



# Tapping experience, desire to welcome and hire

**T**ony Teixeira is no stranger to recruiting and welcoming newcomers to Winnipeg.

The Vice-President of JC Paving has a history working with Manitoba's immigration initiatives to attract newcomers to the province.

Now he is bringing his experience and skill as both a member of Manitoba's vibrant Portuguese community and as a long-time construction contractor to MHCA's efforts to help build the new generation of industry workers.

"Tony has a wealth of experience and he has a big heart for bringing newcomers to Winnipeg, to Manitoba, to show them the opportunities here for growth, prosperity and a great life, overall," said MHCA President Chris Lorenc.

Teixeira was appointed to the MHCA Board in late 2021, succeeding long-time member Henry Borger.

Teixeira has been involved in many committees addressing matters related to the City of Winnipeg, the recycling of concrete aggregates and spec harmonization.

And this spring, he assumed the position of Chair of the newly reconstituted MHCA WORKFORCE Development Committee.

One of the primary areas of concern for the committee is to assist industry's efforts to recruit, train and retain workers. MHCA participated in a job fair mid-July held by Manitoba Start, a provincially funded job readiness and awareness organization that attempts to link up worker skills with employers.

Teixeira is well-placed to lead the MHCA Workforce development initiatives.

He has also spearheaded and organized two immigration delegations with the Provincial Nominee Program, which resulted in fast-tracked recruitment of skilled labour workers to Manitoba, filling some much-needed voids in the heavy construction industry. As well, he sat on a provincial advisory board to the Manitoba immigration minister.

"As with many in the Portuguese community, I know well the work earlier generations had to do to get on their feet, build careers and become secure and prosperous in a new place and that's what I want to help all newcomers find here," Teixeira said.

"But it's about more than recruiting people from across the world or other parts of Canada. There are sizeable pools of potential employees who are Manitoba citizens that we are targeting for our industry," he noted. "This, in fact, is a much larger area of recruitment potential and many would agree they should have every opportunity to find work, advance and enjoy long, lucrative careers in heavy construction."

Teixeira is a valuable asset to the association's workforce development efforts and he comes at a really crucial time for the industry, said Don Hurst, MHCA's Director of WORKSAFELY® Education and Training.

"He has a really solid understanding from both a recruiter's and a job-seeker's perspective of the foundational elements of bringing in new workers, training them properly and then ensuring their jobs are fulfilling, so they stay."

Teixeira said the priorities of the committee include contributing to the province's review of immigration policies and programs, to boost immigration and make settlement, including job-readiness and search, successful.



At a committee meeting in August, Association of Manitoba Municipalities Executive Director Denys Volkov, who is a member of the review task force, was invited to appear and listen to the concerns of the industry regarding weaknesses in the current immigrant recruitment and welcoming programs.

Manitoba's Provincial Nominee Program has a long, envious record of attracting people from other countries to come to Manitoba. But it could be better, said Teixeira.

"The PNP's current process is to award points to applicants for entry, based on a number of factors, such as education, training, certifications and how well the individual's skills line up with labour market demand," he explained.

But that assessment and points-award system does not give weight to an individual's experience, such as many years in heavy construction where skill acquisition makes the work a potentially valuable hire, he noted.

"We think that should be changed. We think the evaluation and points-award system should also give credit for an individual's experience and skill, regardless of certification and we're hoping the review team will recommend such a change."

The committee will also set about to identify workforce needs and gaps, work with the Manitoba Construction Sector Council to strengthen recruitment of Indigenous people for heavy construction and partner with educational institutions and other organizations to increase training to fill workforce needs.

To date, committee members include: John Highmoor, Vice-President, Tri-Core Projects; Jackie Kent, HR Manager, EF Moon Ltd.; Morgan Garand, Human Resources Supervisor, Nelson River Construction; Carol Paul, Executive Director, Manitoba Construction Sector Council; Floyd Buhler, Director of Health, Safety and Environment, Sigfusson Northern Ltd.; Don Hurst and Chris Lorenc.

"We're off to a strong start," said Lorenc. "Tony, with his industry experience, knows how important it is for a new recruit to feel they will get sufficient introductory, and safety & health training prior to putting their feet on the ground."

Under Teixeira's leadership, the committee will expand the association's work and initiatives, and that will bolster support to the industry's own efforts, Lorenc said.



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