those hazards?
- What do I do in case of an emergency?
- Where can I get further information?

In addition to training your employees, employers are required to:

- Ensure that hazardous products are properly labelled
- Prepare workplace labels, as needed
- Prepare SDSs, as necessary
- Provide access to up-to-date SDSs to workers
- Ensure appropriate control measures are in place to protect the health and safety of workers.

If you require assistance with your WHMIS 2015 program, please contact your safety advisor at 204-947-1379.

KNOW YOUR WORKSAFELY™ TEAM

Don Hurst, B.A., M.A. (Econ.)

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MHCA's WORKSAFELY™ Safety Advisor Ed Gregory at the Association of Manitoba Municipalities convention Nov. 27, in Winnipeg. WORKSAFELY provides COR and SECOR certification to public entities, such as municipal workforces. Call MHCA's Kristen Ranson at 204-947-1379 to talk about COR certification for your workplace.



WORKSAFELY™ is bringing COR™ Training Week to Manitoba.

Winkler

January 21-25, 2019
Quality Inn
 851 Main Street
 Winkler R6W 4A4
 Trainer: Ed Gregory

Brandon

January 14-18, 2019
St. John's Ambulance
 Shoppers Mall, 1570 18th St
 Brandon R7A 5C5
 Trainer: Gerry McCombie

Courses Include:

2 days COR™ Leadership in Safety and Excellence
 1 day COR™ Principles of Health and Safety Management
 2 days COR™ Auditor Training

REGISTER NOW

Contact **Kristen Ranson** at **204-594-9056** or **kristen@mhca.mb.ca**



Training Schedule

Construction Safety Excellence™

TO REGISTER,
PLEASE CONTACT:

Kristen Ranson
kristen@mhca.mb.ca

WINNIPEG - MHCA Office 3-1680 Ellice Ave.

December 2018

- 4 Safety Committee/Representative (1/2 day AM)
- 10-11 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
- 12 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
- 13-14 COR™ Auditor**

January 2019

- 8 Train the Trainer - Facilitation Skills
- 10 Winter Roads Safety (1/2 day AM)
- 10 Emergency Response (1/2 day PM)
- 14-15 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
- 16 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
- 17-18 COR™ Auditor**
- 23 Flagperson (1/2 day AM)
- 23 Safety Committee/Representative (1/2 day PM)
- 24 Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
- 24 Auditor Refresher (1/2 day PM)
- 29-30 Traffic Control Coordinator

February 2019

- 5 Managing Impairment in the Workplace (1/2 day AM)
- 11-12 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
- 13 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
- 14-15 COR™ Auditor**
- 20 Train the Trainer-Facilitation Skills

March 2019

- 5 Flagperson (1/2 day AM)
- 5 Safety Committee/Representative (1/2 day PM)
- 11-12 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence
- 13 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management
- 14-15 COR™ Auditor
- 19-20 Traffic Control Coordinator
- 27 Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
- 27 Incident Investigations (1/2 day PM)

BRANDON St John Ambulance

December 2018

- 4 Managing Impairment in the Workplace (1/2 day AM)
- 4 Building a Harassment Free and Respectful Workplace (1/2 day PM)

January 2019

- 14-15 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
- 16 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
- 17-18 COR™ Auditor**
- 30 Train the Trainer-Facilitation Skills

February 2019

- 5 Flagperson (1/2 day AM)
- 5 Safety Committee/Representative (1/2 day PM)
- 6 Excavating & Trenching (1/2 day AM)
- 6 Transportation of Dangerous Goods (1/2 day PM)
- 11-12 Traffic Control Coordinator
- 20 Auditor Refresher (1/2 day AM)

WINKLER Quality Inn - 851 Main St.

January 2019

- 21-22 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
- 23 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
- 24-25 COR™ Auditor**



Celebrating 75 **GROUND BREAKING** years in 2018



IN EVERY MANITOBA REGION, WORKSAFELY™ HAS IT COVERED

A day "at the office" for Manitoba Heavy Construction Association WORKSAFELY™ safety advisor Dave McPherson is unlike most.

Based out of Flin Flon, McPherson has more than 60 clients working as far north as Tadoule Lake and as far south as Swan River.

McPherson is one of five safety advisors that comprise MHCA's WORKSAFELY team. WORKSAFELY covers all regions, and is Manitoba's only safety and health training program to employ a full-time advisor living in northern Manitoba.

WORKSAFELY advisors help companies obtain and maintain COR™ certification, conduct safety audits, provide training, and address workplace safety and health regulatory requirements.

"If you're doing your due diligence and making sure people understand the jobs they're doing, things should be fine. Training is huge," he says.

"You want to make sure the group that leaves home to work in the morning is the same group that comes home that night."

