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ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Volume 42 • Number 3 • Summer 2004

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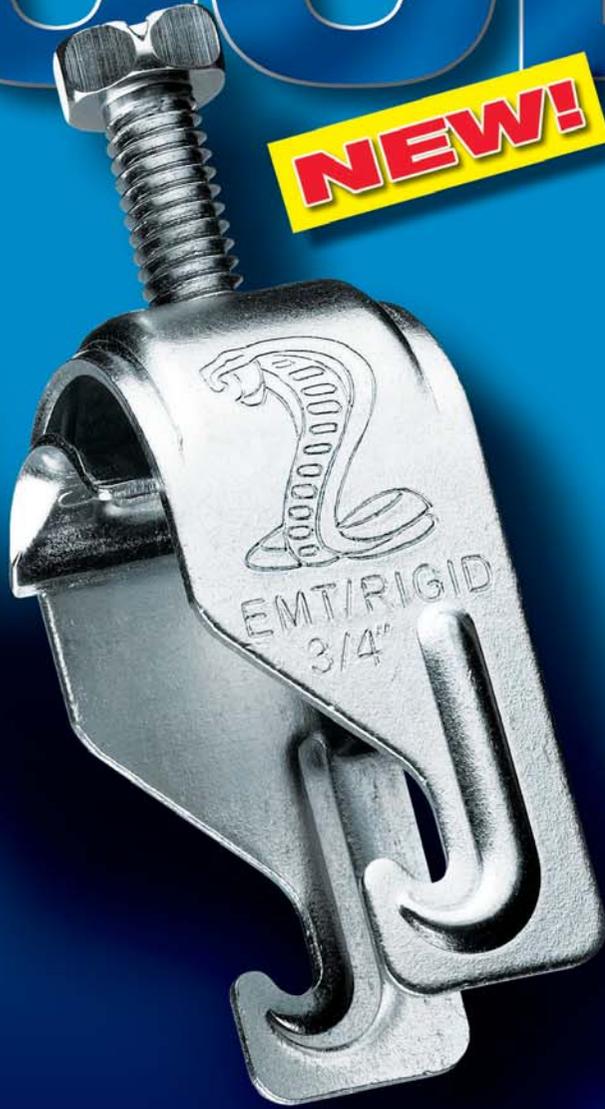


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On The Cover: The provincial licensing team with the Honourable Jim Watson at Queen's Park for the introduction of Bill 70. Back Row: Rob Dowler (left), Assistant Deputy Minister, Consumer and Business Services, Eryl Roberts (second from left), ECAO Executive Vice-President, Dave Mason (third from left), ECAO President and Richard Cullis (second from right), Chairman OEL Contractor Committee. Front Row: Peter Marcucci (third from left), ESA Chief Engineer, Norman W. Purdy (fourth from left), ECAO Past Executive Vice-President, Garry Enright (fourth from right), OEL President, Honourable Jim Watson (second from right), Minister of Consumer and Business Services and Lucy Impera (right), ESA Projects Manager - Regulatory & Engineering.

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THIS TIME IT'S FOR REAL

By Dave Mason

This issue of the *Ontario Electrical Contractor* is very significant for the ECAO, its executive and members. In this issue we are able to report that the industry's proposal for establishing a provincial, industry-managed licensing system for electrical contractors is close at hand. Yes, I know you have heard it before, but this time it's for real! On April 29, I had the privilege of being invited by the Minister of Consumer and Business Services, Jim Watson, to witness his inaugural legislation in the Ontario legislature. Bill 70 is about a lot of issues, but most important for us is that it enables and encourages us to create a provincial system for licensing electrical contractors.

Not only was April 29th a great day for the Honourable Jim Watson, but also for ECAO and its partners, the Electrical Safety Authority and the Ontario Electrical League. We have been working on this project as a team since June of 2000 and as partners in the Electrical Contractor Registration Agency (ECRA) since 1996. Many ECAO presidents have pushed hard for the day when provincial licensing would become a reality and I am honoured to have it introduced in the legislature on my watch. In particular, I have to recognize my predecessor, George Boals, who had the foresight to amend ECAO's strategic vision to include industry self-management in partnership with other like-minded organizations. Recognizing that no single organization could achieve this result, but any one of them could easily kill the initiative was the turning point in this project. Directors and staff of the three partners deserve the industry's thanks for buying into this concept and persevering through all types of uncertainty, including changes in government, to see provincial licensing introduced in the legislature. The same mindset must prevail in implementation.

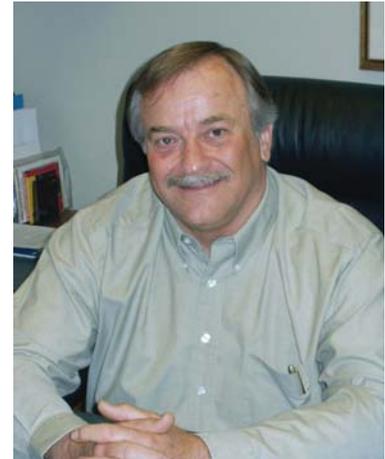
You can be assured that my administration's objective is to see that Bill 70 becomes law and is implemented in the same spirit of partnership and shared responsibility that created the original proposal.

Elsewhere in this issue of the *Ontario Electrical Contractor*, Rob Frank writes about ECAO's efforts to ensure fair competition with local distributing companies, and we continue with the second of Stan Tepner's series of articles about personal financial planning. We also celebrate the future of our industry by showcasing the new talent entering the electrical trade. Be sure to check out the photo essay on Future Building 2004 and Skills Canada-Ontario to witness the industry's future leaders in action.

What about the present? Well, you will also find an article on ECAO's Annual Conference and General Meeting to be held in Windsor, Sept. 29 to Oct. 3 at Casino Windsor and the Essex Golf & Country Club (among other venues). Our highly motivated local contractor committee guarantees an outstanding program and unparalleled hospitality.

As always, we conclude this issue with a Toolbox Talk – this one about allergic reactions in the work environment – an appropriate topic for summer 2004.

I hope yours is a healthy and happy one. See you in Windsor in the fall.



