

What's Inside

McNaughton Announces Funding for Pre-Apprenticeship Programs

COCA's Pre-Budget Submission

Upcoming Ontario Byelections

NORCAT Opens GTA Office

A Primer on the Current Education Labour Dispute

Corey Getting Ready to Leave Infrastructure Ontario

Nominations for National Association's New Governance Framework Published

Register Today for the Annual Construction Associations Curling Bonspiel

GO Rail Expansion Could Be Delayed

First Time Meeting Between Premier Ford and Patrick Brown

Latest Ontario Poll Results Show Libs Ahead

COCA Congratulates John Beck on His Remarkable Career

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MCNAUGHTON ANNOUNCES FUNDING FOR PRE-APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAMS

In London, Ontario on January 24th, Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development Monte McNaughton announced government funding for four pre-apprenticeship projects that will support 100 people to secure jobs in construction and other sectors. The programs will be free of charge for participants.

London projects receiving provincial government support include:

- An investment of \$144,000 to help the Brick and Allied Craft Union of Canada Local 5 offer 12 participants trades training for valuable careers as brick and stone masons and construction craft workers.
- An investment of \$549,580 to support LiUNA Local 1059 in offering a combination of classroom training and work placements to help prepare 72 participants for jobs in the construction craft worker and cement finisher trades.
- An investment of \$131,135 to help Collège Boréal provide training for 11 people in the London area and help them explore career opportunities as child development practitioners and education assistants in schools and daycares.
- An investment of \$99,888 to help the London Training Centre provide 12 participants with Smart Serve training, trade-readiness training and work placements to prepare them for jobs as cooks, bakers and chefs.

For details, click on <https://news.ontario.ca/mol/en/2020/01/ontario-preparing-people-in-london-for-jobs.html>

COCA'S PRE-BUDGET SUBMISSION

There was little new in COCA's pre-budget submission this year as it re-articulated themes from our previous pre-budget recommendations and existing proposals that have already been brought to the attention of the provincial government. Included were the following:

- Transfer ministerial oversight of the WSIB from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to the Ministry of Finance
- Support for the WSIB establishing a funding policy with a 95% to 110% funding level
- Eliminate the WSIB's 72-month lock-in provision
- Deliver fully on the governments commitments to investing \$14.7 billion in 2019- 2020 and \$144 billion over the next 10 years
- Provide clarity in community benefits clauses in government procurement

UPCOMING ONTARIO BYELECTIONS

You will recall that quite some time ago, Nathalie Des Rosiers resigned as the Liberal MPP for Ottawa-Vanier to accept a position at Massey College and Marie-France Lalonde resigned as the Liberal MPP for Orleans to switch to federal politics and win the seat in the House of Commons for the same electoral district. These resignations created two vacancies in our 124 seat provincial legislature. Premier Ford must call the byelection in Ottawa-Vanier not later than February 2nd and not later than March 23rd for Orléans. He will most likely schedule both byelections on the same day.

Candidates in Ottawa-Vanier:

- Liberal - Lucille Collard a French school board trustee
- PC - Patrick Mayangi a former political staffer and campaign worker.
- NDP - Myriam Djilane a community advocate
- Green – Benjamin Koczwarski, an advisor at FCM, engineer and urban planner

Candidates in Orleans:

- Liberal –Stephen Blais a city councillor
- PC - Natalie Montgomery a PhD candidate and health advocate, wife of failed PC candidate Cameron Montgomery, who ran in the same riding in 2018 and who was appointed chair of EQAO
- NDP - Manon Parrot, a translator with CUPW, president of CUPE 1979, labour activist
- Green – Andrew West, lawyer and Green Party attorney general critic

Both are considered Liberal strongholds.

NORCAT OPENS GTA OFFICE

I recently attended the official opening ceremony of the sixth location of an impressive organization called NORCAT.

NORCAT is a not for profit technology and innovation organization headquartered in Sudbury. It aspires to become the global leader in skilled labour training and development.

