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## THE STORY BETWEEN THE BUDGET LINES

# GETTING SUSTAINED INVESTMENT IN CORE INFRASTRUCTURE ON THE BOOKS

BY CHRIS LORENC



Chris Lorenc is the president of the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association.

Someone once said you know when you've got a budget in your hand because it's a whole lot of numbers. Hit snooze. Yes, if you've cracked a budget you've likely experienced a "near-drowning" — slipping under, amid the pages upon pages of budget lines and columns. Expenditures, revenues. Forecasts. It's tough to discern the 'narrative' as the figures clog the mind.

But, there is a story being told within the spending plans. In fact, we see a budget as a report card on a government's performance, achievement and its vision. The public and the heavy construction industry anxiously await what the Pallister government will tell Manitobans about itself in the numbers in its 2017/18 budget, April 11.

This provincial government has been clear on its primary goal — to make Manitoba the most improved province while wrestling down the provincial deficit. The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) is all for that.

Sustained deficits — almost \$1 billion in 2016 — do real damage to a province's finances and its services because in adding to debt, deficits ratchet-up the cost of debt servicing. That debt-servicing, at \$874 million in 2016/17, is money that can't be invested in critical services and programs here, in Manitoba.

Finance Minister Cameron Friesen has been firm with a lot of sectors. This has sparked talk of 'austerity' but really, his conversations to date have been about 'restraint.' It's an important distinction — these entities are getting less of an increase to their budgets, they have not been delivered severe cuts.

The Manitoba heavy construction industry knows restraint. Historically, it has had to fight to get infrastructure the respect it deserves at all levels of government — including federally. The federal government has greater capacity, revenue-wise, to do more of the heavy lifting for moving Canada's transportation system to a place it can help us compete, globally, for trade.

The public needs to see that reflected in Ottawa's budgets, and in the tri-governmental funding agreements, such as the New Building Canada Fund, under the Trudeau administration.

In Manitoba, the budget for roads and other infrastructure moved to an historic high in 2015-16, an election year, which is unsustainably high in this period of deficit reduction.

While the Pallister government has to make tough decisions to avoid another drubbing with the credit-rating agencies — another adjustment downward would see higher interest rates paid on debt — Manitobans also need another sense of security. That is, that their infrastructure funding programs become a permanent, sustained fixture in budgets.

The province has committed to investing no less than \$1 billion annually in core infrastructure, and \$500 million annually in Manitoba Infrastructure's highways capital program. Core infrastructure, as defined in the policy upon which the new point of PST was raised, means: highways, bridges, flood protection, municipal roads, water and sewer, and strategic transportation infrastructure.

At a minimum, those levels must be in place to grow the economy, preserve our transportation assets, and to sustain the capacity of the heavy construction industry, which by the way is marshalled on the spot to respond to emergencies — flooding is a real risk this spring, again.

Good roads mean good transportation, the foundation of a seamless, efficient trade network and a good trade policy. Trade is the heart of Manitoba's economy.

**TRADE GENERATES 50 PER CENT OF MANITOBA'S \$64-BILLION GDP EACH YEAR; IT ENGAGES 5,200 EMPLOYERS AND 240,000 JOBS. IT SUPPORTS \$3.3 BILLION IN PROVINCIAL PAYROLL, OR 16 PER CENT — LARGER THAN HEALTH CARE.**

Trade generates 50 per cent of Manitoba's \$64-billion GDP each year; it engages 5,200 employers and 240,000 jobs. It supports \$3.3 billion in provincial payroll, or 16 per cent — larger than health care.

That is why the MHCA, on its own and with other business organizations, has been advising the Manitoba government to look upon infrastructure not as spending, but as a necessary investment in the economy and Manitoba's future prosperity.

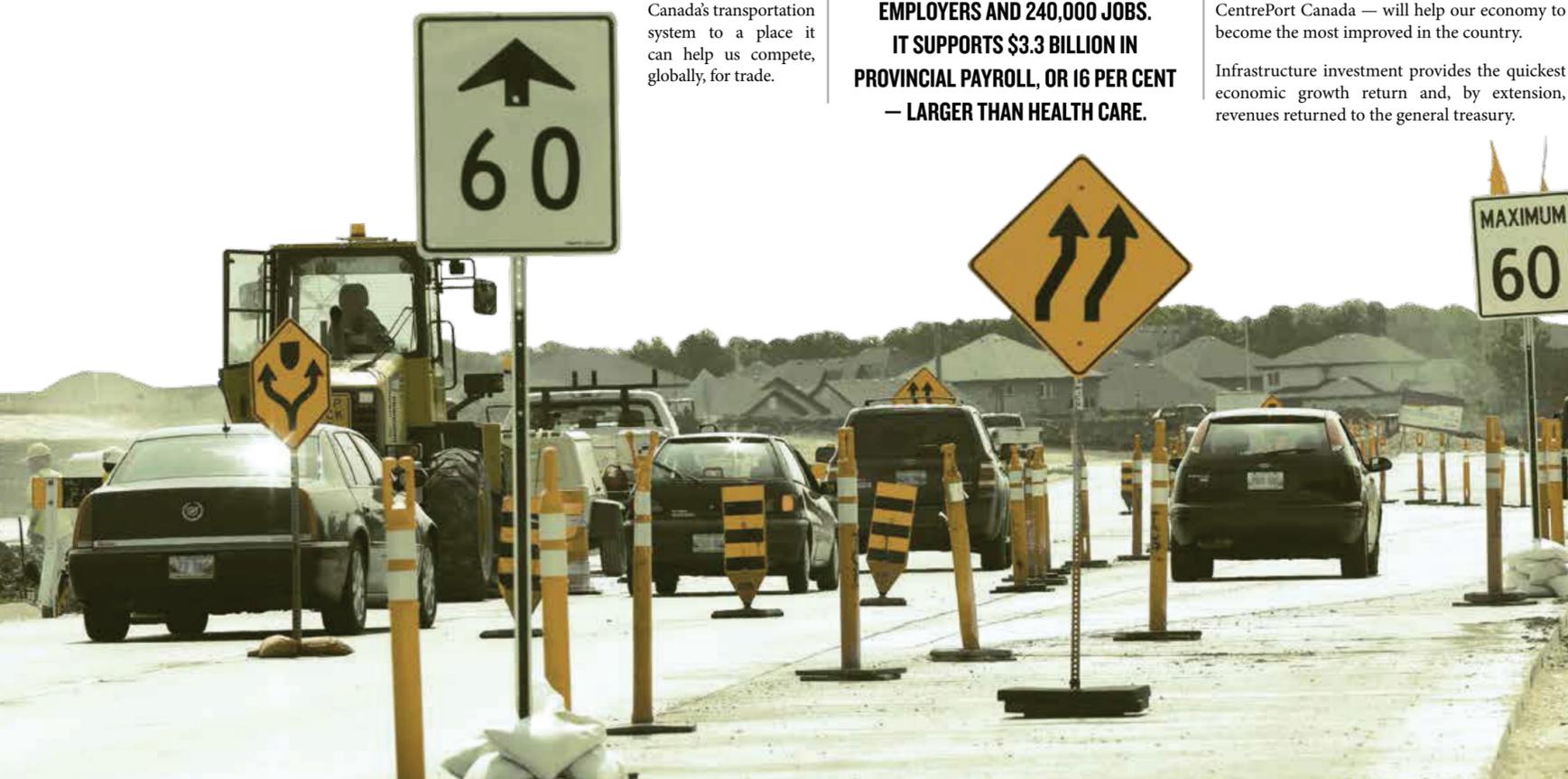
Delayed maintenance or construction of infrastructure becomes exponentially more expensive in future years. More critically, perhaps, is the effect on our economy: Delaying investment in trade-enabling infrastructure acts as a dead weight on the province's ability to meet the challenge and the opportunity of shifting realities of global trade.

