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## BCA INTRODUCES CO-OP TEACHERS TO CONSTRUCTION TRADES CAREERS

Congratulations to the Barrie Construction Association for its Construction Careers Days initiative. After taking busloads of high school students to tour multiple construction sites in years past, the BCA thought they would try something different this year, something that might have greater impact and lead to a better result. Instead of taking students, they decided to take cooperative education teachers and guidance counsellors.

One of the BCA's Construction Careers Days was held on Tuesday, May 16th. About 20 educators from high schools across the Barrie area toured J D Developments three tower Lakevu Condominium project. Tower A is completed and occupied, Tower B is closed in and in various states of construction and Tower C is just about to start coming out of the ground. After a health and safety orientation, there was a top to bottom tour of Tower B, from the rooftop mechanical penthouse to the parking garage. The educators were exposed to the work of many trades.

The tour was led by electrical contractor, BCA director and inspiring construction careers champion, Brian Little. There was lunch at the Ferndale Banquet Hall and an after lunch presentation with a panel of industry experts drawn from the BCA membership and an engaging Q&A session. In the afternoon the group visited the Gunn Street Road reconstruction project and learned all about the complexities of a civil project.

Congratulations to Alison Smith and the TEAM at the BCA for an incredibly engaging experience for educators.

## WSIB WORKERS UNION HAS MANDATE TO STRIKE – JOB ACTION ANNOUNCED

97.3% of the 3,750 unionized workers employed by the WSIB recently voted in favour of giving their union a mandate to strike. They are members of CUPE 1750 also known as the Ontario Compensation Employees Union 1750. The union is believed to be seeking:

- a wage increase to offset the impact of Bill 124 which limited increases at 1% for 2020, 2021 and 2022 and also for the impact of current high inflation
- reduced caseloads
- improved working conditions.
- Negotiations between the union and employer have been ongoing for some time and a mediator from the Ministry of Labour Immigration Training and Skills Development was brought in to help the parties come to an agreement. However, on May 25th, five days before the strike deadline, the union announced that job action would commence at 12:01 on Tuesday, May 30th.

## NEW WAH STANDARDS EFFECTIVE APRIL 2024

Buried deep in a May 17th Ontario government news release that also touted:

- Investing an additional one-time \$12.5 million (of employers money derived from WSIB premiums) in the province's six health and safety associations
- Increasing the maximum fine for convictions of violations of the Occupational Health and Safety Act
- Assessing fines for employers who withhold passports from foreign workers
- Implementing better protections for remote workers during mass layoffs
- Requiring clean and women only washrooms on construction sites was an announcement that many in the construction industry had been awaiting for months, the updated training provider standard and the updated training program standard for Working at Heights (WAH) training. This should have been worthy of its own stand-alone announcement. To find the details you had to click through a couple of links. These long-awaited standards have been ready to go for months.

Here are the details:

### Changes to the WAH Training Program Standard

- On April 1, 2024, changes to the Working at Heights Training Program Standard will come into effect.
- Current training programs will remain valid until April 1, 2024.
- Workers who have valid working at heights training will not be affected and refresher requirements remain unchanged.

Key changes to the Working at Heights Program Standard include:

- Additional learning outcomes on ladders, skylights and damaged equipment
- Additional required personal protective equipment
- Elimination of duplicative language and learning outcomes
- Enhancement of language to foster more inclusive engagement

### Changes to the WAH Training Provider Standard

- On April 1, 2024, changes to the Working at Heights Training Provider Standard will come into effect.
- Current training programs will remain valid until April 1, 2024.
- Workers who have valid working at heights training will not be affected and refresher requirements remain unchanged.

Key changes to the Working at Heights Provider Standard include:

- a basic occupational health and safety awareness training reminder
- enhanced copyright rules
- submitting learner status when providing proof of completion to the Chief Prevention Officer
- updates to instructor requirements
- promotion of social inclusion and anti-racism

Here are the links:

- [Click here for Program standard for working at heights training](#)
- [Click here for Provider standard for working at heights training](#)

## SUCCESSFUL CO-OP PROGRAM GIVES STUDENTS EXPOSURE TO MULTIPLE TRADES

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COCA's COO Committee recently received a presentation from Toronto District School Board cooperative education teacher, Elvy Moro, about his Specialized Trades Experiences Program (STEP) for Construction. Here are some quick facts about this unique and highly successful program:

- It is a cooperative education program that has been operating for 18 years
- It draws participants from 35 TDSB high schools, about 50 each semester
- It appeals to students who are not wired to sit in a classroom.
- The program has many industry sponsors including Stanley Tools which supplies participants with tools and a tool belt
- Participants spend the first five weeks of the program in class, learning about the construction industry and earning five important construction credentials including health and safety, WHMIS and WAH
- Over the years, Mr Moro has built up a large stable of developers and general contractors including many of the provinces largest and best known who are prepared to take on STEP for Construction participants
- Every participant is assigned to a construction site, only one participant per site, and participants spend one or two weeks with each trade contractor on the site to provide them with exposure to multiple trades
- Participants who typically have poor records of attendance at regular school show up reliably and on time for their work experiences
- Participants spend every Friday at George Brown College
- The program has graduated over 850 participants

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## LEGISLATURE'S SUMMER BREAK IS APPROACHING

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Following a constituency week during the week of May 22nd to 26th, the Ontario legislature will resume sitting on the morning of Monday May 29th. The legislature is scheduled to rise for its summer break on the afternoon of Thursday, June 8th. The fall session is scheduled to begin on the morning of Monday, September 11th. The full legislative calendar can be found at the following link:

<https://www.ola.org/sites/default/files/common/pdf/2023-parliamentary-calendar-mar6.pdf>

## TORONTO CITY COUNCILOR TO RUN FOR THE TORIES IN SCARBOROUGH-GUILDWOOD

In order to run for mayor of the City of Toronto, Mitzie Hunter had to resign her Scarborough-Guildwood seat in the Ontario Legislature.

Scarborough-Guildwood was created for the 2007 Ontario general election and it has been in Liberal hands ever since. Hunter was first elected in a by election in 2013 following the resignation of her predecessor, Margaret Best. She won by a margin of about 5% in that contest but in the 2014 general election, she bested the second-place finisher by more than 20%.

The 2018 general was a different story for Hunter, who won re-election by a razor thin margin in the Doug Ford-Tory sweep. But she redeemed herself in 2022 with an almost 15% margin of victory. While the PCs have always finished in second place in Scarborough-Guildwood and came very close to winning the seat in 2018, this short history suggests it's the Liberals to lose.

Hoping to turn the riding Tory blue in the yet-to-be-called by election is Gary Crawford. Here's what we know about Crawford:

- He's a four term Toronto city councillor who was first elected in 2010
- Prior to his election to Toronto city council Crawford served as a trustee on the Toronto District School Board's board of trustees
- In 2007 Crawford's ran unsuccessfully for a seat in the provincial legislature
- Crawford is expected to continue serving as a member of city council while he campaigns for a seat in the legislature



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## OLP LEADERSHIP RACE BEGINNING TO TAKE SHAPE

At time of writing, two individuals had officially registered their candidacy for the Leadership of the Ontario Liberal Party (OLP). Queen's Park watchers will remember that the party's former leader, Steven Del Duca resigned immediately following the Party's disastrous showing in the June 2022 general election in which the Grits failed to meet expectations and took only 8 seats. Interim Leader John Fraser has been filling-in ever since.

The two officially registered individuals are:

### Nathaniel Erskine-Smith

- Age 38
- BA, JD Queen's, BCL Oxford
- Practiced commercial litigation before entering politics
- First elected to the Parliament of Canada in Beaches-East York in 2015 and re-elected in 2019 and 2021 with sizeable majorities each time

### Ted Hsu

- Age 59
- BA Queen's, PhD (physics) Princeton
- Worked as a researcher, trader and in investment banking at several locations around the world
- Was elected MP for Kingston and the Islands in 2011 but did not seek re-election in 2015
- Ran again provincially in the Ontario general election in 2022 regaining the Kingston and the Islands seat for the Grits

Here's where you can find the official information about candidate registrations:

<https://www.elections.on.ca/en/political-entities-in-ontario/leadership-contestants/leadership-contests.html#accordionlib2023>

Others believed to be considering seeking the OLP leadership are:

- Current MP for Ottawa Centre and former MPP for the provincial electoral district of the same name, Yasir Naqvi, to whom the construction industry owes a considerable debt of gratitude for championing prompt payment and adjudication and shepherding Ontario's new Construction Act into law
- Former Liberal MP and current Mayor of Mississauga, Bonnie Crombie
- Former Ernst & Young partner and ScotiaBank SVP, first term MPP for Don Valley West Stephanie Bowman