

The background features a light green map of Vancouver Island, including the Gulf Islands, set against a pattern of semi-transparent gears of various sizes. The overall color palette is shades of green and grey.

**“Building on 98 years  
of service through  
the power of  
alliances”**

A large, stylized graphic element in the bottom left corner, consisting of a dark blue, thick, curved line that forms a partial circle or loop, with a white space inside it.

**Vancouver Island  
Construction  
Association**

 **Reed Construction Data**  
ALLIANCE PARTNER



# Message from the president

The Vancouver Island Construction Association enjoys a membership that is representative of 90 per cent of the industry engaged in the institutional, commercial, industrial and highrise multi-family residential construction on the island.

VICA continues to build on our 98 year history of serving our members and our members customers in many facets of construction.

We have done this through strategic partnerships and alliances, member feedback and leadership through member participation in committees and the board, as well as through the development of a strong and effective team of employees.

The market over the past decade on Vancouver Island has transitioned into one market place and VICA has continued to build on reputation as the respected and consolidated voice of the industry on the island.

VICA has accomplished this through our interactions with industry stakeholders and associations, media, representation and publications for which VICA regularly receives positive feedback.

While our array of services is not limited to project delivery and tendering it is central to our core service, and one contractors, suppliers, owners and consultants rely on to access bidding opportunities or take their projects to the market place.

To this end VICA has engaged members and industry stakeholders in more than 12 VICA hosted sessions on



**Greg Baynton**  
VICA President

the island over the past six months on such topics such as leveraging project delivery and online bidding.

VICA is positioned to be a resource to all industry stakeholders. VICA has implemented two new initiatives and is poised to announce two more in the very near future. The two new initiatives are;

- A member preferred rate courier service for project plan and document copies with same day delivery in Greater Victoria and over night to most island communities
- Complimentary login and passwords to the B.C. industry's online planroom to public owners and the consulting community so they can benefit from the many Plansource tools in the planroom in the delivery of their projects

I am also pleased to report we have broadened our education and training program and in terms of content and delivery.

Industry workshops are offered from Victoria to the Comox Valley.

Education and public sector procurement will continue to have the highest priority for VICA and as the economic and labour markets continue their transition in the foreseeable future.

Lastly, VICA has developed strong partnerships within the island secondary school and college system to promote the fabulous career opportunities in construction trades, management and ownership.

The current economic environment poses some significant challenges for industry and education, however it is only through collaboration and working together that we can preserve and grow our capacity to educate and build BC, and our kid's future.

It's a great and dynamic industry! Contact VICA if you have an interest in taking your organization to the next level.

## Code of Ethics

Membership in the Vancouver Island Construction Association is synonymous with conducting business on the basis of accuracy, truth, integrity and good faith. VICA recognizes the impact the construction industry has upon the comfort, well being and safety of the public at large. This recognition imposes an obligation of professional responsibility and cooperation with one another and our clients.

The principles of integrity, fairness, leadership and confidentiality shall characterize all dealings, whether oral or written, between members and their clients, associates and employees.

Fair and enlightened self government requires the self discipline to maintain high standards of work and abide by self imposed restraints and principles based upon equity and excellence

## Mission

The Vancouver Island Construction Association is dedicated to promoting the interests of the Construction Industry and providing our members with invaluable services and benefits.

## Vision

The Vancouver Island Construction Association is a member driven not for profit organization whose objective is excellence and integrity guided by the principles of leadership, ethics, highest industry standards and rich benefits for our members.

## Leadership

VICA is the leading voice on matters relating to institutional, commercial and industrial and multi-story residential construction on Vancouver Island and the Gulf Islands. We vigorously advocate our members' interests in all facets of the industry.

## Ethics

Ethics are an important component of our membership and the culture of our Association. Our Code of Ethics has been established and encourages high standards in all business and personal interactions.

## Standards

Industry excellence is promoted through the provision and the promotion of learning and networking opportunities for our members.

## Vancouver Island Construction Association Board of Directors 2010

Name	Company
Ross McLean, Chair Person	Houle Electric Ltd.
Peter White, Vice-Chair	Kinetic Construction Ltd.
Angus Macpherson, Treasurer	Cairnview Mechanical Ltd.
Don Cameron, Secretary	G & E Equipment Rentals Ltd.
Carole Bissett, Past Chair	Jardine Lloyd Thompson
Garry Daku, Director	Silvester Glass (BC) Ltd.
Wayne Dalby, Director	United Engineering
Russ Fanucchi, Director	Namdor Reinforcing Steel (1987) Ltd.
Wayne Farey, Director	Campbell Construction Ltd.
Alan Fletcher, Director	AFC Construction
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(VRCA, BC-wide stats)

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# Message from the chairman of the board

I am honoured to serve as the 2010 chair of the Vancouver Island Construction Association (VICA) and to build on the great work of our previous chairs.