McPherson also provides safety instruction to First Nation communities and construction companies building Manitoba's winter-road system.

The WORKSAFELY safety advisor in the Eastman region, Randy Olynick, works with many companies that operate larger-scale sand and gravel operations. Olynick joined the WORKSAFELY program in 2015, bringing 20 years of safety experience in the construction and manufacturing sectors, as well as regulatory expertise obtained working at Workplace Safety and Health.

"We are a safety service. If companies need assistance, they can count on us to help connect them with solutions to their safety challenges," Olynick says. "Whether the question is about a regulatory detail or what to do during a serious incident, I can assist you, and if need be, come directly to your workplace."

"WE ENCOURAGE OUR COMPANIES TO USE THEIR WORKSAFELY ADVISOR AS A RESOURCE. WE ARE AVAILABLE AROUND THE CLOCK AND DO OUR BEST TO HELP OUR COMPANIES, WHETHER IT IS ANSWERING A QUESTION OVER THE PHONE, ON-SITE VISITS, OR THROUGH ON-SITE TRAINING."

WORKSAFELY safety advisor Ed Gregory works with many of the MHCA's smaller member companies located in the southern region of Manitoba. Gregory joined the MHCA in 2012, bringing 20 years of experience in safety and risk management.

"We encourage our companies to use their WORKSAFELY advisor as a resource. We are available around the clock and do our best to help our companies, whether it is answering a question over the phone, on-site visits, or through on-site training."

The majority of the work sites Gregory oversees involve a variety of heavy construction firms, building roads and highways from scratch or repaving roads in subdivisions.

Workplace accidents can have a significant impact on a company's ability to get its work done effectively, he says.

"WORKSAFELY isn't just a safety program at work. It is an initiative that helps our workers get home safely to their families. Many of the younger workers in our industry are just starting their families. I want to be part of the solution that helps ensure they make it home safely."



From top: MHCA WORKSAFELY regional safety advisors Ed Gregory (Southern Region), Randy Olynick (Eastern Region) and Dave McPherson (Northern Region), on a job site with Smook Contractors manager JR Beavis (left).



To read the full MHCA November 15 supplement in the Winnipeg Free Press [click here](#).



SAFETY TALK

WHMIS 2015 Update

On December 1st, Canada completes its move to full compliance with Hazardous Product Regulations (HPR) and WHMIS 2015. Up to now, suppliers, distributors/importers and employers have been in transition from WHMIS 1988. It is important to take note of key changes in the current move that may affect your workplace.

Key Changes

- For clarity, the previous WHMIS will be referred to as “WHMIS 1988” and the current standard as “WHMIS 2015”
- The term “Hazardous product” replaces “Controlled product”
- Pictograms have a red square, tilted 45 degrees on point border, rather than a black circle (except biohazards)

- Material safety data sheets (MSDSs) will now be referred to as Safety Data Sheets (SDSs) and will have a universal 16-section format
- SDSs will no longer need to be updated every 3 years, only with a significant change to the product.
- Older products must be in compliance by Dec. 1st; there is no grandfathering of older labels.
- Both workplace and supplier labelling requirements must meet WHMIS 2015 standards
- Ensure all workers are trained in WHMIS 2015
- Supplier labels must now include a signal word and classification, and do not have a black, dashed line border

Listed above are just some of the changes in moving to the WHMIS 2015 system. You can find a complete schedule of the updates of WHMIS 2015 transition at <https://tinyurl.com/ycuz8f8x>.

Print and review this talk with your staff, sign off and file for COR™ / SECOR audit purposes.

Date: _____

Supervisor: _____

Performed by: _____

Location: _____

Concerns:

Corrective Actions:

Employee Name:

Employee Signature:



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INVESTING IN SAFETY PAYS OFF

— AND SPAWNS SUBSECTOR IN CONSTRUCTION

BY PAT ST. GERMAIN

Since the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association hired its first safety advisor in 1989, the focus on keeping workers healthy and whole has given rise to an entire industry subsector of specialists — trained professionals who are dedicated to ensuring safety is top of mind, every day.

"On a day-to-day basis, we strive to spot the hazard, assess the risk and find a safer way," says Arnason Industries safety coordinator Robert Paige, whose career choice was motivated by personal experience.

"Twenty-five years ago, a friend lost his life trying to save a worker in a confined space. I made a promise to make a difference in the workplace because of that incident," he says.

Paige completed his Construction Safety Officer (CSO) training at BCIT, and earned his National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO) designation through MHCA's WORKSAFELY™ program, which requires candidates with at least three years of construction safety experience to complete a minimum of 12 industry-specific courses and write a national exam. Like many of his peers, Paige's commitment to safety extends beyond his day job.

