



WCR&HCA Convention 2008 **British Columbia Report**

AREAS OF INTEREST

The B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association have once again had a productive and successful year. As we move forward, there are many areas of interest our Association will focus on:

B.C.'s Work Force

British Columbia's economy and society are rapidly changing and it is difficult to appreciate the magnitude of these coming changes. B.C.'s population and workforce will continue to age, with the median age rising to 46 years by 2031 from 39 in 2006. The ageing population will impact labour force growth negatively, which could decrease both economic growth and tax revenue in the absence of productivity improvements.

One positive statistic is that the Aboriginal population is expected to experience growth to 219,400 by 2017 from 193,100 in 2006 (13.6% increase).

- A "go forward" challenge for the B.C. Road Builders Association to champion will be to ensure that immigrant and aboriginal economic, education, and social transitions are facilitated as smoothly as possible.

B.C.'s Economy

B.C.'s economy will continue to be strong for the next five years with real GDP growing above the national average while unemployment will remain under 5% (i.e. basically full employment).

- The Association's challenge will be to keep government focused on transportation and infrastructure spending as the key to continued economic performance and prosperity.



Border Security

Border security will remain important and Canada and B.C. will continue to strive for the most secure entry points possible. A major issue will be whether Canada and B.C. become part of a “North American” security system.

- The B.C. Road Builders will be urging government to ensure that goods, services and people can continue to move freely into the U.S. without excessive delays or crippling security fees.

Resource and Energy Sector

The energy sector will continue to underpin the B.C. economy through 2020 and represents the best opportunity to provide relief for our central interior communities whose economies are being devastated by the mountain pine beetle epidemic. B.C. faces a big challenge securing electricity over the next 20 years and transmission capacity will have to be renewed and expanded. (Note, offshore drilling is not on the agenda).

- The B.C. Road Builders will see increasing opportunities constructing infrastructure for the resource sector and in building and rehabilitating beetle kill timber haul roads. Power generation infrastructure expansion will provide new work for the heavy construction side of our industry.

Education

B.C.’s education system is of high quality and will be the primary supplier of skilled workers to our industry. Efforts will be required to close educational outcome gaps between the aboriginal and general population on high school completion.

- The B.C. Road Builders will continue to advocate for training funding for trades careers that matches the funding going to B.C.’s universities. The Association will champion the inclusion of our industry’s needs for worker training into the education system. We will continue to develop training opportunities for young people who want to work in our industry.

Climate Change

Climate change is guaranteed to persist as a critical provincial, national and global issue which will result in efforts by all levels of government to reduce



greenhouse gas emissions. Transportation is the largest emitter of greenhouse gases and will be targeted to be a leader in emission reduction.

- The B.C. Road Builders' challenge will be to ensure that emission reduction moves forward in a measured, balanced and economically sensitive fashion. It is imperative that "political correctness" does not overtake good science and common sense.

Healthcare

Healthcare costs will continue to be a critical issue in British Columbia. The question of the sustainability of the system will be driven by an ageing population and increasing technology costs. This issue will continue to be of increasing importance to the province.

- The B.C. Road Builders' challenge will be to ensure that the funding needed to provide transportation infrastructure to support a vibrant economy is not bled off to satisfy the never-ending demand for healthcare funds.

Immigration

Immigration - particularly from Asia - will continue to play a significant role in the growth of our population and labour market.

- The B.C. Road Builders will need to encourage governments to cut red tape and allow qualified workers into Canada and British Columbia. We must also find ways to efficiently train and certify new foreign workers.

Crime

B.C.'s crime rates continue to be higher in many categories than other provinces. B.C.'s tolerance and higher use of illicit drugs has an increasing impact on worker dependability, performance and injuries. New regulations assign all of the responsibility for worksite safety and duties to the contractor and personal privacy rights to the worker.

- The B.C. Road Builders will need to advocate for the contractors' rights to hire, fire or discipline workers as necessary which will allow them to protect ALL of their workers.



Transportation

Transportation has been one of B.C.'s top three issues and is often the public's number one concern. A growing population and economy will require further strategic improvements in transportation infrastructure throughout the province (i.e. air, road, rail and marine). Improvements like the "Gateway Program" are needed to ease value destroying bottlenecks and congestion and to increase the fluidity of supply chains to make B.C. the port of entry of choice for Asia Pacific countries trading with North America.

- The B.C. Road Builders will continue to remind governments that having efficient and reliable transportation systems is a prerequisite to having a productive and strong economy.

STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association has had another great and busy year.

