

SUMMER
2017
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NO. 2

THE MAGAZINE OF THE
BC BUILDING TRADES

tradetalk

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Building the Power, a history of LiUNA Local 1611, documents the dramatic events and accomplishments of its members from 1937.

For example, in 1953, Stacey Warner, while organizing pipeline workers, was threatened with a shotgun by a company thug hired for that purpose. The police did not take notice. In 1981, the Labour Relations Board ignored the fact that the employer offered union member Dean Homewood a \$1,000 bribe to change his vote—right at the LRB office—when LiUNA Local 1070 was attempting to certify his bargaining unit. Ignoring naked violence had been replaced by ignoring blatant lawbreaking. But the result was not the same. Warner succeeded in organizing the workers. The certification vote at Homewood's employer was lost.

This beautifully crafted 250-page book, written by the Union's Strategic Researcher Mark Warrior, features many archival and recent photos of members at work on industrial, commercial, and institutional construction projects around the province. For information on how to order your copy, call 1.800.663.6588.

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belonging to 12 international unions.
There are approximately 35,000 unionized
construction workers in B.C.

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SUMMER 2017
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Cover:
Bruce Vechere, head of the Childhood Diabetes Laboratories at BC Children's Hospital, said the BC Building Trades have been instrumental in advancing diabetes research.
Photo: Brynn Bourke

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Starting Point

To the editor:

Thank you for keeping us well informed. We need to keep working on cracking the underground economy. B.C. needs to stop selling off west coast timber and fisheries. This is costing lots of B.C. jobs. These jobs are going to China.

*Karl Wiggins, Fraser Lake, B.C.,
Teamsters Local 213*

Correction

The list of First Nations receiving construction craft worker training from the Labourers Local 1611 was incorrect in the last edition of Tradetalk. The groups involved in the training this spring are the Kitselas, Burns Lake, and Wet'suwet'en First Nations.

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5 You Matter!

Learn to value yourself for who you are, not just for what you do. Practice unconditional self-worth.



6 Positive Feedback

Learn to give and receive positive feedback. Practice self-compassion and empathy for others.



7 Practice Practice Practice!

Practice the skills you have learned in this plan. Practice makes perfect.

CONSTRUCTION INDUSTRY REHAB PLAN

José Lam cartoon



We welcome your comments...

The opinions expressed in Starting Point are not necessarily those of the BC Building Trades Council or its affiliates.

Send letters (the shorter the better) to the editor at:

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bctbctc@bcbuildingtrades.org

Letters must include your name, address, phone number and, where relevant, union affiliation, trade or company.





Clear as mud!

For the most part, the continental divide runs through our province along the high peaks of the Rocky Mountains. Rivers on the western side of the divide flow to the Pacific Ocean while the rivers on the east of the divide, flow in that direction. The divide is a unique component of our geography that is not given a great deal of attention.

There is another divide in our province which, at this moment, is given much attention; it is the political division that splits our province. Vancouver Island, coastal communities, and the better part of metro Vancouver elected New Democrat members to the legislature while the Fraser Valley, B.C. Interior, and North elected Liberals.

On election night and subsequent vote counts, the Liberals finished with 43 seats, the NDP 41, and the Greens 3. A total of 1,591,778 votes were cast for the Liberals and the NDP. When all the votes were tallied, the difference between the two parties was a mere 1,566 votes. British Columbians could not be more divided.

The three Green Party MLAs will hold the balance of power. At the time of writing, the Greens have not indicated who they will support; Clark's Liberals or Horgan's New Democrats. Suffice to say that the next few weeks and indeed the next few months and years will be interesting times for political observers.

During the election, a number of promises were made. Of importance to the members of the BC Building Trades was a particular commitment made by the NDP to build two major Skytrain extensions under a project labour agreement. Among other things, PLAs ensure that: B.C. workers have priority employment opportunities; apprentices have access to project work; and First Nations and women will have training and employment opportunities. These are important components to successful PLAs.

Contrast that commitment with how the Liberal government and BC Hydro proceeded with the Site C project. After over 50 years of building hydroelectric dams under the Allied Hydro Agreement, which was initially established by late premier WAC Bennett, the Clark Liberals moved to an "open managed" site. There are hundreds of workers on that site who do not reside in B.C. There are multiple

contractors on the project who reportedly are overwhelmed and confused by the scope and management of the work. Apprenticeship opportunities fail to meet the government's own "aspirational goal" of 25%. Moving away from the Allied Hydro Agreement/PLA to the open-managed site model was a political decision made to appease and draw continued support from the anti-union contractors in our province.

There are many issues in B.C. requiring attention from our political leadership: from healthcare (MSP premiums) to housing and homelessness; from education at the basic elementary levels to post-secondary which must include trades training and employment opportunities for our apprentices; from poverty reduction to growing our economy in an inclusive manner to foster a robust middle-class. The list of issues is exhaustive.

The leadership of the Building Trades will continue to press the B.C. government on

issues that directly impact our members: employment/apprenticeship opportunities; healthcare and pensions; organizing the unorganized; worker/worksites safety; action on the underground economy—another exhaustive list!

What we do not yet know is what the make-up of the B.C. government will be. Both the BC Liberals and the NDP require the support of the Green caucus in order to pass budgets and move legislation through the legislative assembly. Andrew Weaver, the leader of the Green Party, holds a lot of power at the present time and with power comes tremendous responsibility. His party picked up almost 17% of the total votes cast in the election, less than half of what the Liberals and NDP received. Importantly, only 40% of B.C. voters wanted to keep the Liberals in office. To be precise, 59.64% wanted change. Weaver and the Greens would be wise to heed the call for change.

The Building Trades—Who we are

	Phone	Web address
B.C. Building and Construction Trades Council	778-397-2220	www.bcbuildingtrades.org

Affiliated Unions

BC Regional Council of Carpenters	250-383-8116	http://bcrc.ca
Bricklayers & Allied Craftworkers Local 2	604-584-2021	www.bac2bc.org
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Heat and Frost Insulators Local 118	604-877-0909	www.insulators118.org
IUPAT District Council 38	604-524-8334	www.dc38.ca
Ironworkers Local 97	604-879-4191	www.ironworkerslocal97.com
Millwrights Local 2736	604-525-2736	www.millwrights2736.com
Operating Engineers Local 115	604-291-8831	www.IUOE115.ca
Pile Drivers Local 2404	604-526-2404	http://piledrivers2404.ca
Plumbers & Pipefitters Local 170	604-526-0441	www.plumbers.bc.ca
Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 324	250-382-0415	www.ualocal324.com
Refrigeration Workers Local 516	604-882-8212	www.ua516.org
Sheet Metal, Roofers and Production Workers Local 280 (Vancouver)	604-430-3388	www.smw280.org
Sheet Metal, Roofers and Production Workers Local 276 (Victoria)	250-727-3458	www.smwia276.ca
Teamsters Local 213	604-876-5213	www.teamsters213.org
UNITE HERE Local 40	604-291-8211	www.uniteherelocal40.org

It is time to increase the minimum wage and address poverty and income inequality in BC.