"I am a first aid instructor for Canadian Ski Patrol and volunteer almost every weekend in the winter, and also teach first aid for the Red Cross for workplace first aid courses. I instruct confined space, working at heights, respiratory protection programs, risk mitigation and I am a Licensed Industrial Audiometric Technician."

Nelson River Construction safety, health and loss prevention manager Ray Bissonnette was completing his HR Management certificate at Red River College when RRC introduced a new accelerated Occupational Safety and Health program. He decided to enrol and soon launched a new career, working with the Construction Safety Association of Manitoba before joining Nelson River 11 years ago.

Since then, he's earned his Canadian Registered Safety Professional (CRSP) certification and taken advantage of a multitude of MHCA WORKSAFELY training opportunities.

"I've pretty much gone through the whole gamut of MHCA courses over the years. They've all been useful — I'm a big proponent of training," he says.

"A big part of it is not only the knowledge that I gain, but making sure our employees get the training they need. I always remind our employees, nobody ever kisses their family goodbye thinking it's the last time they're going to see them. Everybody should go home the same way they came to work and a big part of that is training."

Bissonnette says all employees are encouraged to take responsibility for their own safety and for the safety of their co-workers. And he urges them to practice safety at home, too. First aid training is available to every employee, and Bissonnette does his best to motivate them to take advantage of it. In one instance, he casually asked an older worker who was reluctant to sign up if he had any grandchildren. As it turns out, the man enjoyed spending time fishing with his granddaughter.

"I said, 'What would you do if she was having a hot dog and started choking and you didn't know what to do?' He signed up the next day."

Creating personal connections is part of the job. It isn't always easy to convince workers to wear all their personal protective equipment on a hot day, or follow safety protocols when they'll only be operating a piece of machinery for a few minutes.

Borland Construction safety supervisor Jeff Love says that's one reason why it's important to nurture relationships with workers in the field.

"It helps to build that culture of safety within the organization," Love says. "Once you build that culture and people are doing it on a day-to-day basis, that in turn helps Borland to lower our incident numbers and keep workers safe."

A graduate of RRC's Occupational Health and Safety program, Love did his practicum at Borland and was hired on immediately, starting out as a safety technician. Since then, he has earned NCSO, CRSP and Gold Seal Certified Construction Safety Coordinator designations.

For Love and others, maintaining the company's COR™ (Certificate of Recognition) status is an achievement in itself.

COR-certified companies are required to conduct annual internal audits of safety training and procedures, and provide documentation to WORKSAFELY, which conducts an external audit every third year.

For some safety specialists, MHCA's electronic documentation system, e-COR™, has become an indispensable tool.

Arnason's Robert Paige says it allows him to upload and share new safety procedures with hundreds of workers in the blink of an eye, and maintain constant contact with more than 20 remote job sites.

"I can look at a hazard assessment for a location 600 kilometres away. I can approve a confined space entry within minutes of it being submitted and have recently started using a new feature that immediately notifies me when certain events happen, like an incident report," he says.

"I can't imagine being a safety manager without it," he adds. "Almost all our sites are fly-in or ice road-only communities and the logistical challenge of a safety manager would be impossible without e-COR."

Accurate HD safety coordinator Marc Rodrigue also relies on e-COR to help meet stringent documentation requirements. In 2017, Rodrigue received the MHCA WORKSAFELY safety leader award at the inaugural Safetys, presented in partnership with seven other provincial safety organizations.

Accurate HD has been COR-certified since 2012, largely thanks to Rodrigue's diligence. He implemented the company's safety program and is vigilant in ensuring that employees follow best practices and procedures, right down to inspecting electrical cords before they use any machinery.

Hazard assessments are conducted at every job site, every day. Even if workers have been on the same site for several days, Rodrigue says new hazards could crop up — anything from ice on a cold morning to the discovery of a wasp nest.

"It keeps everybody on their toes. They're looking for hazards, they're being a lot more careful," he says. "Change is hard, but the guys are adapting to changing if it means it's going to keep them safe." ■■■



CANADIAN CONSTRUCTION
ASSOCIATION
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Get Gold Seal Certified

Since 1991, the Gold Seal Certification program has set the Gold Standard in the Management of Construction. Today, more than 8,000 construction professionals have been recognized as Gold Seal Certified.



What Is Gold Seal Certification?

The Gold Seal Certification program is a nationally recognized certification for project managers, superintendents, estimators, construction safety coordinators and owner's project managers in the Canadian construction industry involved in:

- General contracting
- Electrical contracting
- Mechanical contracting
- Road building and heavy construction
- Specialty trades.

What Are the Benefits of Gold Seal Certification?

