

Board Approves New Policy Development and Advocacy Structure

From the desk of COCA President Ian Cunningham

At its meeting on February 25th, your COCA Board of Directors approved a new way forward for policy development and advocacy activities at your provincial construction federation. Recognizing that COCA has to be more thoughtful and responsive in its policy development and advocacy work, the Board struck a new committee called the Policy and Priorities Committee to provide oversight to the organization's policy making and government relations efforts. Populated by the seven senior leaders from the COCA network who have the greatest experience in policy development and government relations work, the P&P Committee, as it has come to be known, will consider all continuing and emerging public policy issues impacting upon the construction industry and will have the authority to determine which ones are of highest priority for COCA and its members. It has been proposed that the P&P Committee consider using the following criteria or principles for evaluating issues and determining priorities: 1) the issue must be provincial in scope; 2) the issue must not align one segment of the membership squarely against another; 3) the issue must be one where the allocation of COCA resources can make a difference or it must be a matter of principle that requires COCA to be on the public record; 4) the issue must be on the legislative agenda of the government or one

which the government has indicated a willingness to listen; 5) the issue must be of considerable concern to a majority of the membership. It is expected that the Committee will build upon and refine these criteria as its work begins. The P&P Committee will have the ability to consider issues on its own but it is expected that more often it will strike and mandate committees and task forces to review priority issues and make recommendations. The P&P has the authority to name committee and task force chairs and members and it has been recommended, for purposes of efficiency, that committees and task forces number no more than ten people. It is anticipated that P&P will choose to strike small task forces comprised of subject matter experts to address specific issues rather than use the more cumbersome machinery of standing committees with regular quarterly meetings. The P&P Committee will serve as a parallel executive committee for all of COCA's policy development and advocacy work while the Executive Committee will continue to focus its attention on long term strategy and holding management responsible for the achievement of the annual business plan.



WSIB Chair Engaging in "Meaningful" Stakeholder Consultation

The WSIB is possibly in the worst state of its 95 year history: with revenues dropping like a stone as a result of the current economic downturn and falling levels of employment; with investments off by as much as 20% as a result of the meltdown in the financial markets; benefits levels increased by \$1.5 billion as a result of legislated indexation; and, with the unfunded liability standing at a record high of approximately \$13 billion, WSIB Chair Steve Mahoney is commencing wide ranging consultations with WSIB's stakeholders to look for a new way forward. The shape of the consultation is yet to be determined but Chair Mahoney's latest proposal for the construction sector consultation is a tri partite two day, retreat style, professionally facilitated consultation that has been met with mixed reviews, at best, by the industry. There is no question that the time has come for major reform at the WSIB. The current model serves neither the needs of employers or workers. This is no time for the WSIB to consider increasing the job killing premiums it assesses employers and it is highly unlikely that benefits will be rolled back. It's time for the WSIB to take a hard look at the way it conducts its business, to focus on its core business, to look at new models and alternate business processes, to benchmark against compensation systems in other Canadian jurisdictions and to seek all the help it can get not only from stakeholders but from experts in the insurance industry. The time has come for the WSIB to reinvent itself, its time for a paradigm shift at the WSIB.

Dave Kueneman Receives 2008 Cliff Bulmer Award Highlights of COCA's 2009 AGM



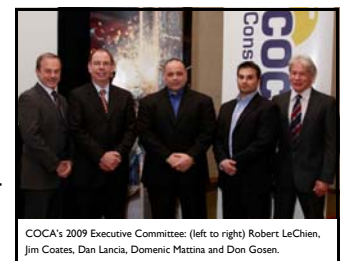
Dave Kueneman and Past Chair Jim Coates

At COCA's Annual Board Appreciation Dinner on February 25, 2009 industry veteran Dave Kueneman was named the recipient of the 2008 Cliff Bulmer Award. The award is presented to an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to building relationships between the construction industry and the government. A two time Chair of the Toronto Construction Association, former Board and Executive Member of COCA and current Board Member of the TCA and the Canadian Construction Association, Dave Kueneman has dedicated time, energy and expertise to the Ontario construction industry for decades. Kueneman was recognized for his ongoing work on amendments to the Construction Lien Act. Kueneman has been Chair of COCA's Lien Act Committee since 2000.

Thank you to everyone who attended COCA's 2009 Annual General Meeting on February 26, 2009 at the Hilton Toronto Airport.