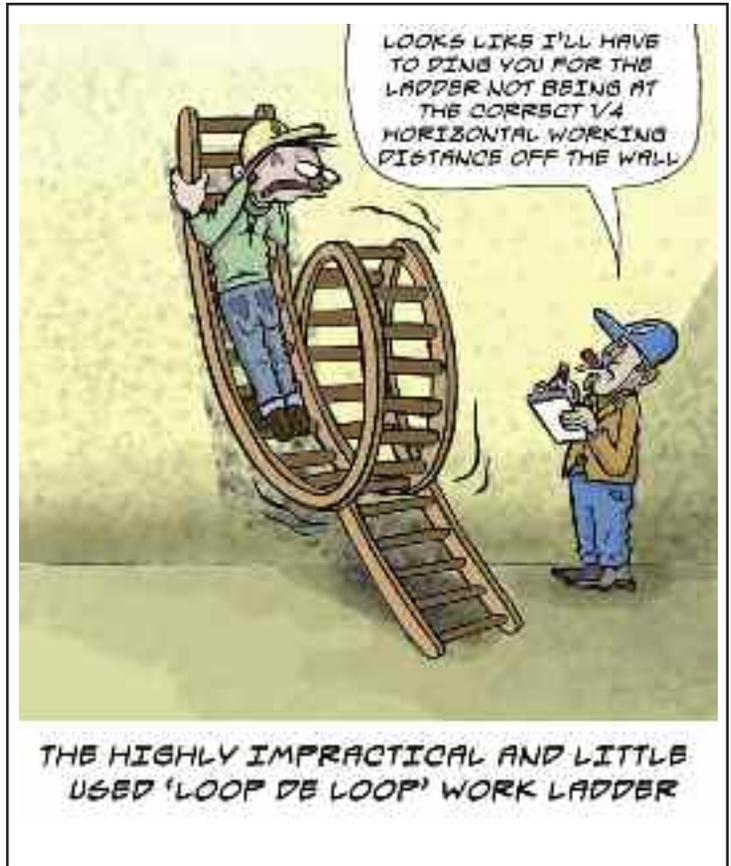
BC's minimum wage is one of the lowest in Canada. As the cost of living continues to go up, workers earning minimum wage cannot make ends meet.

FIGHT FOR 15

BC's minimum wage leaves full-time workers living thousands of dollars below the poverty line.

Work should lift you out of poverty. It's time for the BC government to make a real increase the minimum wage so that nobody is left behind.

RAISE THE MINIMUM WAGE
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Shawn Luke cartoon

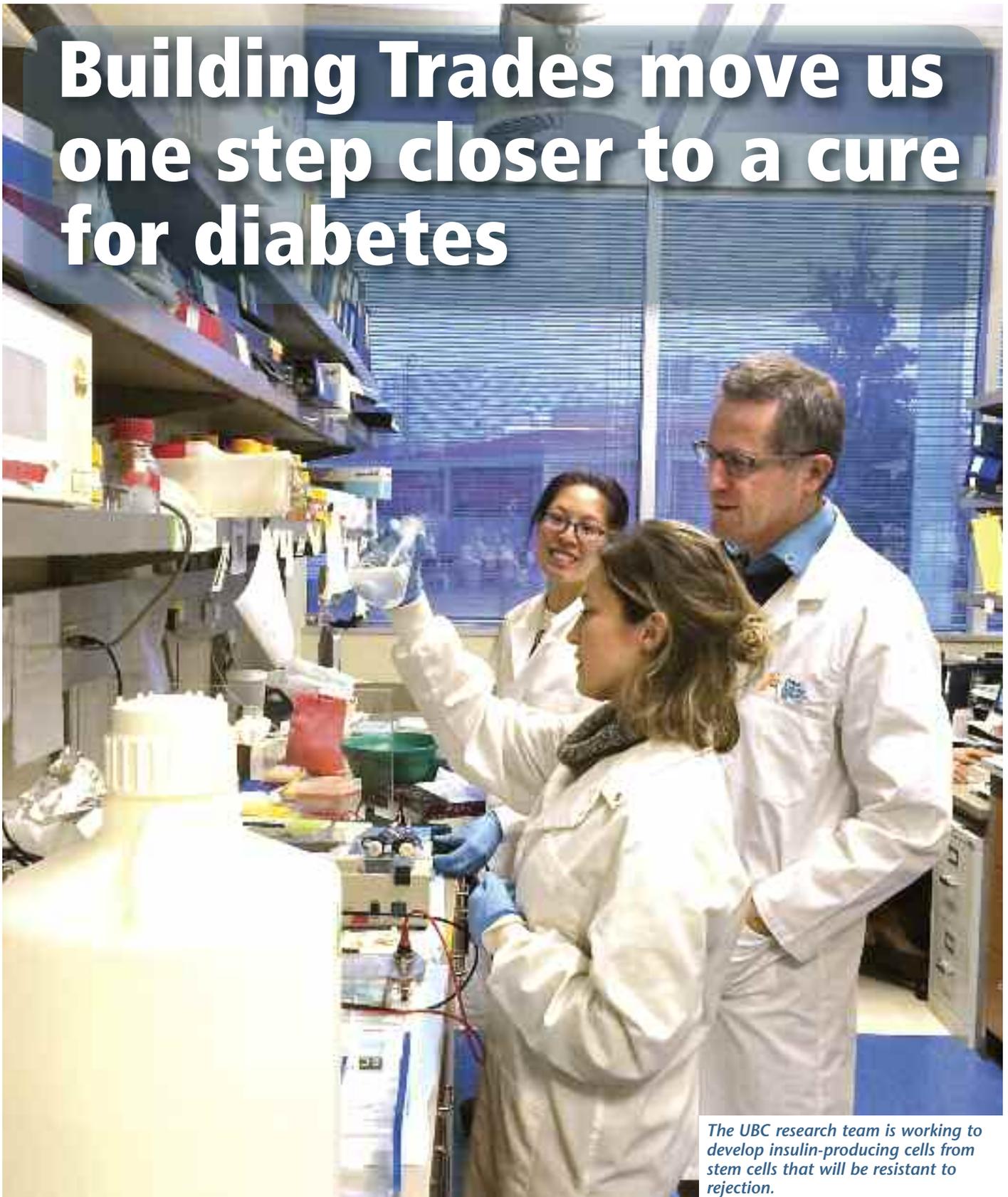
Members of the BC Building Trades will be outside liquor stores on the Father's Day weekend collecting donations for the UBC Centre for Research in Childhood Diabetes. Call your local union office to learn more.

Dollars Against Diabetes (Dad's Day)



Join the campaign! Someday a pen will just be for writing

Building Trades move us one step closer to a cure for diabetes



Brynn Burke photos

The UBC research team is working to develop insulin-producing cells from stem cells that will be resistant to rejection.

By Richard Gilbert

The BC Building Trades Council's unique partnership with UBC is having a transformative effect on research into a cure for Type 1 diabetes.

Over the past 18 years, the BCBT

has raised more than \$330,000 for charity through its annual golf tournament and DAD's Day (Dollars Against Diabetes) bucket collection drives.

For the most part, construction workers are able-bodied individuals

who have a skill which allows them to earn a pretty decent income," said Tom Sigurdson, BCBT executive director. "There is a sense that we are fortunate.

Continued on following page



Continued from previous page

nate and we need to look after people who are less fortunate. As an extension of that, we decided decades ago to support diabetes research.”

Bruce Verchere, head of the Childhood Diabetes Laboratories at BC Children’s Hospital and one of Canada’s leading diabetes scientists, said, “It really started when we built this diabetes centre at Children’s Hospital with some support from the federal and provincial government for equipment... We needed matching funds to liberate the government funds, but also to pay for people to operate and maintain the equipment. We had to make sure the staff was trained and the equipment was being used to its maximum extent.”

Verchere received his PhD in physiology from UBC and is a professor in the Department of Pathology and Laboratory Medicine at the university. One of the most important uses of

Bruce Verchere explains how new technology is being used to enable the integration of single cells into children with diabetes and that can then make new insulin-producing cells.

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the donations from the BCBT goes to experts who train people and operate the high-tech equipment.

“We are using really cool state of the art technology which allows us to integrate single cells of blood from a kid with diabetes,” said Verchere. “Now we are looking at single cells, which involves integrating or looking into the genes and proteins that are made in single cells. We compare cells in healthy and diabetic states in order to try and make new insulin producing cells from stem cells.”

Verchere said one treatment for Type 1 diabetes is to transplant cells, because these people no longer have the cells to make insulin. Transplanting insulin producing cells into patients can have a profound effect, which includes taking people off insulin.

However, transplants don’t last forever and there are not enough organ donors to provide cells for everyone who wants a transplant.

“So, we need new sources, and one of the sources is stem cells,” he said. “We are trying to make new insulin producing cells from stem cells that would be resistant to rejection. We are trying to genetically engineer these cells so they will be protected or last longer once transplanted.”

