

WINTER 2025

Sheet Metal Journal

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British Columbia

CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK 2025

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Official Journal of
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PROMOTING GROWTH AND STABILITY IN OUR INDUSTRY

Formed in 1969, the British Columbia Sheet Metal Association (SMACNA-BC) was the first international chapter of the Sheet Metal & Air-conditioning Contractors National Association (SMACNA). Founded in 1934, SMACNA traces its history to the National Association of Sheet Metal Contractors established in 1910, and has 2,300 members worldwide.

SMACNA-BC is a member-driven association representing unionized sheet metal contractors in the Mainland of BC, and suppliers to our industry. It promotes the growth and stability of the members and industry.

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- To improve the financial stability and business conditions of the sheet metal industry, and to develop and promote methods to improve managerial proficiency
- To improve quality, efficiency and productivity of this industry, and to implement high standards of work
- To establish and maintain high ethical standards of conduct between members of the Association, and between members and owners, architects, engineers, other contractors, and the public
- To promote harmony in labour relations
- To study and help in the development and enforcement of governmental codes and regulations, and such legislation as may be necessary for the best interest of the public and the sheet metal industry
- To exchange technical, professional, and educational information with other contractor associations in the sheet metal industry and its allied trades in Canada and other countries
- To affiliate as a Chapter with the Sheet Metal & Air-conditioning Contractors National Association, Inc.

BC Sheet Metal Association (SMACNA-BC) • Executive Director: Jeremy Hallman

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SMACNA-BC NAVIGATES A CHANGING LANDSCAPE

Our industry continues to face a rapidly evolving landscape as we start 2025. Just as I started to think we could pull off a “soft landing” and avoid a recession, now come tariff threats. As global trade policies shift, the potential for increased costs on imported materials could have far-reaching consequences for contractors, manufacturers, and suppliers. Steel and aluminum tariffs remain a significant concern, as price fluctuations and supply chain disruptions could impact project costs and overall industry stability.

The unpredictability of these tariffs creates uncertainty, making it essential for industry professionals to stay ahead of potential changes. SMACNA-BC is actively monitoring these discussions and working to find industry experts to speak on some of the “what ifs”. We understand that rising material costs can put pressure on businesses, impacting everything from bidding strategies to profitability.

Negotiations with SMART Local 280

As you probably know, the negotiation process with Local 280 started at the end of January. We would like to extend our gratitude to all the contractors who responded in writing to our request for input and attended the open forum to discuss upcoming negotiations. The forum, held at the Surrey Civic Hotel on January 29, provided a valuable platform for open discussion and feedback. Your participation and insights are instrumental in helping us navigate these negotiations effectively.

Local 280 continues to be a great partner, and we hope to have a new contract signed by the time our current one expires on April 30, 2025. As always, our goal is to secure a fair and sustainable agreement that benefits both workers and employers, ensuring stability and continued growth within the industry. We appreciate the dedication and professionalism of all parties involved and will continue to keep our members updated as discussions progress. A special thanks to our SMACNA-BC negotiating committee.

Recent Events

SMACNA CEI Conference

Earlier this month, I had the opportunity to attend the SMACNA CEI Conference, which provided valuable insights and discussions with industry peers. It’s great to be able to connect with other chapters that face challenges similar to ours. Even though we are in different parts of the world, it always surprises me how similar things can be.

SMACNA CEO Aaron Hilger provided an important industry update. He shared that total hours worked are expected to increase by 3% this year, a positive trend that signals continued growth in our sector. However, he also highlighted a significant



Jeremy Hallman,
Executive Director, SMACNA-BC

shift in workforce challenges. Previously, the main concern was finding enough workers to fill jobs, but now the industry is struggling to find skilled project managers, estimators, and supervisors. This change presents both challenges and opportunities for businesses looking to build strong leadership teams and invest in professional development.

As companies continue to expand, it is crucial to address this management gap by investing in leadership training programs. Companies that actively seek to develop and promote talent within their organizations will be in a better position to thrive in the years ahead.

SMACNA-BC January Dinner Meeting – Bonding and Surety

On January 23, we hosted an informative dinner meeting focused on bonding and surety with presenter Craig Spence, an account executive at Wilson M. Beck Insurance in Langley. He discussed the essentials of setting up a bond facility, the broker's role in the process, and what surety underwriters consider when making their decisions. He also discussed the costs and benefits of maintaining a bonding facility, along with an overview of the basic types of bonds.

Upcoming Events

SMACNA College of Fellows Scholarship Application

The SMACNA College of Fellows is now accepting scholarship applications for the 2025-2026 academic year. The scholarship program is open to qualified students seeking to further their undergraduate education by attending an accredited four-year college or university. The scholarships are open to full-time students entering their first year, as well as current full-time undergraduate students. Any course of study may be pursued; however, it is hoped that a career in a field related to the sheet metal industry will be considered.

