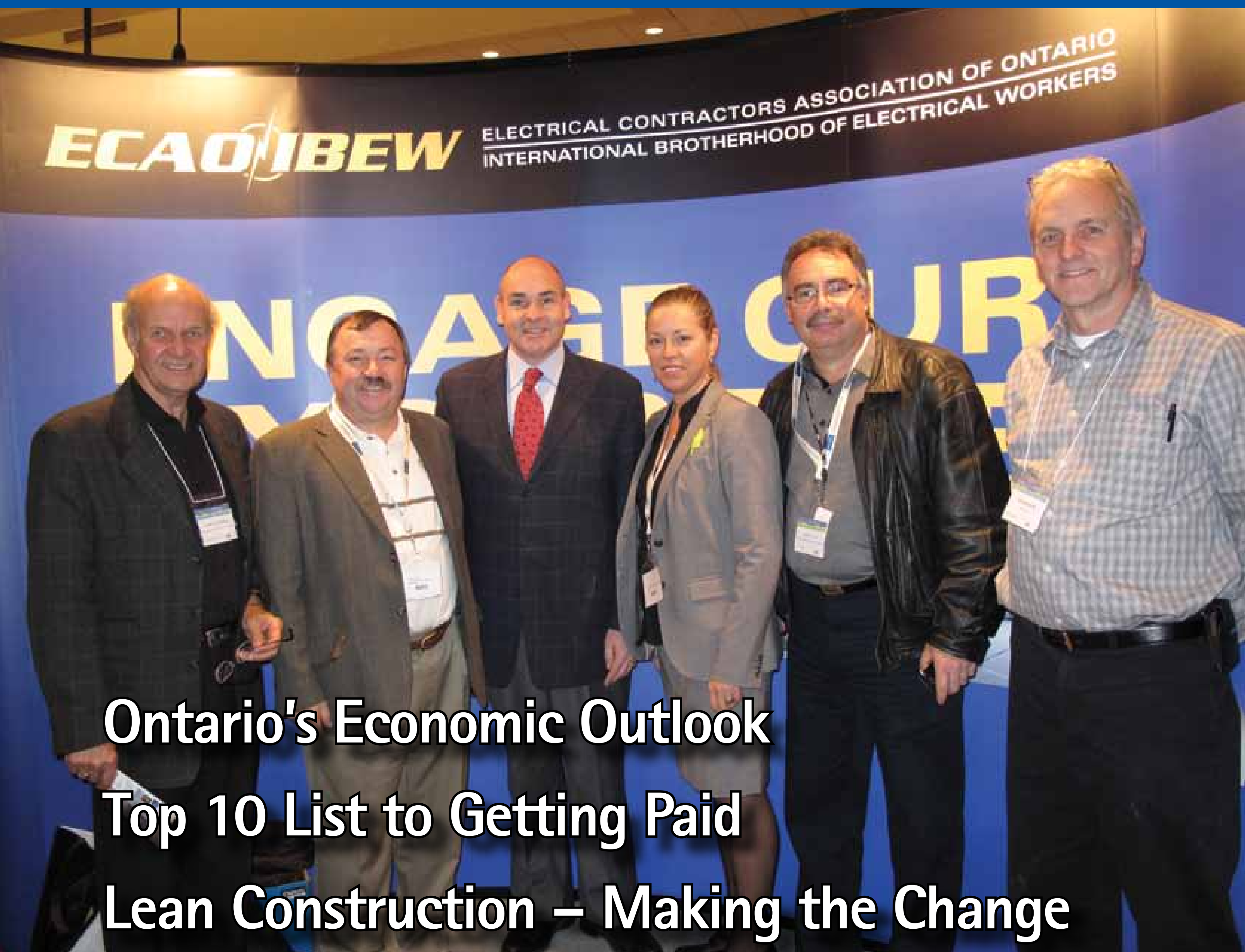
The Voice of Ontario's ELECTRICAL CONTRACTING INDUSTRY

The Ontario ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR

ECAO
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Volume 48 • Number 1 • Winter 2009/10



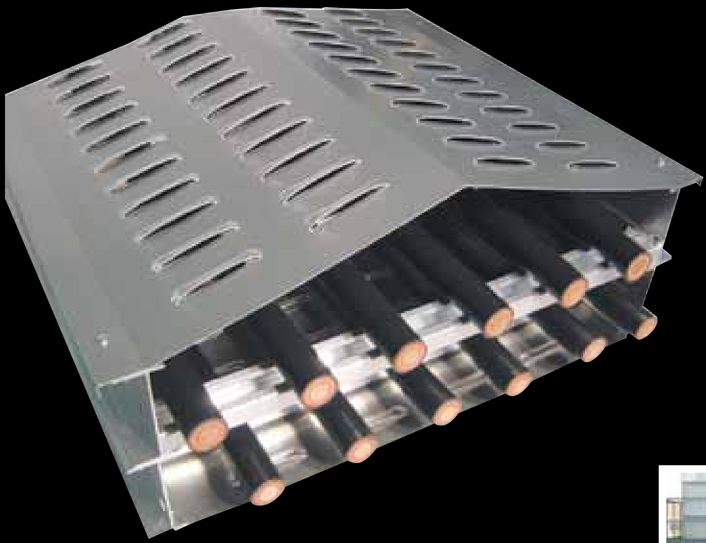
Ontario's Economic Outlook

Top 10 List to Getting Paid

Lean Construction – Making the Change

PM40063602

MAXIAMP®
CABLE BUS SYSTEM
The Most Technically Advanced Electrical Power Delivery System




- Free Air Ampacity Rating in ABOVE and BELOW GROUND Installations
- Up to 8000 AMP / 600 V to 230 kV
- Reduced Power Losses
- Lowest Cost System
- Suppresses EMF's
- Expandable Enclosure
- Easy & Quick Installation
- Underwater Installations

Patent Pending

Replaces BUS DUCT, ARMOURED CABLE IN TRAY, UNDERGROUND DUCT BANK, DIRECT BURIED and CONDUIT SYSTEMS

United Wire & Cable's expertise in cable and enclosure design, manufacture and application engineering ensures a reliable, versatile and cost effective MAXIAMP cable bus system.

For further information please email us at: **sales@unitedwc.com**
Tel: (905) 771-0099 or 1-800-265-8697 • Fax: (905) 771-1658 or 1 800-461-4689 • www.unitedwc.com

Going to great lengths to serve you

United Wire & Cable

The Ontario
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR
Volume 48 • Number 1 • Winter 2009/10

CONTENTS

On The Cover: ECAO and IBEW representatives welcome former Minister of Energy and Infrastructure and MPP (Toronto Centre) to the ECAO/IBEW booth at the CanSIA Solar Showcase held December 7 and 8.

Pictured (from left) are Garry Fitzpatrick, Fitzpatrick Electrical Contractor; John Raepple, John Raepple Electric (ECAO President); George Smitherman; Lucy Roberts, Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario; Alex Lolua, IBEW Construction Council of Ontario; and Mike Boersma, Net Electric.

The Ontario Electrical Contractor is published quarterly for:

ECAO
ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

170 Attwell Drive, Suite 460, Toronto,
Ontario M9W 5Z5
Tel: 416-675-3226
Fax: 416-675-7736
1-800-387-ECAO (3226)
email: ecao@ecao.org
Web: www.ecao.org

ECAO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President: John Raepple, John Raepple Electric Ltd., Cambridge

Past-President: Fred Black, Stevens & Black Electrical Contractors, Markham

First Vice-President: Jim Kellett, K-Line Maintenance and Construction, Stouffville

Second Vice-President: Dan Lancia, Holaco Installations Limited, Hamilton

Treasurer: Bill McKee, Carleton Electric Ltd., Nepean

Director: Dave Mason, D. J. Mason Electric Co. Ltd., Hamilton

Executive Vice-President: Eryl Roberts

The Ontario Electrical Contractor is the official publication of the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario. Its purpose is to provide information and editorial comment on issues that are relevant to the electrical contracting industry.

Publisher
Robert Thompson

Associate Editor
Angela Altass

Editor
Ali Mintenko

Sales Manager
Sharon Komoski

Sales Executives
Nolan Ackman, Steve Beauchamp, Peter Gabriel, Pat Johnston

Production Team Leader
Adrienne N. Wilson

Graphic Design Specialist
Krista Zimmermann

Published by:

MediaEDGE PUBLISHING INC.

5255 Yonge Street, Suite 1000
Toronto, ON M2N 6P4
1-866-216-0860 ext.229
Email: robertt@mediaedge.ca

1 Wesley Ave., Suite 301
Winnipeg, MB R3C 4C6
1-866-201-3096
Fax: (204) 480-4420
www.mediaedgepublishing.com

President
Kevin Brown

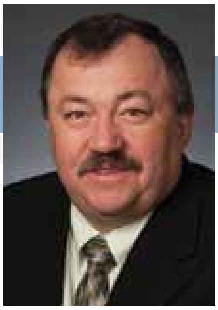
Senior Vice-President
Robert Thompson

Branch Manager
Nancie Privé

PUBLICATION MAIL AGREEMENT #40063602

Return Undeliverable Items to: The Ontario Electrical Contractor, 170 Attwell Drive, Suite 460, Toronto, Ontario M9W 5Z5

The President's Remarks



John Raepple

Welcome to the first *Ontario Electrical Contractor* of the New Year and the new decade. In this issue ECAO looks towards economic recovery and new horizons.

First and foremost in everybody's mind is the hope for recovery from the global economic crisis during 2010. Our contributing economists predict recovery, but counsel patience as we transition into a new economic order.

Meny Grauman, Senior Economist for CIBC World Markets, describes Canada as an "average student in a class of underachievers." In his article *Mapping Out Canada's Economic Recovery* (page 10), Grauman sees a gradual recovery through 2010 mainly due to government spending, with a more confident private sector stepping in during 2011.