Donations from the BC Building Trades also provide seed money for research into a cure for diabetes.

“It’s really hard for us to get funding or grants for pilot experiments or wild ideas that might lead to a cure, because you need a lot of data to go to the government for grants,” he said. “I think there is some appeal for that to donors, because they see the new ideas, innovation, and technology that might go to the next level. These initial steps can help jump start or catalyze research.”

More than half of the money generated from these initiatives has been used to support research into childhood diabetes at UBC. The remainder of the money has been donated to Variety–The Children’s Charity, which is a non-profit orga-



Shawn Luke cartoon

BREAKFAST CEREAL FAVORITES

nization dedicated to supporting children with special needs.

The 19th Annual BC Building Trades Golf Tournament is being held at Hazelmere Golf Course in Surrey on July 19. The tournament organizers have set a fundraising goal this year of \$25,000.

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Voters, everywhere in B.C., are waiting to see how the province will be governed.



Joshua Berson photos

Optimism even with election uncertainty

By David Hogben

When all the counting—and recounting—was done, the May 9 election was so close two weeks later that it was still uncertain who would form the B.C. government.

With the Liberals winning 43 seats, the NDP 41 and the Greens 3, it wasn't clear whether the Liberals could cling to power with a little help from the Greens, or if the NDP and Greens could bridge their differences and govern together.

"Until we really know what the stripe of the administration is going to be, for the B.C. Building Trades it's no

change at the moment," said Tom Sigurdson, BC Building Trades executive director, moments after it was learned that the NDP had hung on to the Courtenay-Comox seat, denying the Liberals a razor-thin majority.

"We are still going to lobby for a B.C.-workers-first campaign. We are going to lobby for compulsory trades. We are going to lobby for project labour agreements on publicly funded projects so that we can have more apprentices, more women, more First Nations included.

"None of that is going to change. We just won't know how well received

that message will be until we know who we are dealing with," Sigurdson said.

Despite the unknowns, BC Building Trades President Lee Loftus said the cliff-hanger election was also reason for optimism.

"The last 16 years has offered a pointed strategy to put us out of business, and that is gone.

"Tomorrow, no matter who is in power, I think there will be more opportunities in the marketplace and more occasions to have meaningful conversations with our partners in construction," Loftus said.

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Janet Routledge is joined by supporters as they head to the polls.

“Hopefully we will find some support in the political community to make sure that local workers, local contractors, and local communities are supported with construction work rather than what we have seen, over the last 15-plus years, with multinationals getting all of the work.”

Even if the Liberals manage to hang on to power, the relationship between unionized construction workers and the government has fundamentally changed, Loftus said, especially with the re-affiliation of several local trade unions.

“So, our numbers are stronger, and the government that has been attacking us is weaker. We have the strength to address issues both with the provin-

cial Green Party, and with the New Democratic Party.”

Unionized construction workers, like other British Columbians, will be wondering about the big-ticket projects like Site C and the Kinder Morgan pipeline expansion.

Kinder Morgan and Site C are key Liberal undertakings.

The NDP and Greens campaigned hard against Kinder Morgan, but Sigurdson said it’s not clear whether they can stop a project that has already been approved by the federal Liberal government and the Christy Clark government.

“I don’t know that they can do anything as a province, given that it’s federal jurisdiction.”

Although a NDP/Green alliance could spell trouble for the Site C multi-billion-dollar hydroelectric project on the Peace River, that political outcome wouldn’t be all bad news.

“Site C, under an Orange/Green scenario, would be referred to the B.C. Utilities Commission, but we have heard that major projects, like SkyTrain extension to Arbutus Street and the other one going east to Langley City, would be done under an Orange platform anyway.”

The Liberals have fought hard against a project labour agreement at Site C. Sigurdson said he expects an Orange/Green alliance would be a lot more open to project labour agreements on big, public projects.



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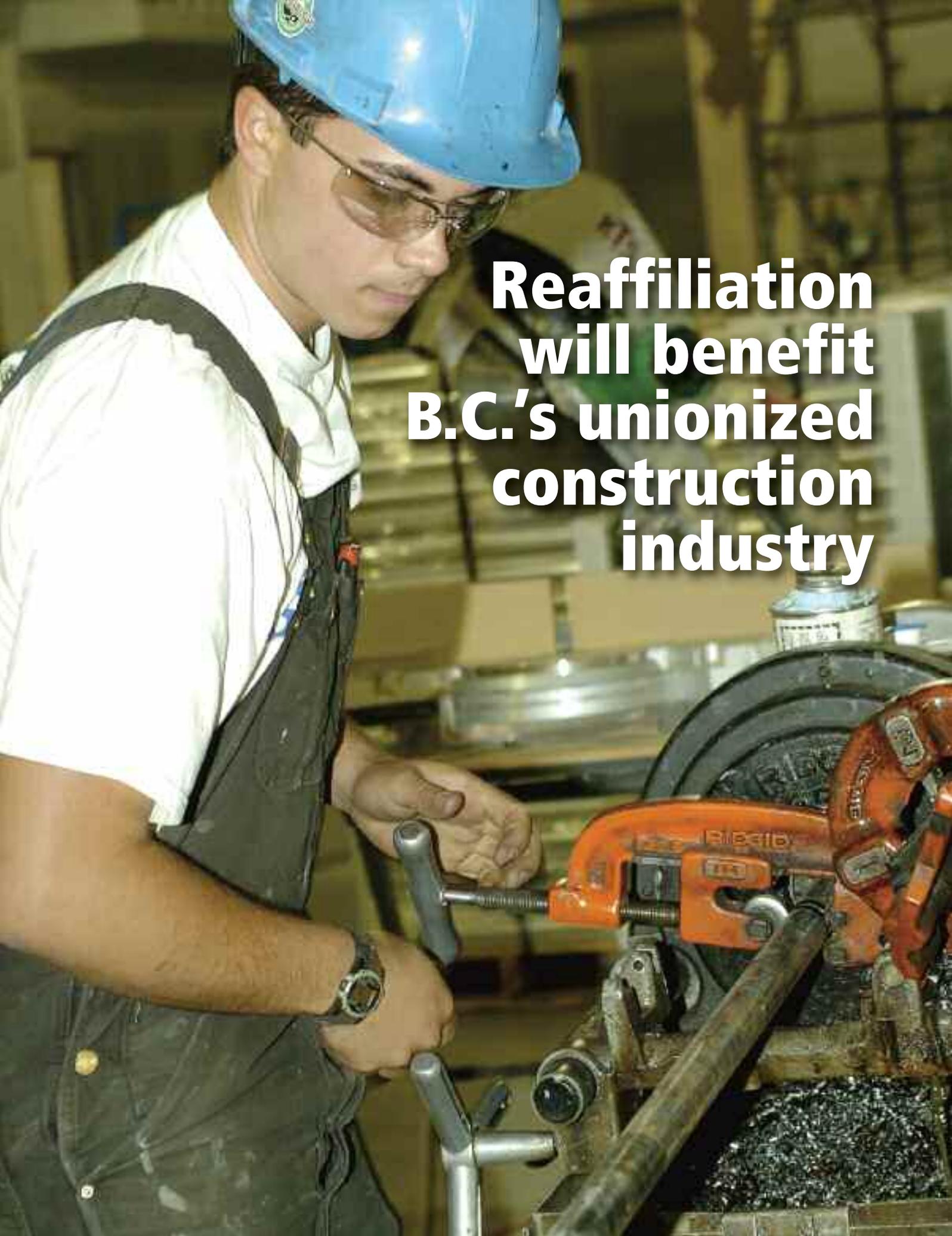
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A construction worker wearing a blue hard hat, safety glasses, a white shirt, and dark overalls is operating a lathe machine in a workshop. The worker is focused on the task, with his hands on the machine's controls. The background shows a typical workshop environment with various tools and equipment.

**Reaffiliation
will benefit
B.C.'s unionized
construction
industry**

By David Hogben

The framework is in place for the unification of B.C. construction unions.