The scholarship application and eligibility requirements are available on the SMACNA website. Applicants must be part of SMACNA’s extended family, which includes SMACNA contractors, employees of SMACNA contractors, SMACNA Fellows, employees of local chapters, employees of SMACNA

National, SMACNA National Associate Members, and members of the families of any of these groups.

Scholarship applications must be postmarked or with email transmission date by February 28, 2025. Applications are evaluated and candidates selected by a Scholarship Committee appointed by the College of Fellows. Selection is based on educational goals as stated by the applicants, academic achievement, and involvement in school-related extracurricular and community activities. Applicants must have demonstrated leadership potential and be of good character. Financial need is not a prerequisite. Award notifications are made by July 1.

SMACNA-BC Dinner Meeting – March 2024

Our next dinner meeting is set for March, and we encourage all members to attend. These gatherings provide an excellent opportunity to discuss industry trends, share insights, and strengthen connections within our professional community. Details regarding the venue and guest speakers will be announced soon, so stay tuned for updates.

SMACNA-BC AGM & Convention – May 8-11, 2025, Whistler, BC

One of the most anticipated events of the year, the SMACNA-BC Annual General Meeting and Convention will take place at the Westin Resort & Spa in Whistler. This family-friendly event should have something for everyone. Leanne's planned activities include a zip line tour, axe throwing, a lunch tour, or golf at Big Sky in Pemberton. The Annual General Meeting will be held at 10:00 am on the Saturday. Please make every effort to attend the meeting or send in your proxy vote to ensure your voice is heard. A list of expiring terms for various boards and committees will be coming out in the next few weeks, so please watch your inbox if you're interested.



SMACNA National Convention – October 26-29, 2025, Maui, HI

Looking further ahead, the SMACNA National Convention will be held in October in Maui at the Grand Wailea Hotel. Registration for the convention is set to open April 24 at 9:00



am Pacific time. This year, contractors will be registering themselves and not going through SMACNA-BC. That said, if you have any questions or need any help from us, please contact us in the SMACNA-BC office at 604-585-4641.

Chapter night for this event will be held with the Western Washington and Oregon & Southwest Washington chapters at the Four Seasons Hotel. Based on past events with Julie and her team, this night should be sure to please.

For a full list of upcoming SMACNA-BC events please visit our website at business.smacna-bc.org/events ■

SMACNA-BC / SMART Local 280 Partnership



Left: Mark McLaren, Ridge Sheet Metal Co., SMACNA-BC President.
Right: Jud Martell, Local Union No. 280 President.



Labour & Management "Embracing the Challenge"

- B. Flaherty, Cornell University, Syracuse, N.Y.

CONSTRUCTION OUTLOOK 2025

British Columbia and Alberta see growth and labour challenges moving into 2025

By Robin Brunet

The good news is that British Columbia's construction sector, which accounts for 10 percent of the province's GDP and employs 167,300 tradespeople, was busier than ever in 2024—and the New Year overflows with work opportunities.

Jeremy Hallman, executive director at SMACNA-BC, says, "We just finished one of the busiest years our trade has enjoyed on record, with hospital projects including Lion's Gate, St. Paul's, Burnaby, and Royal Columbian, and other facilities—being a main driver.

"Yes, inflation and other factors caused some projects to stall, especially in the residential sector. But currently our members have worked approximately 15 percent more hours than in the previous year, so we're withstanding the headwinds."

The bad news is that labour shortages, payment uncertainty, and high costs continue to pressure the province's contractors, and Chris Atchison, president of the BC Construction Association (BCCA), wonders just how long people working in the sector will be able to withstand the headwinds.

"I think we're at a pivotal juncture," he says. "The value of current major building projects is \$170 billion, an eight percent

increase over last year. That's good news, but when you look at the value of proposed major projects, unfortunately those numbers have declined by five percent over the past year and nearly 20 percent over the past five years."

What makes this troubling is that public expenditures far outstrip private sector spending. As megaprojects such as the Trans Mountain Pipeline and Site C come closer to completion, the decreasing value of proposed construction projects suggests that the province is not investing in additional much-needed infrastructure projects, such as schools, multi-unit housing, bridges, and supporting infrastructure.

In short, the juncture Atchison refers to is one in which British Columbia, despite the breadth and expertise of its construction sector, and despite high demand, could be hurtling towards a correction.

The situation is somewhat different in neighbouring Alberta, always a pro-business province. There, the economy is projected to stabilize and diversify, driven by strong energy sector performance and increasing investments in non-oil industries. The provincial government's commitment to infrastructure



"The value of current major building projects is \$170 billion, an eight percent increase over last year."

— Chris Atchison, BCCA President



“There will be a bit of a plateau this year as some of the major projects wind down. There are others coming online, but we see the market cooling and stabilizing over 2025.”

— Jeremy Hallman, SMACNA-BC Executive Director

development of all kinds is robust, but even Alberta’s can-do spirit can’t escape fluctuating material costs and supply chain issues, along with the chronic labour shortages that exist in virtually every region of Canada.