I am also enthused to work with our board and staff to build an even more effective and efficient construction association.

It is my goal as chair to continue in our objective for VICA to be the strong voice of the construction industry and a reliable aid to the many procurers and users of construction.

Our special challenge now will be to prepare our association and our members for the future of construction.

We are an industry in transition. After a year of economic turbulence and uncertainty in the construction industry, many financial indices now point to recovery and growth.

Added to the current low margin pressure will be a renewed skilled trade shortage, more construction risk downloaded to



Ross McLean  
VICA Chairman

the builder, varied procurement methods to deal with, dangerous contractual language, additional requirements from owners and governments like LEED and safety, and the new 'e-based' procedures of construction delivery this year.

After this recent period of doubt and concern a new realization has set in; how do we make our businesses sustainable to meet the exciting needs of the construction industry?

How can we cover our operational costs and also make provision for our risk and growth that would enable our companies and industry to meet this transition and to flourish?

What does this mean to the construction industry on Vancouver Island?

I am pleased to say that VICA is now offering the construction industry the tools and services to enable stable and sustainable business operations through this transition with more offerings to come.

The construction industry as a whole will benefit from the products and services

VICA will be presenting to the industry it serves. Look for a major announcement soon on 'e-based construction' solutions.

These solutions come from our provincial body, the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) with the strong support of our national body, the Canadian Construction Association (CCA).

Not surprisingly, the guidance of your board of directors, with input from our active general contractor council, trades council and other councils has been, and will be, instrumental in driving these solutions too industry needs.

Who better knows the needs and solutions than the members experiencing the industry in transition?

We invite you as members to ask our president how you can participate.

This year, VICA will be proactive in meeting our membership needs plus the needs of our business customers.

With more educational programs, new networking opportunities, information sessions, the **Partnering in Project Delivery** for owners, owner sessions and the new

**U35 Group**, VICA brings opportunities that assist our industry during changing times.

The exciting new **U35 Group** follows the success of similar groups found only in Toronto and Vancouver.

They will bring young energy and direction to the association plus insights needed by the construction industry for youth, by youth.

VICA brings the vision, experience and guidance of the industry leaders.

We ask the construction industry to ask our President what solutions VICA has for you.

I would like to thank our past chair, Carole Bissett and Board board for guiding the association successfully through a challenging period and positioning the association to be more able to meet

tomorrow's needs.

As the recognized voice in the construction industry on Vancouver Island, we look forward to working with all levels of government, owners and procurers' of construction in 2010.

**"Who better knows the needs and solutions than the members experiencing the industry in transition?"**

Ross McLean

## The allocation and costs of risk in construction

Public sector agencies typically espouse the guiding principles of fair, open and transparent process in their purchasing of goods and services, however, it gets complicated in their pursuit of value for money and safeguarding the public interest.

These principles and objects are not only appropriate, they are required by local and provincial government policy and standards, and by interprovincial and national agreements.

This is also easier said than done when it comes to the procurement of construction services, and it is challenging for the most seasoned of purchasing professionals with expertise in construction.

The challenges are multiple and include balan-

cing the guiding principles against the objectives of value for money proposition and protecting the public interest, particularly for public agencies that do not engage in construction on a routine basis and lack expertise in this area of purchasing and contract management.

In their pursuit to safeguard the public interest public owners seek legal advice and means of transferring risk to the extent it becomes unfair and disproportionate, and it compromises the value for money proposition.

The construction industry manages risk and onerous conditions in one of two ways: they don't bid, or the industry adds large contingencies to their bids that are proportionate with the risks.

Risk always affects the degree of competition and costs.

One's immediate reaction is what are the costs, what is the trade off, and is it acceptable?

The Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario (RCCAO) was cognizant of the fact a lot of money was being spent on infrastructure stimulus and as an industry had an interest in the investment going as far as possible.

