

REPORT TO MEMBERSHIP

January 2018



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We are pleased to provide you with this update on the activities and successes of your provincial construction association over the past six months. We ask that it be tabled at your association's next board of directors meeting as a COCA Report.

Advocacy

Government relations work is the cornerstone of COCA's mandate and we gained significant ground on all of our priority advocacy files during the year.

- Without question, our most significant achievement was the introduction and passing of *Bill 142, Construction Lien Amendment Act 2017*. Once the provisions of this Bill are proclaimed over the next 6 to 24 months, the industry will have a totally modernized Construction Lien Act, a prompt payment regime and a new dispute resolution process, all bundled together in a statute renamed the Ontario Construction Act.

The passing of Bill 142 represents a milestone achievement for COCA. We have been fighting for Construction Lien Act reform for about 25 years and the pursuit of prompt payment legislation has been our top priority since 2011.

- We also experienced success working with the Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) in 2017. After the government legislated entitlement for workplace chronic mental stress, COCA was successful in convincing the provincial compensation agency that the workplace must be the "predominant" cause of this multi-factorial condition, not just a "significant" contributor.

We were also successful in pressuring the WSIB for further premium rate reductions in 2018; every construction rate group was granted a reduction. And we continued to work collaboratively with the WSIB to pave the way for the launch of its new classification system, new employer-centric rate setting process and the new prospective experience rating program on January 1, 2020.

- Health and safety has been a priority issue for COCA since our formation in 1975. During 2017 we worked with the Ministry of Labour's Prevention Office on the development of the draft Accreditation policy. The draft policy was published for consultation late in the year and it was positively received. We also worked with the Provincial Labour-Management Committee and the Construction Legislative Review Committee to strengthen the province's health and safety regime.

- During 2017 COCA continued to serve as a watchdog over the Ontario College of Trades (OCOT) and to keep our members well informed about this still fledgling self-governing body for the trades.

Recognizing that the College is here to stay, our approach has been to get involved so that we can help shape the College to serve the public and the industry effectively rather than stand on the sidelines and be a critic. Largely as a result of this approach, COCA's Immediate Past Chair, Don Gosen, was appointed to a two-year term as Chair of the Ontario College of Trades Board of Governors and COCA Executive Committee member Martha George and I were named to the College of Trades Appointments Council.

During the year we weighed in on consultations regarding the change in trade status and we actively solicited applications from interested and qualified individuals to serve on the College's governance structure.

COCA's advocacy successes are the result of the efforts of many individuals and organizations. The successes are the product of the work of our dedicated volunteer committee members and they are also achieved with the help of our various coalition partners including the Ontario Business Coalition on WSIB issues, Prompt Payment Ontario on the pursuit of prompt payment legislation, the Prevention Employers Partnership on health and safety matters as well as many other industry associations and stakeholders. We gratefully acknowledge their willingness to collaborate and their support.

Membership Development

Membership growth was an objective established at our August 2016 planning retreat. This objective was effectively spearheaded by our Chair, Gary van Bolderen, with assistance from Executive Committee members Jim DiNovo, Ron Johnson, Dan Lancia and Jeff Koller.

In 2017 the voice of our provincial federation was made stronger and more effective with the addition of four new member associations, the Niagara Construction Association, the Peterborough Construction Association, the Ontario Erectors Association and the Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association. These organizations add tremendous intellectual horsepower and influential networks to our federation.

Events

- COCA hosted another well attended and successful Annual General Meeting in February 2017. It featured a keynote address by WSIB Chair Elizabeth Witmer, the election of Directors and Officers and the presentation of awards.

A new award was introduced in 2017, the Construction Hard Hat Special Achievement Award. The actual award is a construction hard hat featuring personalized designs for each recipient created by sports artist David Arrigo. Arrigo is better known decorating the masks of professional hockey goalies. Recipients of the first Construction Hard Hat Special Achievement Awards were Construction Lien Act reviewers Bruce Reynolds and Sharon Vogel and COCA's Construction Lien Act Task Force Chair, Ted Dreyer.

- The annual Ontario Construction Associations Curling Bonspiel was hosted by the Grand Valley Construction Association at the magnificent Westmount Golf and Country Club. It was a wonderful event, a combination of GVCA Chair, Jeff Kienapple's ability to make sure everyone has fun along with Martha George's elegant style and good taste. It goes without saying, a good time was had by all.
- At our Welcome to Construction Season Reception at Queen's Park in May, Attorney General Yasir Naqvi committed to introducing legislation pursuant to Bruce Reynolds' and Sharon Vogel's "Striking the Balance" report on the Construction Lien Act and prompt payment, before the end of the then ongoing Spring session of the Legislature.

He further promised that this legislation would be passed into law before the end of the Fall session. True to his word, Minister Naqvi introduced Bill 142 Construction Lien Amendment Act 2017 on May 31st and it passed third reading on December 5th and received Royal Assent on December 12th.

- So close to the finish line, COCA remained focused on the target with great urgency at our Construction Day at Queen's Park industry lobby day in September. The target, of course, was the passage of *Bill 142, Construction Lien Amendment Act, 2017* something we have been working towards for so many years.

In almost 40 meetings with cabinet ministers, parliamentary assistants and with MPPs on all sides of the aisle we pushed for the swift passage of Bill 142. We were not prepared to lose focus nor take our foot off the gas. At the end of day reception Attorney General Naqvi again promised that the Bill would be passed into law before the end of the year.

Operations

On the operations side of our business we upgraded our office technology, made refinements to our website, completed a communications audit and by managing expenses and investments carefully we experienced a successful financial year too.

Conclusion

COCA's role is to work with our members and the government of the day to create a legislative and regulatory environment that supports success in the ICI and heavy civil construction sector and that builds a stronger and more prosperous Ontario. As a non-partisan organization, COCA's focus is on public policy solutions that serve the needs of our industry, without regard for the political stripe of the government. We trust that you see significant value in the work we do on your behalf. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to contact us directly.