Hallman concedes that in British Columbia, “there will be a bit of a plateau this year as some of the major projects wind down. That said, there are others coming online, but we see the market cooling and stabilizing over 2025.”

With regards to the labour shortages, Hallman finds it encouraging that Local 280’s Sheet Metal Workers Training Centre Society is receiving record rates of apprentices but it’s yet to be seen if that will keep up with retired members and the additional work. “Our numbers have gone up, but so has work in this province,” he says.

Jeannine Martin, president of the Vancouver Regional Construction Association, says several important trends accompany the labour situation in 2025. “After many years, the perception of working in the trades is shifting. More and more, trades are being seen as a rewarding career path rather than just a job. But we need new talent in far greater numbers, if nothing else than to compensate for the growing number of workers reaching retirement.”



“After many years, the perception of working in the trades is shifting. More and more, trades are being seen as a rewarding career path rather than just a job.”

— Jeannine Martin, VRCA President

If construction advocates seem to be unduly focused on labour, it’s because of the severity of the situation. The BCCA estimates that the number of construction jobs in British Columbia that will be unfilled due to labour shortages by 2033 is 6,600, an

increase of 600 compared to 2032 forecasts that were made in the fall of 2023.

Accordingly, industry is scrambling to find ways to remedy the problem. Last year, the VRCA enjoyed strong success with its pilot Bring Trades to School (BTS) program, which sparked interest and excitement among grades 8–12 students due to hands-on workshops in electrical, mechanical, carpentry, roofing, heavy equipment operation, virtual welding, and masonry.

“This year 180 students from two high schools will participate in an immersive day of trade workshops,” Martin says. “The numbers may not be huge, but we’re trying to lay the groundwork for the future. We’re also linking Bring Trades to School to our bursary program, which is usually for people already in a trade.”

This program is designed to support students pursuing higher education in trades and construction-related fields, and it awards up to \$3,000 per selected student to help with tuition and costs for programs that pave the way for a successful career in construction and trades.

“The point is, this is all part of a greater effort to raise our profile and foster the growing awareness of construction providing really excellent, challenging, and well-paying careers,” Martin says.

Other important issues are being addressed. Atchison’s organization continues to strongly advocate to bring about long-awaited prompt payment legislation, which among many other benefits would enable small contractors (the backbone of the British Columbia industry) to pay their staff and bills and avoid taking on extra debt.

“Lack of prompt payment has cost BC’s construction sector an estimated \$4 billion with regard to risk premiums, interest charges, and legal fees,” Atchison says. “During our recent election campaign, our political party leaders committed to supporting the construction industry. Now that the NDP has been re-elected, we need them and opposition caucuses to work together to implement policies geared towards payment certainty and workforce development.”

“If we’re able to achieve this, along with improving the labour situation, it’ll help attract external investment and create more favourable conditions for significant projects to get approved.” ■



TRIAL BY FIRE

A devastating blaze tested Rocky Point HVAC's resilience and the value of solid insurance coverage

By Natalie Bruckner

In 2024, Curtis Ahlsten, owner of Rocky Point Commercial HVAC Inc. and a member of SMACNA-BC, found himself facing a nightmare no sheet metal contractor ever wants to encounter—a fire that ravaged a job site, leaving him with questions and an overwhelming sense of loss. With nearly three decades of experience in the sheet metal and HVAC industry, including founding his own business in 2016, Ahlsten had seen a lot. But nothing could have prepared him for the aftermath of this devastating incident.

“The project was going smoothly, progressing as planned,” Ahlsten recalls. “Equipment like ERVs, rooftop units, wall caps, ductwork, and fittings had all been delivered to site.”

And then the unthinkable happened. A fire broke out after the site in Vancouver's Dunbar neighbourhood had shut down for the day. Ahlsten first learned about it from one of his employees, who had heard from a friend living nearby. News spread quickly, and confirmation came soon after from the developer's representative. In an instant, everything changed.

What followed was an immediate shift in the business landscape. One day, Ahlsten had a full schedule—work that would keep his team busy for months. The next, that schedule was shattered and a large portion of his workforce had to be laid off. “We felt the immediate impacts,” he says. “The work we had counted on for the next several months no longer existed.”

The financial strain was sudden and intense, especially with the significant loss of hand tools, saws, lights, and gang boxes. However, Ahlsten's primary concern was the significant investment in labour, materials, and equipment that had already been committed to the project. “Our insurance broker responded immediately, confirming that we had coverage for the tools and equipment lost in the fire,” Ahlsten says. “He also explained that the labour, materials, and equipment already committed to the project would be covered by the general contractor's course of construction policy, but we would still need to wait for the claims process to unfold. There were times I wasn't sure if we were going to make it through this financially.”

The impact on materials was equally significant. Equipment like ERVs and rooftop systems were either destroyed or severely damaged. The project was halted completely, and Ahlsten faced a significant gap in his income. Worse, the developer's plans to rebuild meant he'd eventually have to also rebuild his team, a difficult task in an industry already grappling with a shortage of skilled labour. Ahlsten also had to manage other committed projects, now looming on the horizon.