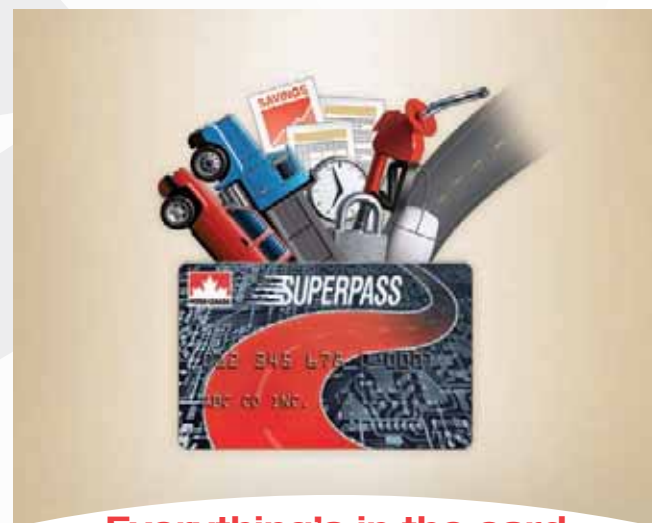
The RCCAO commissioned Stephen Bauld, president of Consultants International Inc., one of Canada's leading experts in public procurement, to undertake a study entitled *Towards a Fair and Balanced Approach: A Commentary on Government Procurement of Construc-*

tion in the Greater Toronto Hamilton Area (GTHA) published in September 2009.

The study states the GTHA spends approximately \$2.6 billion annually on construction through federal, provincial and local government agencies, and estimates that taxpayers are paying five to twenty percent more than they should because of their procurement practices.

All the GTHA governments alone may be paying \$500,000 a year more than is necessary on construction projects. There is a lot of reference in the study on the transferring of risk and its ramifications.

Bauld reports government purchasing policies and contract documents are at the root of the problem.



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# Council of Construction Associations (COCA)

The Council of Construction Associations (COCA) was created as an industry umbrella organization to present a united front and a systematic approach to WorkSafeBC issues.

COCA deals with legislative, regulatory, policy and practice issues within the workers' compensation system in B.C.

COCA also assist individual contractors with their WorkSafeBC concerns about health & safety, claims, return to work and assessments.

COCA has 16 member associations, with membership from every construction sector and from every size of company. COCA is funded by these associations. The COCA chair is Ken Farey of Campbell Construction. A summary of activity/issues follows:

One ongoing concern was the proposed change from WorkSafeBC to the Experience Rating system. This has been a long-standing issue.

In the year 2000, WorkSafeBC moved all other BC industries to a system of Experience Rating that was based on a 50 per cent maximum merit and a 100% maximum demerit. (That is, a merit rate that is up to 50per cent lower than the base rate and a demerit rate that



**Grant McMillan**  
COCA President

is 100 per cent higher than the base rate). This creates a huge swing in the rates that a company may pay.

Prior to this change taking effect, COCA successfully campaigned for continuance of the maximum 33/33 per cent variation that had been in effect for all industry since 1985. WorkSafeBC agreed to a three-year pilot, for the construction industry only, ending in 2003.

Subsequently, over the years, COCA has continued to successfully lobby for the 33/33 per cent limits and WorkSafeBC has agreed to keep them. In 2009, WorkSafeBC indicated that it was again about to start a review of Experience Rating in the construction industry.

That review was about to start in 2009 but has now been delayed as a result of COCA's lobbying efforts. After years of discussion and meetings on the subject with COCA, WorkSafeBC has issued a new Guideline for writing Orders to Workers that should result in the better use of these orders and a more balanced approach to safety responsibility in the workplace.

The guideline applies when the worker has been properly trained and supervised and still violates a WorkSafeBC health & safety regulation. The Guideline can be found online at:

<http://www2.worksafebc.com/Publications/OHSRegulation/GuidelinesWorkersCompensationAct.asp#SectionNumber:G-D3-116>

COCA has assisted the Common Ground Alliance by arranging suitable WorkSafeBC contacts to work to resolve two issues – a true One Call System and a change in provincial legislation that would mandate that utility companies go to the worksite and do physical locates. COCA has also started discussions with government officials and other agencies.

COCA has arranged with WorkSafeBC a review of two regulations that would provide greater flexibility to contractors - To change the appropriate WorkSafeBC regulations to allow engineers to design/certify the proper installation of Wire Rope Guardrails – Reg. 4.58(4)(b) and Swingstages – Reg. 13.32.

The changes are required because the WorkSafeBC system had required a variance to be sought for every installation, and this process could take weeks or even months to complete. These regulation changes go to public hearings in May and June of 2010.

Grant served on the Lieutenant Governor's judging panel for occupational health and safety awards for the fifth year. The panel recommends awards for organizations, individuals and for lifetime achievement. COCA continues to lobby for a change in the WorkSafeBC legislation, which overcompensates apprentices.