NEW PRODUCTS



Accubid Releases Version 6

Accubid recently announced the release of Version 6 of its family of estimating solutions – Accubid Pro BidWinner and BidWinner Plus. Version 6 includes a number of exciting new features and enhancements to increase contractors' accuracy and productivity, including power substitution, temporary assemblies, print preview, schedule screen sorting and filtering and a new job info screen.

"Version 6 reflects our continued commitment to lead the way with estimating software that provides cutting-edge features while still remaining intuitive, fast and easy to use," says Giovanni Marcelli, president and CEO of Accubid Systems.

Though Accubid takes pride in having been recognized as the industry leader in the 2002 CFMA Technology Survey for the Construction Industry, Marcelli insists that Accubid will not rest on its laurels.

"Version 6 shows that the best can, and will, keep getting better," he states.

Each of Accubid's Version 6 estimating solutions works seamlessly with Pocket Bid, Accubid's handheld estimating solution for the Pocket PC. Using Pocket PC, contractors can perform a complete estimate – from take-off to extension to final pricing – right on the job site.

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Bi-Fuel Engine Generators

Generac Power Systems Inc. is introducing new bi-fuel (diesel/natural gas) standby power generators.

Environmental concerns and the operating costs of diesel engines have increased the interest in bi-fuel products. To reduce exhaust emissions and overall fuel costs, as well as provide reliable performance, engineers have been challenged with maintaining an optimal balance of diesel and natural gas fuels across the power range of the diesel engine, and under varying ambient conditions. It wasn't until recently that this was best accomplished through the use of microprocessor controls, combined with automotive sensor and actuator technologies. Today, this digital approach precisely and instantaneously provides the checks and balances needed to safely operate the diesel engine on a bi-fuel mixture.

The use of bi-fuel powered generators is an excellent fit for areas that require low exhaust emissions. Areas with a very cold climate are a particularly viable application for bi-fuel engines.

During initial startup the Generac bi-fuel generator operates on 100 per cent diesel fuel. After certain permissive criteria are satisfied, the microprocessor-

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based controller commences bi-fuel operation. It meters in an increasing amount of natural gas with the intake air and, at the same time, proportionately reduces diesel fuel until it reaches the optimum bi-fuel ratio. With the Generac system, the optimum bi-fuel ratio under typical operation is approximately 10 per cent diesel and 90 per cent natural gas.

Just as with the diesel mode of operation, this bi-fuel system is automatic and transparent to the end user, since the system is fully mapped and optimized within all operating parameters.

Bi-fuel engines have thermal loads equivalent to the same engine operating on 100 per cent diesel fuel. The durability testing, performance testing and oil analysis indicate that the bi-fuel natural gas/diesel engine could experience longer life, extended service

intervals and reduced oil service costs when compared to a standard diesel engine.

The reduced consumption of diesel fuel by the engine under bi-fuel operation means that run times per tank of fuel are significantly extended, making smaller fuel tanks a viable option.

The bi-fuel engine generator comes with built-in fuel redundancy. If the natural gas supply is interrupted for any reason, or if there is a fault in the bi-fuel operation, the system will automatically revert back to 100 per cent diesel without interruption of operation.



For additional information on Generac's bi-fuel generators, contact Total Power Ltd. at ken@totalpowerltd.com or call 905-670-1535 or 1-888-870-9152.



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PROVINCIAL LICENSING PROPOSED FOR ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS



Dave Mason, ECAO President, Eryl Roberts, ECAO Executive Vice-President, Honourable Jim Watson, Minister of Consumer and Business Services, Norman W. Purdy, ECAO Past Executive Vice-President.

Proposed legislation will establish province-wide standards for licensing electrical contractors, master electricians and electricians under the auspices of the Electrical Safety Authority (ESA) in Ontario. Today contractors typically hold several municipal licenses, representing different standards and pay different license fees in each locality. Uniform standards will replace the current patchwork of municipal licensing practices and allow license holders to work anywhere in the province with a single license.

New standards are also expected to make it easier to compare and contrast the electrical trades' qualifications with those required in other provinces and facilitate more inter-provincial trade mobility. The proposal creates a single standard for assessing qualifica-

tions of out-of-province contractors and vice versa, enhancing compliance with Ontario regulations and reducing their participation in the underground economy.

The Minister of Consumer and Business Services, Jim Watson, recently introduced Bill 70, *Consumer and Business Services Statute Amendment Act*, which encompasses more than 80 amendments to 24 statutes the ministry oversees, including amendments to the *Electricity Act* to broaden the Electrical Safety Authority's mandate. ESA (formerly Ontario Hydro Inspections Department) was first established as an industry-funded, not-for-profit corporation in 1998 to enforce the *Ontario Electrical Safety Code*, conduct inspections of electrical wiring installations, and approve electrical equipment for use or installation in the province.

Ontario Electrical Contractor

The new licensing system will be based on an industry model jointly developed by the ECAO, the Ontario Electrical League and the Electrical Safety Authority. These agencies already comprise the Electrical Contractor Registration Agency (ECRA) along with 12 Ontario municipalities that have voluntarily agreed to standardize their licensing practices and are the only municipalities that actually mandate standards to a level the industry recognizes. The 12 ECRA participants are Barrie, Brantford, Cambridge, Guelph, Hamilton, Kingston, Kitchener-Waterloo, London, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, Toronto and Windsor. Only 70 of Ontario's 445 municipalities have any kind of licensing standards.

The industry licensing model is a three-step process, which advocates empowering ESA to license contractors and trades; transferring ECRA from ECAO to the Electrical Safety Authority; and exempting electrical contractors from municipal licensing.

Currently, the licensing of electrical contractors is a municipal responsibility under the *Municipal Act*, but a municipality is not required to license and there is no single standard. Electrical contracting is a highly mobile business with most contractors operating in more than one municipal jurisdiction at any given time. The results of the existing system are limitations on labour and business mobility; a high rate of non-compliance; difficulty in enforcement; and cynicism among compliant contractors about the value of their license.

Among the municipalities that do have license requirements, there has been little outcry about giving up the authority to the industry, perhaps because Ontario's *Municipal Act* was revised in 2002 and now prohibits municipalities from generating revenue through the practice.