He immediately reached out to his team to break the difficult news that they might need to look for other work. “It was hard on them,” Ahlsten explains. “They had a job site lined up for the next few months, and now they were facing unexpected changes to their employment.”

Communication with the contractor, Graham Construction, was ongoing through Ahlsten's project manager. "For the most part, people were understanding," Ahlsten adds.

The insurance process turned out to be more time-consuming than expected, too. However, Ahlsten says his broker at Wilson M. Beck was there to make sure he got the answers quickly. "The insurance process had its challenges, but with their support, we stayed on track," he says. "Compiling the loss of tools has been challenging, but their help gave us the confidence to keep moving forward."

Brett Nicholson, partner at Wilson M. Beck Insurance Services, a company specializing in construction insurance and surety bonding, understands the complexities contractors face when managing insurance.

"Every contractor should have Commercial General Liability insurance as a minimum," he says. "This coverage protects against basic risks like third-party bodily injury, property damage, and lawsuits. However, it's equally important for contractors to consider additional coverage to protect against the unique risks they face on the job."

Nicholson adds, "This includes insuring tools and equipment, as well as ensuring the policy includes endorsements to cover potential deductibles related to a General Contractor's Course of Construction and Wrap-Up policies. These are essential to ensure that all potential risks are properly covered."

He emphasizes that contractors should work with a broker who specializes in construction insurance and understands the full range of coverage required. A specialized broker can help ensure that both liability and property coverage are addressed properly and that any gaps in coverage are eliminated. This is essential in managing risk and protecting the contractor from unexpected financial setbacks.

Nicholson also stresses the importance of maintaining an accurate schedule of tools and equipment. "In the event of a loss, having a detailed and up-to-date schedule makes the claims process much simpler," he says. "It ensures that all assets are accounted for and covered, reducing potential delays or complications during the claim."

"A knowledgeable broker can help ensure that all aspects of a contractor's operations are covered, from liability to property risks, and will also help streamline the claims process should an incident occur."

Though Ahlsten's recovery has been slow, there have been positives. He was able to rely on his relationships within the industry to help bridge the gap. "Relationships with existing clients proved pivotal," he says. "Any projects they could approve, they passed along to me. I received countless phone calls offering





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“ Ahlsten’s experience serves as a hard-won reminder to always be prepared and to never underestimate the value of a well-maintained safety net. ”

support from Local 280 members, contractors, suppliers, and others who knew me through the trades.

“Thankfully, my friends at Ridge Sheet Metal took some of my employees on loan. Ridge also fast-tracked fabrication for other jobs so I could send some of my team to those sites and get those projects moving,” Ahlsten says.

While the cause of the fire remains a mystery, Ahlsten says it has made him wary of taking on wood frame construction projects in the future. Despite the costs, he believes insurance is a safety net that contractors shouldn’t underestimate. “It may seem expensive, and you might think you’ll never need it, but believe me, it’s invaluable in times like this.”

The fire left Ahlsten and his team in a difficult spot, but it reinforced the importance of preparation, communication, and solid insurance coverage. “When working on wood frame projects, hot work is always a concern. We ensure that when it comes to drilling through wood, we use new, or newly sharpened, bits or hole saws. We now mist down any openings, and grinders are never used on wood frame construction. Fire extinguishers are always easily accessible and nearby.”

Ahlsten’s experience serves as a hard-won reminder to always be prepared and to never underestimate the value of a well-maintained safety net. ■

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Remembering Tony Paris

Antonio (Tony) Paris, at the age of 92, peacefully passed away on December 28, 2024, surrounded by his loving family. He will be deeply missed, but there is comfort in knowing he is reunited with his beloved wife, Maria, his cherished grandson Franco, his sister Dora, his nephew Enrico, his niece Liana, and in laws Martino and Anna Maria.

Born in Celano, Italy, Tony immigrated to Vancouver in 1952, where he met and married his wife, Maria.

Tony leaves behind his devoted children: daughters Enrica and Anna (Bob) and son Angelo. He was a proud grandfather to his late grandson Franco, as well as Matthew (Karissa), Anthony, Jordan, Sofia, and Marco, and a great-grandfather to Gio Franco. He also leaves behind his beloved sister Giseppina and his sisters-in-law Rosanna and Sylvia (Louie).

Tony was a devoted family man, a respected community leader, and a successful businessman. In 1970, he founded Apollo Sheet Metal Ltd., which grew into a leading company in Vancouver's sheet metal and air conditioning systems industry and became a contractor member of SMACNA-BC. Tony's dedication to his industry and community was unparalleled. He served on numerous boards and committees, including:

- SMACNA-BC Board of Directors: 1975 to 1979, 1986 to 1994, and 1999 to May 2011
- SMACNA-BC President: 1977 to 1978 and 1988 to 1989
- SMART Local Union No. 280 / SMACNA-BC Joint Conference Board: 1978 to 1981 and 1987 to May 2012
- SMACNA Inc. National Board of Directors: 1990 to 1994
- Sheet Metal Industry Training Board: 1977 to 1980



- SMART Local Union No. 280 / SMACNA-BC Health Benefits Trustee: 1983 to May 2013
- Bid Depository Committee: 1991, and 1997 to 2011
- Negotiating Committee: 1991 to 2011
- Mechanical Contractors Association of BC Board of Directors: 2002 to 2004

Throughout his life, Tony made immense contributions through his generosity, philanthropy, and commitment to excellence.