The MHCA has long held six organizing principles to guide infrastructure investment (see below). Last year, prior to the provincial election, six organizations — MHCA, Business Council of Manitoba, Canadian Manufacturers and Exporters, Manitoba Chambers of Commerce, Manitoba Home Builders' Association and the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce — produced 7 Pillars to Growing Manitoba's Economy (see Page 5).

We hope to see in Budget 2017/18 recognition that the six principles and the seven pillars can support the goals of making Manitoba the most improved province and getting the deficit under control.

We hope the budget returns to incremental sustainable increases in the highways programs targeted to investment — not spending — in economic growth. We hope to read of provincial strategies that leverage investment-sharing with federal programs to target nation-building, trade-enabling assets. Trade investment — harnessing, for example, the potential of the New West Partnership Trade Agreement and CentrePort Canada — will help our economy to become the most improved in the country.

Infrastructure investment provides the quickest economic growth return and, by extension, revenues returned to the general treasury.



### A GUIDE FOR INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

MHCA'S SIX PRINCIPLES

- 1 A PERMANENT PROGRAM** — no less so than health care, education and public safety
- 2 Primary focus should be to GROW THE ECONOMY**
- 3 EMBRACE INNOVATION** in every aspect, including design, financing/funding, procurement, construction, maintenance and rehabilitation
- 4 Harness PARTNERSHIPS WITH THE PRIVATE SECTOR**, the engine of ingenuity
- 5 Funded by DEDICATED REVENUE STREAMS** in support of its purposes
- 6 Subject to ANNUAL TRANSPARENT REVIEWS** for accountability, adjustment and 'discipline to purpose'



**Brian Bailey is a retired environmental planner and landscape architect.**

He has worked as a consultant in Ontario and Manitoba, and helped develop Manitoba's Aggregate Pit and Quarry Rehabilitation Program within the provincial Mines Branch.

## PITS AND QUARRIES:

# 'FOUNDATIONAL' TO INFRASTRUCTURE

## MANITOBA MUST PROTECT ACCESS TO THESE FINITE, UNIQUE RESOURCES

BY BRIAN BAILEY

The term 'infrastructure' always seems to be in the news these days, and appropriately so. Our economy is based on the infrastructure that previous generations have built, and our economic future will be largely dependent on our maintenance and expansion of that infrastructure. But here's a trick question. What is our infrastructure based on?

Quite literally, gravel and crushed stone, mineral commodities that are jointly referred to as 'aggregates.' Millions and millions of tons of gravel and crushed stone. In 2015 alone, over 23 million tonnes of aggregate minerals were mined in Manitoba. That works out to more than 950,000 truckloads.

For centuries, builders have prepared a few inches (sometimes now a few feet) of stone and sand into a base to support enormous weight. The stone particles interlock when packed, and yet allow water to drain away, creating a stable pad to support our roads and highways, train tracks and airports, sidewalks and driveways, our houses and offices.

Further, aggregate minerals are used to manufacture the concrete and asphalt that comprise much of the infrastructure itself, all over Manitoba. Also, think of the basement floors and walls of our homes and offices, and the piles and beams in our super structures.

**Virtually everything we build requires aggregate minerals — in very large quantities. There are no known substitutes. Without it, we cannot build or maintain our infrastructure. It is safe to say that mineral aggregate — sand, gravel and crushed stone — is as important to modern society as clean water and energy.**

Now here is the rub: We don't find sources of mineral aggregate everywhere. Sand and gravel comes from unique geologic features created by ancient glaciers, where the fast-flowing melt waters sorted and washed the fine clay and silts out of the till material. Geologists identify these as kames, eskers or old

beach ridges (along what was once a glacial lake).

In many rural municipalities in Manitoba, there are no such sources of gravel. Winnipeg and the Capital Region was fortunate to have the Birds Hill kame moraine complex just east of the city, and this topographic high in the RM of Springfield has been a primary source of aggregate for the city's development since the 1800s.

In the 1960s, entrepreneurs in the RM of Rockwood took advantage of another unique geologic feature to develop a second major source of aggregate. Just north of Stonewall, a dolomitic limestone bedrock formation protrudes close to the surface, and can be economically accessed by quarrying. Almost half of the Winnipeg and capital region's aggregate requirements now come from this small area, and that proportion is increasing as the gravel reserves in the Birds Hill area are depleted.

### JUST LIKE ANY OTHER MINERAL COMMODITY, AGGREGATE IS A NON-RENEWABLE RESOURCE

Just like any other mineral commodity, aggregate is a non-renewable resource. Once it has been extracted from the closest locations, we'll have to look for sources farther from construction sites. The increased hauling distance has serious economic and environmental consequences: It drives up the cost of construction projects, many of which are publicly funded. The carbon footprint of the trucking industry is also expanded, as more fuel is required.

Given the broader public good, it only makes sense to make the most of the few available aggregate deposits close to our infrastructure projects. In Manitoba, this policy objective was enacted by regulation under The Planning Act in the 1980s, and implemented through municipal development rules.

The Mines & Minerals Act requires that once

these locations are depleted, the landscape will be rehabilitated. Aggregate producers pay an environmental levy in proportion to the tonnage produced each year. That fund pays for rehabilitation.

Since 1991, over \$40 million has gone to rehabilitate over 9,600 hectares. This made-in-Manitoba solution, supported by industry, guarantees timely and efficient rehabilitation of depleted pits and quarries.

Now gravel pits and quarries are heavy industrial operations — noisy, dusty and involving truck traffic. As such, they are regulated provincially and municipally to hold to environmental standards.

But you can't make an omelet without breaking eggs, and some consequences of mining are inevitable. As Winnipeg grows, we see rural residential developments expand, too. This leads to increased conflicts with pit and quarry operations, and stronger local opposition to opening new pits and quarries. Local residents and neighbours may acknowledge the broader public benefit for infrastructure development, yet still feel they suffer the immediate consequences.

Concessions are needed from all sides to reconcile conflicting interests. We must find a way to respect the needs of residents, but it makes no sense, environmentally or economically, to disallow all pit and quarry operations.

Among the possible solutions, the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) has proposed a Community Enhancement Levy (CEL) in conjunction with the existing rehabilitation levy collected by industry. The funds from a CEL could be used by a local municipality to build amenities offsetting neighbours' concerns over the interim impact of mining pits and quarries.

The best solution at the end of the day will come from thoughtful dialogue, a little imagination and a lot of good will at all levels. Manitobans have a pretty good track record in this regard.





## MAYOR SAYS HE IS COMMITTED TO CONTINUING HISTORIC FUNDING LEVELS FOR CITY STREETS

The Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) sat down with Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman recently to talk about the state of city's infrastructure. Here's an abridged version of the conversation:

**MHCA: Mr. Mayor, the thaw is in and we're getting to see, a little bit, the shape of our roads. Can you tell us what is the state of Winnipeg's roads?**

**Mayor Bowman:** On a macro level, they need a lot of work, from many, many years of neglect of our infrastructure. This council is stepping up to meet the challenging task of trying to chip away at that infrastructure deficit. That's why we've been stepping up with historic money for roads, as well as for investments in active transportation and public transportation.