"Most of them are in support," Eryl Roberts, ECAO executive vice-president, observes. "I think we are giving them an opportunity to offload a responsibility they may have taken on under the previous version of the *Municipal Act*. I think, generally, they are already stressed in terms of delivering these services."

"Consumer protection is a major focus of the industry proposal," Roberts adds. It is a key deliverable for licensing in the *Municipal Act* and in the proposal – something that the industry is determined to achieve. Proponents see the new centralized licensing body as a means to ensure that qualified contractors perform electrical work; develop centralized resources for training, education and accountability; streamline code administration and inspections; eliminate duplication of regulations and certifications; and support the transition to an audit and risk management based system. It will also help counter an underground economy that represents an estimated annual siphoning of more than \$35 million in potential government revenues.

The new licensing legislation is enabling legislation in the truest sense of the words. It enables ESA, in conjunction with the industry, to have oversight of people (and companies) who perform electrical work for others. In the past ESA was only mandated to approve electrical products and installations. This expanded mandate will permit ECRA of ESA to engage electricians and electrical contractors in the delivery of public electrical safety and consumer protection. Proponents

see ESA employing some portion of its professional and on-site resources on continuing electrical education and enforcement of trade regulations. This phase of the industry initiative will require consultation with the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities and the Ministry of Labour. In the longer term, the industry proposal is as much about preserving the integrity of the electrical trade as it is about licensing contractors. Both the public and the electrical industry believe that Ontario will be a safer place if both functions are performed by the same knowledgeable organization.

Bill 70 proposes a five-year phase-in of the new standards and Roberts suggests they will likely be rolled out first in the municipalities where no licensing standards are in place.

As of mid-May when this article was

written, the electrical industry portion of Bill 70 has enjoyed strong support and that suggests quick passage through the legislature. However, Bill 70 also contains amendments to other statutes including the *Consumer Protection Act (2000)*, the *Bailiffs Act*, the *Land Titles Act*, and the *Real Estate and Business Brokers Act*, to name a few. Problems with any one of these could divert the bill to committee and delay passage. Regardless, the industry is optimistic that industry self-management is close at hand.

The bill can be found on the Government of Ontario's website at www.ontla.on.ca/documents/Bills/38_Parliament/Session1/index.htm

This article is based on an article originally appearing in Canadian Property Management written by Barbara Carss.

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FOUR POWERFUL TAX STRATEGIES FOR YOUR INVESTMENT PORTFOLIO

By Stanley Tepner

When you really work hard to earn a dollar, it truly is frustrating to witness almost half of it get gobbled up by the endless appetite of the Canada Revenue Agency (the CRA, which readers probably still think of as Revenue Canada, or by its most recent, longer acronym, the CCRA).

And when your investment portfolio works really hard to earn a dollar (and whose portfolio hasn't rung up a few beads of sweat over the last four years?), it is equally frustrating to forego huge chunks of it to that bottomless pit in Ottawa.

Fortunately, there are numerous strategies that you can employ to minimize your investment tax bill, and many are surprisingly simple to deploy. Remember, it's not how much you make; it's how much of it you get to keep.

1. Not all investment income is taxed equally

Some people swear that "a buck is a buck is a buck." When it comes to the tax you pay on your investment returns, this old adage isn't necessarily true. That's because different kinds of investment returns are taxed at different rates.

The chart shows the maximum rates of tax that an Ontario resident would have to pay on different types of income in 2004 (exclusive of the new provincial health care premium "tax") and how much is retained after the tax has been paid.

	Marginal Tax Rate	Cash Retained Per \$1,000 Income
Employment	46.41 per cent	\$535.90
Interest	46.41 per cent	\$535.90
Foreign Dividends	46.41 per cent	\$535.90
Canadian Dividends	31.33 per cent	\$686.70
Capital Gains	23.21 per cent	\$767.95

Clearly, in a taxable environment, it is preferable to generate capital gains than other forms of investment return, in order to retain the greatest percentage of money on an after-tax basis. Accordingly, you should consider aligning your investment portfolios so that your more highly taxed investments are placed inside the tax-free haven offered by RRSPs and RRIFs (e.g. own your interest-paying investments there). Also, if you anticipate generating significant capital gains from an actively traded stock or mutual fund portfolio, you may wish to hold those securities inside your registered plans. This could shelter your portfolio from potentially large current tax bills that could arise from profitable trading.

2. Swap assets to reduce taxes

If it makes sense to restructure your investment portfolios based on the suggestion in Tip 1, there is a simple technique that allows you to move assets between registered and non-registered portfolios at little or no cost. Known as a "swapping," this technique allows you to exchange assets of equal value between the two portfolios, without physically buying and selling them on the market.

For example, if you own \$10,000 worth of interest-paying Ontario Savings Bonds outside your RRSP, and \$10,000 worth of common shares of a Canadian bank inside the RRSP, you can swap one asset for the other. As a result of this exchange, your bonds will earn tax-sheltered interest in the RRSP, while the bank shares will continue to grow outside the RRSP. Their dividends will only be taxed at a maximum rate of 31.33 per cent (versus the 46.41 per cent tax on the bond interest), and when the shares are ultimately sold, the capital gain will be subject to a 23.21 per cent tax rate (versus the 46.41 per cent tax rate charged on RRSP or RRIF withdrawals). This is clearly a smart idea for investors who prefer to own securities for the long term.

3. Avoid the mutual fund "double tax"

As onerous as our tax rates may be, there is nothing worse than paying more tax than you are legally responsible to pay. Yet thousands of Canadians probably pay much more tax than they need to when they sell

their mutual funds, because they don't properly calculate their capital gains.

In basic terms, the capital gain is the difference between the proceeds received less the "adjusted cost base" (ACB) of an investment. In some cases, the ACB will equal the original cost of the investment. With many mutual funds, however, the ACB is equal to the original cost PLUS all re-invested distributions made by the fund while it was owned. These distributions were probably taxed in the year they were received. To avoid being taxed twice, investors should carefully recalculate their ACBs, so as not to inflate the capital gain number reported on their tax returns.

The accompanying chart describes the proper calculation.