For over 50 years, Tony dedicated himself to fundraising for the Show of Hearts Variety Telethon, raising substantial funds to improve the lives of countless children in need.

He was honoured with numerous awards, including the "Fedeltà al Lavoro e Progresso Economico" (Loyalty of Works and Economic Progress) award from the Italian Chamber of Commerce Government of Italy. He was inducted into SMACNA Inc. College of Fellows 2010 and received SMACNA-BC Life Membership 2016.

Tony was also a founding member of the Italian Cultural Centre, president for 14 years of the Circolo Abruzzese Club, and later named Honorary President, and Director of the Health & Benefit Plan for the Sheet Metal Sector of Vancouver.

The family would like to express their heartfelt gratitude to AnaMaria, Minerva, Besa, Navneet, and Amelia for their dedicated care of Tony. Special thanks also goes to Lina Fronzo from Annie's Place Group Care for providing invaluable care and support.

Tony's legacy as a family man, a pioneer in his industry, and a compassionate community leader will live on in the hearts of those who knew and loved him.

The Service of Christian Burial was held in January. ■





Financial Basics

Scott Mosher, advisor with RBC Dominion Securities, presented a Financial Basics workshop to the SMACNA-BC membership at a dinner meeting in November.

By Jessica Kirby

As business owners, we often look to the future and dream of retirement, but we don't always understand a clear path to get there driven by the investments we make today. What kinds of investments are out there? How to we open investment accounts? How should we be planning our will and legacy? These are some of the questions Scott Mosher, advisor with RBC Dominion Securities, answered for SMACNA-BC members at a dinner meeting in November. Forty-six members and their guests showed up interested in charting that clearer path forward. "We had several new faces out that night, which was great to see," says Jeremy Hallman, executive director of SMACNA-BC. "We asked companies to send younger people that might not have been exposed to some of this at home or in school."

Hallman adds that Paul Charbonneau of Cascade Metal Design and a SMACNA-BC board member originally requested the presentation because he wanted young supervisors to ensure they were planning accordingly for their futures.

"Knowledge of risk, returns, and market principles are key for anyone, especially living in the Vancouver area," Charbonneau says. "Without basic financial understanding, investing is like sailing without a compass—you may move, but not in the right direction."

The presentation was well received and laid out some basic, straightforward options for meeting short-, medium-, and long-term investment goals.

Common Investment Accounts

A First Home Savings Account (FHSA), for example, is a registered savings account used to squirrel away funds for a first home purchase. Investors can contribute \$8,000 per year (tax deductible) up to a total \$40,000. That cash will grow and be withdrawn tax-free on purchase of a home. After 15 years, if a home is not purchased, the funds can roll into an RRSP.

Speaking of RRSPs, any Canadian taxpayer under 71 years of age with a social insurance number can open an RRSP—even minors. RRSP contributions are tax deductible, and earnings grow tax deferred. Individual RRSP limits are typically 18% of last year's income to a yearly maximum.

"Generally, I would only recommend using the RRSP if you are in a higher tax bracket than you expect to be when you will take funds out," Mosher says. "Tax Free Savings Accounts (TFSA) tend to be the best savings vehicle for those in lower tax brackets that do not benefit from tax deductibility."

Funds deposited to a TFSA grow tax free and can be accessed tax free, and contribution room starts to accrue the year in which the investor turn 18 and has a valid SIN. Contributions are not tax deductible, but TFSAs provide greater flexibility than other registered accounts, because funds can be invested with a short-term or long-term time horizon.

“In early years, TFSAs are often combined with other accounts for home down payment or major life needs,” Mosher says.

Individuals with children may choose to invest in a Registered Education Savings Account (RESP), which is structured like RRSPs except the funds are used to save for a child’s education and there is no tax deductibility. Contributed funds receive a Canadian Education Savings Grant at 20% of the contributed amount up to \$500 grant per year when \$2500 is contributed.

Investments

There are also investment products that provide varying levels of risk and diversification and typically require the help of an advisor. Mutual Funds, for example, represent a pool of funds collected from investors and invested by a professional fund manager with a direct mandate or objective. They offer diversification and the initial investment can be smaller, although the advisory fees tend to be higher.

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often a basket of investments, but they trade on an exchange similar to a stock, allowing them to be bought or sold throughout the day. ETFs provide diversity and tend to have lower fees than mutual funds.