B.C. Building Trades (BCBT) affiliates and re-affiliating unions laid out how they will work together during a special convention at the Pacific Gateway Hotel in Richmond on April 25.

The B.C. Regional Council of Carpenters; Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 170; Millwrights Local 2736; and the Piledrivers Local 2404 joined current Building Trades members in voting unanimously in favor of a resolution to “endorse the principle of unity for British Columbia’s Construction Crafts and agree to fully support a re-unified Council to the benefit of all.”

“It’s an exciting time for us to revisit our history,” said BCBT President Lee Loftus after the vote.

“There was a time when the building trades [council] in B.C. was one of the strongest advocates for working people, and because of some internal strife around the typical stuff construction industry works with, specifically jurisdiction, we found ourselves wandering down different paths,” Loftus said.

“Fortunately, today it looks like all those paths are coming back together.”

The final step in uniting unionized construction workers is set for the BCBT’s annual convention in September which will include changes to the constitution and bylaws that will bring the re-affiliating members back to the council.

The April meeting also set out preliminary budgets, funding, and voting rules for the special convention.

Brian Zdrilic, the millwrights’ busi-

ness manager, said the re-affiliation will give his union a better ability to deal with political and Labour Relations Board issues such as organizing and certifications. “It’s going to be a higher profile for our members,” he said. “A bigger voice carries a lot farther than a single voice.”

Joe Shayler, business manager of the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 170, said “It’s best for the building trades to be together working towards increasing market share in the construction industry and supporting each other.”

Shayler said he wants to see the increased strength of the unified council be put to work focusing on “dealing with issues such as trade qualification tickets in municipalities through the inspection departments.” Municipal inspectors should be required to visit construction sites to ensure that qualified tradespeople are on site, doing quality work, he said.

Darrell Hawk, the piledrivers’ business manager, said there will be improvements for his members because of the re-affiliation.

“I think it’s big picture stuff, trying to be a common voice, on things like project labour agreements.” That common voice, he said, adds strength when promoting union qualifications and apprenticeships.

Jason Pedersen, business manager for the Sheet Metal Workers Local 276 and a current member of the council, said the return of the former affiliates will make it more attractive for project developers to deal with the BC Building Trades rather than face dealing with multiple unions.

“The reason that keeps some people out is they say, ‘I have to deal with 11 or 12 different unions on my own. Why would I do it?’

“[Now] a contractor can say I need this building, and we can say, ‘Well, we can do that for you,’” Pedersen said. “That is something we haven’t had since Expo ’86 when lots of the fragmenting began.”

Bob Blakely, chief executive officer for the Canada’s Building Trades Unions, said the voice of unionized construction workers in B.C. will be stronger with the return of the re-affiliating members.

Anyone trying to put forward a message for the public good faces the same challenge. “If your message is sound, some people may hear it. [But] if your message is sound and carried by a number of people, your chances of success go up astronomically,” Blakely said. For unions, “it means that their views get represented.”

Tom Sigurdson, BCBT executive director, said bringing the groups back into the fold will be good for them and existing Building Trades members. “Having the groups together in the same room means the level of debate will be better focused because it will represent more of the unionized construction industry in B.C.

“We need that. We have had holes. We have not had the carpenters. We have not had the plumbers. So those gaps are going to be filled. We are certainly going to be able to advance, in a more holistic way, the benefits of having qualified workers delivering a quality product to the consuming public.

“We are going to be a little more focused, a little more driven, and deliver the benefits to the members who are working on the tools.”

Sigurdson is optimistic the re-affiliation process will be ready for the finishing touches at the September convention.

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No Go for workers' rights on Site C for now

IT APPEARS that Site C Dam workers won't get a chance to certify as a bargaining unit with the BC Building Trades Affiliates—at least not for now.

The BC Labour Relations Board ruled in late May that organizers with the three affiliates had not signed up enough members to qualify for a certification vote. Its ruling is based on the requirement that a union applying for certification of a business or work site must prove that it has signed up a minimum of 50% of the work force on the payroll at the time of the application.

Josh Towsley, business representative with the Operating Engineers Local 115, who co-led the organizing drive along with reps from Teamsters Local 213 and Labourers Local 1611, was fairly certain

that they had signed up more members than the minimum requirement. The subsequent payroll and sign-up review by the LRB disagreed.

While the result was disappointing, as in any organizing drive, relationships between workers developed and there were many conversations about the challenges confronting workers and the construction industry in B.C.

"We signed up a lot of people," Towsley said, adding that the potential bargaining unit would have included up to 2,000 workers on the project.

Complicating the issue is that the workers—who are mainly crane, heavy equipment, and supply operators and those who perform servicing and maintenance work—are currently members of CLAC (the Christian Labour

Association of Canada) which is not seen as a legitimate labour organization by most unions. The organizing drive was considered a "raid" because one union is asking members of another to join it, Towsley said. The three unions put in their application for a vote well in advance of the April deadline.

"The employees were worried about health and safety issues—like who is properly trained to be running the equipment—and they had payroll concerns and they weren't getting any union representation," Towsley said, adding that the organizing drive started in January, after many of the workers on the site approached the three unions for help. "There are on-the-job fears about being bullied. It's the usual



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situation we see with CLAC. It seems to be just that way with them.”

The general contractor, Hydro Partners Construction Ltd., is a joint partnership between BC Hydro and two private firms. The companies signed “voluntary recognition” agreements with CLAC at the very start of the project. These agreements don’t involve the LRB. Instead contractors or bosses agree to recognize employees as a union and together they sign collective agreements.

“They got a deal when there were just a few people on the site,” Towsley said. “Then they started to crew up for the job.”

In addition, he said the drive was plagued with constant delays by the LRB pushing back decision deadlines. Towsley said a key factor in the delay was that the provincial government has been underfunding the LRB for several years. It no longer has sufficient resources to conduct business in a timely manner. “There’s been a steady decline in resources at the board. There aren’t enough people to get things done as quickly as they used to. At one time, you could get to the board at 8 p.m. or even 2 a.m. because the board would be open for business 24 hours a day. Now you’re getting pushed out the door at 6 p.m. because they want to lock up.”

Another point of concern, he said, was the lack of desperately needed apprenticeship opportunities on the \$8.8 billion project. A BC Hydro report showed that at the end of January there were a mere 40 apprentices, out of a total of 2,000 positions.

“Any project of similar scope to this one would be expected to have 20 to 30% apprentices,” he said. The nine-year project would present a great



opportunity to train large numbers of new entries to the construction sector. “So this (Site C Dam project) has a shockingly low rate of apprentices. That’s very disappointing since BC Hydro is a public utility. This project is being paid for by taxpayers and ratepayers, and the corporation can’t even be bothered to ensure there are sufficient apprenticeship levels. We ought to be getting the maximum level of apprentices on these sites.”

The lack of support for apprenticeship training has been a grievance of many unions. This has been verified by numerous industry and economic monitoring reports showing that B.C. suffers a shortage of up to 30,000 skilled construction trades positions every year.

“A lot of our people are within a few years of retirement,” Towsley said. “They can’t keep working forever, and

when they go, as it is now, there won’t be enough people coming up to replace them.”

This decline in skilled workers has left the industry to seek skilled labour from outside the province and country, or in the case of many non-union firms, simply to do the best they can without them. That also affects the quality of construction, with many examples in the residential construction sector. For larger commercial projects, the results could be disastrous, Towsley said.

“When these types of projects go ahead, we try to ensure they are using union labour,” he said. “These ought to be built with proper apprenticeship programs that ensure quality work and that people are paid well with proper health and safety [programs] and representation from real unions that get real results.”

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Painting apprentices keep pace with technology

Guests at the open house get a look at the Pleural Component Paint System (bottom left), spray booth (top), and abrasive blast tank (top right).

By Leslie Dyson

Students at the Finishing Trades Institute are keeping up with the fast pace of technological change that has come to the industrial painting sector.