**MHCA: This year, do you have specific priority for infrastructure?**

**B:** Roads. It's really that simple. That is the No. 1 priority for Winnipeggers: fixing our roads.

We're trying to make smarter decisions about which projects are selected and how, and how we're building infrastructure. We're now using

the "cost-benefit point" analysis to make smarter, less political decisions. I've led the initiative to create a municipal infrastructure research chair at the University of Manitoba so we can tap the incredible expertise it offers, to make sure we using the best products and processes in place. We also have to ensure that this council is doing its part to ensure that we are continuing to make historic investments in infrastructure. We also need the support of other levels of government, as well.

**MHCA: On procurement (of local and regional street renewal projects), we've seen on regional, a speeding up of the (tendering) process a year in advance. Where do you see further improvements in procurement happening?**

**B:** We've taken a number of steps including earlier budget and earlier tendering, but also making sure we're investing tax dollars as smart as possible on the right projects that build this city and position it for a million people. The over \$7-billion infrastructure deficit — about half of which is existing infrastructure; the other half is for infrastructure we know we're going to need to support a growing community — we want to make sure we're making smart decisions, as early as possible. We know we've got more work to do. We want to get earlier procurement happening across the board, and that includes local as well.

**MHCA: You mentioned the \$7.4-billion infrastructure deficit. That was actually calculated in 2009. Have we had an update of that?**

**B:** Those are the most updated numbers that I've seen. We know that municipalities collect eight cents of each tax dollar and are responsible for 60 per cent of the infrastructure. We know that we have

a massive infrastructure deficit. So the steps we've taken, not just with the funding, but to successfully lobby other levels of government to step up with increased funding for infrastructure are important steps to chip away at that infrastructure deficit.

**MHCA: The 'long-term proposal' that was included when we entered into the two-per-cent tax increase for local and regional street renewal, at the time that was done, it was meant to augment the funding that was in place. It also included targets to get to sustainable — \$80 million (annually) for local by 2022, and \$60 million for regional by 2021. Are those targets reasonable, do you know if they're realistic, if we can still meet them?**

**B:** You're talking about projections from budgets that predate my term and this council's term in office. That being said, the first three years of my

mandate, we've exceeded the roads budget in the previous six years combined. So our commitment to roads investments is unprecedented and historic and obviously I want to see that continue. Each year, ultimately council has to decide on the actual dollars that they want to invest in roads. I think the track record is pretty clear that we want to prioritize roads investments. I know that in the first three years we managed to exceed the projections that were set out in the appendices of those budgets.

**MHCA: If we can talk in terms of vision, in the next 10 or 20 years where would you like to see Winnipeg with respect to the state of the infrastructure?**

**B:** I'm very proud of the fact that when we take a look at our overall budget we've been able to balance our budget while maintaining our credit rating and increasing our funding for roads to historic levels.



**"OUR COMMITMENT TO ROADS INVESTMENTS IS UNPRECEDENTED AND HISTORIC AND OBVIOUSLY I WANT TO SEE THAT CONTINUE" — MAYOR BRIAN BOWMAN**



# THE ROAD TO PROSPERITY SEVEN PILLARS TO GROWING MANITOBA'S ECONOMY

In today's globally competitive business environment it is imperative that government create a climate that attracts new business and allows existing businesses to grow and thrive. For Manitoba to reach its full potential there are seven key public policy pillars that must lead economic and investment policies in the province:

#### FISCAL COMPETITIVENESS

Manitoba must have an effective and fiscally prudent government committed to creating a competitive tax jurisdiction to attract and retain new investment.

#### VENTURE CAPITAL

Commitment to the creation of an accessible venture capital fund and supportive tax credit policies to leverage investment in the growth of new and existing businesses.

#### GLOBAL TRADE

Commitment to pursuing an expanded global trade profile for Manitoba which derives substantial economic benefit.

#### INFRASTRUCTURE INVESTMENT

Commitment to a strategic, sustained, disciplined approach to investment in Manitoba's core infrastructure.

#### ABORIGINAL ENGAGEMENT

Commitment to the creation of an Aboriginal Engagement Strategy to ensure inclusion and partnership in economic growth policies.

#### SKILLED WORKFORCE

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# PROSPERITY RELIES ON WISE INVESTMENTS IN INFRASTRUCTURE

BY CARLO DADE AND NAOMI CHRISTENSEN



**Carlo Dade is the director for the Trade and Investment Centre at the Canada West Foundation.**



**Naomi Christensen is senior policy analyst at the Canada West Foundation.**

The March 22 federal budget marks another step towards rolling out Ottawa's \$187-billion infrastructure plan. This type of investment does not come around every year – not even every decade. For trade-enabling infrastructure – the roads, ports and similar links that bring Canadian goods and services to markets – it is crucial this opportunity not be wasted.

Trade infrastructure helps pay for other infrastructure investments Canadians want and need, like parks, rinks, schools and hospitals. The trade infrastructure that delivers Canadian products to global trading partners earns more than 60 per cent of Canada's collective income. According to Standard and Poors, every one per cent of GDP invested in trade infrastructure returns 2.5 times that value to the economy within three years.

The need is growing. The Canada-European Union trade agreement was recently signed. With trade negotiations between the EU and the U.S. stalled (as the new U.S. administration focuses on bilateral trade), Canada is going to have a lead over American competitors in the European market. If that is not enough of a challenge, even larger opportunities are opening to the West.

The Canada-Korea trade agreement is Canada's first in Asia. We are beginning the long process of opening negotiations with China, and Canada recently joined the 11 other signatories to the Trans-Pacific Partnership agreement to discuss advancing the deal despite the U.S. withdrawal.

In North America, despite potential renegotiation of NAFTA, both the U.S. and Mexican markets continue to grow. And should the NAFTA renegotiation not end favourably for Canada we will still have a decade's head start over other exporters to this market. Maintaining that advantage will require that we exploit our primary advantages — proximity and infrastructure that connects us directly to U.S. markets.

In all of this, Manitoba and Western Canada face a unique opportunity to position as a preferred supplier of food, energy and materials and related services and manufacturing to markets in the east, south and west. New trade agreements open the door to a new global middle class that is growing at unprecedented rates — predicted to increase from the current two billion consumers to five billion by 2030. That's three billion more consumers in less than 15 years. Manitoba has the good fortune of being able to supply many of the things these new consumers need and want.

To seize this opportunity, Manitoba must be able to deliver its products and services to markets where demand is increasing. Investments in trade infrastructure must prepare us for where the puck is going, as well as opportunities along the way. Simply throwing money at projects without intelligence, strategy and calculation will not build a bridge to the prosperity that lies in these markets. Spending trade infrastructure money well demands more than just spending money.

Now that the federal and provincial governments have committed to spend, the question we face is how to increase the intelligence in our decision-making to meet the challenges we now face.

## SPENDING TRADE INFRASTRUCTURE MONEY WELL DEMANDS MORE THAN JUST SPENDING MONEY.

Over the past two years, the Canada West Foundation held a series of strategic trade infrastructure roundtables with private sector stakeholders — including CentrePort Canada and the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association — and provincial and federal government officials focused on this question.

A recommendation from our most recent roundtable, and presented to the federal infrastructure minister, is the need in Canada to establish a sustained private-sector role to bring sophisticated supply and logistics information, foreign-market and business planning intelligence that the public sector lacks to improve evidence-based decision-making. This is standard best practice around the globe and our competitors, such as Australia, are nearly a decade ahead of us in doing it.