Katherine Jacobs of the Ontario Construction Secretariat examines the Ontario construction scene and points out the split between a weak industrial/commercial private sector and the strong institutional/civil engineering public sector. In *Signs of Economic Recovery Starting to Emerge* (page 8), she too sees the way forward depending upon the private sector's "ability to pick up the torch" from government. Growth? Yes, but Ontario lags behind the rest of the country.

The electrical contracting industry's economic performance falls closely in line with these opinions. ECAO members and their employees suffered a 15 per cent reduction in work activity on average last year, but averages don't tell the whole story. ECAO experienced this general decline in activity in spite of the largest government spending spree in history. Some areas are busier than ever; others struggle with record lows. Some contractors on hospitals and civil projects are booming; others who rely on Ontario's commercial and manufacturing economy are idle. Regardless, I am confident that these challenges will be overcome.

The cover photo for this issue is a good example of why I am confident in our future. It depicts then Minister of Energy, George Smitherman, attending the ECAO/IBEW solar "coming out" party at the Canadian Solar Industry Association (CanSIA) tradeshow. In less than six months, ECAO and IBEW were able to build upon their foundation of qualified contractors and skilled electricians and developed a solar marketing strategy, a full blown solar training curriculum, a certification for electricians, and a catalogue of qualified solar contractors. A national training standard is in the works which, with the participation of NECA and IBEW in the U.S., may very well become international.

When opportunity knocks, we know enough to answer the door.

2010 brings with it collective bargaining and a chance for the workplace parties to put this trait to work. We must become part of the solution and contribute to the recovery of the private sector. The challenges of this marketplace, with its split personality, are well understood by both the ECAO and our labour partners. I am certain that in 2010 we will meet these challenges and find innovative and effective ways of ensuring that the benefits of the recovery are shared equally by all of our ECAO members and their IBEW employees.

International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers
Construction Council of Ontario

John Pender, Executive Secretary Treasurer - Jack Dowding, Executive Chairman - John Grimshaw, President
Sol Furer, Vice-President - Bruce McNamara, Power Council President - John Gillett, Power Council Vice-President

Representing 13 IBEW Local Unions across the Province of Ontario serving over 14,000 Electricians, Communication Workers and Linemen.

105 HAMILTON
John Grimshaw, B.M.
Vic Prohaska, Pres.
tele: 905-387-1721

115 KINGSTON
BIll Pearse, B.M.
Guy Desaulniers, Pres.
tele: 613-547-4115

120 LONDON
John Gibson, B.M.
Steve Carty, Pres.
tele: 519-451-0655

303 ST. CATHERINES
Peter Wall, B.M.
Mark Cherney, Pres.
tele: 905-227-7303

353 TORONTO
Joe Fashion, B.M.
Barry Stevens, Pres.
George Smith, Rec. Sec.
tele: 416-510-3530

402 THUNDER BAY
Glen Drewes, B.M.
Kirby Kapush, Pres.
tele: 807-623-5759

530 SARNIA
Mick Cataford, B.M.
Raphael Camden, Pres.
tele: 519-344-4154

586 OTTAWA
James Barry, B.M.
Douglas Parsons, Pres.
tele: 613-741-5664

773 WINDSOR
Sol Furer, B.M.
Ed McDowell, Pres.
tele: 519-948-2221

804 KITCHENER
George Couch, B.M.
Corina Hicks, Pres.
tele: 519-742-8319

894 OSHAWA
John Gillett, B.M.
Randy O'Neill, Pres.
tele: 905-623-7931

1687 SUDBURY
Bruce McNamara, B.M.
Timothy Butler, Pres.
tele: 705-566-1687

1739 BARRIE
Tom Leduc, B.M.
Blaine Neville, Pres.
tele: 705-734-9590

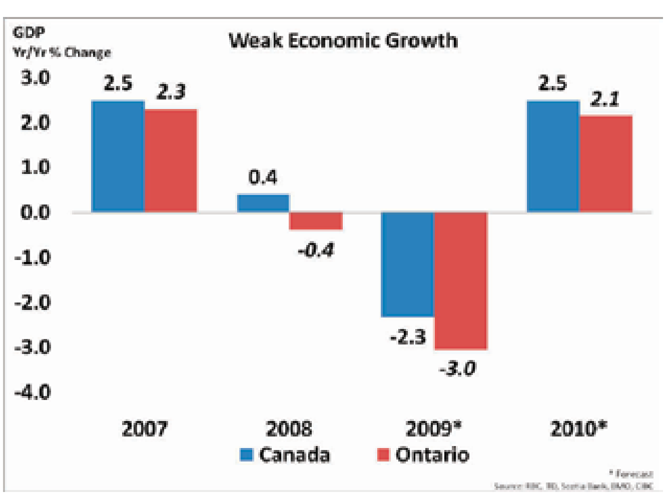
INTERNATIONAL OFFICE
Phil Flemming, IVP
tele: 905-564-5441

IBEW CONSTRUCTION
COUNCIL OF ONTARIO
61 International Blvd
Suite 209, Etobicoke ON
tele: 416-674-6940

Signs of Economic Recovery Starting to Emerge

By Katherine Jacobs

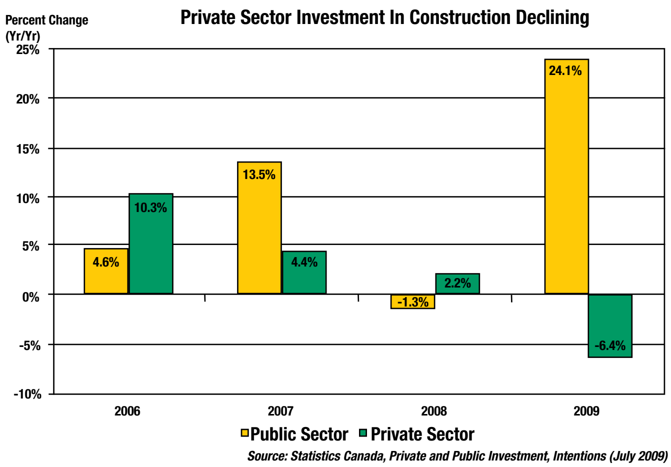
The global economic downturn is beginning to stabilize in response to unprecedented and synchronized monetary and fiscal stimulus. Most economies, including Canada's, are now transitioning towards recovery. Ontario will continue to struggle given its strong dependence on the manufacturing sector and export ties to the United States. However, most economists now predict Ontario's economy will grow modestly in 2010 as the U.S. economy starts to recover in the later part of 2009. Ontario will continue to lag the national economy as the beleaguered manufacturing sector works to find a new 'normal.'



However, we should not take this recovery for granted. Aggressive public spending has provided a strong dose of economic stimulus that is expected to continue through 2010, but it won't last indefinitely. We need to see the private sector take over this stimulus lead for the recovery to gain a strong foothold. Corporate profits have taken a beating over the past three-quarters and tight cash and credit will hold back a strong recovery in private investment until 2011.

So, how does this emerging recovery affect the construction industry? As is often the case with construction, there isn't one simple answer. Looking at Ontario's non-residential building construction investment, we saw a drop of 4.2 per cent to $3.9 billion in the third quarter of 2009. All three sectors (industrial, commercial and institutional) declined in the third quarter, but the commercial sector was the prime contributor to the drop. Declines in commercial investment are primarily attributed to lower spending on office buildings, shopping centres and warehouses. Surprisingly, institutional spending also declined in the third quarter, primarily due to lower spending on health-care facilities and homes for the aged. This decline points to the lag in identifying projects for stimulus funding and getting those projects started.

As we look forward to the end of the year and into 2010 we can expect to see continued weakness in the industrial and commercial sectors of the construction industry. The commercial construction category is already experiencing a slowdown. Private sector funding is critical to the commercial sector and with constrained credit, rising vacancy rates and lower consumer confidence, new commercial construction will be negatively impacted over the next year. Most of these factors are cyclical in nature and will turn around as the economy picks up, but that will take time. Only modest improvement in commercial work is to be expected in 2010, with much better prospects coming in 2011.



It is the institutional category of non-residential buildings that is a clear winner given government stimulus. Hospital projects and additions to institutions of higher learning are getting the additional federal and provincial funds. Many of these projects are now getting underway and we anticipate the bulk of the benefit of government stimulus will be realized next year.

So, the outlook for construction is mixed. Those contractors and employees who work predominantly in the institutional sector or on civil engineering projects will benefit from the significant stimulus dollars the government has allocated. Residential, commercial and industrial projects, which are funded through private investment, will see drastic reductions in activity over the next couple of years. The uncertainty as we move forward and out of the recession revolves around the private sector's ability to pick up the torch and replace the government stimulus that has been propping up the economy. Without renewed private sector strength we risk a 'double dip' recession. Next year will be a transitional year as the provincial and federal governments articulate their 'exit' strategies and we start to see improved opportunities from the private sector.

Katherine Jacobs is Director of Research & Analysis with the Ontario Construction Secretariat.

Mapping Out Canada's Economic Recovery

By Meny Grauman

The tumble from boom to bust was fast and indiscriminate, but the recovery now underway will be much more nuanced. The Canadian economy will manage to outperform all of its G7 peers next year, but like an average student in a class of underachievers the pace of growth will still be sluggish. On some dimensions, Canada stands out from its peers, largely because the financial shock to the household, government and banking sectors was less dramatic than in the U.S. or some parts of Europe. But after an initial pop in activity, one that could look surprisingly strong as inventories are rebuilt worldwide, the hangover from the global crunch is likely to weigh on growth in Canada's key export markets until 2011.

Lead Actor in Recovery: Ottawa

Looking ahead to next year, the growth we do see at home will be all about the impacts of the record fiscal and monetary stimulus that brought us back from the brink of depression. Rate cuts are working better in Canada than stateside due to a healthier financial system, but take those goodies away too soon, before we have seen enough job creation for private sector demand to be self-sustaining, and those now warning of a double-dip recession would have something to crow about.