While the training institute employs a virtual paint sprayer as much as possible because it is an environmentally responsible tool that saves gallons of paint each year, the FTI also features some of the most advanced equipment in Canada. The official opening of the 14,000 square foot addition to the now 40,000 square foot facility in Surrey took place on March 30.

The District Council 38 Joint Trade Society raised \$4 million for construction and equipment that includes an abrasive blast tank, well ventilated spray booth, and Pleural Component Paint (PCP) System—used in the industrial painting sector. A new hazardous materials abatement training area is located on the mezzanine.

“This is what the future holds for

the industrial sector,” said Instructor Chico Albino. “We want students to be able to use the equipment safely and proficiently so it’s like second nature. It’s labour intensive to set up and clean up the spray gun for example.”

Albino, a member of DC 38 since 1985 and an instructor for nine years said, “You have to look ahead or you’ll be left behind.” Training on this equipment will ensure that the skills of the students are in high demand. “It’s what we’re here for,” he said.

Business Agent Justin Chapman, the training institute’s industrial painting rep, explained that industrial painters are using constantly updated coatings for a wide variety of purposes. Many can’t be mixed the old-fashioned way, in buckets, because they are highly volatile and toxic and can dry in as little as eight seconds.

The PCP spray system allows mixing of components that dry quickly and require specific temperatures to be

combined. The drums can be heated up to 130° before the coating is sent through the paint lines.

These high-performance coatings have many applications, from sealing the bottom of ships to preventing rust and adding strength and durability inside and outside pipes.

Chapman, a 10-year member of District Council 38, learned how to use all this equipment and gained wide-ranging experience while working for 8 years with Dynacore Coatings on jobsites such as the GVRD water pipeline, SkyTrain line, at the Imperial Oil terminals, and the Chevron refinery.

The institute’s circular abrasive blast room, is the first in North America and doubles as a confined-space training environment. It resembles the types of vessels that industrial painters are required to work inside. It is equipped with a fan system that allows the spent abrasive to be vacuumed up and filtered. Materials that can be reused are

Business Agent Justin Chapman with the Pleural Spray Paint system which allows mixing of components that dry quickly and require specific temperatures to be combined.



collected, and leftover paint and rust are redirected into 45-gallon drums for safe disposal.

Equipment is becoming more efficient and user friendly, Chapman said, "but coatings have changed the most. They are far superior and I expect this will continue. There's always the 'newest and greatest' thing."

As a result, efforts to protect workers and the public have been ramped up. "Safety has come a long way," he said. Painters are often required to use fresh air supplied respirators rather than the cartridge models to protect

them from a multitude of epoxies and urethanes. "You want to stay away as much as possible from them," he said.

Before construction began, Chapman went to Business Manager Dave Holmes to say that he could come up with a better design for the abrasive blasting booth. Holmes told him to do the research and come up with a proposal. Chapman met with him a few days later.

"How much?" Holmes asked.

"Over \$100,000," came the reply.

Holmes told the guests at the official opening that he tried to hide his sur-

prise. He said he told the young business rep, "OK. But if it doesn't work, you're fired." The guests laughed.

Chapman called suppliers and assembled all the components. The union has a policy of trying to source equipment and supplies from communities as close as possible to B.C. and he made sure supply companies had local reps who could provide support and troubleshooting as necessary.

The facility went up in just four months and was built without government funding. Holmes credited much of the success of the project to signatory contractor support. Contractors, District Council 38 members, and apprentices worked well together to ensure construction was completed as quickly and efficiently as possible.

Robert Kucheran, general vice president for the international union, thanked the contractors and said this is the third such training facility in Canada, although the FTI in Surrey is the most advanced.

Business Manager Dave Holmes said, "34 years ago, someone taught me my trade so I could have a good career." Passing along skills and experience from member to member "is our philosophy and what we live by every day."

The FTI trains and provides upgrading courses for painters, glaziers, water blasters, drywall finishers, hazmat workers, and interior systems mechanics. It is the only comprehensive glazing training facility in B.C.



Students at the Finishing Trades Institute will be using this newly installed abrasive blast tank.

A great showing from the building trades

Article and photos by Leslie Dyson

Several members of the B.C. Building Trades were medal winners at the provincial Skills Canada competition in April in Abbotsford. Hundreds of post-secondary and high school students competed in this year's event. Gold medal winners were invited to compete at the national competition in June in Winnipeg.

Wall and ceiling installation

Jaysper Mannas, a fourth-year apprentice with District Council 38, won the gold medal in the wall and ceiling installer competition after pre-fabricating materials and installing an elevated ceiling from a mockup provided at the beginning of the six-hour competition.

Mobile crane

Garrett Duffus, a first-year apprentice with the Operating Engineers Local 115, received a gold medal for maneuvering a bucket through an obstacle course and into a series of barrels. He operates a Manitowoc crane for Broadwater Industries out of Prince Rupert.

Lee Taylor, also a first-year apprentice, received a silver medal. He operates boom trucks for RKM Crane Services. Caitlyn Younger, a first year too, received the bronze medal.

Frank Apel, a second-year apprentice who works for Fraser River Pile and Dredge running lattice friction cranes, and Brent Hoard, another first-year from Squamish operating boom trucks and hydraulic cranes for Mega Cranes in Surrey, also competed.

All are receiving their training at Local 115's training site in Maple Ridge.

Plumbing and pipefitting

John Dicus, Level 2 with the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 170, won a gold medal in the sprinkler fitting competition. Grant McKittrick won silver. Samuel Kaiser, from Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 324 won bronze.

The competitors were given a drawing with the fewest measurements possible and asked to fabricate pipe and assemble the project. The systems were then pressure tested and measured for level and accuracy.

Kyle Horne, also with Local 170, won a gold medal doing layout, fabrication, tube bending, grinding, and welding as part of the steam fitting competition. Jacob Downie, Level 2, won the silver and Cody Pihl won the bronze.

Marcello Simoncioni received a silver medal in the plumbing competition for building a piping system with three different types of material (a cast iron main, a system for trap arms and fixture drains, and copper for venting). In addition, competitors had to complete a copper pipe bending project with four ninety-degree bends and a brazed tee.

Refrigeration

Aliah Penner, from Refrigeration Workers Local 516, won a gold medal in the refrigeration competition.

Sheet metal

Matt McHardy, a fourth-year apprentice with Sheet Metal Workers Local 280, won a silver medal in the sheet metal competition. McKenzie Collins, from Sheet Metal Workers Local 276, won the bronze medal.

Electrical

Brian Probert, in his first term with the Electrical Workers Local 213, won a gold medal in the electrical wiring competition. Mitchell De Sousa, in his fourth term, won a silver medal in

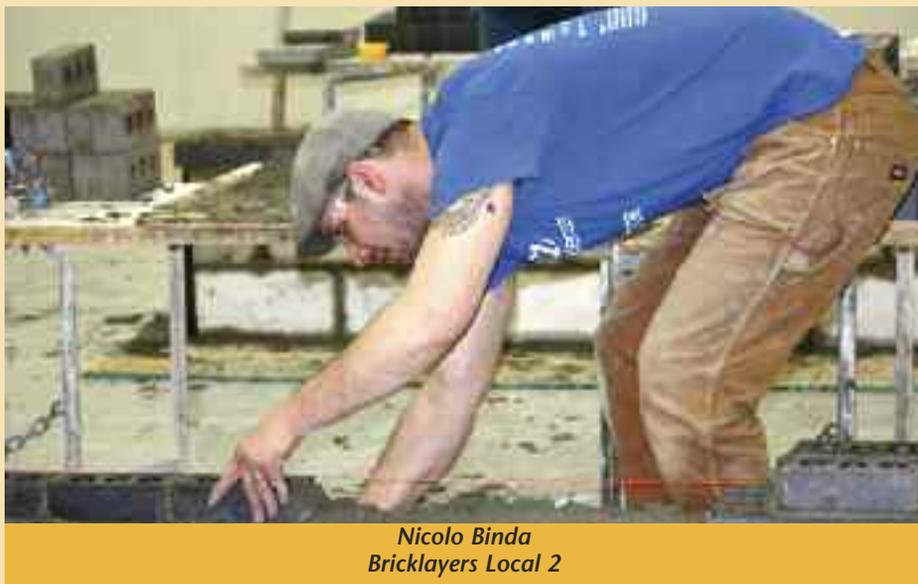
electrical automation and control.