Guaranteed Investment Certificates (GIC) are a lower risk option, since they generate a fixed interest rate, and the capital is usually protected up to \$100,000. Bonds are slightly riskier than a GIC because they come with credit/default risk. Stocks—individual shares in publicly traded companies—have varying degrees of risk, as the value of stocks is determined by the company’s earnings and assets.

“Stocks are typically more volatile than bonds and should be invested in for longer time frames to account for higher volatility,” Mosher says.

Know Before you Go

Investment options are almost endless, but there are restrictions and considerations for each that are important to understand before committing. Each product has a level of risk associated with it, for example, and accounts have restrictions or penalties for early withdrawal. Some accounts allow contribution amounts to carry over from one year to the next or have generous maximums to maximize investment potential.

“The best way to find the clearest path for you is to speak with a professional,” Mosher says. “There is no ‘one stop shop’ option to answer all questions.”

He adds that the most important consideration when choosing an advisor or service is deciding how much of the work you will want to do yourself. “Do it yourself has you looking for more of the answers to upfront questions like how to hone your vision,” he says. “Working with an advisor is typically more expensive and often comes with minimum initial investment amounts.”

Leaving a legacy

When looking beyond retirement to estate and legacy planning, Mosher says every British Columbian should have a will, assign powers of attorney, and have a representation agreement in place. This planning addresses what would happen to one’s assets on their passing, who would oversee their estate, and who would make medical decisions if they were unable.

“Doing the work of financial and estate planning brings peace of mind, knowing you have a plan and goals to achieve,” Mosher says. “It can also mean better financial security and protection for you or your family.” ■

 Create a simple will and representation agreement for around \$200 at epiloguewills.com

 Learn more about investment at rbcgam.com/en/ca/learn-plan/investment-basics

ADDICTION IN CONSTRUCTION: THE CULTURE OF RECOVERY

In Canada, men experience the highest rates of opioid overdoses, and trades workers are more impacted by substance use and addiction than other fields of work.

Trades work is physically demanding and stressful. Its culture calls for celebratory or relaxation drinks or substance use after work. Injury and chronic pain are common in the trades, and many trades workers self-medicate with alcohol or other substances—including pain relievers that can be opiate based.

These circumstances are compounded by expectations on men to avoid talking about their pain, mental health challenges, or substance use, and the result is that they are less likely to ask for help when they need it.

The BC Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA) produced “Construction Safety and Substance Use: Blueprint for Action in BC,” in co-operation with scientists at the Centre for Applied Research in Mental Health and Addiction at Simon Fraser University (SFU).

“It’s the most comprehensive investigation of substance use and its implications for safety in a large regional construction sector,” said Julian Somers, an SFU health sciences professor and one of the report’s authors. “According to the results, cannabis and alcohol account for the vast majority of safety and health-related risks faced by workers in BC construction.”

The report was informed by 639 anonymous responses to a survey about what substances workers are using. The results indicated that in the 12 months prior, respondents used alcohol (82 percent), cannabis (42 percent), tobacco (31 percent), mushrooms/LSD (16 percent) and cocaine (nine percent).

Vicky Waldron is executive director of the non-profit Construction Industry Rehabilitation Plan (CIRP). In an interview with Business in Vancouver she says she is pleased that construction is now taking substance use and mental health seriously.

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“It used to ignore them, so it’s a step in the right direction,” said Waldron.

As of 2023, each year, CIRP serves approximately 220 construction workers, and the program’s intakes have increased 64% since COVID-19 was declared.

CIRP’s report, “Estimation of the Economic Impact of Substance Use and the Related Mental Health Issues on the BC Construction Industry,” released in 2023, calculates the annual economic impact of substance use and related mental health issues on the construction industry, looking at days of work missed and days of work when a worker was present but hungover or going through withdrawal and unable to work at full capacity.

Data was collected through a three-minute, anonymous email and text survey delivered to trades workers. The results indicated that the total annual cost to the industry from employees missing work and showing up hungover or with withdrawal symptoms to be \$847 million, and the cost to the provincial government in taxes foregone was estimated at \$318 million.

In response to the survey findings, CIRP released a white paper called, “Construction Industry-Led Solution to the Overdose Epidemic,” outlining the extent of the problem and possible solutions for both the industry and government to consider as the epidemic enters its eighth year.

“We believe that working together, construction industry employers, trade unions, and the provincial, federal, and municipal governments can find lasting solutions that will give workers affected a way forward to recovery and create a stronger, more resilient and productive workforce,” Waldron says.

The white paper provides 16 recommendations for supporting a prevention and treatment model developed by and for the construction industry. These include treating the client within the context of the construction industry and in cooperation with the employer and union; employing prevention and education that includes awareness of substance use issues and peer training;



Holiday Schedule

- April 18** – Good Friday • SMACNA-BC office closed
- May 8-10** – 56th SMACNA-BC Annual AGM & Convention
- May 19** – Victoria Day • SMACNA-BC office closed
- July 1** – Canada Day • SMACNA-BC office closed
- August 4** – BC Day • SMACNA-BC office closed
- September 1** – Labour Day • SMACNA-BC office closed
- September 12** – SMACNA-BC 40th Annual Golf Classic
- September 30** – Truth and Reconciliation Day

“We believe that working together, construction industry employers, trade unions, and the provincial, federal, and municipal governments can find lasting solutions that will give workers affected a way forward to recovery and create a stronger, more resilient and productive workforce.”