Fortunately, in the battle to get out of recession, policy-makers seem unlikely to switch gears too quickly. The Bank of Canada has pledged to stand pat on rates until mid-2010 even if its consensus-topping growth outlook is on the mark, and we believe that rates will remain on hold for even longer. The good news is that by keeping monetary and fiscal policy stimulative in the coming year, the stage should be set for a more robust upswing in 2011. By then, U.S. consumers may have achieved the desired rise in the savings rate and will be willing to match income growth with spending. A year of modest job growth will add to that confidence and hopefully give the private sector the boost it needs to take over just as government stimulus starts to run dry.

Are the Doomsayers Correct?

Record low interest rates have jump started the residential real estate market prompting some doomsayers to suggest the red-hot pace of activity in the Canadian housing market is just a bubble waiting to burst. Indeed, the Bank of Canada is keeping an eye on these trends, but can hardly react with alarm, considering it engineered rate cuts so that businesses and households would borrow and spend. Even Ottawa's fiscal package included inducements to households to borrow and finance home renovations, and the government also helped maintain liquidity through its mortgage purchase program.

Canadian policy-makers can't really fight against the household credit boom by using the blunt instrument of interest rate hikes when the economy is still starved for growth.

But it is important for them to remind Canadians that they should still borrow responsibly. That entails working with both banks and borrowers to ensure that mortgages taken today at very low rates will still be affordable when they come up for renewal, undoubtedly at higher rates, three or five years hence. The good news here is that Canadian mortgages taken out during the last period of low interest rates earlier this decade have subsequently performed quite well.

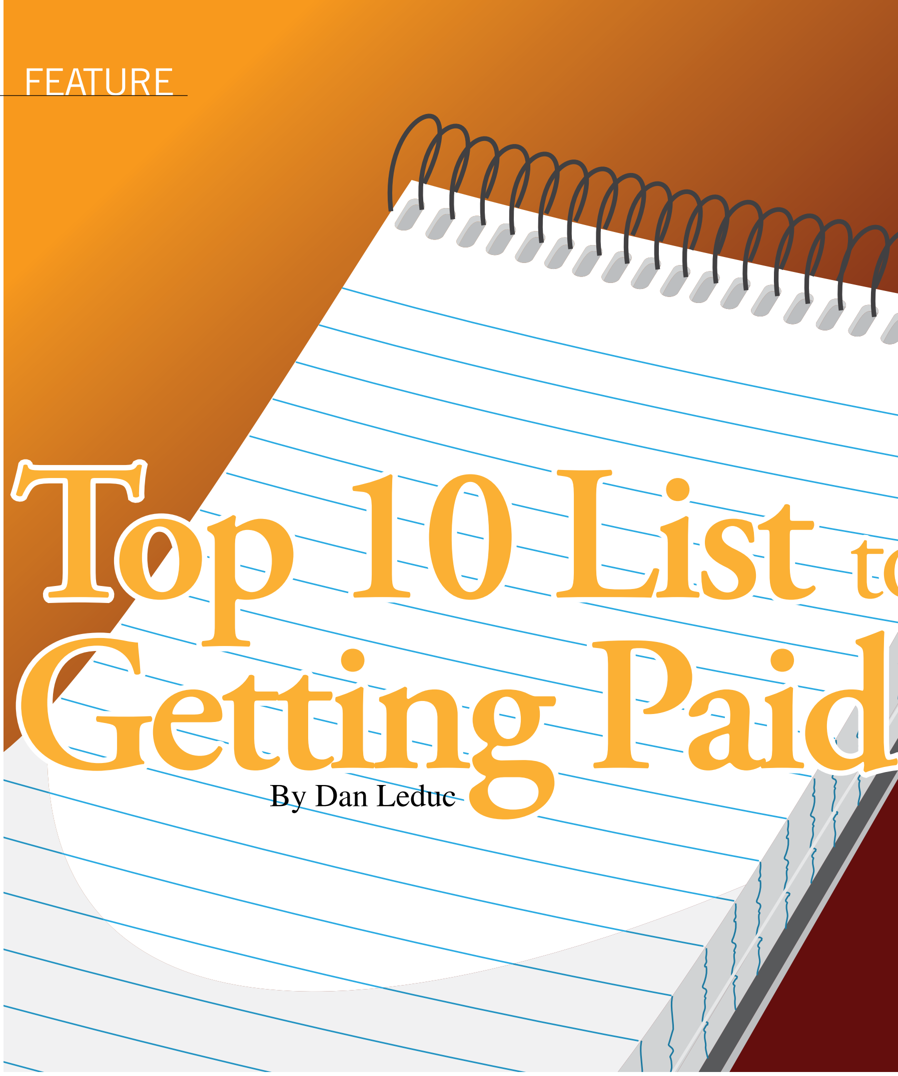
Commercial real estate markets typically lag residential activity by a full year. Therefore, we continue to look for declines in the immediate future, but are encouraged by recent signs of stabilization south of the border and upswing in sales here. Still, financing will be a major determining factor in Canadian outperformance. In the U.S. the main concern for the next few years is the overhang of maturing debt that won't qualify for refinancing. While the volume of maturing debt over the past two years has been relatively low, refinancing demand will pick up dramatically over the coming years.

In Canada though, the refinancing problem is much less dramatic. Furthermore, even at the height of the credit crunch, Canadian lenders did not stop lending, and in fact, in recent months have been expanding their client base. The real value of non-residential mortgages in Canada, while no longer rising by a double-digit rate, is still expanding by just under 8 per cent on a year-over-year basis, a rate that is higher than during most of the past decade, and helps ensure that our construction market does not suffer the same fate as down south.

2010 is a Preamble to a True Recovery in 2011

Besides the risk of the U.S. economy dipping back into recession, the greatest threat to the Canadian economy right now is the strong Canadian dollar. The loonie has climbed 15 per cent versus the greenback since the start of the year, hurting exporters, and by the Bank of Canada's own admission more than offsetting the boost from improvements in the financial markets and healthier global growth. With the dollar weighing down trade, it will be the public sector's job to sustain the economy in 2010, but a more robust global expansion the following year should help ensure that private sector is fully back on its feet come 2011.

Meny Grauman is Executive Director, Senior Economist, CIBC World Markets Inc., Toronto



Top 10 List to Getting Paid

By Dan Leduc

As we move through this current recession, it may be worthwhile to review our strategies on 'getting paid.' With all credit to David Letterman, we offer the following Top 10 List to Getting Paid:

1. Be Pro-Active - waiting to get paid without taking any steps on your own only makes the later task of getting paid more crucial and costly.

2. Meet in Person - it is human nature to delay a response via prolonged email exchanges or phone calls. It is much more difficult to deny someone an answer, such as 'when are we getting paid' in person. Meet with your debtor's representatives in person and discuss the issues to getting paid. If a promise or representation is made to you about getting paid, then follow up with an email or fax.

3. Never Do Work Under Protest - there is longstanding caselaw from the Supreme Court of Canada that holds that one cannot do work under protest when there exists a mechanism for disputed changes in your contract.

4. Check for 'Pay When Paid' Clauses - this type of contract clause says that you are not to be paid until the debtor you have contracted with has been paid. If the clause is clearly worded, it can still be enforced in Ontario. It may be a risk that you assume.

5. Check Your Interest Rate in the Contract and Your Invoices - this issue arises more than it should. Where interest is payable in a contract, but no rate is fixed by the agreement, then the rate is 5 per cent per annum. Except

'Time is what prevents everything from happening at once…' – Lien Periods – A Brief Summary

The above quote is from John Wheeler, a renowned physicist who tried to improve on Einstein's 'unified field theory.' I sometimes believe that one might need to be a nuclear physicist to understand the various time periods associated with the Ontario Construction Lien Act ("Act").

This short article will try to summarize those time periods; it cannot give you a full outline of all time periods involved, but is meant as a starting point. First, an excerpt from our Lien Act in respect of the various time periods at play:

31. (1) Unless preserved under section 34, the liens arising from the supply of services or materials to an improvement expire as provided in this section.

Contractor's liens

(2) Subject to subsection (4), the lien of a contractor,

(a) for services or materials supplied to an improvement on or before the date certified or declared to be the date of the substantial performance of the contract, expires at the conclusion of the forty-five-day period next following the occurrence of the earlier of,

(i) the date on which a copy of the certificate or declaration of the substantial performance of the contract is published as provided in section 32, and

(ii) the date the contract is completed or abandoned; and

(b) for services or materials supplied to the improvement where there is no certification or declaration of the substantial performance of

for mortgages, for interest to be enforceable in your contract, it must be expressed in a yearly effective rate. If not, then 5 per cent is chargeable. How often do we see “2 per cent per month” on contracts or invoices and no yearly effective rate?

6. Know How to Certify a Subcontract for Earlier Release of Holdback - section 33 of the Ontario Construction Lien Act is a mechanism whereby if, for example, you are an early trade on a project (i.e., excavator, concrete placement, steel erection), there is a means by which you have your subcontract certified as complete (not substantially performed which is a different mechanism) and then permit payment of your holdback 45 days from the date of that certification rather than waiting several months later for substantial performance to be certified and then a release of holdback.

7. Know How to Trigger Mediation or Arbitration - this too is often ignored. Many contracts include dispute resolution mechanisms that can act as the machinery for the process to get paid. Too often parties will wait to the end of the project to trigger these mechanisms. You should be pro-active on initiating these dispute resolution mechanisms. Also, you should know the difference between mediation and arbitration: mediation involves a third party engaged by all parties to try to facilitate a settlement. The mediator does not render a decision. Arbitration is a process whereby a third party is retained by all parties to render a decision on the dispute, akin to what a judge would typically undertake.

8. Know Your Lien and Trust Claim Rights - there is a reason why the Ontario Legislature enacted lien

the contract, or for services or materials supplied to the improvement after the date certified or declared to be the date of substantial performance, expires at the conclusion of the forty-five-day period next following the occurrence of the earlier of,

(i) the date the contract is completed, and

(ii) the date the contract is abandoned.