Bricklaying

Nicolo Binda, in Level 1 with Bricklayers Local 2, was tested for speed, neatness, accuracy and safety while building a brick wall with window in under 4.5 hours. He has been doing mostly refractory work and smaller brick projects. His father Antonio Binda, a Local 2 member since 1980, his wife Amber, and daughter Nya were there to cheer him on.

Ironwork

Secondary school student Claudia Daignault was one of many students to try walking the iron beam installed by Ironworkers Local 97. Local 97 journey person John Molloy talked to the students about safety and the nature of the ironworker trade. Local 97 also brought its mobile training trailer that it uses to provide certified welding training. A steady stream of students and younger siblings learned a little about the equipment while welding their names on metal plates.



Nicolo Binda
Bricklayers Local 2



*Marcello Simoncioni
Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 170*



*Jaysper Mannas
Wall and Ceiling installer - DC38*



*John Dicus
Plumber and Pipefitters Local 170*



*Lee Taylor
Operating Engineers Local 115*



*Jacob McVeigh
Plumber and Pipefitters Local 170*



*Brian Probert
Electrical Workers Local 213*



*Claudia Daignault
walking Local 97's iron beam*



*Jacob Downie
Plumber and Pipefitters Local 170*

Building bridges and crossing controversy

Joshua Berson photo

The general contractors for the new Massey Bridge crossing over the South Fraser River will be announced soon but major infrastructure projects in B.C. might be little less controversial if union workers and contractors were given fair access to the tendering and bidding processes, said Walter Canta, Teamsters Local 213 secretary treasurer.

The new bridge, which will replace the existing George Massey Tunnel linking Delta to Richmond, as well as the recently approved Kinder Morgan oil pipeline, are raising concern across the region for numerous reasons—not the least being who gets to build them. Canta said how large-scale projects are tendered needs greater public accountability and should be more inclusive.

“Kinder Morgan was awarded, and most of it went to Ledcor and Kewitt, and contractors are telling me they didn’t get a fair chance to bid,” he said. “Our contractors got to bid on some of it, but apparently not the rest. Why can’t they let us bid on all of it? It’s supposed to be an open-tendering process, but that’s not how it seems to be in practice.”

Particularly of concern, he said, is that Ledcor and Kewitt are both signatory contractors with CLAC—the Christian Labour Association of Canada, which is not seen as a legitimate labour organization by most unions. CLAC has been repeatedly challenged over the past two decades with complaints of lack of democracy and member control, poor representation

of workers’ concerns, undermining standard pay rates, inadequate training and health and safety (particularly in the construction sector), and lack of solidarity with other unions on worker and public interest issues.

Many of its contracts are “voluntary recognition agreements” where contractors or employers agree to recognize workers as a union and bargain for an agreement without the involvement of the Labour Relations Board. The agreements are often concluded before anyone is hired and operations begin. Many unions and public interest groups have charged that contractors and employers seek out CLAC and similar organizations to sign such contracts in order to trap workers into binding working conditions they had no say in



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drafting and administered by an organization over which they have limited control. This has earned these groups the title of “rat unions.”

Canta said the title is well-earned. “We’ve seen a lot of this over the years,” adding that he strongly suspects the provincial Liberal government of favoring CLAC-signatory or non-union contractors in tendering contracts for public infrastructure projects. “The Port Mann Bridge project wasn’t really up for tender and Enbridge seemed to have had everyone in place before anything started” on the Northern Gateway Pipeline project.

Union construction workers are looking forward to the opportunity to work on the new bridge and pipeline, said Canta, despite widespread public concern around both. But he is concerned that the bidding process may prevent them from getting much of the work.

“Generally we see any construction

being good for us,” he said. “We have no problem with the bridge itself. There’s a real need to improve our transportation infrastructure (in the Lower Mainland). We just want it built union, with safety and quality assurance and that people are paid living wages for their work.”

This position has put the local on the opposite side of many public interest, consumer and environmental organizations, and the majority of the mayors in the Greater Vancouver Regional District—with the exception of Delta Mayor Lois Johnson, who has been among the strongest proponents for the project.

The GVRD has cited concerns over the loss of high quality farmland because of the project and sees the solution to increasing traffic as expanding public transit. Other opponents insist that upgrading and widening the existing Massey Tunnel would be a less disruptive and less costly alternative.

Canta agreed that protecting farmland is important, but that some loss is inevitable given the mayors’ support for a growing metropolis. “Municipalities are already giving up farm land for other things,” he said. “How much land has been freed up for townhouses? It’s a juggling act. We are growing our communities, and there are costs for that, and it’s better to pay them now than wait until it gets much more expensive and tougher.”

He added that numerous reports show that the Lower Mainland is in need of both road and highway improvements, as well as public transit expansion. He’s also not opposed to the tunnel upgrade option as an alternative. However, he pointed out that all of this will affect some farmland, but overall will be an improvement, claiming that the new Port Mann bridge and South Perimeter road have eased traffic congestion, which studies have shown reduces air pollution.

B.C. workers are paying for refunds to business

By Merrill O’Donnell, Workers’ Advocate

The provincial government’s recent announcement to create a policy to return all future surpluses in WorkSafe B.C.’s accident fund to the business community reminds us of the unflinching accuracy of Marx’s statement that “the executive of the modern state is but a committee for managing the common affairs of the whole bourgeoisie.”

As noted in its news release, the government’s resulting policy, which will be crafted by June 2017 and supported by the necessary statutory changes during the next legislative sitting, “will trigger a return of funds to employers when WorkSafe B.C.’s funding hits a specific target level of assets over liabilities over a period of time.” According to Shirley Bond, the minister of labour at that time, “employers fund the workers’ compensation system in our province and we think their money should be returned to them when the system is over-funded.”

The government has revealed—without a shadow of a doubt—who it serves, certainly not workers.

As we contemplate the government’s proposal, it is instructive to remind ourselves who creates value (read profits) for employers. Contrary to Bond’s statement that “employers fund the workers’ compensation system,” the fact is that all value in our economy is ultimately created by labour. True, in an economic structure based on property rights such as ours, individual employers emerge to develop the means of production and employment for workers. But only by harnessing those workers can value, wealth, and profit be generated. Without workers the machines (i.e., the means of production) lay idle and powerless. It is worker-generated profits, not employers, who ultimately fund the workers’ compensation system.

As for the claim that WorkSafe B.C. is “over-funded,” we must ask, how did this happen? The answer isn’t too hard to find. The legislative and policy changes brought in by the B.C. Liberals in 2002 as a result of the aggressive lobbying of the

business community has, as planned by the business community and as expected by anybody who was paying attention, generated significant surpluses in the hundreds of millions of dollars. And what did those legislative and policy changes consist of?

The list is too long for me to provide an exhaustive account, but let me give you a little taste:

- benefit rates were reduced from 75% of gross income to 90% of net income thereby reducing benefits by 13%
- power was concentrated in the board of directors, including the delegation of power to enact binding policy and the removal of discretion in decision-making processes
- the Consumer Price Index was reduced to the rate of CPI increases less than 1% and to a cap of 4% in any year, and calculated only once yearly rather than twice
- standard lifetime pensions were eliminated for pensions that stop at age 65
- deep cuts were made to employer premiums
- loss of earnings disability awards were significantly reduced and there was an unconscionable clamping down on vocational rehabilitation services which were supposed to prepare injured workers who could no longer return to their pre-injury jobs for meaningful careers
- the cancerous growth of the culture at WorkSafe B.C. that views the business community as their “client” and injured workers as the enemy.

The government has assured the public that “the amendment will not affect the benefits payable to workers injured or killed at work.” That’s a lie. Not only will workers’ compensation benefits, disability awards, and vocational rehabilitation services be negatively affected, more workers will die on the job because funding for accident protection will be reduced over time.