At its four locations in northern Ontario NORCAT provides health and safety training for the mining industry and delivers occupational health and safety services, and product development assistance to small, medium and large industrial enterprises including those in construction.

The Mississauga facility appears to be well set up for construction safety training. The sixth location is in Chile and serves the mining industry. NORCAT has been approved as a provider of the WSIB's new Health and

Safety Excellence Program and is a member of the League of Champions.

This new GTA location is headed by Dan Fleming who is known to many from his days at the CSAO/IHSA and Ellis Don and his involvement with the League of Champions and Safety Pass

Turnout at the event was impressive and included the Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development, Monte McNaughton, all the local area PC MPPs, Chief Prevention Officer Ron Kelusky, reps from the WSIB and the IHSA who along with NORCAT CEO Don Duval cut the red ribbon to officially open this impressive health and safety training facility in Mississauga.

Welcome to the GTA NORCAT and best wishes for success!

A PRIMER ON THE CURRENT EDUCATION LABOUR DISPUTE

The Ontario government is currently in a labour dispute with the province's four education unions, the Elementary Teachers Federation of Ontario (ETFO), the Ontario Secondary School Teachers federation, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers federation and the Association des enseignants et des enseignantes franco-ontariens (AEFO). All four unions have received strong strike mandates from their members.

According to CTV <https://toronto.ctvnews.ca/internal-union-poll-shows-parents-support-teachers-over-ford-government-1.4772427> :

- The OSSTF has been conducting weekly polling since the beginning of December to determine public sentiment regarding the labour disputes between teachers and the provincial government.
- The poll of 500 people conducted by Environics Research between December 20th and 23rd revealed that "about 57% sympathize with the teachers and education workers over the Ford government; 56% believe education unions are being more reasonable in the talks; and 59% say teachers should keep pushing for a better deal" .

It's generally believed that a public sector union has to be on strike for a period of at least two weeks before the government can justify legislating them back to work. Once the government legislates teachers back to work they have at least two options: i) impose a contract on the bargaining unit, which would likely have to stand up to the scrutiny of the courts; and ii) appoint an arbitrator to hear from the parties and then make a decision with regard to the contract terms.

The problem for the government with the second option is that studies have shown that arbitrators in making their

contract determinations are more generous than the results the collective bargaining process produces.

While there are many minor issues, the three main points of contention are:

- Compensation – the government would like to limit increases to 1%, an increase that is below the rate of inflation
- Class size – the government wants to increase class sizes but they have reduced the class size increases that they originally proposed
- E-learning – the government wants to increase the number of e-learning courses that a high school student would have to take although they have reduced the number of required e-learning classes they originally proposed

Currently the unions are conducting one day rotating strikes across the province which imposes a significant inconvenience and in many cases new childcare cost for parents and a loss of learning for students. The government has offered parents a reimbursement of up to \$60 per student, per day for expenses incurred as a result of the rotating strikes and at time of writing more than 51,000 families have applied for the subsidy.

The government wants to return to the bargaining table but with a private mediator replacing the mediator that's currently in place from the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development.

Both sides, the union leaders and the Minister of Education, Stephen Lecce, have handled themselves well in the media. Clearly public opinion will play an important role in the future course of the dispute.

COREY GETTING READY TO LEAVE INFRASTRUCTURE ONTARIO

Ehren Corey's three-year appointment as President & CEO of Infrastructure Ontario was set to expire on February 1, 2020. According to a statement released by Corey, he had informed the provincial government of his plans to return to the private sector after the expiration of his appointment. According to his announcement, after negotiations with the government, he has agreed to stay on the job until April 30, 2020 in order to provide "time for government and our Board to put in place next steps to transition". Congratulations to Ehren for a job well done.