Original investment in growth mutual fund	\$10,000
Cumulative re-invested dividend income.....	\$2,000
Cumulative re-invested capital gains.....	\$2,000
Proceeds on complete redemption of fund	\$20,000
 Capital Gain = Proceeds	\$20,000
Less ACB (\$10,000+	
\$2,000 + \$2,000)	(14,000)
	<u>\$6,000</u>

Too many investors ignore the re-invested amounts, and calculate this capital gain as \$20,000 - \$10,000 = \$10,000. Most mutual fund companies maintain reliable ACB records and can be contacted directly for assistance.

4. Tax-deductible investing in Flow-Through Share Partnerships

The tax shelter industry used to be huge in Canada, until the government systematically dismantled most such offerings. Very few tax-deductible shelters remain today, and even fewer are specifically cited in the *Income Tax Act*. RRSPs and Flow-Through Share Partnerships fall into that latter category. Most other tax shelters have been constructed in the offices of creative lawyers and accountants.

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continued from page 13

The government allowed for the creation of flow-through shares to encourage investment in the Canadian resource industry. In general, an investment in a flow-through is fully deductible against a taxpayer's other income, with most of the deduction claimable in the year the investment is made. For example, in 2004, the deduction from a \$10,000 flow-through investment amounts to up to \$4,641 tax savings, for an after-tax cost of \$5,359 to the investor.

Since the investment is fully written-off, it is deemed to have an ACB of \$0. When it is ultimately sold, a capital gain realized will be equal to its market value at the time. In our example, if the investment were disposed of at its original value of \$10,000, the tax on the \$10,000 capital gain would only be \$2,321, which would result

in \$7,679 of after-tax proceeds. This would represent a substantial return over the after-tax cost of \$5,359 (a 43.3 per cent positive return after tax).

Most flow-through share partnerships are illiquid for two years, after which are often rolled, on a tax-deferred basis, into a mutual fund. The mutual fund can then be retained in one's portfolio, redeemed, or gifted to a charity (which provides even greater tax benefits, and will be discussed in a future article).

With proper planning, you can incorporate these four powerful tax strategies into your investment portfolios. When you work as hard as you do for your dollars, it only makes sense to retain as many of those dollars as you can. Properly structuring and planning your portfolios will take you a long way along that path.

Stanley M. Tepner, MBA, CA, CFP, TEP, is a First Vice-President and Investment Advisor with The Tepner Team at CIBC Wood Gundy in Toronto. He can be reached by telephone at 416-229-5566 or 1-800-488-8688 or by e-mail at Stan.Tepner@CIBC.ca. The views of Stanley Tepner do not necessarily reflect those of CIBC World Markets Inc.

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feature

FACTS ABOUT FALLS .. and what you can do to stop them

By the Construction Safety Association of Ontario

If a construction worker is going to get seriously or fatally injured on the job, chances are it'll be from a fall. More construction workers die from falls than from any other kind of injury.

Everyone faces this risk. Falls happen in all sectors, all project types and all trades. Falls happen because people don't follow the regulations or accepted good practices. The regulations don't need to be changed, and the solutions are neither complex nor technical in nature. Arm yourself with the facts!

LADDERS

Facts

- Falls from ladders are the leading hazard—in both residential and ICI work.

- A few simple rules can prevent most or all of these kinds of injuries.

What to do

- Never over-reach to get at something off to the side. Always reposition your ladder.
- Make sure that your extension ladder is:
 - free of damage to rungs, siderails, and hardware;
 - set up so that the base is level and the bottom can't slip;
 - sloped between 1:3 and 1:4;
 - tall enough to extend at least three feet beyond the landing area at the top; and
 - secured at the top if it will be a regular means of access.



- Consider using ladder-stabilizing attachments at the top and base.
- Make sure your step ladder is:
 - free of damage (no cracks in rungs or siderails, no excessive lateral play in the hinges);

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- set up with the legs fully extended and locked; and
- tall enough to let you work while keeping your waist below the top of the ladder.

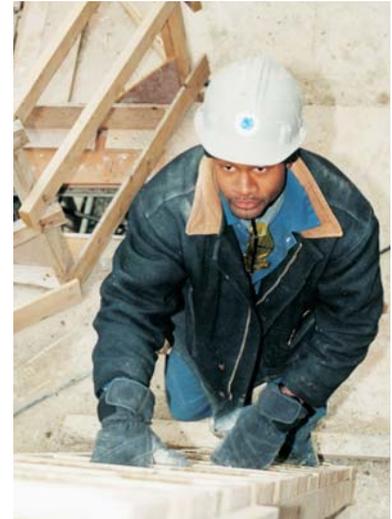
ROOFS

Facts

- You face the second highest risk of falling when you work on a sloped roof or near the edge of a flat roof.
- Falls are most common at residential low-rise and commercial projects.
- There are fall protection solutions for working on roofs, but they're not used often enough.
- Complying with the regulations and current good practices would prevent most, if not all, fall injuries from roofs. There is some inherent risk of falling while installing or removing fall protection systems on roofs, but there's only been one case of such a fall.

What to do

- Always use a fall-arrest or travel-restraint system.
- Use rooftop anchorage systems. They're available.
- If you can't install rooftop anchorage, rig a lifeline over the roof to a temporary anchor on the other side of the building.
- Ladders should extend three feet above the landing area on the roof, and they should be secured against slipping.
- Use edge protection along the eaves to prevent tools or material from sliding off the roof. While edge protection doesn't qualify as a guardrail, it may make the life-saving difference when things go wrong.
- Use properly constructed scaffolding when doing chimney maintenance or repairs.
- Use barriers on flat roofs to keep workers from walking backwards towards the edge.



- Cover skylights or other openings securely or protect them with guardrails.

SCAFFOLDS

Facts

Falls from scaffolds are caused by

- problems with access—systems for getting up or down, on or off the scaffold, are improper or inadequate;



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feature

- incomplete or inadequate planking or decking; and
- structural failure from incomplete bracing or faulty erection.

Some falls occur when workers are erecting or dismantling the scaffold.