—Vicky Waldron, executive director, CIRP

appropriate supports for those ready and not ready for treatment, screening, and pain management alternatives; and ongoing support, including return to work, to build resilience.

Read the report and white paper at: constructionrehabplan.com/press-releases/the-impact-of-substance-use-amp-related-mental-health-issues-costs-construction-industry-847-million-annually-in-lost-time-recommends-actions-to-create-solutions-amp-save-lives

Vicky Waldron, CIRP’s executive director, spoke at SMACNA-BC’s membership dinner meeting in January. Learn more about her presentation and access CIRP resources at constructionrehabplan.com. ■

This news piece was compiled from BCCSA and CIRP resources, which can be found in their entirety at the URLs above. If you or someone you work with needs help with addiction or mental health challenges, reach out to CIRP or SMACNA-BC to connect with the resources that can help.



INTRODUCING BLUEPRINT ORDERING



BuildCentrix’s new Blue Print Ordering feature provides the ability to upload blueprints directly into BCX and order sheet metal and piping parts by simply tracing over the plans. Like any BCX order, Blueprint orders are integrated into CAM and piping equipment, and the platform calculates all of the material, fab time, cost, and price for up-to-the-minute project data at your fingertips.

KEY FEATURES:

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- Change views and orientation to see the 3D model over top of the plans



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COMFORT BY DESIGN PER ASHRAE STANDARDS 62.1 AND 55

The goal of a good room air distribution system is to provide thermal comfort and a healthy living environment for occupants in the space. ASHRAE Standard 55-2020 *Thermal Environmental Conditions for Human Occupancy* and ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2022 *Ventilation for Acceptable Indoor Air Quality* provide design engineers with the guidance to optimize health and comfort occupied building spaces. Many codes around the country require compliance with these ASHRAE standards. LEED also requires compliance to these standards. This article will briefly outline the goals of these standards and illustrate how to comply.

The occupied zone as defined by Standard 55-2020 reads as follows: “The region normally occupied by people within a space, generally considered to be between the floor and 6 feet level above the floor and more than 3 feet from outside walls/windows and 1 foot from internal walls.” The space from the interior walls inward 1 foot serves as a mixing zone where room air is entrained into the supply air stream and mixes to provide thermal comfort in the occupied space. When designing underfloor air distribution (UFAD) systems or thermal displacement ventilation (TDV) systems, the occupied area around the outlets may be excluded to where the total air jet from the outlet contains velocities greater than 50 feet per minute. These areas are known as the “clear zone”.

Any design must also include an adequate supply of ventilation air to the breathing zone of the space. ASHRAE 62.1-2022 defines ventilation air as “that portion of supply air that is outdoor air plus any re-circulated air that has been treated for the purpose of maintaining acceptable indoor air quality”. The breathing zone is the 6 foot area above the floor.

The primary factors to be considered when determining conditions for thermal comfort in the occupied space are



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temperature, air velocity, humidity, clothing insulation, and activity level of the occupants. All of these factors are interconnected when determining the general occupant comfort of the space. The ideal temperature in a space is where the occupant will feel neutral to their surroundings. While the range of acceptable temperature may vary depending on other conditions, ASHRAE 55 requires the “allowable vertical air temperature difference between head and ankles to be 5.4 degrees (F).” Air velocity in the space is less than 50 fpm during cooling and 30 fpm during heating. ASHRAE 55 requires the dew point to be less than 62.2 degrees (F). Clothing variables also are factored in from sandals to shoes. The final item is the activity level of the occupant in the space. Most office activity ranges from a 1.0 to 1.3 factor.

The three common methods of room air distribution used in commercial buildings are fully mixed, fully stratified, and partially mixed, such as underfloor systems. Design methods for cooling an interior zone and heating a perimeter zone vary with each method. For fully mixed systems, the pattern of the air delivered to the space must be considered when selecting the air outlets. Various options include ceiling diffusers, plenum slot diffusers and side wall grilles.

Typically for perimeter applications where the same outlet is being used for both heating and cooling a liner or plenum slot diffuser is used. For perimeter heating, the requirements for table 6-2 of *ASHRAE Standard 62.1-2022* must be considered.

For partially mixed air distribution systems (typically UFAD), the core area usually experiences even loading throughout the occupied area. The goal of partially mixed systems is to save energy by conditioning the lower area through use of floor diffusers. Perimeter zones for partially mixed systems need special attention due to the outdoor solar and air temperature changes. Fully stratified design typically requires a separate heating system, but ventilation air can be reduced by 20%.