The issue arises when a person who is an apprentice is injured at work, (this would apply to any apprentice in any industry, not just construction). After 10 weeks, under the WorkSafeBC legislation, the apprentice has his wage rate increased to the journeyman level. It takes three to four years to progress from apprentice to journeyman. Some apprentices make about \$14 per hour and then gradually move over four or five years, if they qualify, to about \$28 per hour.

The WCB moves the apprentice to this journeyman rate of \$28 per hour after 10 weeks. Grant has been having ongoing discussions about this issue with Deputy Minister

Rob Lapper following meetings with British Columbia Construction Association president Manley McLachlan, Terry Siklenka (of the COCA Board) and of Minister of Labour, Murray Coell.

COCA continues to work with WorkSafeBC and CBI/Summit Rehabilitation to promote an improved Return to Work program – called Employer Injury Services (EIS). The basic concept is to assist the injured worker to achieve a safe, early and durable return to work. In some cases, using this process may result in no time lost from work.

EIS provides immediate access to a doctor, specially trained in return to work processes, and to a physiotherapy assessment.

There is direct, same day, communication with the employer to facilitate a safe return to work. CBI Health Group has a large facility in Victoria and has an extensive network of medical care and rehabilitation centres, including 32 clinics and 120 physicians across the province.

To ensure set up your company program and get easy access, call Mike Allegreto, EIS Program Coordinator for CBI Health Group directly at: 1-250-818-2990. At COCA's request, WorkSafeBC has added a second client services manager for construction. COCA lobbied for the position of client services manager (CSM), in order to give contractors a single point of contact for WorkSafeBC issues.

The major advantage that the CSM has is that they can directly access all WorkSafeBC files and deal directly with individual issues from within the administration. Grant can also work with the contractor and the CSM to clarify issues or present your case. Contact Grant for more information.

COCA is seeking a new Regulation change to improve worker safety during the collection of traffic cones on freeways. This item has been placed on the WorkSafeBC workplan for the next set of regulatory consultations. COCA continues to ongoing advice and assistance to member associations and individual contractors.

## Apprenticeship Scholarship Program

The Vancouver Island construction industry is currently working its way through uncertain economic times and much of the industry is focused on sustainability. Fortunately, Canada's Economic Action Plan a.k.a. Infrastructure Stimulus and private sector owners, who are taking advantage of the best buyers market in over 25 years, are creating some stability and opportunities for economic growth.

Vigorous competition and reduced costs combined with the lowest interest rates in history are driving a buyers market. It is a great time to build! On the Vancouver Island there is a lot to be grateful for. When it comes to construction there

is a silver lining resulting in some cautious optimism. There continues to be strong activity across the commercial and retail sector with the construction of big box stores, the renovation of existing stores such as Thrifty's and mall development from Victoria to Campbell River.

Unique to the island is approximately \$450 million in capital projects that started last year at CFB Esquimalt and Comox that will span a four to five year time horizon. In the capital region there is also the \$350 million proposed wastewater treatment project that offers Vancouver Island based construction industry and those residing in island community's fabulous employ-

ment and skills development opportunities.

While a majority of the industry is not presently looking to hire new people and is focused on bidding and sustainability, industry leaders are very conscious of the looming HR challenge.

The current Construction Sector Council's Construction Looking Forward reports twenty percent of the skilled construction workforce will retire over the next five years resulting in 28,000 vacancies and 7,000 new positions for a total market demand of 35,000 positions in Red Seal trades and management opportunities. Despite the economic downturn in 2009, the Vancouver Island Construction

See VICA on pg 8

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# Certificate program helps to enhance workplace safety

**S**afety awareness and training is becoming increasingly important on construction jobsites.

Today's owners face a variety of risks when they undertake a construction project. Not only must owners be concerned with potential risks to their employees, tenants or property, but they must also be concerned about the risks that the contractor bears.

Safety is a critical item on all construction projects for multiple reasons including protecting the welfare of employees, providing a safe work environment and controlling construction costs.

In an effort to reduce the number of injuries and accidents, more employers across the province are focusing on training employees in basic workplace safety. Safety training is important not only at the worker level, but at all levels within the organization. This is where the Vancouver Island Construction Association (VICA) plays an important role.

In partnership with the Construction Safety Association of B.C., the association offers courses for supervisors, owners/managers, and workers that include a specific focus on meeting due diligence requirements.