As the principle user and financier of trade infrastructure, the private sector is on the front lines and knows where improvements or additions to our supply chain network will benefit the economy. It has developed data, tools and personnel that improve the identification, planning, prioritization and co-ordination of trade infrastructure — capacity that government acknowledges it lacks. Greater engagement with the private sector will help the government make sound decisions on its trade infrastructure priorities.

We also need to better communicate what we are doing in order to reassure foreign buyers who are worried that our infrastructure will prevent us from being reliable and trusted suppliers to markets that pay more for security of supply. This is a job that cannot be left to Ottawa. The province must undertake even more engagement and outreach to personally deliver this message to key markets.

Ensuring investments are made where they are needed and ensuring that foreign buyers know we are doing this, will make Canada, and the provinces, more prosperous and improve our ability to compete globally.



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# SETTING THE STANDARD FOR SAFETY AND HEALTH CERTIFICATION – COR™ AND SAFE WORK CERTIFIED



BY JAMIE HALL



**Jamie Hall, a professional engineer with an MBA specializing in human resources,** joined SAFE Work

Manitoba as Chief Operating Officer in 2014. He believes that we are on the cusp of monumental improvements in safety performance in Manitoba and in society as a whole.

**S**AFE Work Manitoba is Manitoba's public agency dedicated to the prevention of workplace injuries and illnesses. In 2016, as a province we had 28,960 injuries reported to the WCB, a number that spans all industries. To reduce this number, SAFE Work Manitoba has made SAFE Work Certified, our standard for safety and health certification, a strategic priority for making our province's workplaces safer.

For two decades now, Manitoba has had a strong and effective safety and health certification program through COR™ for construction, and the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) WORKSAFELY™ program has been critical to this success.

**THE WCB RECENTLY ANALYZED THE DATA FROM 2000 TO 2015 FOR CONSTRUCTION COMPANIES BEFORE AND AFTER ACHIEVING COR™. OUR DATA SHOWED THAT ON AVERAGE EMPLOYERS SAW THEIR TOTAL INJURY RATES DECREASE BY 42 PER CENT**

The WCB recently analyzed the data from 2000 to 2015 for construction companies before and after achieving COR™. Our data showed that on average employers saw their total injury rates decrease by 42 per cent. In addition to this, employers experienced a

37 per cent reduction in injury costs per worker, and saw their number of work days taken for time-loss injuries reduced by almost half.

This success seen with COR™ for construction served as a solid example for us at SAFE Work Manitoba when we set out, with input from our partners, to build SAFE Work Certified, a standard that can be applied to all industries.

One of the questions I get asked frequently is if SAFE Work Certified is a replacement for COR™, and the answer is that it is not. Instead, SAFE Work Certified is the common yardstick that we use to measure each industry's safety and health certification program in our province, including COR™.

The COR™ program offered by WORKSAFELY™ meets the SAFE Work Certified requirements and provides a program uniquely suited to the construction industry. Any construction workplace that achieves COR™ has met the SAFE Work Certified standard. I believe one of the main reasons that COR™ is effective at making construction workplaces safer is because it articulates the unique safety needs and requirements for this industry, and provides safety solutions that meet these needs.

For the last year, SAFE Work Manitoba has worked with industry-based safety programs in other industries, including motor vehicle, trucking and manufacturing. Our collaboration with these industry partners has allowed us to work together and apply the same successful approach we've seen in

construction and bring customized safety and health certification to employers in these diverse industries. Our efforts have been rewarded, as the motor vehicle industry certified its first employer, Rocky Mountain Equipment, at the start of this year. Many employers in these other industries are presently working on attaining SAFE Work Certified in their industry.

The next question I am regularly asked is how things will change now that SAFE Work Certified is here. As long as construction employers maintain their COR™ certification, they meet the SAFE Work Certified standard. What is new is that any employer that has a safety and health certification program in place that meets the SAFE Work Certified standard qualifies to receive a rebate of 15 per cent of their WCB assessment premium (or up to \$3,000 for smaller employers), which will be paid out starting in 2018.

As a province, we are making progress in making work safer for everyone. At SAFE Work Manitoba, we are excited to do our part by working and collaborating with our safety partners, such as the MHCA, to build a culture of safety in our province through safety and health certification programs and by rewarding organizations that prioritize workplace safety.

**For more information about SAFE Work Certified and the Prevention Rebate Program, visit: [www.safemanitoba.com/topics/Pages/Safe-Work-Certified-Content.aspx](http://www.safemanitoba.com/topics/Pages/Safe-Work-Certified-Content.aspx).**



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# A CARBON PRICE

ON FUEL WILL HAVE  
 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS  
 FOR THE HEAVY  
 CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY



## BUILDING TOWARD, AND WITHIN, A CARBON-PRICE ERA

BY PHILIP GASS

**M**anitoba is on the cusp of announcing its climate change plan, and a key part of this will be a carbon price. When Manitoba launches its price, joining other provinces, it will mean almost 90 per cent of Canadians will be paying a carbon price, with the potential for this to climb even higher in 2018.

The pressure to adjust will be greatest on energy-intensive industries in the province. The heavy construction industry is among them. Specifically, transport fuel falls under carbon pricing, and it is an input in all elements of construction of roads, bridges, sewer and water works. A carbon price on fuel will have implications for the cost of infrastructure projects as a result.

With that in mind, here are some key questions to understand how a carbon-pricing system might work, the financial implications for the industry, and what can be done to maintain economic competitiveness.



**Philip Gass is a senior researcher with the Energy Program for the International Institute for Sustainable Development (IISD).**

Established in Winnipeg in 1990, IISD is an independent, non-profit organization that provides practical solutions to the challenge of integrating environmental and social priorities with economic development.

### WHAT IS A CARBON PRICE, AND HOW MIGHT IT WORK?

A carbon price is essentially a charge placed on the emissions generated from fuels and processes that produce carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases. In relation to transport and heavy construction equipment, this can include fuels like diesel and gasoline, but also applies to coal, natural gas, propane and other petroleum fuels.

The goal of carbon pricing is to ensure that the environmental and other impacts of the emissions from these fuels are incorporated in the cost of their combustion (i.e. their purchase price), and to discourage their use, encouraging a shift to cleaner, more efficient technologies.

In British Columbia, for example, a tax is placed on the sale of certain fuels at a rate equivalent to \$30 per tonne of carbon dioxide they produce. This works out to 6.67 cents per litre on gasoline and on diesel, a more carbon-intensive fuel, 7.67 cents/litre. The price is paid 'at the pump' just like other gas taxes.

### WHAT HAS THE IMPACT BEEN OF CARBON PRICING IN OTHER JURISDICTIONS?

There are two ways to look at the impact of carbon pricing. First, does it work? Does carbon pricing actually reduce emissions?

In total figures, B.C.'s emissions have increased since 2008, which may lead you to think the answer is no. Looking more closely at the numbers, however, indicates that the tax is working. Absolute emissions have increased because both the population and GDP have grown. Emissions intensity (emissions per unit of GDP) has actually dropped every year, as have per capita fuel sales. Sales in gasoline and diesel have both been at significantly lower rates than in the rest of Canada.

Secondly, what has been the economic impact? B.C.'s GDP growth since the introduction of the carbon tax has been just slightly ahead of the provincial average for the country. Data for engineering construction are not available prior to 2007, but since then the sector has been relatively stable. While it is difficult to identify

the exact impact of the carbon price, the B.C. economy is growing in a similar manner as it had before carbon pricing.

### THE KEY TO WEATHERING THE IMPACT – REVENUE RECYCLING

As with any added cost of doing business, there is an impact on industry. As fuel costs rise, this pressures industry, and may impact competitiveness. However, there are a number of measures that can be taken to mitigate impacts and help ensure competitiveness.