What to do

- Ensure that the scaffold is properly constructed, level and plumb, with all bracing properly installed.
- Use a proper ladder to get on or off the scaffold.
- Ensure that planking and decking is free from damage, properly installed and fully covers the working level of the scaffold.
- Always use fall-arrest systems when you're erecting or dismantling scaffolds.
- Inspect scaffolds regularly to ensure that they're safe.
- Ensure that guardrails are installed on the working level.

OTHER FALLS

Facts

Common fall hazards involve:

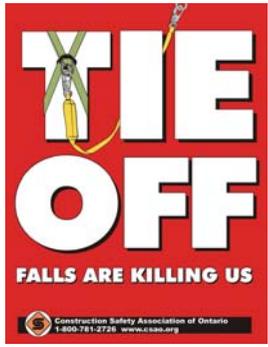
- inadequately protected floor openings;
- poor housekeeping in stairways ;
- makeshift work platforms; and
- missing or inadequate guardrails.

What to do

- Put guardrails around floor openings or cover them securely. Mark covers to keep them from being removed accidentally.
- Keep hallways, stairs and landing areas clear.
- Do not use upside-down pails, crates or other makeshift platforms.
- Use guardrails to protect floor edges.

GET TRAINED and remember to TIE OFF

The Construction Safety Association of Ontario (CSAO) has produced Basics of Fall



Protection, an employer-delivered training course, which helps fulfill contractors' legal requirements for training employees. All you have to do is follow the instructions in the trainer's guide. When combined with job-specific training, Basics of Fall Protection helps ensure your workers know how to prevent falls.

As well, CSAO's fall protection posters are free for the asking. The posters carry a simple message: Tie Off—Falls are killing us. For more information on products and training, contact the Construction Safety Association of Ontario: 1-800-781-2726; or visit www.csaoo.org.

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feature

COMPETITORS show their SKILLS

These photographs from the Ontario Skills Competition and Future Building 2004 showcase the new talent entering the electrical trade.

The 15th Annual Skilled Trades and Technology Competitions took place at RIM Park in Waterloo May 3-5 with more than 1,200 contestants competing in 43 skills competitions with more than 5,000 elementary and secondary school students taking part in workshops and activities, visiting career booths and watching the competitions.

The Joint Electrical Promotion Plan (JEPP) sponsored the secondary and post secondary electrical wiring competitions and held a demonstration of the Network Cabling Specialist trade. Twenty-two apprentices from across the province competed at the post secondary level with 12 secondary students competed in the residential wiring competition.

JEPP also held six elementary workshops on the day before the competitions for groups of students who had specifically signed up to learn more about the electrical trades.

During the two days of the competitions, JEPP also had a popular booth in the Career Showcase area for the students and their advisors to obtain information about apprenticeship in the electrical trades.

The last day saw the presentation of the gold, silver and bronze medals for all the competitions. As gold medal winner of the post secondary apprentices competition, George Kardaras goes on to the Canadian Skills Competition in Winnipeg in June with a \$1,000 bursary from JEPP to help send him to the event.

More than 14,000 students, teachers, advisors and parents took part in Future Building 2004 at the National Trade Centre in Toronto, March 29-31. The Ontario Construction Secretariat in partnership with Human Resources Development Canada (HRDC) and the Ministry of Training, Colleges and Universities (MTCU) sponsors this career fair, which included a 60' x 60' electrical pavilion sponsored by JEPP.

All four trades from the electrical industry were represented at the pavilion with hands-on demonstrations of the skills required for each trade.

The power lineman trade had the students tour a line truck, work with rubber gloves, watch a lineman climb and dress a pole, and the Electrical & Utilities Safety Association (E&USA) demonstrated high voltage dangers with its Hazard



Post Secondary Competition Winners George Kardaras (left) (Local 586/Imperial Electric) (Gold) and Steven Dawson (Local 353/Campbell & Kennedy Electric) (Silver).



Students gather information at the career showcase area of the Ontario Skills Competition



Post Secondary Skills Competitor Virginia Pohler (Local 120/Gordon Electric).

Hamlet. A mini traffic control system was set up as a self-demonstration activity.

The residential electrician was represented with a large cut-away stud wall illustrating the installation techniques of house wiring from incoming service to receptacles and switches. A security system, data-com wiring, satellite communications and lighting control systems were also featured, representing the latest technology.

The construction and maintenance electrician area demonstrated such hands-on activities as light board identification, conduit bending, wire-pulling and wire joints. An instructor-demonstrated fire alarm system and PLC represented leading-edge technology.

The network cabling specialist area had a very popular hands-on telephone connection activity, which was supplemented by a display of fibre optic cable splicing.

JEPP also supported a one-day career fair in Kingston and a two-day career fair in Sarnia with 5,000 registered students.



Jerry Wilson (left), IBEW Canada is on hand for the Post Secondary Skills Medal Presentations to Silver Winner Steven Dawson, Gold Winner George Kardaras and Bronze Winner Andrew Clark.

This information first appeared in the ECAO newsletter.