There are a number of safety hazards on the construction site, ranging from falls to strains and overexertion. One common factor that every worksite is vulnerable to, however, is high-voltage hazards. Silent and invisible, it can injure and kill in even small doses.

No jobsite is without it and no worker is immune to its potential impact. Yet for most employees it is out of sight and out of mind until it is too late. Between 2004 and 2008, 96 construction workers in B.C. were injured by electricity, some of them fatally.

When not handled properly, electricity can injure or kill. Injuries can range from shock to severe burns. A big part of the problem is that electrical safety tends to be seen as something for electricians to worry about.

For a construction worker, a fall is an obvious hazard; a damaged extension cord or overhead powerline is not.

E.H. Emery Electric Ltd. is a long standing Victoria-based electrical contractor that has demonstrated the value of an effective health and safety training program.

Over the past 80 years, the company has been involved in the construction and improvement of many major landmarks and institutions on the island including the Pacific Institute for Sport Excellence and the Royal Oak Middle School. For the past four years, the E.H. Emery Electric Ltd. successfully completed the Construction Safety Association of B.C.'s Certificate of Recognition (COR) Program.

"The safety of our employees is a priority and we have always had a safety plan in place," said Derek Emery, president. "COR helped us to take that safety plan one step further. It provided us with an audit tool and framework so that we can more effectively measure how we stack up."

The result is that the process is now more streamlined, and we have also experienced financial benefits including

rebates on our WorkSafeBC assessments." Developed in association with WorkSafeBC, the Certificate of Recognition (COR) program helps owners of construction companies understand and manage their health and safety responsibilities to reduce workplace injuries and site delays.

Employers who obtain and maintain the Health and Safety COR may receive an annual 10 per cent rebate on their WorkSafeBC assessments, and those who also achieve the Injury Management/Return to Work COR are eligible for another five per cent.

A number of other VICA members who have achieved COR include Irwin Industries Ltd., Ramsay Painting Ltd., Parker Johnston Industries Ltd, Wescor Contracting Ltd. and West Bay Mechanical Ltd.

For more information on the Certificate of Recognition program, contact:

Vancouver Island Construction Association - [www.vicabc.ca](http://www.vicabc.ca)

250.388.6471 or toll free 1.877.847.6471

Construction Safety Association of BC - [www.csabc.ca](http://www.csabc.ca)

604.434.3222 or toll free 1.877.434.3222

## BENEFITS OF MEMBERSHIP VANCOUVER ISLAND CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION

Providing services to our members which are valuable to them is our highest priority. Its not only about the services though - it is also about the service. Association staff feel very fortunate to work with our members and it shows; we work hard at work worth doing.

Take a look at the array of services and benefits we offer which are critical for growing your business.

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- Tender Bulletin
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- Education, Training & Workshops
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  - COR Courses
  - Gold Seal
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  - Journal of Commerce
  - VICA's Membership Directory
- Commissioner for Signing Documents (Stat Decs)
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- BCCA Employee Benefit Program
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- Petro Canada Superpass Program
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# BCCA endorses the Harmonized Sales Tax

There has been much ado about HST across our province in recent months.

Clearly there are some pretty strong opinions on whether it should or should not be implemented and I can understand where both sides are coming from.

Nevertheless I feel it would be remiss of me, as a representative of an industry sector critical to the economic welfare of B.C., not to point out some of the obvious advantages that a harmonized sales tax provides for construction activity.

Value-added taxes similar to B.C.'s proposed HST are used in Quebec and the Maritimes (excluding PEI) and very broadly throughout the industrialized world. By all reports, the economies in those regions have benefited from moving to such a tax. A strong economy means more jobs and more oppor-



**Manley MacLachlan**  
BCCA President

tunity for all British Columbians.

In March 2009, Ontario announced its intentions to implement HST.

It makes sense for B.C. to follow suit if we are to remain competitive nationally as well as internationally.

The B.C. Construction Association endorses HST for a number of reasons.

The construction industry in B.C. is strong, and we will grow stronger because of the many positive aspects of sales tax harmonization.

B.C. contractors will experience overall tax cost reductions, reduced "red tape" and administrative costs, and increased competitiveness with contractors inside and outside B.C. The construction industry pays PST on many of the goods and some services it purchases for their operations.

This includes PST on building supplies, tools, equipment, trucks,

repairs and maintenance of equipment, offices supplies and equipment, etc. The cost of the PST to the business is then passed on to consumers in the price of the final product.

While HST will be payable on these items, the HST can be recovered through input tax credits and PST will no longer be passed on to consumers.