That excerpt certainly does not inspire understanding. Here is an attempt at summarizing the various time periods for preservation (registration) of a lien.

The deadline to register (preserve) a lien is always 45 days. In calculating your 45 days, try www.timeanddate.com. The key is 45 days from what?

legislation - it is for you to have a mechanism to provide you with some form of security to getting paid. For as much stigma as is often associated with registration of a lien, a lien can be quickly registered and then as quickly be discharged upon payment. You should also be aware that Part II of the Ontario Construction Lien Act, which has nothing to do with registration of a lien, provides that every dollar that is paid to a debtor is impressed with a trust in favour of the creditor for that particular project who acts as beneficiary. Trust laws are the strongest legal obligation one entity or individual can owe to another. Use it to your benefit.

9. Know how to get a Copy of the L&M Payment Bond and What To Do With It – a labour and material payment bond is also another mechanism of use for getting paid. Request and obtain a copy as soon as you sense any difficulty in getting paid and read it carefully for its notice and claim time periods. Section 30 of the Construction Lien Act gives you the express right to make this request – use it.

10. Written Notice – almost all construction contracts require some form of timely written notice. As soon as you have the potential for a claim of any type or kind, review your contract's specific notice requirements, the timelines for providing such notice and give the required written notice.

Dan Leduc is a Partner at Ogilvy Renault LLP - Construction, Engineering and Infrastructure Law Practice Group. He can be reached at 613-780-1536 or my email at djleduc@ogilvyrenault.com.

If you have a direct contract with the Owner then you are called a "contractor" under the Act. Contractor's lien must be preserved before the conclusion of the 45-day period next following the occurrence of the earlier of:

1. the date on which a copy of the certificate or declaration of substantial performance of the contract is published (see Daily Commercial News – online see http://www.dcnonl.com/csp/?rm=show_article&main_sub=cert);
2. and the date the contract is completed or abandoned.

The term "contract" includes an amendment to the contract, and so accordingly any such amendment must be taken into account in deciding whether the lien preservation period has begun to run.

The lien of a supplier other than a contractor (i.e., subcontractors, suppliers, etc. – someone who does not have a direct contract with the Owner), prior to the date certified or declared to be the date of the substantial performance of the contract, expires at the conclusion of the 45-day period next following the occurrence of the earliest of:

1. the date on which a copy of the certificate or declaration of the substantial performance of the contract is published;
2. the date of the last supply services or materials to the improvement; and
3. the date a subcontract is certified to be completed (section 33);

In computing the 45-day period, the first day is excluded and the last day is included. Because the courts and land registry offices in this province are closed on public holidays and Saturdays, the time for registration extends to the first business day next following the 45th day, should the 45th day be a holiday or a Saturday.

Liquid Filled Transformers

up to 10MVA with primary voltage through 69kV

TRANSFORMATEURS LTEE

PIONEER

TRANSFORMERS LTD

AN ISO 9001 COMPANY

www.pioneertransformers.com

SALES: 905 625 0868

Surety Bonds *versus* Letters of Credit

By Lori Kieswetter

Many contractors feel that providing an Irrevocable Letter of Credit (ILOC) is easier, faster and cheaper than applying for a surety bond facility. This route can be easier and faster since the bank is a secured creditor and is interested only in the quality and liquidity of the collateral. Although it may initially be cheaper, look at the big picture for a true cost to your company.

I'll use the term owner for the entity or company that has hired you to perform a contract. If they feel you failed to complete the given project as per the specifications of the contract, they simply request payment of the funds from the bank or financial institution that provided the letter of credit for you. They do not have to prove anything or explain why they are making the claim; they simply have to make the claim before the expiration of the Letter of Credit. There is no investigation and you therefore have no protection. I invite you to "Google" RBC versus Gentra for a rather frightening scenario. The performance of the contract in question has **no bearing** on the bank's obligation to pay on the letter of credit. Most frightening is that frequently they will cash the entire ILOC and not just the amount in question. The additional effect of this happening is that the ILOC will appear as a contingent liability on your financial statement.

The bonding company, on the other hand, performs an intensive investigation into your company including your reputation and character, your past experience, your financial strength and your management abilities before agreeing to provide a bond facility. If you have submitted a surety bond on a project and a dispute arose, the owner would have to declare you in default of the contract and then make a claim on your bond. The bonding company would initiate an investigation and determine if the owner has performed their own contractual obligations and that

1. you are in fact in default, and

2. you have been declared to be in default.

If there is a dispute and the bonding company's investigation supports your case the matter will go to court. But first they may be able to assist you in getting the owner to find a solution so that you can continue with the contract and be paid.

If there is a dispute and the bonding company's investigation does not support your case and they feel the default is valid, they will be obligated to act and could either choose to finance you as the original contractor if the problem was financial; or as set out in the bond form:

1. arrange for a new company to come in and perform the contract, and

2. have the project owner award the balance of the contract to another company and pay the difference in cost.

If none of the above alternatives prove feasible, the surety may pay the bond amount.

In short, with an Irrevocable Letter of Credit the owner is not obliged to prove their case nor must they perform their own obligations under the contract. The bank is simply required to give them the money and it is then an interest bearing loan for you. To me, this is the most important difference between these two forms of security, but you might consider the fact that surety bonds are issued on an unsecured basis and provided on the strength of the corporate and personal signatures of the owners of the company.

The face amount of an ILOC is applied to your borrowing line and thus reduces the credit you have access to and could lead to cash flow problems on this and other projects. It would also limit the number of projects you could pursue as your cash/credit is already tied up. These lost opportunities would most certainly cost your company.

Payment Assurance

If you are working for a general contractor who has provided an ILOC or default insurance to the owner, you have no protection as a subcontractor that you will be paid as you would have if the general were required to provide bonds (a Labour and Material Payment Bond specifically) to the owner. This may be something worth considering when bidding on work through a general and, as we try to tell generals, it may even have a bearing on the prices they get from their subs.

The Cost of Obtaining Bonding

Contractors frequently complain that bonding is a hassle and I agree with them. I always tell them if I were a contractor and could do business without them I would because it's just one more person telling you how to run your company. That said, if I had to choose between an LOC or a bond, I'd get bonds every time.

For subcontractors who need very few bonds in a year, the annual bid bond administration fee is a bone of contention. From the bonding company's point of view a surety facility is expensive for them to maintain because they have to regularly collect and examine financial data throughout the year, and the less active accounts are generally not very good about providing that on a regular basis so inevitably you end up with a bond request on a job that's closing tomorrow and a file that's six months out of date causing everyone to go into a state of panic. For those same smaller subcontractors, they very rarely need a performance or payment bond and this is where the bonding company earns their money so the income on this type of account is low and the expense is high. This annual bid bond administration fee can go from $1,000 to $5,000 depending on your surety company and broker and your past bond usage. While the $5,000 is entirely justifiable from a business point of view, $1,500 or $2,000 is more commonly seen. There is a program available to ECAO members which upon qualification includes an annual fee of $500. It is more palatable for many but if you currently have a good relationship with your bonding company then it is not worth a move for the sake of $1,000. Bonding, unlike insurance, is all about the comfort level and relationship. When times are tough – and in construction that day inevitably does come – it's best to have someone on your side who believes in you and has seen you in good times and bad, as opposed to a company you moved to yesterday in order to save $1,000 a year.

Lori Kieswetter is an Account Executive with Ogilvy & Ogilvy Insurance.

Cellphone Usage While Driving in Ontario

Driving a vehicle puts extreme demands on your attention, but performing other tasks while driving can distract you and increase the chances of an accident. Some of the more common distractions include using a cellphone, eating, fiddling with the radio, talking to passengers, and being distracted by other drivers or people outside the car. Cellphone usage has been linked to severe auto accidents and should be considered a hazard. Distracted driving is a factor in 20 per cent of all road accidents and texting increases the risk of a collision by 23 times.

The *Ontario Highway Traffic Act* (amendment Bill 118) now bans drivers from using handheld devices with display screens while operating a vehicle on the road; the education period started October 26, 2009, with enforcement starting February 1, 2010.

The new rules are as follows:

PROHIBITED

- Holding or using a wireless communication device (a cellphone) or a portable electronic entertainment device (iPod) while driving is prohibited.

ALLOWED

- Pre-programmed commercial GPS units along with similar dashboard-mounted devices that provide gauges and displays relating to logistical or navigation uses are allowed.
- Using a cellphone or wireless communication device in hands-free mode, as long as you're not holding it during use, is fine.
- Using any device while pulled-over or parked in a way that you are not disrupting traffic.
- Making a 911 call.

Violation of this law carries a fine of $500. Demerit points will not be included, but depending upon the violation, police will have the option to also use existing careless driving laws for additional penalties, including a $1,000 fine, six demerit points, a driver's licence suspension, and possible jail time.

Some safety tips:

- Learn how your cellphone controls operate before driving, especially the hands-free features.
- Never participate in conversations that require deep concentration, are stressful or emotional.
- Keep conversations brief and if driving conditions become hazardous, end the call immediately.

For those companies with a fleet program, who want to add a cellphone comment to their Driver's Policy, here's an example:

- Distracted driving is a factor in a significant portion of vehicle accidents in North America. Four provinces have outlawed the use of hand-held electronic devices and more provinces are looking at implementing similar rules. Cellphone usage has been linked to severe auto accidents and should be considered a hazard. Some reports show that cellphone usage has similar results to driving drunk. Therefore, the use of all hand-held electronic devices, including cellphones is prohibited when the vehicle is being driven.

As other provinces are in the process of amending their Highway Traffic Acts similarly and in the interests of safety for all, the restriction of cellphone usage is good common sense.