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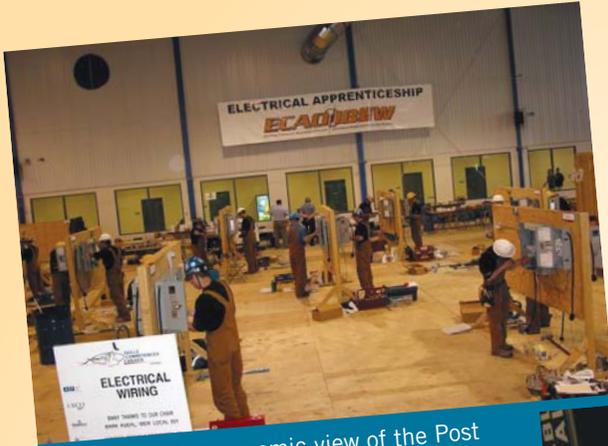
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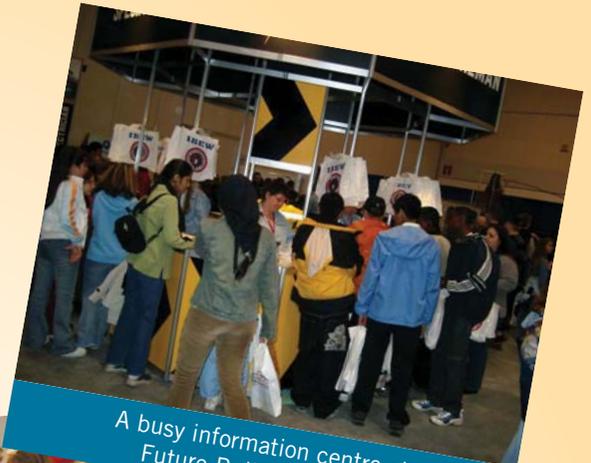
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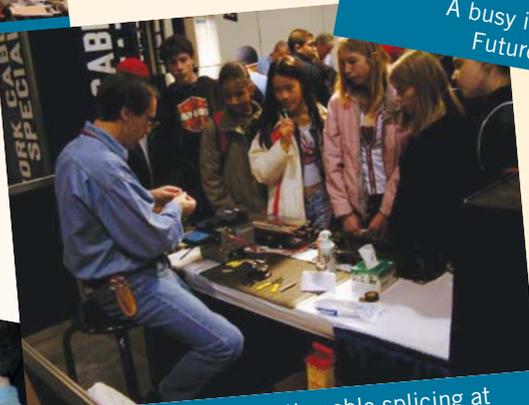
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A panoramic view of the Post Secondary Skills Competition.



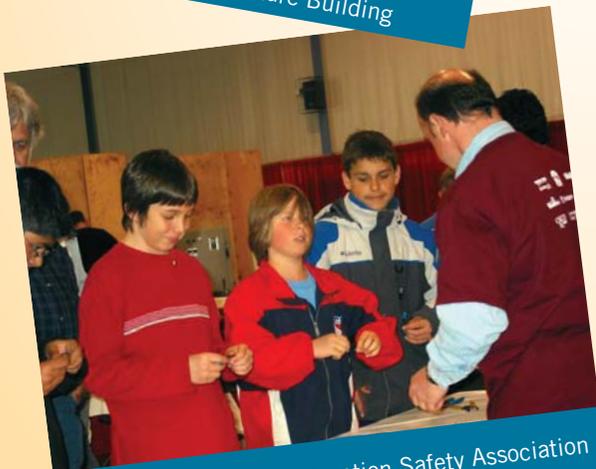
A busy information centre at Future Building 2004.



A display of fibre optic cable splicing at Future Building 2004.



Students participate in a wire joints activity at the construction and maintenance electrician area of Future Building



Ian Reece (right), Construction Safety Association of Ontario, gives Skills students a hands-on demonstration of wire joints.

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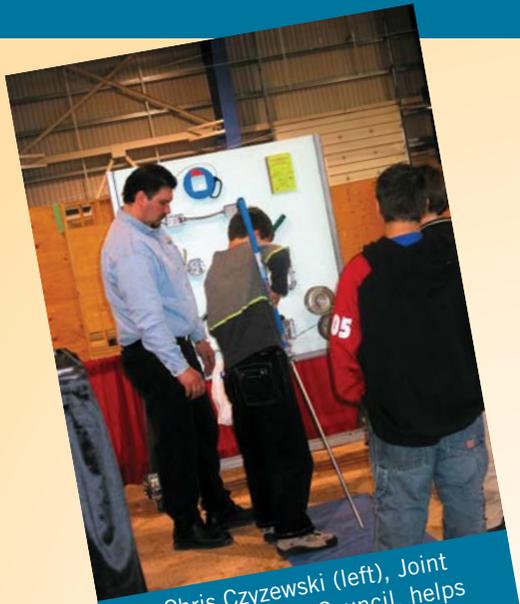
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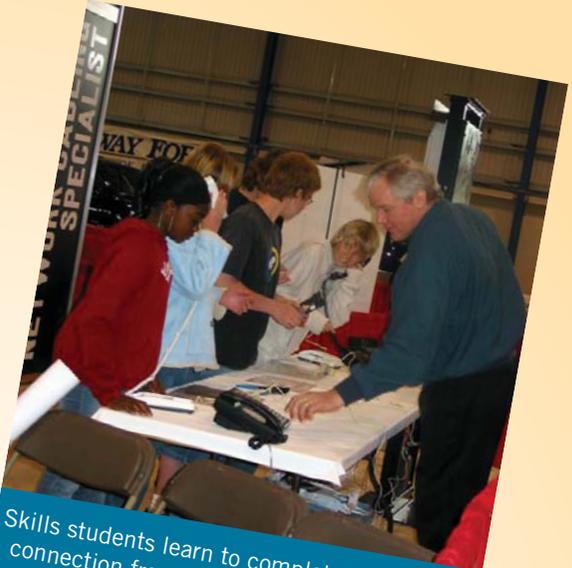
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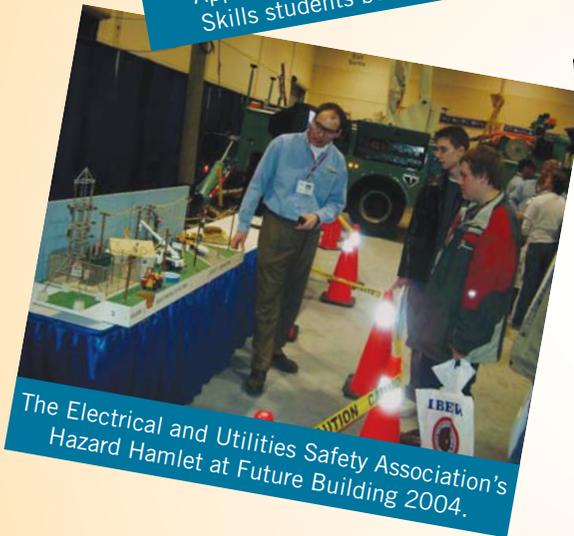
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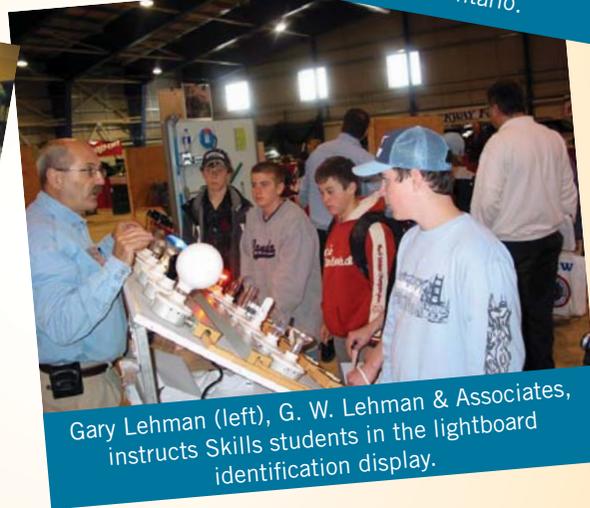
Chris Czyzewski (left), Joint Apprenticeship Council, helps Skills students bend conduit.