Policy certainty, long lead times and transitional periods with time-limited exemptions can all help ease adjustments. The most powerful tool for assisting competitiveness is with the revenues raised by the pricing mechanism itself.

In B.C., carbon-pricing revenues were used to lower personal and business taxes. Carbon-pricing revenues can also be used to support research and development of clean technologies, assist companies in transitioning to

cleaner fuels, and for offering tax credits for equipment and activities to support transition to more efficient activities, or to lower any potential competitiveness impacts.

If the Manitoba heavy construction sector is going to be faced with a carbon price, it is ultimately in its interest to identify to government where recycled revenues, and other competitiveness measures, could be implemented to lower impacts for business.

Being proactive on this front is paramount. A good first step would be to identify, and learn from, how the sector has responded in other provinces where a carbon price is already a reality of doing business.

Ultimately, it is in the interests of all Manitobans to see that the shift to a carbon-pricing regime is carried out carefully, mindful of potential disruptions and the need to adapt. The move to protect the environment is essential, but can have unintended and considerable consequences on the economy and social welfare. A carbon-pricing plan must account for economic and social dynamics for its environmental goals to be achievable.

# CAPITAL REGION GROWTH DRIVES TRANSPORTATION PLAN

BY COLLEEN SKLAR



**Colleen Sklar, executive director of the PMCR,** works with local leaders in developing integrated regional land-use planning, infrastructure investment and economic development that also protects our water and natural lands. She is a strong proponent of local engagement to plan for population growth and build resilience to sustain our prosperity into the future.

In his February state of the city address, Winnipeg Mayor Brian Bowman highlighted the need to prepare for a bigger, better kind of Winnipeg. One that is ready for a million people who will live, work, study and move around the city and across the region on streets, on buses, by car, on foot and by bike.

Mayor Bowman's call is timely: the recently released census found that Manitoba is one of the fastest-growing provinces in Canada. That growth, current and anticipated, is not all concentrated in Winnipeg. It is occurring in many communities, particularly in the Capital Region.

The mayor challenged the luncheon crowd to think about what this growth will mean, and to plan for it.

Well, Capital Region leaders, the mayors and Reeves who make up the Partnership of the Manitoba Capital Region (PMCR) have done just that. Over the past two years, the PMCR has been hard at work developing a platform for collaboration, building consensus on guiding principles and outlining priorities to ensure the 18 municipalities are pulling in the same direction. It is a "team of teams" approach that recognizes we are more than the sum of our parts and if we are to be truly competitive in this globally integrated world, we need a shared vision and 360-degree view of where we want to go.

What the region needs is fluid, well-planned transportation networks that can both accommodate and benefit from an expanded population, to realize the full economic potential of the collective wealth of our skills, efforts and the goods and services we produce and trade. This not only adds to our bottom line, it ensures we continue to afford the social programs that support the quality of life Manitobans enjoy.

**A MODERN, EFFICIENT TRANSPORTATION SYSTEM PREVENTS BOTTLENECKS AND CHOKE-POINTS FROM IMPEDING BUSINESS AND TRADE.**

Recognizing this, PMCR leaders aim to plan and develop a modern, efficient regional transportation system to seamlessly move people to jobs and goods to market as a region, through strategic, coordinated investments. A modern, efficient transportation system prevents bottlenecks and choke-points from impeding business and trade. At the same time, it expands mode choice for residents — improving our quality of life and reducing our carbon footprint.

The approach proposed by the members of the PMCR sounds logical, but as they say, the devil will be in the details. The first step is to bring community interests and leaders from all levels of government together to set aside current approaches, and work collaboratively for the benefit of all Manitobans.

This is a challenge, but we have seen great progress in a very short time. Over the past 18 months, the PMCR members and a working group of transportation and planning experts have been hard at it, exploring the intricacies of such a transportation plan. Out of the first phase of the detailed analysis of the need, scope and possibilities, important insights have surfaced.

The first is that if we are to increase our competitive advantage and enhance our quality of life we must embrace "capital-region thinking." We must abandon the traditional "silo" planning approach and build an integrated regional plan that prioritizes, anticipates and plans for the future.

The second is that we must embrace the regional scale if we are to build opportunity and see our future as more than a zero-sum game.

These are the realities to guide our next steps to designing a coordinated, regional transportation system.

That system, and the road map to get us there, cannot be just about cars and trucks (and potholes!). It must also be about choice — supporting choice in how residents, young and old, get around.

Embracing capital-region thinking will allow us to build a model that informs and guides decision-making across the 18 municipalities. Coordinating decisions — getting them to work in tandem — is critical to building and embellishing a strong, efficient transportation system that can accommodate the population growth we are anticipating, for the biggest economic return, in an environmentally and socially responsible way.

This makes ample sense to us as taxpayers, but it is equally important to us as residents, families and neighbours. It is an investment today, in the interests of our children and grandchildren.

The PMCR partners are talking now with the provincial government on the next steps, to lift this plan off the drawing board.

I think it is safe to say we all agree that "we've got it pretty good" in the Capital Region today.

It's time to go from good to great. Capital-region thinking lays down the road map to get there.



The Partnership of the Manitoba Capital Region (PMCR) sees a need for an integrated regional transportation plan.

Photo by KEN GIGLIOTTI / WINNIPEG FREE PRESS



## WINNIPEG'S INFRASTRUCTURE PRIORITIES: WHERE BUDGETING ART AND IDEALISM MUST MEET

BY LOREN REMILLARD



Loren Remillard is the president of the Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce.

### THE WINNIPEG CHAMBER OF COMMERCE HAS LONG SUPPORTED GOOD, MODERN INFRASTRUCTURE TO KEEP THE CITY COMPETITIVE.

But, more humbly — or perhaps more ambitiously, depending on your perspective — it means we have to invest in our streets, thoroughfares, sidewalks and active transportation routes in our city proper. They all feed into the same system — a trade system. That system contributes a lot to what we call our 'quality of life.'

Winnipeg has come a long way, just in the last decade, in its thinking on this.

You can see it in the historically high levels of investment that council has made in the last few years for local and regional street renewal. You see the municipal mind-shift, as well, in the investments in active transportation corridors, lanes and trails.

That broad perspective was at the heart of my comments to city council in December, when I asked it to focus on the long-term, on how the dedicated property taxes for local and regional street renewal can be used to move Winnipeg to 'modern,' to a place that attracts new residents and new businesses.

True, the budget shows the revenues of the two-per-cent property taxes dedicated to local and regional going directly into those street renewal programs. But it also shows that discretionary spending for roads — the revenues that the city transfers from its general revenues into the program — is falling.

So, the question we ask is how then do we get out of the infrastructure deficit.

There is no deficit of ideas here.

The 2011 Infrastructure Funding Council report is a great starting point, and many of its recommendations still await implementation.

In our 2014 BOLD Winnipeg document, the chamber advanced a number of recommendations, notably the need to increase municipal per capita capital spending from \$525 to a seven-city average of \$1,078 (Edmonton, Calgary, Saskatoon, Regina, Hamilton, Toronto and Ottawa). BOLD Winnipeg contains many other ideas, offered by Winnipeggers themselves, which necessitate consideration.

The chamber knows that the City of Winnipeg is facing a tough challenge, in that the municipality owns most of the infrastructure but has less ability to generate revenue than other levels of government to maintain or to build new infrastructure.