This year's strategic objectives included:

1. To further advance skilled workers recruiting and training programs

- This year, both the Foundation and Heavy Equipment Operator Programs have been offered throughout the province.
- The Industry Training Authority is now allowing employers to deliver the HEO apprenticeship pilot program directly to its own employees.
- The Association has created a study guide to challenge for the Certificate of Qualification for the HEO Program
- A company that deals with foreign workers from Korea, *Hunt International*, is currently piloting the Foundation and HEO Programs in Korea. Students are being trained to the B.C. standards by a B.C. instructor.
- The Asphalt/Paving Laydown Program learning modules are now complete and three pilot courses are being delivered between this February and March.
- The ITA has said it will approve the development of the Utilities Installation/Gradesperson Program.
- Service Canada is funding, a very detailed profile chart for the Supervisor/Foreman Program. CCA has been working on a similar program, and we are waiting for their materials.
- Service Canada has agreed to fund the development of a profile and outline for the Maintenance Technician Program.



2. To support and promote municipal investment in core infrastructure through standardized public tendering

- Developed a plan to encourage municipalities to use the federal gas tax money for the development of roads and infrastructure.
- We are working with the UBCM to ensure that the Gas Tax Agreement is extended for another four years and to get the agreement wording changed so it has similar wording to the Ontario Gas Tax Agreement, which allows greater spending flexibility by recognizing that the development of new infrastructure can result in environmental improvements.
- We will continue to emphasize the importance of ensuring that all municipalities employ standardized, fair and transparent public tendering practices.

3. To build stronger and more cooperative relationships with the Ministry of Transportation (MOT)

- We held meetings with the Ministry executive to talk about various issues and challenges in the industry from both the construction and maintenance sector perspectives.
- Preventing and solving working relationship problems was a major focus at this year's B.C. Road Builders Fall Conference and we were pleased that *the Ministry clearly acknowledged to its own staff and the road builders that they needed a viable road construction and maintenance industry that will provide contractors with a reasonable return on investment.*
- We received good support from the Ministry in partnering sessions and plan to continue to work cooperatively with them on various committees.

STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

To improve communication with members

- We re-designed our website (www.roadbuilders.bc.ca) so it is more timely and informative.
- We made changes to the newsletter so it comes out every two months and contains important industry information.
- We send out weekly e-bulletins that contain the weekly tender bulletins, information on upcoming industry events, and relevant industry information.

To improve the industry's public image

- For the maintenance sector, we are working with the MOT to encourage people to prepare for driving in winter road conditions.



- We are promoting our training programs and careers in the road building and heavy construction industry.

To improve the industry's environmental image

- The Roads to Green conference held in January in partnership with the Consulting Engineers of BC and the MOT is the first time we have come together to discuss greenhouse gas emission (GHG) reduction.
- We will advocate to have GHG emission reduction become a national program under the CCA Roadbuilders Council as well.

To develop a 2010 Olympics Support Program

- We have formed a committee that is working with the Vancouver Olympic Organizing Committee (VANOC) and plan to assist with the "torch relay," distribute free event tickets to students throughout the province and help install the thousands of event signs required for the games.

To host the 2008 WCRHCA Convention in Maui

- We have done everything possible to make the 2008 convention one of the best and the most memorable!

To create a single construction industry safety association

- We have initiated meetings between the two rival associations and continue to support talks that may lead to an amalgamation.

ASSOCIATION EVENTS

In addition to working towards achieving all of those strategic objectives and strategies, the B.C. Road Builders and Heavy Construction Association also hosted some great events:

Annual Golf Tournament

On May 11th, the Association held its 38th Annual Ivan Hanchard Charity Golf Tournament once again raising \$30,000 for the Betty Spalton Scholarship Fund and the B.C. Children's Hospital. Over the last seven years, the Association has donated over \$150,000 to the B.C. Children's Hospital.

Women in Construction Industry Night

The B.C. Road Builders hosts a Women In Construction Industry Night every two years in conjunction with the Heavy Construction Show that takes place in Abbotsford. Female staff, friends and partners are invited to come "test drive" heavy equipment and learn more about industry. This event provides a great opportunity for us to promote careers in the industry and our training courses to the media.



Fall Business Conference

This year's Fall Conference in Kelowna had a record turnout with over 430 delegates in attendance. We were also joined by our partners from the Ministry of Transportation, including Minister *Kevin Falcon*, Deputy Minister *John Dyble*, Chief Operating Officer *Peter Milburn* and over 80 other Ministry of Transportation representatives. We had a number of great sector meetings, special presentations, networking events and golf tournaments.

AGM and Seasonal Celebrations

This year's AGM and Seasonal Celebrations were said to be among the best ever. Transportation Minister *Kevin Falcon* and Deputy Minister *John Dyble* handed out the Deputy Ministers Transportation Construction Awards. We had many learning seminars and sector meetings and the ladies enjoyed high tea at Victoria's beautiful Butchard Gardens and also had a seminar on pole and lap dancing! We ended the festivities with the spectacular Snow and Ice Ball and Champagne Brunch.

For more information, contact:

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