B.C. businesses will save about \$2 billion in costs through the HST. The construction industry will realize the most significant tax savings from the HST: \$880 million.

Other sectors – which are major suppliers to the construction industry – will also realize savings: \$140 million for manufacturing, \$210 million for the transportation industry, \$140 million for the forestry sector and \$80 million for mining and oil and gas.

HST means reduced administrative costs and "red tape" for contractors. With HST, construction businesses will save time, money

and effort and avoid duplication because they'll only need to collect, remit and deal with a single tax.

PST has been a large burden for BCCA members.

Administration of PST has been troublesome for construction companies, mainly due to the complexity of the PST rules affecting construction contracts.

HST represents the optimal PST simplification measure for contractors.

Compliance with one tax, essentially a larger GST, will be easier than trying to deal with two different sales tax systems and taxation authorities. HST will reduce the burden of taxation "red tape" for contractors.

The introduction of HST and the elimination of PST will provide B.C. contractors with a level playing field on outsourced construction projects, allowing fair competition on bid processes with contractors in Alberta, Ontario and other jurisdictions outside of Canada, where PST

does not impact their cost of doing business.

Keeping our industry competitive with neighbouring regions is critically important for an industry as mobile as ours.

Consumers worry that they will have to pay more when HST is implemented. However, the implementation of HST during recessionary times will put pressure on businesses, which are competing hard for limited consumer dollars.

Smart businesses will move quickly to reduce their cost structure and will pass on savings as soon as possible, to preserve their market share. Overall, we need to keep in mind that lowering the cost of doing business for job-creating industries, such as construction and forestry, makes B.C. more attractive to new investment and job creation.

When these industries are strong, they contribute to a strong overall economy and support other community-based industries such as retail, restaurant, tourism and service industries.

Despite the way this tax has been introduced and the subsequent political turbulence, the HST is the right move at the right time.

**HST means reduced administrative costs and "red tape" for contractors.**  
**Manley MacLachlan**

## Procurement practices deteriorate in the absence of oversight

A deteriorating economic and political environment has heightened industry's interest in procurement practices that can be characterized as acute.

Many of the projects funded by infrastructure stimulus have been tendered and awarded, and trade contractors and suppliers are busy under the pressure of the March 2011 funding deadline to complete the work.

The provincial government is responsible for oversight of procurement practices on provincially funded projects across the public sector and to ensure processes are fair, open and transparent, and that there is accountability to vendors and tax payers.

Despite years of communicating with the Liberal government the government continues to pay lip service to the industry despite evidence of procurement shortcomings and in some instances failure, and after acknowledging there are serious problems within public sector procurement.

The procurement issue and the impact it has on the taxpayer and construction industry is simply not a priority for the Liberal government.

Economic stimulus was directed at construction because it is the fastest and most effective way to stimulate an econ-

omy and positively impact the broader community, and provide that community with a long term benefit of much needed infrastructure.

The existing infrastructure in Canada and B.C. is old and much of it beyond its intended service life. B.C. is expected to be one of the fastest growing jurisdictions in North America and despite the worldwide economic downturn and uncertainty it fosters, B.C. is projected to return to strong economic growth.

When one considers these facts and the fact construction is the single largest sector employer in the province, employing more people than agriculture, mining, fishing and forestry combined, it is difficult to comprehend why there is not a Ministry of Construction or some form of framework for constructively engaging such a vital industry to B.C.

It is beyond the comprehension of industry why the Liberal government will not provide the necessary leadership and oversight to ensure procurement best practices are adhered to in accordance with government policy and to ensure accountability, value for money and protection of the public interest.

Public sector procurement is a priority for VICA and efforts will be ramped up to affect change in terms of best practices and accountability of government.

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# Hour-Bank benefit plans a flexible and logical option

As our economy in British Columbia recovers from the downturn that significantly hit the construction industry, the outlook appears to hold promise. The impact of the downturn to the employee benefits and insurance sector was significant as well, resulting in very challenging renewals across not just the construction industry, but across all sectors.

For most group benefits providers and consulting firms, plan renewals were challenging, to say the least, and definitely saw rate adjustments outside the norm of what was the case over the past ten years or so.

However, factoring the various aspects that impacted these rate adjustments, it could have been lot worse if not for groups

that belonged in large underwriting pools, which provided the benefits of economies of scale and the dissemination of risk over multiple groups like the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) Employee Benefit Trust.