NOMINATIONS FOR NATIONAL ASSOCIATION'S NEW GOVERNANCE FRAMEWORK PUBLISHED

The Canadian Construction Association (CCA) has published the proposed slates of members for its new governance framework that includes the 20 member board of directors and four national advisory councils. The slates were developed by the national association's nominating committee based on a number of criteria including the appropriate balance of general contractors, trade contractors and heavy civil contractors, appropriate provincial/territorial representation, the need for various board competencies (strategy, risk, hr, finance/accounting, legal) and governance experience. At the risk of leaving someone out, here are some friends of COCA that have been nominated to serve the board and Councils:

Board of Directors:

- Ray Bassett, Vice President, Chief Underwriting Officer Surety, National Accounts, Travelers, member of the Reynolds-Vogel Advisory Panel
- Stephen Coote, President, Group 92 Mechanical, a past president of the NCA
- Russ Kerr, Branch General Manager, Vipond Inc and a past president of the BCA
- Mike Reinders, Director, Maple Reinders

General Contractors Advisory Council:

- Jeff Shantz, Vice President, Melloul Blamey

Construction and a past president of the GVCA

- Gary van Bolderen, President, Dutch Masters Construction Services, immediate Past Chair of COCA, a past chair of the CFBA, a current director with the BCA

Manufacturers, Suppliers & Services Advisory Council:

- Glenn Ackerley, Chair of the construction practice group at WeirFoulds LLP, Past Chair and current Director of the TCA, member of COCA's Construction Act committee
- Geza Banfai, Counsel at McMillan LLP (construction/infrastructure law), Past Director with the TCA
- Catherine DiMarco, Partner, Heal & Co LLP

Local Construction Association Advisory Council:

- Martha George, President, GVCA
- John Mollenhauer, President & CEO, TCA

CCA members will vote on these slates at the national association's annual general meeting on March 18th in San Diego. Should all of these individuals be confirmed, COCA's links with the CCA will remain strong.

REGISTER TODAY FOR THE ANNUAL CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATIONS CURLING BONSPIEL

The Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association will be hosting the 2020 edition of the Ontario Construction Associations Curling Bonspiel. The registration fee of \$750 per team covers the welcome reception and dinner on the evening of March 23rd as well as the curling competitions and other hospitality and festivities on the 24th and 25th. This annual event is a wonderful opportunity to get all the Associations together to network, have fun, share some laughs, and drinks, create memories and friendships.

So far COCA, Windsor CA, Barrie CA and NOCA have signed up so there's room for a few more associations. Register today and let's make this year's bonspiel the best ever! Contact Adam Pinder to register adam@ssmca.com

GO RAIL EXPANSION COULD BE DELAYED

According to Infrastructure Ontario's website, the GO Rail Expansion-GO Regional Express Rail On-Corridor project "will transform the transportation network in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area over the next decade. Metrolinx will transform the GO Transit rail network into a system that will deliver two-way, all-day service every 15 minutes over core segments of the GO Rail network.

System-wide infrastructure upgrades will include: adding tracks, expanding stations, electrification of the rail network, new locomotives and train control systems to enable more frequent service." It is a Design, Build, Finance, Operate, Maintain type of project.

The prequalified teams are:

EnTransit

- Applicant Lead: SNC-Lavalin Capital, Siemens Project Ventures, Keolis
- Construction Team: SNC-Lavalin, Siemens
- Design Team: SNC-Lavalin, Siemens, Balfour Beatty Rail
- Operations & Maintenance Team: Keolis SNCF, SNC-Lavalin, Siemens
- Financial Advisor: National Bank

MTR Kiewit Partners

- Applicant Lead: MTR, Kiewit
- Construction Team: MTR, Kiewit
- Design Team: MTR, Arup, Mott Macdonald
- Operations & Maintenance Team: MTR
- Financial Advisor: Scotiabank

ONcore Transit

- Applicant Lead: ACS
- Construction Team: Dragados Canada
- Design Team: AECOM, Sener
- Operations & Maintenance Team: ACSIC, RATP Dev, Bombardier
- Financial Advisor: Astris Finance and Rubicon

ONxpress Transportation Partners

- Applicant Lead: Aecon Concessions, John Holland, Meridiam Infrastructure, Alstom Transport Canada
- Construction Team: Aecon IM, John Holland, Alstom
- Design Team: WSP, Hatch, Alstom
- Operations & Maintenance Team: Deutsche Bahn, John Holland, Aecon O&M
- Financial Advisor: RBC Dominion Securities

According to media reports, pre-qualified bidders are pushing back on the risk they are being asked to accept under the terms of the IO-Metrolinx contract. This has caused IO and Metrolinx to reconsider their procurement.