Skills students learn to complete a telephone connection from Peter Olders (right), IBEW Construction Council of Ontario.



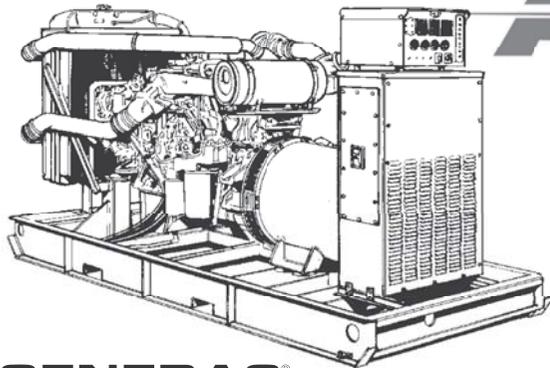
The Electrical and Utilities Safety Association's Hazard Hamlet at Future Building 2004.



Gary Lehman (left), G. W. Lehman & Associates, instructs Skills students in the lightboard identification display.

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feature

WINDSOR CONTRACTORS to host 2004 ANNUAL CONFERENCE and AGM



2003 Conference in St. John's, Newfoundland

This fall, the Windsor contractors have invited ECAO members to hold their Annual Conference and General Meeting in their hometown, Sept. 29 to Oct. 3, at the Casino Windsor, a four-diamond property with superior facilities and exceptional service and Canada's highest-rated casino.

The event kicks off Wednesday evening with a Mix & Meet Wine Tasting presented by some of southwestern Ontario's finest

winemakers. The following morning, Ralph Nichols of the Dale Carnegie Corporation will inspire and motivate conference goers with his keynote address on leadership and success.

Business sessions on Thursday and Friday include estate planning, workplace safety incentives and corporate governance. While the delegates are benefiting from these excellent sessions, their partners will be visiting Colasanti's Tropical Gardens, the Canadian Club Brand Centre and the Odette Sculpture Park. Friday afternoon will present an opportunity for attendees to play a round of golf at Windsor's most exclusive course, The Essex Golf & Country Club. The Essex course is a traditional Donald Ross design, which has played host to such world-class events as the Canadian Open in 1976, the LPGA's duMaurier Classic in 1988 and the AT&T Canada Senior Open in 2002.

Following the golf, conference attendees will be entertained with a *Saturday Night Murder* mystery dinner where a 1970's disco club is the scene of the crime. The dinner will be held in the Essex's elegant and stately dining room. Delegates and their partners will be invited to dress up with platform shoes, polyester clothes and 'out of sight' hair. Can you spell Y-M-C-A?

Optional events on Thursday include a tour of the Pelee Island Winery or tickets to the Detroit Fox Theatre and on Saturday, Ford's recently opened Rouge Factory Tour or the Institute of the Arts in Detroit, Michigan, following the annual general meeting. As always, the conference wraps up Saturday evening with the president's reception and gala.

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REMOVING BARRIERS to COMPETITION for CONNECTION WORK

By Robert Frank

ECAO has been taking steps to address the concerns of its members that the current business practices of certain electricity distributors have been creating barriers to entry and competition with respect to connection work to the utilities' distribution systems.

The barriers relate to cabling and transforming (as defined below), two of the four key electrical design components for the connection of a load to a distribution system. The four key components are:

1. Physical connection of the cables to the distribution company's system ("connection");
2. Cabling from the distribution company's connection point to the load ("cabling");
3. Installation of meters ("metering"); and
4. Installation of transformers and switch gear ("transforming").

In the current regulatory environment, customers are not required to use a distribution company's equipment or personnel for cabling, transforming or metering (collectively, "competitive components"). A private contractor (such as an ECAO member) is entitled to install cabling and a private equipment provider is entitled to supply the meters, transformers and switch gear.

However, it has been the experience of ECAO members that certain distribution companies have been using their authority as a distribution system to discourage customers from choosing competitive cabling, transforming and metering options. The improper actions have included:

1. Refusal or delay to approve designs if the distribution company is not the supplier of the competitive components;
2. The distribution company's practice of bundling the price for the competitive components with the connection component;
3. The imposition by the distribution company of more stringent requirements on electrical designs that are not from the distribution company; and

4. Misrepresentations that the distribution company offers lifetime warranties with respect to competitive components.

It is ECAO's position that this type of interference with a customer's choice to purchase the competitive components is inconsistent with the distribution companies' regulatory requirements, namely the restrictions on their permitted business activities under section 71 of the *Ontario Energy Board Act, 1998* (the "OEB Act"), and their obligations to provide nondiscriminatory access to their distribution systems under section 26 of the *Electricity Act, 1998* (the "Electricity Act"), section 3.3 of the Distribution System Code ("DSC"), and their distribution licences.

Further, it is ECAO's position that certain distribution companies are acting improperly by directly carrying on business that includes competitive components (i.e. cabling, transforming and metering) rather than complying with the requirements of the Affiliate Relationships Code and ensuring that such services are only provided through a stand-alone affiliate on terms that are regulated by that code and other regulatory requirements.

ECAO is taking steps to monitor the type of breaches noted above and, where possible, ECAO is working with distribution companies to ensure that they bring themselves into compliance with their regulatory requirements. In particular, ECAO is seeking to ensure that the distribution companies modify their business practices so that they no longer create or maintain barriers to entry of competition for connection work.