Another industry trend stemming from the downturn, which also negatively impacted renewal rates, was due to attrition in the workforce as a result of lay-offs and the move towards hiring contract and seasonal labour.

The crux of this impact was mostly felt in the group's benefits experience or claims expense. This is due to displaced workers all rushing out to use their benefits (and rightfully so), before their coverage was termin-

ated as a result of the loss of their employment.

With salaries and benefits being one of an employer's largest costs, it's reasonable that they should look at ways to reduce costs in this area; however, there is a balance that needs to be considered when costs are being reviewed. That balance is somewhat hindered when you see employers struggling to recruit and maintain key employees.

A very fitting solution or option for groups dealing with this dilemma is to implement an hour-bank benefits plan for their contract or seasonal employees while maintaining the traditional premiums-based program for their full-time and salaried staff.

Hour-bank plans are ideal for employers who experience rapid increases or decreases in the number of staff working for them during the year. How an hour-bank works is relatively simple. The program allows employees to bank the hours they work during peak period in their jobs.

The excess hours banked each month can then be utilized during slow periods or when employees are laid-off.

Depending on the plan, laid-off employees even have an option to self-pay toward their hour-bank to maintain coverage.

Premiums that an employer pays for coverage is determined by the number of hours employees worked and a fixed amount for each hour worked.

## STEP PROGRAM

Following last year's move by the British Columbia Construction Association to increase the size and scope of the Skilled Trades Employment Program (STEP), we are proud to announce that the program now has a truly provincial reach. With offices in 13 cities comprising the four primary regions, STEP has already exceeded the targets we set for the year.

Hundreds of workers have started careers in the skilled trades and dozens of organizations have acquired the skilled workers that will ensure that they remain resilient and competitive into the future.

While primarily focused on the acquisition of skills and credentials by workers and skilled workers by organizations, each of the provincial regions has its own unique focus, developed in response to the economic realities found there.

Leveraging what has worked well on the Island this year, STEP will continue to provide workers with opportunities and organizations with skilled workers, but it doesn't stop there. While some of our challenges are regional, others mirror those found across the world.

As economies inch toward recovery and industries flirt with a positive outlook, the demographic demon will again rear its head. Skilled workers will retire and skill shortages will again loom.

In preparation for this trend, we at STEP are aligning with those companies that see it coming and know that their own resilience will depend on a supply of workers who understand their unique product lines, customer bases and corporate cultures.

They recognize that to thrive in the future, they will need to be more than efficient; they will need to consistently innovate. Some have made the connection between innovation and having a culture that includes learning.

Some have already realized the benefits to productivity and customer service by having skilled employees actively engaged in their own learning. It's ironic that the new issues we face can be greatly helped by a very old practice; apprenticeship. Everything old is new again.

By nature, apprenticeship engages workers in their own learning, stimulating their performance and the contribution they make, not only to productivity but to the culture of the organization.

As an HR partner, STEP is working with organizations to clarify the financial, performance and cultural benefits of apprenticeship. We work to understand not only the skills required by our employer clients, but their cultures as well, so that we find the right person as well as the right skill set. If your company sees the future that we do, give us a call.

We can save you time and money by posting positions and prescreening prospects to get you the people best prepared to help you thrive. Why not leave it to specialists? Call STEP's Trade Employment Specialists at 250-361-1607.

## The future of online bidding

The B.C. Construction Association (BCCA) and Vancouver Island Construction Associations in partnership with regional associations under the BCCA umbrella are leading the industry in the use of new online technologies to improve the entire bidding process.

The B.C. online planroom uses the industry embraced PlanSource technology that now includes an online bid module as one of its features.

Owners and tendering authorities now have a new approach available to them that virtually eliminates many of the challenges they face in managing the bidding process for their projects.

The process to obtain a



**Dave Robertson CEO**  
Infinite Source Systems

price and enter a contract for construction work is complex in part because virtually every project is unique.

Over the course of years construction bidding, standards have evolved and been shaped by best practices and

changes in the law.

The online planroom now offers a new way of integrating the entire process to eliminate some of the more common issues and problems that typically arise through the tender period of a project.

Some of the typical issues that arise during the process include:

- Missing documents or information
- Trade contractors having different information than the prime contractor
- Late issuance of addenda
- Incorrect document versions
- Unclear closing times
- Incomplete tender submissions
- Missing schedules or

attachments

- Missing tender security (bonds)
- Late submission of tenders
- Busy fax lines precluding bid amendments from arriving on time

These and many other related issues can be managed effectively using a Site of Record approach to tendering.