Highlights included:

- An economic update from Scotiabank Chief Economist Warren Jestin, followed by an expert panel on Ontario, the economy and construction;
- The presentation of the first annual Chair's Award to Dr. David Surplis
- A presentation on Building Information Modeling;
- A luncheon keynote presentation from TD Bank Financial Group Chief Economist Don Drummond; and
- The election of the 2008/2009 Board of Directors



COCA's 2009 Executive Committee: (left to right) Robert LeChien, Jim Coates, Dan Lancia, Domenic Mattina and Don Gosen.

Record Deficit and Budget Expected for 2009

The provincial government has confirmed March 26th as budget day and Finance Minister Dwight Duncan has confirmed speculation that Ontario's anticipated deficit for the next two years will amount to approximately \$18 billion.

TD Bank Chief Economist Don Drummond is projecting Ontario could be starring down a record \$13 billion budget shortfall for the 2009-2010 fiscal year that could carry over in to 2010-2011; a far cry from the anticipated \$500 million deficit projected by Finance Minister Dwight Duncan in last fall's economic statement. Sharply declining provincial tax revenue and the province's commitment to match its portion of federal stimulus spending outlined in the recent federal budget are the key contributing factors to the anticipated shortfall. The one certainty that Ontarians can count on is that total provincial government spending for the

next year will surpass \$100 billion; another record.

The McGuinty government has committed to following through on its commitments to protect and create jobs and preserve its improvements to public services and infrastructure such as health care, education and green electricity generation. However, what eagerly remains to be seen is how it intends to deliver on these commitments. More than a month ago the federal government tied a significant portion of its recession fighting agenda to the replacement and refurbishment of core public infrastructure and yet aside from a few photo-op announcements for recreation centres, the details of the "master plan" remain a mystery. With public hopes that infrastructure renewal, and the expected flood of well-paying jobs it will create, will lead the way out of this dark time, let's hope Ontario will have a more definitive solution.

LDCA looking to the future

The London & District Construction Association (LDCA) has taken the bold step forward announcing its intention to launch Canada's first Building Information Modeling (BIM) training centre to be housed in a local construction association.

Coined the LDCA BIM Café, for its café style atmosphere, the training centre falls under the banner of the association's Construction Learning Institute located on Aberdeen Drive in London. Building Information Modeling, known as BIM, is an evolutionary process under development for the past two decades to deliver construction projects using parametric modeling of the building in virtual space prior to construction. The model is then passed from discipline to discipline along the delivery chain with content being added and extracted as needed by the consulting and constructor teams. The model ultimately contains all pertinent information

including building materials and specifications, constructability details, environmental design (LEED®), and building lifecycle information.

A significant portion of the funds to develop the digital environment training centre came from the McGuinty governments' Ontario Skills Training Enhancement Program (OSTEP). When completed, the café will house six training workstations and utilize fully digital whiteboards as training aids. It is envisioned, that once up and running, the centre could potentially train or re-train between 100 and 150 individuals per year to competently navigate BIM.

The LDCA is currently in the process of finalizing the government grant agreement and writing an RFP for BIM trainers to deliver course material. For more information Derek Smith can be reached at 1-519-453-5322 or dsmith@ldca.on.ca

Construction Safety Blitzes Set for March

The Ministry of Labour's *Safe at Work Ontario* blitz strategy is focusing on construction for the month of March as its 430 occupational health and safety inspectors will be seeking out conditions that can result in workers being struck or trapped and crushed by moving equipment or improperly secured building materials.

During the blitz, Ministry of Labour inspectors will focus on:

- the quality of equipment operators' training and supervision
- adherence to equipment manufacturers' operating instructions
- the presence and use of roll-over protection
- the adequacy of equipment maintenance
- proximity to overhead power lines
- the adequacy of excavation shoring
- worker exposure to carbon monoxide
- procedures for handling materials safely, and
- the protection of workers from being struck by construction equipment or road traffic.

Convictions for incidents under the Ontario *Occupational Health and Safety Act* can lead to maximum fines for corporations of \$500,000 and for maximum fines of up to \$25,000 or imprisonment for up to 12 months or both for individuals.

From April 2004 to March 2008, the Ministry cites Ontario's annual lost time injury rate as being reduced 20 percent. Between 2005 and 2008, 34 construction workers were killed on the job.