Regardless of which type of room air distribution system you use on your project, occupants who are comfortable are more productive. Comfort derived from good design keeps all occupants and users happy and healthy. ■

BUILDING SMARTER: WHAT CONSTRUCTION CAN LEARN FROM MANUFACTURING

When it comes to inefficiency, construction is in a league of its own. Cost overruns, delays, and material waste are so common they're practically baked into the process. "That's just how construction works," right? But here's the thing, it doesn't have to.

Look at manufacturing. Over the years, factories have embraced automation, lean processes, and data-driven decision-making to cut costs, speed up production, and deliver consistent quality. Meanwhile, construction is still struggling to keep its timelines on track and budgets in check.

It's time for construction to catch up. By borrowing lessons from manufacturing's playbook, the building industry can overcome some of its biggest challenges.

1. Lean Processes: Doing More with Less

Waste in construction is a massive problem. Overordered materials, inefficient workflows, and poor scheduling are just the start. It's not just frustrating; it's also expensive. Manufacturing addressed these issues years ago with lean processes. The idea is simple: eliminate waste and focus only on what adds value. Think about just-in-time delivery, where materials arrive exactly when needed, or standardizing components to speed up production.

In construction, lean principles could mean reducing on-site clutter, standardizing modular designs, or streamlining labour schedules. These approaches don't just reduce costs—they also make the entire process more predictable and efficient.

2. Automation: Solving the Labour Problem

Labour shortages are one of construction's biggest headaches. Relying heavily on manual work slows down projects, and the

physically demanding nature of construction can lead to worker injuries or burnout.

Manufacturing has long used automation to handle repetitive, time-consuming tasks. From assembling car parts to packaging goods, machines have taken over what humans don't need to do. Now, construction is catching up with technologies like bricklaying robots, autonomous equipment, and modular assembly lines. Not only do these tools speed up the process, but they also improve safety and free up skilled workers for tasks that require creativity and expertise.

3. Data-Driven Decision-Making: The Digital Edge

Construction has traditionally leaned on intuition and experience to make decisions. While there's a place for that, manufacturing has shown us the power of data.

In factories, real-time analytics allow teams to monitor production, predict maintenance needs, and fix inefficiencies before they become major problems. Construction can use the same tools. With digital twins, IoT sensors, and project analytics, teams can track materials, equipment, and labour in real time. Imagine knowing exactly when a piece of machinery is about to fail or having real-time updates on how much material is left on-site.

Making decisions based on hard data instead of gut instinct can make projects run smoother, faster, and with fewer surprises.

Build Smarter, Not Harder

The challenges in construction, like waste, inefficiency, and labour shortages aren't new, and solutions are already out there. By adopting lean processes, automation, and data-driven decision-making, the industry can move past its old habits and into a smarter, more efficient future.

Manufacturing has already paved the way, proving that these strategies work. The question now is: will construction rise to the challenge? ■

David is a seasoned sheet metal worker with a dynamic background in drafting, BIM, project management, and operations. With extensive experience across multiple facets of the industry, he blends hands-on expertise with strategic insight, driving innovation and efficiency in every project he undertakes. David is passionate about optimizing processes and embracing new technologies.



By Dave Halabourda, Project Manager and Project Optimization Specialist at Apollo Sheet Metal

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DIVERSITY IN LEADERSHIP: WHY REPRESENTATION MATTERS

In the modern workplace, the importance of diverse leadership cannot be overstated.

However, when we talk about diversity, we refer to a broad-spectrum of identities encompassing race and ethnicity, gender, cultural background, age, sexual orientation, disabilities, and different educational backgrounds, among many others. According to a report by the Canadian Securities Administrators the number of board seats occupied by women in publicly listed Canadian companies increased from about 11% to 27% over the last nine years.

Diversity in leadership ensures that leadership or management teams reflect a wide variety of human experiences and perspectives. Yet people of colour (or racialized people) hold only about 10.4% of board positions across various sectors in eight major Canadian cities, according to a study by Toronto Metropolitan University’s Diversity Institute. This underrepresentation, as one indicator, means that many experiences and perspectives are missing from leadership discussions and might limit innovation.

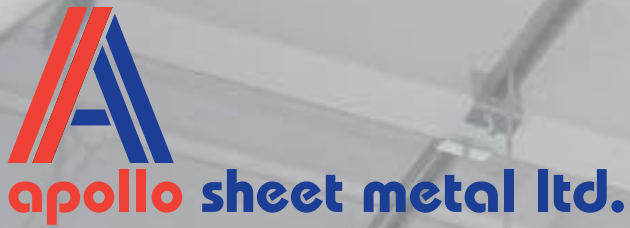
Diverse leadership improves company culture

A diverse leadership team brings a wealth of experiences and perspectives that can transform company culture. According to Catalyst, diverse leadership fosters an inclusive environment where employees feel valued and understood, regardless of their background. This inclusivity boosts morale, maximizes productivity, and enhances teamwork. Thus, leading to a more cohesive and motivated workforce.

This blog was written by Michael Bach, consultant to Build Force Canada. Continue reading at buildforce.ca/en/resource-centre ■

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