It is the ECAO's position that, at a minimum, distribution companies should be required to take the following steps to bring themselves into compliance with their regulatory requirements:

1. Distribution companies must cease carrying out the competitive components (i.e. cabling, transforming and metering). Should distribution companies wish to carry out any competitive components, they must do

so only through an affiliate, in full compliance with the Affiliates Relationship Code and their other regulatory requirements;

2. Distribution companies should be required to issue published rates, based on their costs to provide the connection component and make those rates available to customers, regardless of whom those customers choose to supply cabling, transforming and metering;

3. Distribution companies should be required to inform customers requesting a connection that the customer has the choice to obtain alternative bids for competitive components from other qualified contractors, inform the customer that the customer may choose to have that work performed by other qualified contractors and provide the customer with a list of other qualified contractors;

4. Distribution companies should be required to notify customers of all billing credits that are available, such as transformer ownership credits; and

5. Distribution companies should be required to advise customers that their general installations are not required to meet Canadian Standards Association or Building Code standards, whereas other qualified contractors are required to meet those standards.

ECAO views the issue of open and fair competition for connection work as an important one for its members. ECAO will continue to work with distribution companies – and, to the extent necessary, it will seek relief from the Ontario Energy Board – to ensure that the market operates as it is intended to.

Robert Frank is a partner in the Toronto office of Macleod Dixon LLP. Macleod Dixon LLP is a recognized leader in national and international energy law services, with a particular emphasis on electricity, natural gas and emissions trading.

toolbox talks

003: Allergic Reactions

Why this topic is important:

- Allergies are becoming increasingly common, due to changes in our environment.
- Severe reactions may cause death or disfigurement.

Types of allergens

- Medication, food and other ingested items.
- Chemical exposure, airborne contaminants, perfumes, cigarette smoke and other man-made sources.
- Insect bites, plant oils, animal dander, mold, dust, pollen and other natural sources.

Types of reactions

- Skin blotches, swollen eyes, swelling in the face or neck, swelling in extremities.
- Wheezing, coughing, congestion – think of sinus issues.
- Difficulty breathing. Gasping, clutching at chest or throat. This indicates respiratory distress. Inhalation of burning poison oak can cause this, as can inhalation of anything else a person might be allergic to. Even a bee sting can cause this.

Mild attacks and seasonal allergies

- People with seasonal allergies typically do not need assistance. However, conditions can push their allergies to extremes.
- Most folks self-treat with over-the-counter medications. If a co-worker is taking something, ask your co-worker to verify it is a non-drowsy medication.
- A mild allergic reaction, such as a sneezing fit that passes, is not reason for concern unless it recurs. If it does, work with your foreman to possibly remove the allergen.

Serious attacks

- Noticeable swelling or rash will re-

quire immediate treatment. You have no idea how far the condition will go before disabling or killing your co-worker. Do not accept “it’s nothing” for an answer. See your foreman for assistance, if need be.

- Call for help and activate the Emergency Medical System.
- If strong fumes or other signs of allergens are present, move the victim from the area.
- Stay with the victim at all times and monitor for breathing problems.
- Do not let the victim wash with hot water, which opens the pores. Don’t let the victim splash his/her face with water, or touch his/her face or eyes with the hands.
- If the victim has a skin rash and needs to make a nature call, supply the victim with vinyl gloves to avoid contaminating the genitals.
- Do not let the victim lie down. The reaction may be spreading to the airway.
- Ask the victim questions, based on the acronym AMPLE:
 - A: Allergies. Ask the victim about any known allergies.
 - M: Medications being used.
 - P: Past medical history, past illnesses.
 - L: Last meal. Note everything eaten and drank, where and who with.
 - E: Events preceding the attack. Where were you, what were you doing, did you notice unusual odours, did you do anything unusual?

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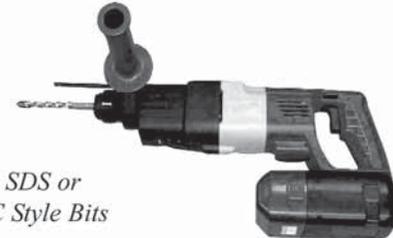
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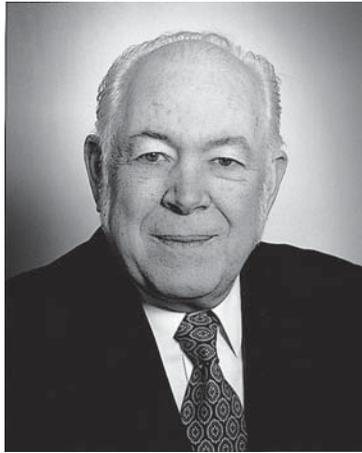
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In Memoriam – KEN BROWN



With great sadness, the industry mourns the passing of Ken Brown, a beloved employee of Accubid Systems and mentor to the electrical estimating profession.

With more than 40 years experience in the electrical contracting industry, Ken earned the respect of many people and his dedication and contribution to the electrical contracting community will be remembered for a long time.

Ken was an electrical estimator, instructor, author, columnist and advisor. After college and a stint in the air force, he began work as an electrician and then in 1952 as an estimator. Throughout the next four decades, Ken worked as an estimator, project manager and office manager with Ontario Electric, Canada Electric, Comstock and Bennett & Wright. Ken was involved with commercial, industrial and institutional projects, as well as process lines and process plants worth millions of dollars.

In 1964, Ken began teaching estimating courses for electrical contractors' associations. Later, he taught manual estimating at George Brown College, Seneca College and

for the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario (ECAO).

Ken's books on estimating and project management (*Practical Electrical Estimating Solutions* and *Practical Electrical Project Management Solutions*) were widely read in the industry and became required reading for the estimating course at the British Columbia Institute of Technology.

After retiring from the trade in 1990, Ken worked as a technical advisor with Accubid Systems, the leading provider of estimating software for the electrical industry. Ken advised Accubid on the design of its estimating software, helped train Accubid clients and wrote estimating handbooks and newsletter columns for Accubid.

Ken was born in Weston, Ont., and lived there his entire life. Ken is survived by Katherine (Kaye), his wife of 45 years, who will miss their regular trips to Casino Rama.

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