As BC Building Trades Executive Director Tom Sigurdson said, “this announcement is a betrayal to every injured worker and their families.” That’s the truth.

Canadian building trades present monumental gift to the nation

Canada's Building Trades Unions (CBTU) recently marked a historic occasion with the unveiling of the Canadian Building Trades Monument in Major's Hill Park in Ottawa on May 16.

The monument was fabricated in Ontario with Cambrian black granite, quarried in Quebec. The most prominent features are a pair of oversized plumb bobs, one of the oldest tools known to mankind. The monument also features 16 iconic 'tools of the trades' etched into the granite. Each tool was chosen by one of the 14 different trade unions that sponsored the monument.

"CBTU is proud to offer this monument as a gift to all Canadians," said Bob Blakely, CBTU's chief operating officer. "This was a long time coming, we have worked hard and long to create a national monument in Canada's capital that will celebrate the contributions made to society by the women and men who work in the building and construction trades and commemorates the losses they have endured in carrying out their work."

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau was present to accept the monument on behalf of the people of Canada.

Working with Indigenous communities

Canada's Building Trades Unions resolved at the May convention to provide career opportunities in the skilled construction trades for underrepresented segments of the population

A highlight of the convention was the unveiling of a monument to tradespeople.



including First Nations, Metis, and Inuit (FNMI) Peoples.

Furthermore, the delegates committed to meaningful consultation with Indigenous communities, building respectful relationships, and continuing to advocate for cultural understanding in an environment of inclusivity and respect.

The resolution was presented by Darrell LaBoucan, the director of Canadian Affairs for the Iron Workers union, and it adopts the principles of #92 of the national Truth and Reconciliation Call to Action.

This is the first step in an initiative designed to recruit and retain under-represented populations in the workforce. Building on the momentum gained from its work with women in the trades, the national building trades will expand its advocacy to include Indigenous peoples, the next generation of building trades workers, and new Canadians.

"This initiative is important to the future of the building and construction trades as well as to the workforce of Canada," said Lindsay Amundsen, CBTU workforce development coordinator. "We need to recruit and retain a workforce that reflects the country we live in. We are really proud of the work we have done with women in the trades and look forward to creating an even more inclusive work environment, where everyone is respected."

The design features plumb bobs, in use since ancient times, and 16 engraved tools representing the trades that sponsored the monument.



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Finally! A monument to tradespeople



So, what's the big deal and why would anybody erect a monument to tradespeople? Are they just the folks who couldn't cut it at university and need a way to keep out of the soup kitchen?

You might hear ill-informed people make these kinds of comments and they are giving opinions that their very limited knowledge entitles them to hold.

But the facts are readily available. The question is "Why is it taking so long for people to figure it out?"

Our crafts suffer from underexposure. Construction sites are fenced off and we disappear into them, do our work and then leave. By the time the public sees what we've done we're long gone to the next job. The only real exposure most people get is on the way to work or an important appointment when they come face to face with the traffic flagger who is holding up the stop sign, an inconvenience of seconds.

Another reason is that there are no accurate construction role models on TV. Tradespeople are often portrayed as second-class folks in dead end jobs and married to Roseann! The other reason is, strangely enough, that we are wildly successful in what we do—bridges in Canada don't fall down, boilers don't blow up and pipes don't leak. It is once again a case of out of sight out of mind.

Consider the day of a person who lives in a climate-controlled high rise condo overlooking Stanley Park. The electrically driven alarm clock rings precisely at seven and the automatic coffee maker begins to make coffee. Our person swings out of bed and walks across comfortable flooring to the en suite. Their business is done, teeth are brushed, and shower finished leaving enough time to enjoy the view for a couple of moments.

This person has been touched since before waking by the construction crafts. The high rise is stable and safe because of the work of the ironworker, carpenter, labourer, cement mason, crane operator, bricklayer and a few more that collaborated in building the structure. The climate control was achieved by some sort of mixture (depending on the heating system

used) of the talents of the electrician, plumber, steamfitter, sheet metal mechanic, gasfitter, refrigeration mechanic and instrumentation mechanic. The view was enabled by the glazier or the ironworker. Safe electricity and potable safe water are also taken for granted. The flooring (depending on its makeup) came courtesy of the floor-layer. The weather was kept out by the skills of the plasterer, sheet metal worker, painter, insulator, pre-cast ironworker or carpenter—ISM lather. The elevator constructor allows for a safe descent to the parking garage, which has been built and maintained by the trades above and a few others like the surveyor and the non-destructive testing technician.

On the road, the now happy motorist is driving on roads and bridges built by the operating engineers, labourers, carpenters, ironworkers, bricklayers, and teamsters.

While at work, our person fires up his computer and it works, thanks to the fiber optic cable installed by the telephone electrician and with power that comes from not just the electrician and powerline technician but from a host of trades including some that our person has never even heard of before. It takes all the trades to construct a generating station and those

that they have never heard of are paramount to the success and reliability of the grid—the boilermaker, millwright, insulator and steamfitter.

They have never thought that the trades working away from home need a home away from home and they are looked after by chefs, cooks, bakers, camp attendants, nurses and warehousemen.

The day has just begun and our person has been affected (favourably) by all of the trades and crafts in the Building Trades and many more.

This goes on every day without fail. We build their world and keep it running.

When the Oilers win the Stanley Cup it is in a facility we built and now maintain; when Parliament decides great things it is in a structure that we have built and re-built; when a skilled surgeon saves a life it is in an OR that we built and equipped with medical gas, light and computer links.

Quite simply there isn't an activity that we are not involved in. Without us the system grinds to a halt. We are the glue that holds everything together, the backbone of Canadian Society. So that is why it is a very big deal when someone has finally recognized that they need us.

Congratulations to you, the stalwarts to whom the Construction Worker Monument is dedicated. It should never have taken so long!

The monument to tradespeople unveiled last month in Ottawa.



A big role for building trades

Same construction work but focus moves to climate change

By Richard Gilbert

“The construction industry in Canada is going to be busier than we have ever been as we provide opportunities to reduce Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emissions and move to advance the goals of the Paris Agreement,” said Lee Loftus, president of the BC Building Trades.

The BCBT commissioned a study by the Columbia Institute to undertake original research on climate change and the role of the construction industry in transforming to low-carbon development in Canada.

“This document provides a solution, which is in defence of work and is not in opposition to the protection of the environment. I don’t think we will meet net zero by 2050, but I certainly think we will be moving in that direction.”

Loftus argues that climate change and global warming are Canada’s most important environmental, economic, and public policy challenges in the coming decades.

The Paris Agreement, introduced in December 2015 at the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change, commits 195 countries including Canada to

reduce GHG emissions that cause catastrophic climate change, while shifting economic activity away from the use from fossil fuels, such as coal, oil, and gas. This first legally binding climate change agreement mandates governments to keep global average temperature from increasing more than 2°C above pre-industrial levels, and pursue efforts to keep the rise below 1.5°C.

The agreement aims to achieve net zero carbon emissions in 2050 by balancing a measured amount of carbon released with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset, or buying enough carbon credits to make up the difference.

A recent study from the Columbia Institute entitled “Jobs for Tomorrow: Canada’s Building Trades and Net Zero Emissions” views this target as a major policy challenge for the Canadian government. However, the global response to climate change is also an opportunity to invest in the construction of facilities for the generation of renewable energy, including hydro, wind, solar, tidal, biomass, and geothermal energy.

“The construction employment that our members are doing today will be

no different from the work that will be done in the future as we move toward 2050,” said Loftus. “This is an exciting time for the building trades in terms of being able to look at future employment and get a better understanding of what that means.”

The study concludes that the transformation of the national economy is one of the most important pathways to low-carbon development. It will require construction of new energy infrastructure and conversion of existing systems.

For example, the study forecasts that the construction of an electrical supply grid composed primarily of new wind, solar, geothermal and tidal power generation (43%); hydroelectric (40%); and legacy nuclear (5%) would result in more than 890,000 direct construction jobs by 2050.