All tender activities, information and documents are made available to all bidders in a single secure online site.

The Site of Record is the only official set of information made available to bidders leaving no chance for errors in the production, distribution or tracking of hard copy documents.

See *EMBRACING* on pg 8





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# VICA revitalizing apprenticeship scholarship program

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Association board of directors revitalized the association's Trade and Scholarship Committee mandate to focus on forging new partnerships and enhancing existing ones in the high schools, colleges and similar industries, and to develop programs to support and promote careers in construction.

This resulted in partnering with the North and South Island School District Partnerships to identify opportunities to support high school and post secondary education apprenticeship programs.

One that emerges was the revitalization of the VICA Apprentice Scholarship Program for the six trades the school district partnerships offer. In addition the six trades there is a Super Star Apprentice Scholarship Award for a construction apprentice who has overcome obstacles and adversity to successfully complete technical training.

The highest ranking nominees for the six trades were submitted to VICA by the North and South Island School District Partnerships for adjudication:

- **Carpenter:** Duncan Aylard, Alberni District Secondary
- Cameron Fischer, Edward Milne Community – Scholarship Recipient
- **Electrical:** Nic Novelli, Timberline Secondary
- James Carpenter, Stellys Secondary – Scholarship Recipient
- **Joinery:** Kevin Hood, Parkland Secondary – Scholarship Recipient
- **Plumbing:** Ryan Hanna, Timberline Secondary
- Kody Wright, Belmont Secondary – Scholarship Recipient
- **Sheet Metal:** Nik Pirttikoski, Stellys Secondary – Scholarship Recipient

- **Welding:** Brandon Ritchie, Timberline Secondary
- Adam Omanson, Belmont Secondary – Scholarship Recipient

No nominations were received for the Super Star Apprenticeship Award, however, all these students were the top in their class.

VICA applauds them all for their achievements. The scholarship recipients have been notified and will receive a \$500 scholarship certificate at an upcoming awards event at their school.

The Vancouver Island Construction Association is committed to supporting youth and other groups including first nations, woman and immigrant communities in developing a rewarding career in the construction industry.

Construction is one of the few industry's where opportunities are laddered and diverse. Individuals can enter the industry as

a skilled labourer, apprentice, journeyman tradesperson, college graduate or a technician. Regardless of an individual's career entry point, supervisory, management positions and even ownership are attainable. Any successful career path it requires time, commitment, persistence and patience, and good old fashioned hard work.

Employers and the market place will reward those who are deserving, and those who enter the industry as an apprentice will have the added benefit of a trade that they will have for their life, and that will offer them skills that are transferable from work to their home and recreation life.

For information on VICA scholarships see [www.vicabc.ca](http://www.vicabc.ca). Contact your school or district careersprogramscoordinatorforinformationonhighschoolapprenticeshipopportunitiesorvisit [www.theskilledlife.com](http://www.theskilledlife.com).

## Embracing PlanSource

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Every bidder who accesses the information is automatically included in the distribution list for any addenda. The tender form is made available to bidders electronically with all requirements clearly defined for the bidders.

It cannot be submitted with missing information which ensures a complete tender submission. At the instant the reverse countdown clock reaches the closing time bids are no longer able to be submitted or edited.

At that same instant, the results of all properly submitted tenders along with any required bid bonds or other attachments are all immediately available for review either individually or in a spreadsheet format.

All of the activities in the process are logged ensuring that all the key elements of the process are verifiable should the need arise after the fact. It

is early days but the system is already delivering value on a number of projects.

It is currently used by BCCA's Electronic Bidding System (EBS) with a number of successful closings already completed. Contractors and construction managers are reporting very positive feedback from trade contractors and suppliers, who appreciate the ease of use of the entire system.

It wasn't that long ago that the idea of using the internet to view and manage construction drawings and specs was a bit of an 'out there' concept. Now it is the standard. Using a Site of Record approach to construction tendering cannot be far behind as it saves time, reduces costs for all parties and most importantly it significantly reduces the risk of problems or claims arising from errors or omissions in the tendering process.



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## Why invest in employee benefits?

A well-managed benefit plan is an effective tool for recruiting and retaining motivated people. Extended health, dental care and insurance will boost any compensation package, especially for employees with family responsibilities.

The BCCA Employee Benefit Program has served the construction sector for 40 years. Because we're run by our members, we provide a high level of value for every dollar invested. We're the right choice for your team.

[www.BCCAbenefits.ca](http://www.BCCAbenefits.ca)



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Construction Association



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