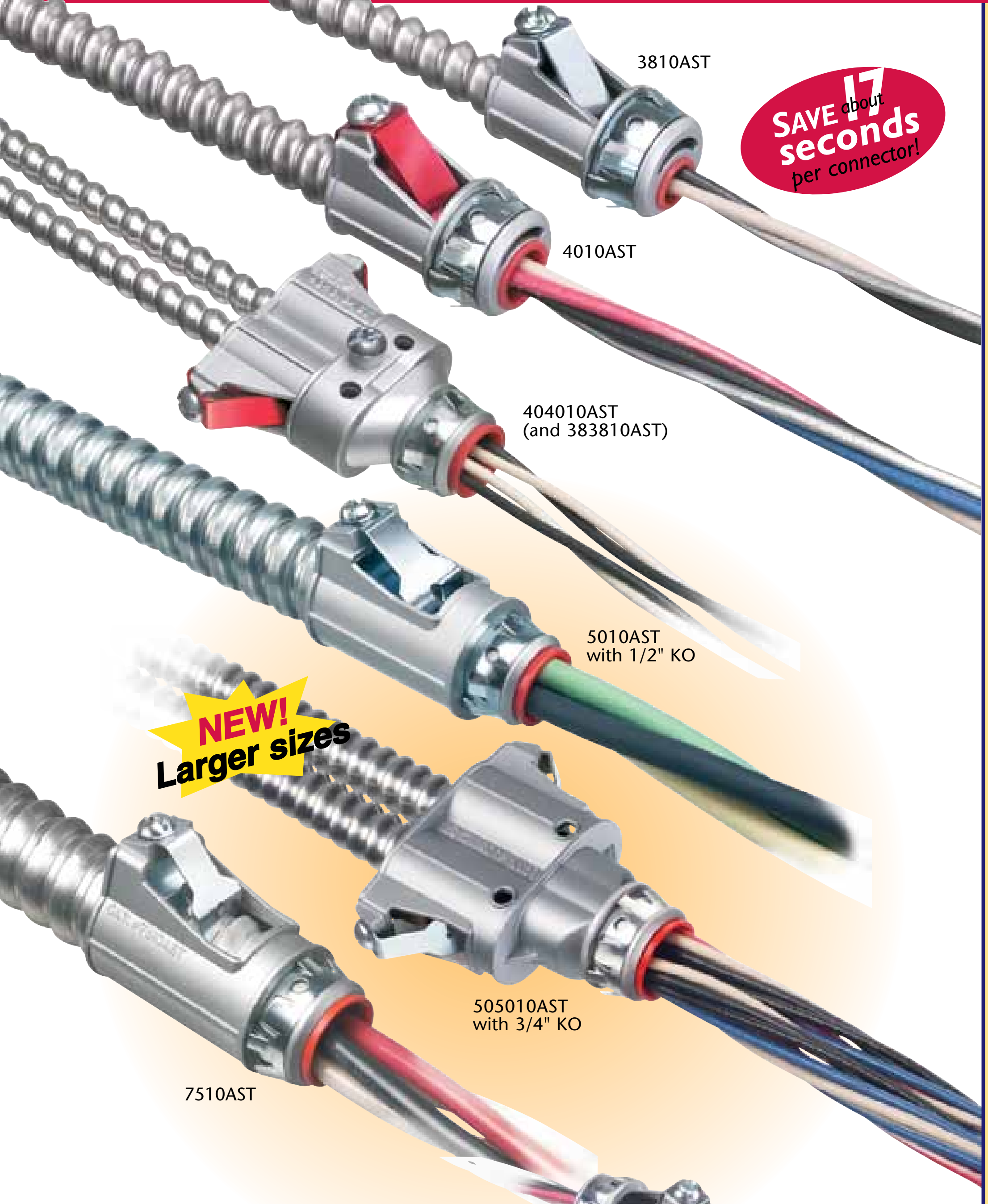
Partners In Prevention

At Federated Insurance, we believe Loss Prevention is a critical component of your Risk Management Program. Your Risk Services Coordinator together with our Loss Prevention Team is available to assist you in developing security measures appropriate for your Business. Working together to reduce your loss exposures protects your bottom line!

For more information, contact your Risk Services Coordinator, our Loss Prevention Department at 1-800-665-1934, or visit our website at www.federated.ca

Federated Insurance provides this Loss Prevention Bulletin as a service to our policyholders and their business advisors. The information provided is intended to be general in nature, and may not apply in your province. The advice of independent legal or other business advisors should be obtained in developing forms and procedures for your business. The recommendations in this bulletin are designed to reduce the risk of loss, but should not be construed as eliminating any risk or loss.

ARLINGTON's NEWEST
SNAP2IT® CONNECTORS
EASY CABLE INSERTION & REMOVAL

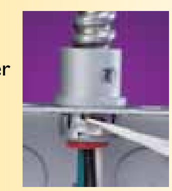


Easiest cable insertion.
NO TOOLS!
Secure hold.

Arlington's **3810AST** and **4010AST** series – and now the new, larger sizes: **5010AST**, **505010AST**, 7510AST **SNAP2IT**® fittings – are the easiest to insert snap-on connectors. And they handle the widest variety of cables!

- **Easiest installation**
  New and improved design delivers the easiest cable insertion (angle the cable for best results).
- **Widest total cable ranges**
  Our Snap2It® connector line accommodates cables from 14/2 to 3/3.
- **Widest variety of cables**
  For AC, MC, HCF, MC continuous corrugated aluminum cable and MCI-A cables (steel and aluminum).
- **Fast, super-secure installation**
  The angled clip locks down on MC cable so there's no chance of pullout!
- **Connector is removable, reusable**
  From cable: Loosen the screw on top and remove.

  From box: Slip screwdriver under notch in the **Snap-Tite**® ring and twist.



Fully assembled, ready to use!

Arlington
Scranton, PA 18517
www.aifittings.com
800.233.4717

Patented / Other patents pending

Industry Briefs

ECAO Annual Industry Conference – Kingston – June 2010

ECA Quinte – St. Lawrence, is proud to host the ECAO 2010 Industry Conference in the beautiful Limestone City of Kingston, Ontario. Its warm and welcoming spirit celebrates cultural diversity as it represents balance and connections between natural and urban environments, reflecting how Canadians live in and contribute to both surroundings. Delegates will stay at the newly renovated, four star, Four Points by Sheraton, June 23 to 27.

Kingston is such a vibrant city with its historic charm and its thriving artistic and entertainment life. Kingston is a university city and is known for its historic attractions like Fort Henry and Bellevue house, where Canada's first Prime Minister Sir John A. MacDonald lived. Board the 1000 Island Star, and enjoy a relaxing and scenic cruise of the many islands that Kingston has hidden away. For those who enjoy a little adventure, visit places like the Boiler Room, an indoor facility of wall-to-wall rock climbing for all levels of participants. The city has many hidden gems down cobble stone entryways to superlative restaurants and antique shops. In the winter, behind City Hall, there is a skating rink open to the public, but during the summer months, the heart of the square opens to a public display of vendors and growers who offer fresh produce, flowers, plants, baked goods, maple syrup, fish, sausages, preserves, arts and crafts, and the Sunday Antique Market. There is so much to explore and so much to enjoy.

ECAO is pleased to introduce Keynote Speaker, Dave Williams, Canadian astronaut, physician and aquanaut who will speak about endurance, persistence, and the ability to overcome obstacles. He believes success is built on a combination of effective judgment, skill and knowledge. ECAO is also pleased to announce Ken Wong, who is a faculty member and the Commerce '77 Teaching Fellow in Marketing at Queen's School of Business. He is an expert in his field and has received numerous awards for his courses in strategic planning, marketing and business strategy. His expertise could not have come at a better time as he explores the recession business owners currently face and how marketing your business during this time is especially valuable.

So come and join us as we embrace this beautiful and vibrant city. Register before February 15, 2010, for two chances to win the early bird draw. All information is available online - visit www.ecao.org – upcoming events.

Tribute to the Chair

Representatives from the electrical industry pay tribute to retiring Chair of the Electrical Trade Bargaining Agency (ETBA), after 17 years of dedicated service, during ECA Northern Ontario's Social at the Sudbury Downs Racetrack on November 28, 2009. Pictured (from left) are Bob O'Donnell, Executive Vice-President of the Greater Toronto Electrical Contractors Association, Eryl Roberts, Executive Vice-President of the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario, Peter Bryant, Esten Electric (past Chair, ETBA) and John Raepple, John Raepple Electric and President of the Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario.

Education Matters - Scholarship Winners for 2009

The Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario is pleased to announce the winners of the Scholarship Awards for 2009.

Jordan Calabrese

Congratulations to Jordan Calabrese, son of Peter Calabrese, Black and McDonald Limited in Toronto. Jordan is currently attending George Brown College taking Construction Engineering Technology, while working at Black and McDonald Limited. In his letter to ECAO Jordan states, "When I was 16 years old I was put on my first job site. Being a teenager I observed how people interacted, how the job worked and realized that when I grow up I wanted to be in construction."

Brad Ferguson

The second recipient is Brad Ferguson, son of Beverlee Ferguson, PowerTel Utilities Contractors Limited in Whitefish. Brad is the fifth of five children attending post secondary school and is currently enrolled at Cambrian College. Brad similarly conveys his interest in the industry saying, "I enjoy working in this field and I feel I will do very well in the Powerline Technician Program at Cambrian College."

The winners will each receive $2,000 towards furthering their education.

Congratulations to the winners and good luck to all future applicants!

Lean Construction – Making the Change

Lean Construction research shows that the construction industry has a 57 per cent wastage factor (defects in material/finished product, over production of material or services, inventories of goods awaiting process or use, unnecessary processing, unnecessary movement of people, unnecessary transport of goods, inconsistent production, and underutilized human resources). Another research statistic reveals that of the activities assigned on a typical construction project the success rate was in the order of 55 per cent Planned Percent Complete (PPC). Are these statistics acceptable in our construction industry? A change in how work is done must be considered. Lean Construction provides a viable option.