That's why the chamber believes that the city and all municipalities need a new revenue model, one that reduces dependency on property-based taxation and increases use of taxation tied to economic growth.

Fixing Winnipeg's infrastructure deficit is a long road indeed, but the sooner we commit to the journey, the sooner we'll get to our destination.

It is often said that politics is the art of the possible, and that policy is the work of the idealist. Sometimes they meet, and work well together. Sometimes they merely offer high contrast.

Winnipeg city council's budget, passed in December, does a bit of both.

When I appeared to endorse the 2017 operating budget at council in December, I was rightly acknowledging some tough work this council, under Mayor Brian Bowman, got done. City council pulled off a real coup by keeping spending increases to 2.3 per cent, overall.

Another win was the fact it held to the promised reduction in its business tax — a small reduction but it showed, nonetheless, the commitment to its promise, recognizing that cutting taxes is actually an investment in growth. This is borne out by the fact that the 2017 revenue from the business tax is expected to increase by \$200,000. Cut taxes on business and it will result in more business getting done, more businesses starting up and thriving.

That's one form of investment.

Another is the way the city chooses to invest in itself, specifically in getting people to jobs and goods to market — that's called infrastructure, or "trade-enabling" infrastructure. And it is broader, in concept, than what you might immediately think when you think "infrastructure." It includes moving people (and their talents — ie. services) in a variety of ways, allowing choice in that commute. This is a broadly imagined city of business.

But it needs a broad vision. The Winnipeg Chamber of Commerce has long supported good, modern infrastructure to keep the city competitive. That's why we did support, and remain stalwart in support of, CentrePort Canada, for example. It serves trade within the city, the Capital Region, the province and also, critically, to points beyond our borders in Canada and globally.



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## CLICK BEFORE YOU DIG TO AVOID HIDDEN PERILS

BY ANDREA GEARY

Hitting a buried utility line with a shovel or excavator isn't just costly and time consuming — it could be fatal.

Whether you're digging a hole for a simple fence post or for a complex sewer system, it's essential to Click Before You Dig.

As a public safety service, the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) has partnered with Manitoba Hydro, the City of Winnipeg and other utility providers to form the Manitoba Common Ground Alliance (MCGA), which coordinates location service for underground utility lines and structures for power, telephone, water and waste systems.

The MCGA launched the Click Before You Dig website at [www.clickbeforeyoudigmb.com](http://www.clickbeforeyoudigmb.com) to provide location information for anyone who plans to excavate the ground to a depth below 15 centimetres.

"More and more infrastructure is going underground and in the case of Manitoba Hydro lines, the energy is volatile and a damaged electrical cable or natural gas pipe line could result in serious injury or death," says Rob Morrison, Manitoba Hydro's Underground Locate supervisor.

"It doesn't take much to create a crisis," he adds, citing a case in which two houses in Western Manitoba were destroyed after an excavation caused a relatively small rupture in a natural gas line.

**HOMEOWNERS AND CONTRACTORS ALIKE ARE REQUIRED BY PROVINCIAL LEGISLATION TO ENSURE SERVICES ARE IDENTIFIED BEFORE THEY START DIGGING, EVEN IF THEY'RE ONLY EXCAVATING SMALL HOLES FOR FENCES OR DECK FOUNDATIONS.**

Homeowners and contractors alike are required by provincial legislation to ensure services are identified before they start digging, even if they're only excavating small holes for fences or deck foundations.

The Click Before You Dig website offers an instructional video, along with step-by-step safety information, which can be downloaded and printed.

Users can submit an online Locate request or call 1-800-940-3447 to arrange for utility owners or authorized locators to provide information regarding the dig area. The process takes three to five business days and typically requires a locator to visit to the property to physically mark locations of underground lines.

MHCA WORKSAFELY™ Education and Training specialist Jackie Jones says the former Call Before You Dig system didn't fully meet the needs of MHCA members. Industry and utility representatives met to find ways to streamline the process, making it easier to submit a locate request and speed up response times.

"We talked about what we could do to improve the website and to promote damage prevention. We decided to build upon the existing Manitoba Common Ground Alliance, taking a more collaborative approach to reducing damage by getting membership more involved," she says.

Morrison says Manitoba Hydro welcomes the opportunity to work with industry and other utility providers in the MCGA to prevent damage and service disruptions and to promote safety.

"Our members are part of the solution going forward."

Morrison and Jones will present an information session on the Click Before You Dig service and the MCGA initiative at the MHCA's Heavy Construction Expo at the Victoria Inn & Convention Centre April 4-5.

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# SAFETY SIMPLIFIED, TAILORED TO THE WORK SITE

## MHCA DELIVERS ON-SITE TRAINING AND RESOURCES



BY PAT REDIGER

Spring and summer are prime time for heavy construction projects, but safety is a priority year-round.

At Accurate HD in New Bothwell, safety coordinator Marc Rodrigue took advantage of downtime in January to run a full week of safety programs for management and staff – everything from hearing tests and First Aid courses to confined-space rescue training and several other modules that are part of the Certificate of Recognition (COR™) system.

“We had all of our supervisors involved in COR™ training, which was Leadership in Safety Excellence,” he says.

For most staff members, training days were like any other workday, since programs were delivered on-site in New Bothwell.

Accurate HD is one of about 20 companies over the past year that have taken advantage of on-site training programs delivered by the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA) WORKSAFELY™ program.

“We’ve been doing more and more where we’ll send our advisers right into a workplace and do training for one day, two days, sometimes upwards of a week,” says Don Hurst, MHCA director of WORKSAFELY™ education and training.

MHCA provides training for 2,000 or more workers each year. As many as 200 will access a range of courses at two-day events such as the upcoming Heavy Construction Expo, set for April 4-5 in Winnipeg. Smaller groups attend training sessions at MHCA’s offices and, increasingly, customized training sessions are being delivered in workplaces.

**MHCA PROVIDES TRAINING FOR 2,000 OR MORE WORKERS EACH YEAR. AS MANY AS 200 WILL ACCESS A RANGE OF COURSES AT TWO-DAY EVENTS SUCH AS THE UPCOMING HEAVY CONSTRUCTION EXPO, SET FOR APRIL 4-5 IN WINNIPEG.**

Hurst says companies may want multiple courses — flag person and traffic-control training, transportation of dangerous goods and safe work procedures, for example – and so far, MHCA has provided on-site training in First Nations communities and in Winnipeg, Brandon, Arborg and Thompson.

On-site training isn’t the only initiative that’s more cost-effective and convenient for companies.

About two years ago, MHCA partnered with an Abbotsford, B.C., company called SiteDocs to provide COR™ certified companies with an electronic documentation system, e-COR™.

Arnason Industries Ltd. and Accurate HD were among the first companies to use the safety-management software.

Arnason safety coordinator Jamie Plesh says the paperless system allows companies to run their entire safety programs from mobile apps and the web.

“Everything goes onto the iPad,” Plesh says. “The app holds all our policies, procedures and information on workplace safety and health. In the past, I would make a separate binder for things such as emergency-response procedures and give it to the site supervisor, who would have to lug it around wherever they go.”

The system makes it easier to maintain COR™ certification by allowing companies to manage their day-to-day safety compliance electronically and keep complete records.

“Before this program, we dedicated a lot of storage space in our office to safety records. We keep all our safety records for a certain amount of years. I had bookcases full of binders,” Plesh says. “Now, we don’t have to do

that anymore. If I want to print out the data, I can, but it’s all saved, stored and organized for me.”

Plesh says the electronic system also makes it much easier to manage safety in remote work sites.