Whether you are a construction professional, a contractor, project manager, or an owner of a construction project, Gold Seal Certification can help you set a higher standard—the *gold standard*—on any construction project.

There are many benefits to Gold Seal Certification.

For individuals, Gold Seal Certification offers opportunities to improve skills, advance careers, and provides recognition for years of experience and education.

For contractors and subcontractors, it signifies a commitment to excellence in the management of construction, shows that your organization values professionalism and ongoing education. As well, Gold Seal Certified employees provide a competitive advantage on tenders.

For owners, Gold Seal Certification is an investment in quality, best practices, and ensures excellence in the management of a construction project.

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GSC



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Gold
Seal
Certified
P.GSC



The U.S. consumer boom

By Stephen Tapp, Deputy Chief Economist

Black Friday seems to have been another smash hit for the U.S. economy. Any economy would welcome this news, but when it's the world's top economy and growth leader, well, everyone benefits – at least in the short term. The U.S. has seen its consumers go on a buying binge many times before, only to regret it when the bubble burst – 2008 was a classic example. Is this one of those times, or is there some staying power this time?

Recent U.S. consumer strength is no mere blip. Real spending is rising at a 4 per cent annual rate, and there seems to be no let-up rolling into the fourth quarter. Retail sales numbers agree: non-auto sales are rising at a 6-per-cent-plus annual pace, and even with flattish auto sales, the overall numbers are decent. Given that the U.S. consumer, at 68 per cent of GDP, pack more of a punch than for most OECD nations, this is good for overall economic growth. So far, the numbers seem to be strong.

Job growth is hot

What's keeping them up? One of the principal drivers of consumer spending is job growth. U.S. employment numbers are on an impressive 8-year run, and they don't seem to be losing any steam. Wage growth has been muted for most of the cycle, but in the past two years has increased to the point that year-over-year growth is at a cyclical high of around 2.8 per cent. Put these two together, and there is a lot more consumer cash floating around than at most points

in the last decade. Again, times sure seem to be good.

But can it last?

Increasingly, pundits are worried about the sustainability of the situation. Businesses are complaining about the lack of skilled employees, and this is now turning into griping about the availability of regular workers. The unemployment rate seems to agree: it's at 3.7 per cent for the second straight month, about as low as it ever gets. In fact, it is well below what economists would consider to be sustainable; that rate was thought to be in the 4.5-to-5 per cent window, and is, ahem, under revision. Then there are weekly UI claimants. That number is also crazy-low, having fallen steadily since 2009 to the current 200,000-mark. These are typical late-cycle signs – so is the party almost over?

Extremely tight standard indicators ignore one key fact. Labour force participation has been extremely low in the current cycle, suppressed no doubt by the severity of the Great Recession and the sluggish growth that persisted for many years following. Millions of workers were sidelined, a phenomenon that dulled the numbers right through 2016. At that point, without any particular policy shift or new program, the tight labour market began to draw the disaffected back in. Since then, over a million young workers have scored their first meaningful job, and after a long hiatus, the mid-career folks are also flooding back in. The best news? There are still millions more of all ages that are waiting for their chance – this could go on for some time, drawing out the labour market's capacity to grow.

Debt and interest rates: spoilers?

Pessimists point to two potential spoilers. What if something inter-

rupts the flow, jolts consumers a bit and alters the momentum. Are they so leveraged that any tripwire will level them? Actually, debt-to-income levels have been falling since the recession – it seems on that count, Americans learned a hard lesson, and kept it up. Helping the situation is a higher level of savings from disposable income. During the late-cycle bubble, the saving rate was 3.5 per cent; now, it's almost double that. It doesn't look like a debt crisis is in the works.

What about interest rates? Well, with better debt dynamics, the recent rise in mortgage and consumer credit rates won't hurt as much. But regardless, we are coming off an ultra-long period of ultra-low rates, and normalization could be a big shock to many. So far, it's not the case; consumer confidence is still reaching for almost impossible cyclical highs, in spite of the fact that U.S. rate hikes have been in the works for over 30 months, plenty of time to begin eliciting a reaction. Consumers do seem to be on a roll.

The bottom line?

The world's big spenders are employed in greater numbers, commanding higher wages, confident, saving more prudently, and also very active at the till. And there is capacity to keep this going for some time to come. While trade tiffs are making others twitchy, Americans seem irrepressible. We can all say a word of thanks...and cash in.



Your Voice Heard

The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) is the voice of Manitoba's heavy construction industry, promoting sustainable municipal infrastructure development, sustained investment in core infrastructure, and seamless, multi-modal transportation systems.

We want your voice to be heard. If you have any questions or suggestions regarding our industry, the MHCA, or the services that we provide, contact us directly by visiting our website www.mhca.mb.ca or calling 204-947-1379.





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