One of the tenants of Lean Construction is that successful projects must be viewed as a collective enterprise where an "all for one – one for all" mentality is created. In today's traditional construction hierarchy, this collaborative approach is hard to achieve. The Lean Construction approach relies on relational type contracts that employ financial incentives for cost savings sharing for all the stakeholders. The construction industry has a long established traditional hierarchy that will be hard to change. General Contractors (GCs) are usually in the prime contract position affording them control of the project and some may be very reluctant to give up this control.

Lean Construction principles are gaining a foothold in the United States particularly in the health-care sector; however, there is still reluctance in the whole construction industry to adopt this process. This reluctance, in part, is fueled by the low price, competitive bidding mentality that dictates the use of traditional contracts and perhaps because of a lack of knowledge about Lean Construction. The high cost of construction continues to drive buyers of construction services to take the low price to keep costs down. But more often than not, when a project is finally complete there is a large cost overrun, a missed completion date and just as likely, a sacrifice in quality.

Coupled with the inefficiencies cited above, two other major issues affecting efficiency and wastage facing the construction industry are changes and scheduling. The high level of changes required on a project is problematic causing impacts far beyond actual costs and continually leading to confrontation. Scheduling adjustments are seldom considered when a change is processed.

If the goal is efficiency in construction, what can be done to reach this goal?

The principles and philosophies of Lean Construction offer solutions and once embedded in the industry, changes the way work is done. This occurs throughout the complete process - from planning and design to actual construction and operation. It recasts the role of the Specialty Trade Contractor, elevating them to the same level as all the project stakeholders contributing input to design and constructability and participating in the financial rewards of a successful project.

Change from the traditional construction model to the new Lean Construction model will take time. Specialty Trade Contractors are in a position to change the process. As a Specialty Trade Contractor there are steps that can be taken immediately to improve company productivity and that could also influence the overall project attitude toward collaboration. Even without a collaborative model in place on multi-trade projects, a Specialty Trade Contractor can influence better project efficiencies by pushing from the bottom up.

Start by controlling what you can, and then manage what you cannot control.

Lean Construction's Last Planner© System (see figure 1) provides a collaborative system that when followed insures a better success rate at completing assigned activities. The system can be used in isolation but is more valuable when used in collaboration on a project wide basis.

LAST PLANNER SYSTEM: WEEKLY WORK PLANNING

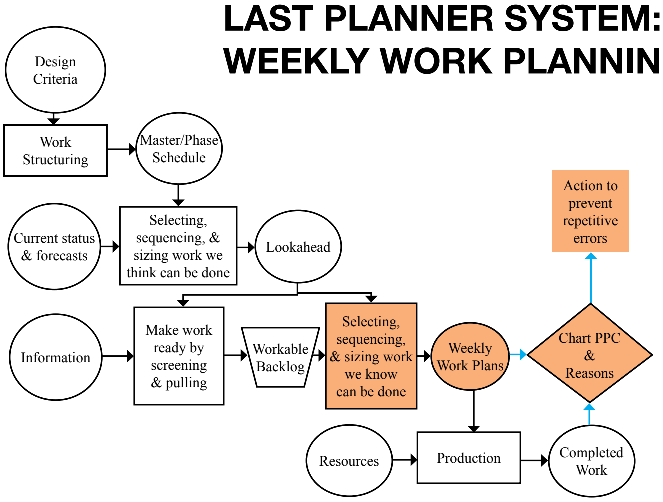
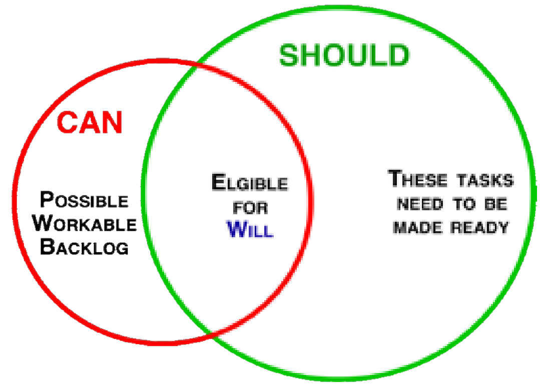


Figure 1

Because the industry uses so many different names and titles for field supervision, Lean Construction chose the name Last Planner to represent all those who make the final plans to get the work done. The front end of this graphic in Figure 1 deals with the Long Term Planning that is required to get the work to a position of work backlog. Then Short Interval Planning comes into play.

This system requires that reliable work be assigned to the work crews. A construction schedule consists of activities that should be done. In order to turn them into activities that can be done, all resources (information, material, space, equipment and manpower) must be acquired before committing to promising that it will be done. It is graphically depicted as:



Research shows that the two major reasons for not completing activities successfully are lack of authoritative information and not having the necessary materials available. The last planner and their project managers need to work hard to acquire this information and organize the right materials, in the right quantities, in the right place at the right time. So often specialty trade contractors are required to attempt activities to meet the GC's agenda without consideration as to whether the activities can be successfully completed. They may not be can do activities. Agreeing to something that cannot be successfully completed sets the crew up for failure, demoralizes them, lowers productivity and in the end impairs the progress of the project. A familiar maxim that could be heeded is "just say no" when asked to perform a task that cannot be completed successfully.

The GC needs to be convinced that the systemic problem, lack of proper planning, needs to be fixed. Better collaborative planning needs to take place with the GC and with any specialty trade contractors who might be impacted. The whole idea is to try for complete project throughput, not individual trade point speed. Successful throughput will lead to better project speed in the long run and the project will likely be done on time if not earlier.

The Last Planner© System starts with long-term planning to put activities into the can do category. Collaborative short interval planning is done, usually on a one-week basis, to get commitment from everyone that the activities will be done. This requires committing to planning reliable work - work that is SMART (Specific, Measureable, Attainable, Realistic and Time-oriented). Input from the work crew is essential for worker buy-in.

The week's work is then begun and at the end of the interval the success of each activity is measured. This measure of success is planned percent complete and as indicated earlier, is typically 55 per cent. Much better PPC is achieved by attempting only reliable work activities that can be done. There are too many variables in construction to achieve 100 per cent PPC. Projects employing Lean Construction are realizing in the order of 88 per cent PPC. More recent data suggests with each percentage point increase in PPC, there is a percentage point increase in productivity. For example, going from 55 per cent PPC to 65 per cent should see a 10 per cent increase in productivity.

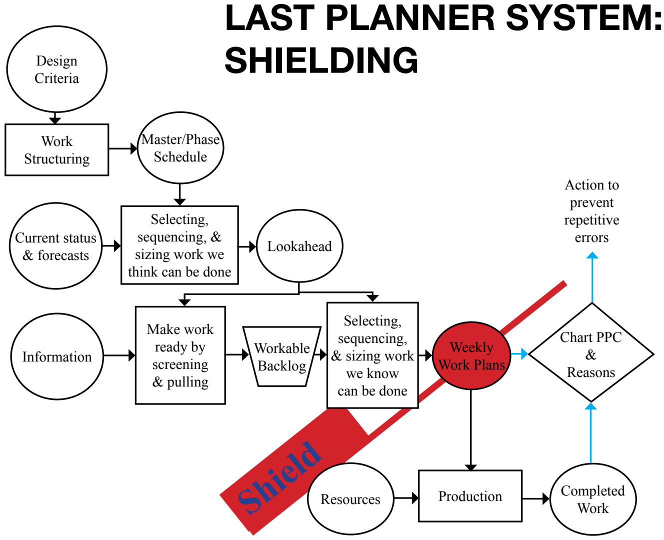
Typically in construction if the weekly work plan is not completed it is pushed to the beginning of the next week or weekend work is scheduled. This is the band-aid solution. At the end of a week the question needs to be asked, "Why did we not complete the work?" Identifying the reasons for lack of completion enables the team to solve the systemic problems, (i.e. poor planning). This ensures the same mistakes are not made over and over again. Eliminating systemic problems improves work reliability and thus productivity.

Another aspect of the Last Planner© System that cannot be overlooked is the effect of shielding the work crews from the project "noise" so they are not burdened with the politics of the project. They can focus on the job at hand because there has been impeccable coordination and all resources are in place.

The benefits of shielding are many:

- Injects reliability, certainty, and honesty into the work environment.
- Improves productivity and speed of activities and reduces project duration and cost.

LAST PLANNER SYSTEM: SHIELDING



- Improves control and accountability.
- Facilitates improvement by reducing system noise.
- Releases time and energy for improving work methods.

As stated earlier, Lean Construction is successful because of impeccable collaboration. As an aware specialty trade contractor on a project with many other production partners as well as the design team and the owner, how does one go about influencing them to employ the principles of Lean Construction? The first step, which will bring improvements to your own production and profitability, is for you to employ these principles for your own operation. Your example may have some stimulus on the other project partners to follow suit.

The all important first job meeting is where you can lay the groundwork for developing the collaboration that is essential for a successful project. Ensuring authoritative information is available in a timely fashion is essential. Establishing processes for shop drawing approval, change orders, RFIs and any other pertinent information requests can be initiated by you. Have them agreed to and minuted. Then follow up to make sure they are adhered to.

Scheduling collaboration is a must. Most neutral subcontracts, such as the CCA – 1 2008 Stipulated Price Subcontract, attach to the responsibility of meeting the schedule the right to regular review and input to adjustment of that schedule. Exercise that right. Typically GCs want additional work done or work done to meet their agenda but do not want to change the end date of the project. When directed by the GC to adjust the work schedule from what was agreed to, specialty trade contractors need to learn to exercise their contract rights and suggest re-planning.

Lean Construction is more than a philosophy. It is a way of doing work.

More and more contractors are becoming aware of Lean Construction. Its philosophies are slowly being adopted but the process will undoubtedly take time. Collaborative design and relational contracts may not be the order of the day for all construction projects but some of the production philosophies will undoubtedly take hold and be employed by more and more specialty trade contractors. There are principles as outlined in this article that can easily be imbedded in the traditional construction model. It will take time to realize a change in attitude and commitment to improving wastage and productivity in the construction industry.