“Sending paperwork back and forth, whether it’s through faxing or scanning and emailing, is not very time-efficient. When you have time-sensitive material, you want to make sure guys are doing it. Our site supervisors can do their due diligence and provide their signatures right on the platform itself,” he says

“I can open it up on my desktop at work and check if they did their hazard assessment the morning, for example. If they haven’t, I can start bugging them. If I need to update safety procedures, I can update it remotely and then let them know to check for updates.”

Hurst says e-COR™ is proving popular. About 70 of some 350 COR™ certified companies have adopted the system so far, and he sees it as the future of safety documentation. He says it adds value and reduces delays, since users don’t have to hunt for a binder to complete paperwork.

“We want it to be an active tool that people use every day and in the field.”




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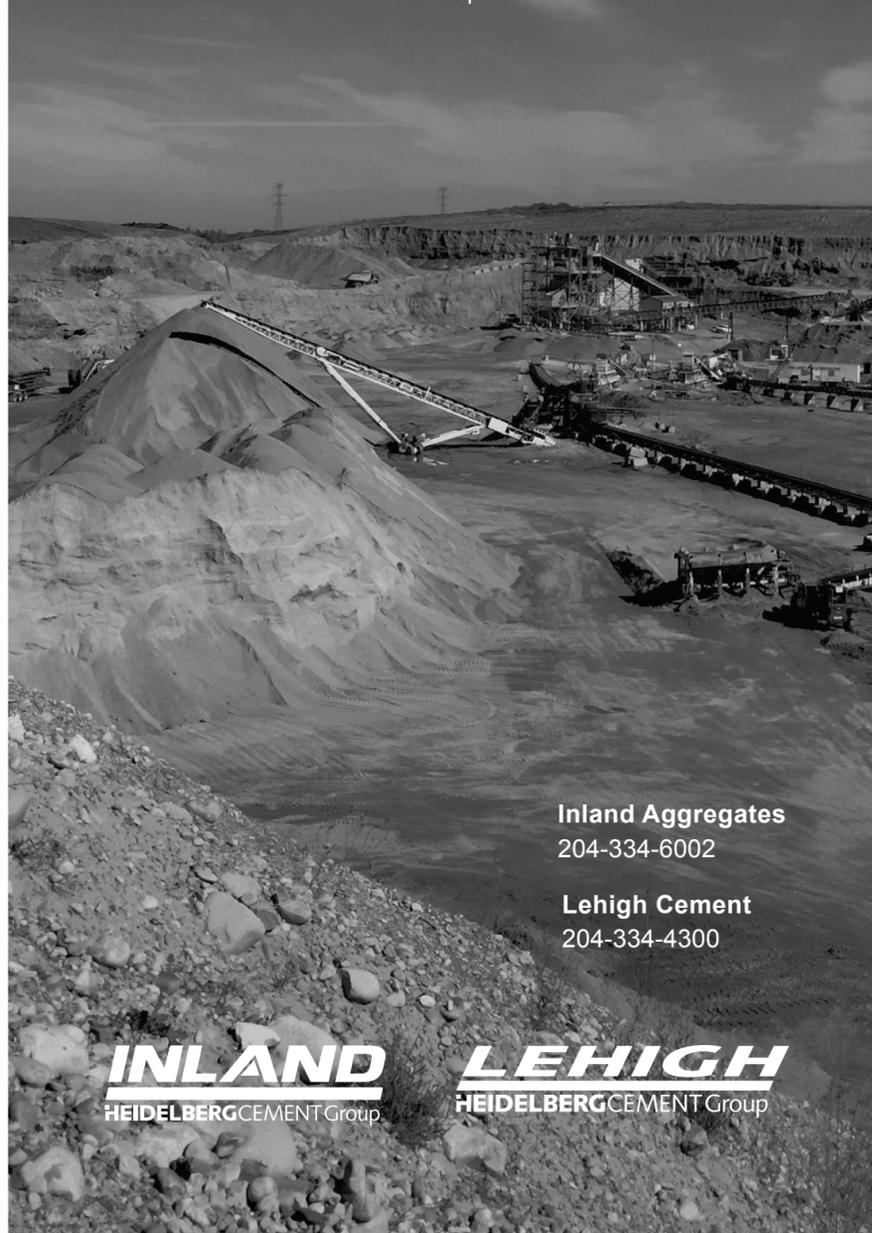


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## A HIGHER STANDARD

### NORTHERN SAFETY OFFICERS NATIONALLY CERTIFIED

BY GEOFF KIRBYSON

In her seven years of working for a trucking operation in Northern Manitoba, Alishia Lundgren says she has taken pretty much every course in workplace safety available to her. So safety on the job is an ever-present concern.

Lundgren says taking the National Construction Safety Officer (NCSO) certification just seemed like the obvious next step.

Recently, she and another woman in the North joined a small club of heavy construction workers who have passed the relatively new, nationally recognized exam for NCSO designation.

"I figured why not write the exam and learn and better myself in this career," says Lundgren, who has worked in heavy construction since 1996.

"The big thing I learned is that due diligence is the most important (issue) when it comes safety. If you didn't document it, it didn't happen."

Due diligence allows an operation not just to show that it has crossed its Ts when it comes to safety in the workplace. It is an effective way to review processes and procedures against the required measures, to ensure the office or worksite practices remain tight and meet recognized standards.

Lundgren and Smook Contractors Ltd. employee Claudette Dudley gained their NCSO through MHCA's WORKSAFELY™ program. WORKSAFELY™ staff worked with its partners in the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations to standardize the credential requirements for the designation for the construction industry.

Phil McDaniel, WORKSAFELY™ safety advisor, says NCSO candidates require three years of safety construction experience and must take a minimum of 12 courses in various areas of safety and health matters specific to the construction sector. They then must write the exam that is now nationally endorsed.

Since assuming health and safety duties at Smook Contractors Ltd. 18 months ago, Dudley says she sees everything now through the lens of risk and safety.

The human resources manager at the Thompson-based firm started seeing hazards not just at construction sites, but around town and in her own home.

Even something as seemingly run-of-the-mill as cutting the grass was red-flagged. "I quickly realized we should be using the proper footwear and eyewear" as well, while cutting grass, Dudley says.

"You should have earmuffs or ear plugs, too. You want to preserve your hearing. "Noise-induced damage is huge. Once you lose your hearing, you don't get it back," she says, before pausing and adding with a laugh, "I was never like this before."

In 2016, 10 individuals in Manitoba completed the requirements to obtain their NCSO designation.

McDaniel says having the NCSO designation is widely recognized as fundamental to workplace safety and health training.

"It's a highly sought-after designation for our industry. People hiring are looking for it. It's a valuable resource to management in implementing their health and safety programs."

Dudley believes far too many people still have the attitude that accidents only happen to other people. She's hoping to change that, even if it has to be one person at a time.

"The more education workers get, the more they realize (accidents) could happen to any one of us at any point in time."

Lundgren says her NCSO achievement will benefit her employer, the workplace and herself "because training and learning is always ongoing. Every day there is a new safety concern or task at hand and we all work together to (address) any issues or concerns."



MHCA WORKSAFELY™ safety adviser Dave McPherson with nationally certified safety officer Alishia Lundgren.

## LEADING THE WAY

### IN CREATING A CULTURE OF SAFETY

BY GEOFF KIRBYSON

When Michael Burtnick started out in the construction industry in the mid-1980s, he would have the best tan in the city every summer.