The full story appeared in The Star:

<https://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2020/01/20/go-expansion-plans-facing-uncertainty-as-companies-raise-concerns-over-p3-procurement-model-documents-warn.html>

FIRST TIME MEETING BETWEEN PREMIER FORD AND PATRICK BROWN

For the first time since their elections as Premier of Ontario and Mayor of Brampton, Doug Ford and Patrick Brown met on January 24th. The meeting took place in Mississauga where Ford announced funding for Peel Regional Police. (Peel Regional Police serves the Region of Peel which includes the Cities of Mississauga, Brampton,

the provinces 3rd and 4th largest cities, and the Town of Caledon). According to Brown on Twitter, the meeting with Ford was productive, the tone was co-operative and the subject matter discussed included emergency health care, guns and gangs, (the use of) closed circuit television and (the lack of) judicial resources at court houses.

LATEST ONTARIO POLL RESULTS SHOW LIBS AHEAD

An on-line survey of 2,198 Ontarians aged 18 and over conducted by Pollara Strategic Insights between January 6th and 11th and released on January 15th revealed that 33% of decided and leaning voters would vote for the Liberals, 29% for the PCs, 27% for the NDP, 9% for the Greens and 2% Other.

The survey employed demographic and regional quotas and was weighted to reflect the actual population of Ontario.

By region the survey produced the following results:

- Toronto decided and leaning voters: Libs 41%, PC 23%, NDP 25%
- GTA 905 decided and leaning voters: Libs 36%, PCs 30%, NDP 26%
- Hamilton/Niagara decided and leaning voters: Libs 24%, PCs 30%, NDP 28%
- Eastern Ontario decided and leaning voters: Libs 34%, PCs 29% NDP 24%
- Northern Ontario decided and leaning voters: Libs 31%, PCs 25%, NDP 24%

What is so surprising about these results is that the Liberals, who are currently without a permanent leader and are in the midst of a leadership campaign, were decimated in the Ontario general election little more than 19 months ago and the seat count in the Legislature has the Grits holding only 6 seats while the PCs have 73, the NDP 40, the Greens 1.

With Amanda Simard's move to the Liberal Party, there are still 2 independents - former PCs Randy Hillier and Jim Wilson, with both likely to return to the Tory fold There are also two vacancies (resignations of Liberal MPPs Marie-France Lalonde and Nathalie Des Rosiers).

One has to believe that the Liberal brand is at least alive in Ontario if not healthy and that their interim captain, John Fraser has avoided missteps and provided competent leadership. And there must be significant disappointment among the NDP ranks with the inability to gain any traction with voters.

COCA CONGRATULATES JOHN BECK ON HIS REMARKABLE CAREER

On January 10th Aecon Group announced the retirement of John Beck from his role as Executive Chairman. Beck will transition to the position of non-executive Chairman of the Aecon board of directors and will no longer be an employee of the company he founded five decades ago.

An engineering graduate of McGill University, John told the amazing and inspiring Aecon story at a Toronto Construction Association Members' Day event a few years ago. It started with his parents and the family dog in the kitchen of their Montreal home, moving the company to Toronto, then to Calgary then back to Toronto, making acquisitions along the way, to eventually become the Canadian construction powerhouse that it is today.

John Beck has been an outstanding leader, a role model for others to follow and an icon in our industry. Congratulations on your enormously successful career, thank you for your many important contributions to our industry and very best wishes for a long happy and healthy retirement.