Take up the mantle, learn about Lean Construction and employ its philosophies on your next project.

Acknowledgements:

CECA - Electrical Project Supervision Course – Graphics

Lean Construction Institute - Last Planner© System

For more information go to: www.leanconstruction.org

GET A LIFE
(outside of the business)
Love what you do.
Do what you love.

By M. Lynne Jacob

On the 14th day of being in Las Vegas, while in the airport on my way back home, I started writing this article … focusing on Strategy #7: GET A LIFE (outside of the business). Love what you do. Do what you love.

Following one five-day conference, I spent one day catching up on sleep, one day touring the desert (oh, how gorgeous!), and then I was so productive for three long, solid days! Next, I spent another three days in a second conference.

The article almost completed, I check my luggage, get my boarding pass and start heading towards my gate. Along the way I see people I had just been chatting with in the check-in lineup and we start up another conversation.

Ditch the earlier article I was going to submit for publishing in this issue!

Instead, let me tell you Connie and Brian's story. Sadly enough it's not so different from many others' stories.

Connie tells me she's pretty much fully recovered from a stroke that happened just seven months earlier. Connie's all of 42 years old and the mother of a nine-year-old boy!

As Connie told me about how suddenly her stroke happened while out shopping with a girlfriend (whose recent experience of a stroke by an older family member actually saved Connie's life), I thought of a video I had just seen that morning in the conference.

There is no such thing as coincidence.

Every "chance" event/meeting happens in perfect order.

While watching that video just that morning, about a young scientist specializing in brain functionality who had suffered a stroke at the age of 37 (I believe), I was taken back to a very memorable time in my own life. I was 28.

I was cycling with my older daughter, then seven. My five-year-old daughter was at our neighbour's house. As I was coasting down the hill my seven-year-old called "Mommy! Wait up." I looked back briefly and said "I'll wait for you at the bottom."

I turned my gaze back to the rural street ahead of me and only remember seeing our dog appearing from the woods, joining us in excitement. I recall saying "Pajo! No!"

The next thing I remember was two days later feeling excruciating pain as my then employer was (probably lightly, even) squeezing my hand. From there I remember even more excruciating pain in my head. Everyone was bothering me – loudly calling my name and asking me questions – dumb, insignificant questions, I remember, that they repeatedly asked. I was responding to them but it was as though they weren't listening to me. I then felt frustration, which mounted to anger as their incessant, loud demands continued whilst ignoring my responses. Little did I know that my speech was incomprehensible. I remember clearly thinking some profanities and telling myself "I'm tired anyway. I've been so tired lately and life hasn't been so pleasant, so I'm just going to take advantage of being in bed and go back to sleep."

In the days that followed, I experienced what Dr. Jill Bolte Taylor was describing during the onset of her stroke, only in the reverse. The longer I was awake in those moments, the more I saw that I was separate from my body. I and my body were two separate beings, it seemed. As the awakened moments lengthened we slowly became one again. By the end of one week I had sufficiently passed the barrage of tests to be allowed to go home to be with my babies again, but only because my doctors were assured I would have lots of support. I still spent 23½ hours/day in bed for at least another week and, if I recall accurately, it was a good month before I was able to get out of bed in the mornings with my children and spend some hours with them after school and in the evenings.

Why am I telling you these stories in relation to the 7 Key Strategies on which I train and coach trade-contractors to help them EARN MORE PROFIT while having MORE TIME OFF, while enjoying LOTS OF FUN along the way to building a RETIREMENT … on your terms, should you decide to take one? After all, this article follows on the heels of the 6th strategy: GET REFERRALS from IMPRESSED CLIENTELE. Empower your customers to do your marketing.

Let's go back to Connie & Brian in the Las Vegas airport, shall we?

Connie spoke repeatedly of how lucky she was.

There is no such thing as luck!

I explained to Connie that there was a reason why she had had that experience, including her survival and quick recovery. Her eyes nearly bugged out as she stared at me … almost in disbelief! Connie said "Actually, I think you're right, Lynne." In my confident, yet respectful way, I smiled and said "Connie, I know I'm right."

Connie told me something, in front of Brian, which left Brian speechless. Brian's shoulders weren't just slumped, he was bent forward, staring at his wife almost in disbelief … registering what he had just heard her tell a complete stranger in an airport.

Just days before Connie's stroke, Connie told me she had said "to the God" (her words) that she was fed up with the meanness and cruelty of so many people around them. If there were no more purpose to life than what she was feeling at that time she didn't want to continue living.

As Brian stood there in stunned silence, I assured Connie that she was right in her belief that she'd brought that stroke on to herself and that God clearly showed her that there is a purpose to her life – more than to just be the brunt of others' meanness.

And now it was Brian's turn to tap into the viewpoint of this stranger in the airport. Brian asked for my take on his work situation.

Classic example of being in a job where he'd given it his all, and proudly, for nearly ¼ of a century … and how he'd not only been passed over for a well-deserved and logical promotion, but how the new 28-year-old (son) boss wouldn't even speak to Brian anymore since informing him that Brian was no longer in the plans for the company's growth! What was my advice? Brian asked.

Not knowing that a good professional coach doesn't give advice, Brian wasn't ready to answer the question I posed:

"What would be the ideal situation for you, Brian?"

Brian responded with more explanations. I silenced him … and repeated the question.

Again, Brian tries to deflect the direct question, in his lack of confidence in having "the right answer."

"Brian! Stop!" I said, firmly, yet in a friendly manner, with my hand held up. "What would be the ideal situation for you?"

With a huge smile lighting up Brian's face, he says "I'd love to quit and start my own business. I've been doing this for years and I still love it. I just don't love the people I'm doing it for."

"And what's stopping you from quitting and starting your own business?"

The paycheque.

Connie interjects with "It's been such a stress on our life for all these three years and the doctors think it may be one of the things that contributed to my stroke. In fact, Brian feels guilty every day, thinking his negative attitude towards work has played a major role in causing my stroke."

"How much more of a wake-up call do you need, Brian? For these three years you've been waiting for this promotion and now for months you know you'll never get it. Your soul is dying every single day. The stress is literally killing your loved ones!"

What I recognized when I was again able to think and reason, after my head injury, was that there were so many things I hadn't yet done in my life. I, like Brian, had been settling … unhappily holding myself back, in accordance with someone else's plans (or fears).

Brian's settling, he knows, nearly cost him more than a marriage, but a loving wife … and the mother of his young son. Brian knows this, yet he still lacks the courage (which is simply faith in himself) to do what his soul is screaming at him to do: Quit his job and start his own business.

It's as simple as that!

I can't say that Brian made a decision right there and stepped into, burning the ships to eliminate the possibility of retreat, but I know that as I ran to grab a sandwich before my flight home that Brian had lots to think about on his flight back to Canada.

Can you now see how this story relates to Strategy #7: GET A LIFE (outside of the business). Love what you do. Do what you love?

You are likely in business for yourself already. How satisfied are you … on a heart & soul level … with your business?

How many vacations do you take each year? And for how long?

Do you know that it takes a minimum two weeks at least twice/year to recharge your batteries? Many of you tell me you'd get bored being on vacations for that long. Who said what your vacation has to be? In fact, I love adventures for my vacations. As an entrepreneur I need vacations that totally sweep my mind away from the business … and so do you.

I don't expect you to start with a three-week vacation right off the bat, but I do encourage you to set that as your goal. I highly recommend one three- or four-week vacation each year, as well as another three vacations for at least five days each. These can even be continuing education events, like trade-shows, annual association conferences, business workshops, product knowledge events. While those are not vacations, and should never be considered as such, you can always add a couple of fun days to both ends and you'll still come back refreshed from being in a different environment and using your brain in a different way.

You also need to have customers who not only accept that you'll be away, but who feel confident that your powerful support team will serve them well, without being able to contact you while you're away. You will, of course, have set your business up with the types of customers who help you grow your business.

"But we can't afford the expense of even one vacation every year, let alone more than one." This is a statement I hear all too frequently. Look at all of your other business expenses. You make them because they give you a good return on your investment, do you not? Vacations are the same. These are the times that you are fully recharging your batteries, reconnecting with your passion for the business … getting you back to why you ever got into business in the first place!

Because you've focused on:

- getting your prices right,
- budgeting for the family, as well as the business,
- being really clear on where you want your business and your lifestyle to be in three years' time,
- investing in proper support to make sure you followed through on your ideas while
    - planning business developments,
    - leading a championship support team,
    - hiring customers for their alignment with your business and lifestyle goals, etc.

then GET A LIFE (outside of the business) is actually a result of having focused on all of the other along the way.

I only mentioned three of us in this story with serious physical wake-up calls, but I know of so many more. One of them first became a client of mine after she not only had breast cancer and a double mastectomy at the age of 37, but following her last operation her 42-year-old husband had had a heart attack. Lisa and Tim both recognize that their physical wake-up calls, while extremely unpleasant to experience, were the best things that ever happened to them, despite the fact that they had two young children who went through the experiences, as well.

Don't wait until you get a wake-up call like we did!

Start living your heart's desires today!

GET A LIFE (outside of the business).

LOVE WHAT YOU DO … and DO WHAT YOU LOVE!

I want to leave you with this exercise, and I encourage you to do it. When answering these questions, be honest with yourself … brutally honest. Then make a decision on something you're going to do over the next 90 days … and break it down into tiny, manageable, bite-sized chunks, happily swallowing one of them every single day:

1. Sit quietly for a minute and reflect back to when you were making the decision to get into business for yourself. You may need to close your eyes to be able to go back that far. After all, a lot may have happened since then. In which year was it? In which season were you getting close to making the decision? What was happening at that time in your life? Where were you working? How old were you? Did you have children? How old were they? Where were you living? Which vehicle were you driving? The

clearer you are of the scene, the more likely you are to really get in touch with that moment. Can you remember?