Attire was not what is seen on road crews today, says Burtnick, now the safety manager at Maple Leaf Construction. In fact, safety procedures were largely an afterthought in those days, and steel-toed boots, hard hats and protective clothing were often seen as unnecessary impediments to getting the job done.

**HIGH-PROFILE ACCIDENTS ON WORK SITES OVER THE YEARS HELPED CONVINCE INDUSTRY PARTICIPANTS ACROSS THE COUNTRY THAT SAFETY NEEDS TO BE A TOP PRIORITY.**

High-profile accidents on work sites over the years helped convince industry participants across the country that safety needs to be a top priority.

Not only is it the right thing to do, it's good business.

Don Hurst, director of WORKSAFELY™ education and training at the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association (MHCA), says the Certificate of Recognition program, (COR™), is the ultimate accreditation to verify that a company has implemented a comprehensive health and safety program. It also means that the same safety standards are followed across the country.

Among other things, COR™ ensures that procedures are documented, including how equipment and machinery are used, and the approaches taken to protect workers from physical and environmental hazards.

Safety must permeate entire organizations, including people at all levels of the corporate hierarchy.

"Companies are required to put managers through the training so they know what the system is. It's not just one guy on a construction site telling everybody what to do, which was probably the case 20 years ago. It's more than just instructing people, it's taking responsibility in all aspects of the job. The approach is proactive now, not reactive," Hurst says.

The system is so well regarded that the SAFE Work Manitoba branch of the Workers Compensation Board of Manitoba (WCB) is working with

manufacturers, the Manitoba Motor Dealers Association and the Manitoba Trucking Association to implement a safety program based on similar principles as COR™.

Edie Construction owner Calvin Edie says his company was one of the first to adopt a formal safety program. In 1990, the company signed on with the program that evolved into COR™ in 2000.

"It's recognized among your peers right across the country that you're committed to safety," says Edie.

His company specializes in excavation, and he says employees have to be alert to potential dangers at all times.

"I think the biggest thing is to have everybody who's on the site not only looking after themselves but looking after everybody else, because you might see somebody getting into a bad habit and if you don't deal with it immediately, it can cause you grief down the line," he says.

"One thing I tell the guys is it's easier to stay out of trouble than get out of trouble, so make sure you're doing things right."

Maple Leaf Construction and Nelson River Construction were also leaders in adopting COR™ safety training and procedures. Burtnick says one reason safety protocols are more widely accepted on work sites today is because a culture of safety was instilled in younger workers who are now moving into leadership positions.

"They've grown up in the company with safety as

a regular part of their work day. It's just like putting your work boots on. It's part of their routine," Burtnick says.

But just because workers are increasingly safety conscious doesn't mean that the general public follows suit. Burtnick says every road crew across the province has stories about close calls with distracted drivers.

"Our guys just shake their heads. Most of the time, (distracted) drivers just knock over a couple of pylons. We're afraid one day it's going to be one of our people."

Ray Bissonnette, safety health and loss prevention manager at Nelson River Construction in Winnipeg, says his crews see the exact same thing — drivers treat an area where they have to slow down as if it were a parking lot so they pull out their phones.

"There's not much we can do. We train our flag people to look out for it when a distracted driver is coming through the zone. They'll radio ahead or yell to the crew if they're close enough," he says.

The more accidents under your watch, the higher the premiums paid to the WCB and the more money is spent hiring and training replacement workers. Part of Bissonnette's challenge is showing that Nelson River's safety programs are working, which is more difficult than in other departments.

"The manager of concrete can show what he saved the company at the end of the year in terms of concrete, but I can't show you how many accidents were prevented," he says.

## PROTECTING THE VULNERABLE

### INJURY PREVENTION IS FIRST JOB FOR YOUNG WORKERS

BY PAT ST. GERMAIN



**R**emember your first job? How excited you were to clock in on Day 1 — and how eager you were to please?

Youthful enthusiasm is a wonderful thing, but combined with inexperience, it can be dangerous on a heavy construction site.

“Students are typically the most vulnerable because they’re new to the industry,” says Peter Paulic, vice-president of Thompson-based Smook Contractors Ltd.

“It’s all brand new to them and eagerness can get them in trouble, and the size of the equipment can get them in trouble. A lot of times the kids think they’re invincible.”

Young workers are often reluctant to ask questions, and they’re more willing than experienced workers to expose themselves to danger.

**YOUNG WORKERS ARE OFTEN RELUCTANT TO ASK QUESTIONS, AND THEY’RE MORE WILLING THAN EXPERIENCED WORKERS TO EXPOSE THEMSELVES TO DANGER.**

“That’s why you put them with more experienced workers,” Paulic says. “One, it’s getting them comfortable with the job and the people they’re around so they can ask questions, and two, making sure they’re not being overzealous and trying to please anyone with doing more than what they should be doing.”

Young workers typically enter the industry as flaggers or general labourers, and they’re often surprised that their jobs begin with a full day of safety orientation in a classroom setting, followed by close supervision shadowing an experienced worker on the job.

Amber Klassen, general superintendent at Direct Traffic in Brandon, says about 60 per cent of the company’s flaggers are students working summer jobs, and all workers spend at least one full day going over safety procedures in the classroom and in the field.

“Even those workers that have come back with us redo all their training every single year so we can make sure that we’re all on the same page, and that way we can update them if there are any changes in rules and regulations.”

After their first day on the job, workers meet with managers to discuss the

experience, and they have many opportunities to ask questions of trainers and supervisors.

Klassen says working in traffic is the most dangerous part of the job, but flaggers have to be alert to everything that’s happening on a job site.

“You have to keep moving your head all around and make sure that you’re not only aware of the vehicles that are coming toward you, but also the large piece of equipment that’s moving around behind you,” she says.

Other hazards are less obvious. Both Klassen and Paulic say weather is a factor. On hot days, employees in every position have to stay hydrated, and on excavation sites, rain can cause a bank to cave in.

In Northern Manitoba, Paulic says flaggers face a few unique hazards — bears and flying rocks on gravel roads.

“If somebody is not slowing down or stopping for you, they’re shooting rocks at you at 100 kilometres an hour,” he says.

“They have to be in a safe position so they’re not getting hit by flying rocks. We do the best we can in order to put them in safe positions, and a lot of times that means having vehicles with them

at all times in a protected environment.”

Flaggers can duck behind a vehicle if an approaching driver doesn’t slow down, and they may be seated inside the vehicle if there are bears in the area. All workers have to make sure their lunches are protected so they don’t attract bears, and intentionally feeding bears is dangerous for the animals and workers alike. Bold bears will even lie on the road and then approach vehicles when they stop.

Paulic says most young workers who land summer jobs with Smook Contractors are university students who return every summer during their academic career. And he’s proud of the fact that older workers with established careers in heavy construction take them under their wings.

“They really care for them and they really want to make sure that they all go home safely and soundly,” he says.

“The workers that are there that have the experience typically all have kids, and the kids could be a similar age, so it’s very easy to bring a student on in the heavy construction industry, as far as I’m concerned, and have experienced workers really take care of them.”

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# Spring is here. Let's hit the pavement.

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Let us take care of your Traffic Management so you can focus on what you do best: build safer roads.

We provide the tools and systems to keep people safe and traffic running smoothly.

## WE OFFER

- Consulting
- Access to 15,000+ Products
- Traffic Management Plans
- Traffic Accommodation Systems
- Traffic and Railroad Audits

## WE PROMISE

- Complete Responsibility
- Accurate Budgeting
- Consistent Quality
- Public & Worker Safety
- Driver Satisfaction



Contact us today for your free consultation.

### Winnipeg Division

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