2. What was the lifestyle you were dreaming of for yourself and your family at the time you were considering going out on your own? What, in particular, did you imagine the benefits of being self-employed would be? List them.

3. What was the type of:

   - house you dreamed of owning?
   - vehicle you saw yourself driving?
   - adventures you'd be enjoying?

4. At what age did you then imagine you would be retiring?

5. What was the income you dreamed you'd be taking home by now?

6. How many of these benchmarks have you reached now?

7. Accept that, while it goes against the culture of most of us, we have every right to earn whichever amount of money we desire … and with that money, we have every right to buy and enjoy whichever toys we desire. Believe it or not, this is one of the biggest components that holds us back from realizing most of the dreams we have.

Now, it's up to you. Make a decision:

1. What are you going to accomplish within the next 90 days to get you closer to where you want to be? Write it down.

2. Break it into tiny pieces and make a list of the pieces.

3. Keep this list in front of you every day for the next 90 days … and take at least one step every single day. No one's saying you're forbidden from lengthening the strides and increasing the pace!

4. If the "goal" is worth accomplishing, it's worth accomplishing within 90 days. Get support! Proper support!

5. Get back to the passion that you had for your business when you were just getting started. If you weren't passionate about it then, what would ever make you think you'd be passionate about it now? If this is the case, I encourage you to - like Brian - figure out what would light the fire in your belly.

6. Have tons of fun along the way!

M. Lynne Jacob, Business Success Coach (Certified), of MLJ Coaching International, absolutely LOVES how she serves people like you through her business.

Lynne helps people reconnect with their passion, so they can enjoy

MORE PROFIT

TONS MORE FUN!

RETIREMENT … on their terms!

MLJ 7 Key Strategies

Visit her website or contact Lynne directly, Lynne@mljcoaching.com, to learn about her next live workshop where you, too, can learn how easy it is to

- get back to basics,

- stay focused on your ideas, and, finally,

- get the results you desire … in your business and your family & personal life.

Office: 613-766-7898
Direct Line: 613-353-9941
Direct Fax: 613-353-2179

Get your free Special Report on three huge obstacles that keep business owners frustrated, exhausted and disillusioned and how to overcome them today at www.mljcoaching.com.

New Products & Services

SB708

Cooper B-Line, a global provider of innovative, labour-saving support systems and enclosure solutions for engineered facility subsystem applications, introduces the SB708 Series, a new addition to the company's industry-leading line of Swing Gate Wall Mounted Equipment Racks.

The SB708 is designed to support 19" or 23" rack-mounted networking equipment including switches, patch panels and equipment shelves. It features the market's best load rating of 150 lbs and has a fast and convenient installation process that, thanks to a single-piece back that requires no leveling, can be easily completed by a single installer. In addition, the rack's aluminum door hinges right and left, and opens 130 degrees to both sides, providing convenient access to the back of the mounted equipment. The rack's aluminum door is also fully removable from its steel frame after installation is complete.

The SB708 Rack is available in various sizes to fit any need, and is UL-listed and mounting hole compliant to EIA/ECA-310-E. The product is packaged and shipped unassembled in protective material suitable for parcel shipment, and is available in flat black (FB), telco gray (TG) and silver (SL) finishes.

Cooper B-Line, a subsidiary of Cooper Industries plc is a global provider of innovative, labour-saving support systems and enclosure solutions for engineered facility subsystem applications. Cooper B-Line's products are used in a variety of settings for the commercial, industrial, utility and OEM markets. For more information visit: www.cooperbline.com.

TOP FIVE REASONS TO GET YOUR CONTRACTS REVIEWED

Let's face it. Contracts are a necessary evil. There may have been a time when commerce could be conducted on a handshake and a smile, but for contractors that time is at best a distant memory. Today, working without a contract is like driving a car without brakes.

So since you have to work with contracts, here are the Top Five Reasons to Check Out Federated Insurance's Contract Review Services:

5. Insurance requirements placed on contracts are becoming more complex.

4. Having worked hard to become an expert in your field, why should you now have to become an expert in contract law?

3. Spend more time building your business while you let a contract expert verify you have the insurance you need.

2. It's not worth risking your business over the easily prevented threat of insufficient insurance coverage.

1. Federated Insurance's Contract Review Services are quick, easy, and complimentary for Federated Insurance contractor clients.

That's right. Your Federated Insurance Risk Services Coordinator has direct access to a construction contract wording expert and can quickly diagnose and guide you in correcting any coverage issues. It's no-charge added value from Federated Insurance that shows "knowing your business matters."

Contact your Federated Insurance Risk Services Coordinator for more information or to have your contract(s) reviewed.

Air King
Ventilation Products
ECO-EXHAUST SERIES
Almost Silent Operation
Perfect for Continuous Operation
High Efficiency Motor
ENERGY STAR
HEALTHY HOME VENTILATION
EXHAUST MOISTURE
IMPROVE YOUR INDOOR AIR QUALITY
REDUCE THE CAUSES OF MOLD AND MILDEW
www.airkinglimited.com

BRADY
WHEN PERFORMANCE MATTERS MOST™
BMP21
MEET THE NEWEST MEMBER OF YOUR CREW.
BMP™21 LABEL PRINTER
Brady's high performance wire ID materials are now available in an easy-to-use, economical printer – the BMP™21 Portable Label Printer.
Simple to operate and quick to print, the BMP21 label printer creates clear, legible labels that stick and stay stuck - even the harshest environments.
Easy One-Handed Operation With Magnet Accessory
Continuous PermaSleeve™ Wire Markers
B12B
Continuous Self-Laminating Labels up to 1.5"
For more information visit:
www.bradycanada.ca/bmp21
AEC119

Toolbox Talks

033: FIREFIGHTING

What your duties are
It is the job of the fire brigade or fire department to fight the fire "war."

Your job is to fight the fire "battle," so you can either prevent a war or escape if war is imminent.

Your job does not involve fighting a big fire with a little extinguisher until you pass out from smoke inhalation so that someone else has to go into the fire to pull you out…or notify your next of kin.

If a fire is growing despite your extinguisher efforts, make no further attempt to fight the fire. Focus on getting to the assembly area. If an alarm has not already sounded, notify others via a fire alarm pull station, phone or whatever means you have.

Your equipment includes fire extinguishers, fire doors, fire alarms, fire escapes, and telephone, cell phone, or radio. It does not include fire hoses, unless you are on the fire brigade.

Fire extinguishers
You can easily douse a small fire and prevent a big one, if you respond quickly with a fire extinguisher.

You should note the location of fire extinguishers (and fire exits) as soon as you enter any given work area. Look for red stripes on columns or similar indications. Find the extinguisher and note its type. Typically, you will want a Type B or Type C, which both use an extinguishing gas. Check to see whether the extinguisher is fully charged or not. If not, notify your foreman so the work area can be made safe.

Do not use a Type A extinguisher (water) on fuel fires or electrical fires. It will merely spread the fire.

How to use an extinguisher
Note whether the extinguisher is charged or not. If it is not charged, find another extinguisher. If you can't tell, try the extinguisher.

Remove the extinguisher from its mounting bracket, holding it by the handle, and set it on the floor.

Remove the pin.

If you can't tell whether the unit is charged, give the handle a quick test squeeze. If you can tell it's charged, skip this step.

Approach the flame, pointing the fire extinguisher nozzle at the base. Then, pull the trigger and sweep the extinguisher from side to side to push the flame back at its base. If you aim high, you will not douse the fire.

Escaping
If you hear a fire alarm while in an equipment room, leave immediately. Rooms that contain generators often have automated fire doors that trap inside, and the extinguishing agent will asphyxiate you.

Your primary goal, in the event of a big fire, is to get out of the building and to an assembly area. If you don't smell smoke, and can quickly shut off power to machinery near you, shut it off. If you do smell smoke or cannot find the shutoff, leave the machinery and evacuate as quickly as possible.

You can use the extinguisher to make an escape route through the flames, rather than using it to put out the flame.

If the situation is so desperate that you need to make an escape route through the flames, then smoke inhalation is a real danger. Stay as low as possible.

You can use the extinguisher bottom to break glass or door latches if you can't find another suitable object. Take care to aim the valve away from people, as this kind of action may damage the extinguisher.

Before going through any door, touch it with your fingertip. If it doesn't feel hot, touch it with your hand. If the door is hot, there is flame on the other side and opening the door is likely to cause the flame to burst forth to feed on the new oxygen on your side of the door. Look for a different route out. If there is no other route, you may need to open the door in a manner that keeps you out of the flame path. Once it's open, use the extinguisher to clear a way out.

This Toolbox Talks article is reprinted with permission from 100 Safety Training Toolbox Talks for Electrical Construction Work, 2003*, National Electrical Contractors Association (US). The complete set of 100 Toolbox Talks is available in Canada through the Canadian Electrical Contractors Association (CECA). Visit the CECA website at www.ceca.org to place your order or call 1-800-387-3226.*

Volume 48 • Number 1
Winter 2009/10

The Ontario ELECTRICAL CONTRACTOR
ECAO ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF ONTARIO

Advertisers Index

STANLEY

FatMax® XTREME™

TREAT IT LIKE YOU HATE IT.™

FatMax® Xtreme™ Snips

- ***50,000* cuts***
- Serrated blades made of Chrome Molybdenum alloy give stable bite and help prevent slippage
- Titanium-coated high-performance blades stay sharp for extended cutting life.
- Flush-hardware prevents catching on tool pouches and materials when cutting

FatMax® Xtreme™ Twin Blade Knife

- Two knives in one. ***NEW twin blade design*** provides the freedom to alternate between two blades without carrying more than one knife
- InstantChange™ feature affords the ability to replace dull blades in seconds
- Interlocking blade sliders ensure only one blade is extended at a time
- Knife includes 2 straight and 2 hook blades

Always Wear Safety Goggles

*50,000 cuts based on average test values on 18 gauge cold rolled steel

STANLEY®

stanleyhandtools.ca