In addition, net-zero building retrofits and new green industrial, commercial, and institutional building construction are predicted to account for nearly 2 million direct construction jobs.

Building small district energy systems in half of Canada’s municipalities with populations over 100,000 would



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create over 547,000 construction jobs by 2050.

An investment of \$150 billion on urban transit infrastructure—including

rapid transit tracks and bridges, subway tunnels, and dedicated bus lanes—between now and 2050 would create about 245,000 direct

construction jobs. More importantly, the transformation of the national economy will require the work of all the trades in the BCBT.

Infrastructure spending Higher wages and living standards

The benefits of a national infrastructure spending program include a higher standard of living, more private-sector investment, and a more productive economy without significant long-term fiscal consequences to federal or provincial governments," according to the Broadbent Institute.

"There's also a cautionary tale in here," added economist Robin Somerville, the author of "The Economic Benefits of Public Infrastructure Spending in Canada."

"The costs of neglecting our public infrastructure are not zero. Allowing our public infrastructure to decay imposes costs at least equal but opposite to the benefits estimated in this study."

A five-year \$50-billion public infrastructure spending initiative would trigger significant private sector investment and stimulate wage increases and competitiveness. The study models a five-year program of \$10 billion per year equally

shared by the federal and provincial governments.

Within the five-year construction phase, governments also recoup \$0.44 of every dollar spent through additional tax revenues. The public infrastructure brings permanent benefits to private business by lowering their operating costs, which leads to increased productivity and higher wages for workers.

Other key findings include:

- in the short term, the spending program boosts employment by between 81,000 and 88,000 jobs, increasing the employment rate by 0.4% to 0.5%;
- about one half of the new jobs (42,150) would be in construction, with positive short-term impacts on jobs in manufacturing, and the business service sector providing support to construction;
- in the short term, provincial revenues raised per dollar spent are highest in

Quebec (\$0.72), British Columbia (\$0.57) and Nova Scotia (\$0.46).

- B.C. and Quebec see the greatest impact on real GDP growth in the short term, while the average annual increase across the range of benefit scenarios for Canada is around 0.7%, B.C. sees growth between 0.8% and 0.9%, and Quebec an average increase of over 1.0%.
- private-sector investment rises by as much as \$0.34 per dollar spent in the short term, and by up to \$1 per dollar spent in the long run;
- the spending program increases labour productivity by between 0.3% to 0.5% in the long term and workers earn higher real wages: up 0.4 to 0.6% a year on average relative to the economy without the spending program.
- the change in the average annual deficit-to-GDP ratio from this program lies between a rise of 0.04% and a decline of 0.02% for the federal government, and between a rise of 0.08% and a fall of 0.04% for provincial governments.

MARCH 1 - OCTOBER 31

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Shawn Luke cartoon

My career in trades is built on safety



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Find helpful industry resources at [worksafebc.com/health-safety](https://www.worksafebc.com/health-safety)

WORK SAFE BC

Building a culture of safety from the ground up

WORKSAFE B.C.

JOB SAFETY

Workers new to the trades, especially those without any experience in them, often face challenges and barriers that may not occur in other jobs. The learning curve for safety regulations alone can be daunting, never mind the educational, physical, and technical rigors found in most trades. However, with the right training, resources, and employer support, workers new to the trades can become, not only proficient in their fields, but successful leaders in their industries.

The students in the Women in Trades Training (WITT) Program at Okanagan College, mentored by WorkSafe B.C. prevention officers and journeypersons Mary-Jaye Salmon and Lindy Monahan are tackling the unique challenges of women entering a career in trades and building a culture of health and safety that will serve them along their way.

Taking down barriers

Single parenthood and the high cost of childcare affect many women working outside the home. Low-paying jobs in retail and service sectors often include shift work and irregular hours which drive women to look for other careers. However, purchasing necessary trade equipment or attending the required training programs can add even more difficulties. The support and advice from the WITT go a long way to helping students navigate a new career path.

“For these students, working with mentors who’ve not only gone through similar challenges, but who have come

through as leaders in their fields is a great resource,” said Monahan, a journeyperson cabinet maker. “It shows them that success is possible. Many of us worked in the trades before there were resources like financial assistance and mentor support, so students are confident about coming to us with questions or concerns about the industry or the specific jobsite they’re on.” These queries include workplace safety which remains a focus for students when they’ve moved into jobs in the field.

“When they first come to us, many of these women are starting from square one learning about these trades and their safety requirements,” said Salmon, a journeyperson carpenter. “Situational awareness, machine safety, PPE, it’s all brand new.” The good news, she added, is that to these workers, “Safety becomes an automatic part of every job. It’s not simply another chore to be checked off a list.”

Monahan, who often sees former students on jobsites, agreed. “It’s great to see students get involved in trades. I’ll be visiting a site and they’re happy to point out that they’re in compliance with the safety requirements. Or if something is unsafe on the worksite, they’ll ask my opinion on how to best address it. There’s such conscientiousness about safety—it’s great for them, great for their employers, and it helps everyone on the job stay safe.”

These new workers, having been mentored by women in trades who are also occupational health and safety professionals, are building a culture of safety in every construction trade they

Teleclaim centre open from 8 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Workers who’ve been injured on the job, can call WorkSafe B.C.’s Teleclaim Centre between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. to file a report. A representative will complete the injury report, explain the claims process and help direct the worker to other services if necessary. The worker’s employer is then notified of the injury and both the worker and employer can follow the status of the claim online.

Call 1-888-WORKERS (1-888-967-5377) or #5377 on your cell phone if you subscribe to Telus Mobility, Rogers or Bell Mobility.

join. “They are the agents of change,” said Monahan. “They’re going out there. All I’m doing is sowing the seed and they make it come to fruition.”

Learn more

WorkSafeBC has a variety of resources and information on young and new worker safety; find them at www.worksafebc.com/health-safety

To learn more about the Women in Trades Training (WITT) Program at Okanagan College and WorkSafeBC’s role, see our Women in trades video at www.youtube.com/worksafebc



José Lam cartoon

BUILD TOGETHER

WOMEN OF THE BUILDING TRADES

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Member at Large

Amy Carr
Member at Large

Crystal Guay
Member at Large

Michelle Neil
Member at Large

Build Together BC Team at Skills BC

The Build Together BC team participated again in Skills BC's Trade & Technology Conference for Women on April 5. Team members acted as mentors for dozens of young women interested in exploring opportunities in the trades. The conference was sponsored again this year by the Electrical Workers Local 213.

New structure, new strategies

A new executive was elected at the annual general meeting. The new executive will be working on improving regulations around pregnancy for women in the trades, networking with local unions, and increasing recruitment efforts. Build Together BC is open to all women who are members of a BC Building Trades affiliated union. For more information, or to join email info@buildtogetherbc.org



The Build Together team at the Delta Career Fair.



Sandra Brynjolfson, a member of the Build Together team, shares her enthusiasm for the electrical trade.



BCBT President, Business Manager Insulators Local 118

The B.C. election changed the way we do construction

WHILE B.C.'s major parties jockey to establish a stable provincial government, BC Building Trades affiliates have been busy putting our house in order to defend the unionized construction industry.

I am proud to welcome back members from the Plumbers and Pipefitters Local 170 and the BC Regional Council of Carpenters—including Floorlayers 1541, Millwrights 2736, and Piledrivers Local 2404. It's been a quarter of a century since the council has been so strong and unified.

This is an exciting time.

We will need that solidarity now more than ever to prepare for the uncertainty that's about to take place at the provincial level and to help us shape the provincial discourse on the future of construction in British Columbia.

For nearly two decades, developers and proponents have built with impunity. They've bypassed local labour for foreign workers on major projects like the Canada Line and Golden Ears Bridge. They've cut corners on materials and supplies on projects like the Olympic Village. They've rolled through communities and started development without any concerns to employing or engaging local First Nations peoples.

We may not know much about the final outcome of the B.C. election but one thing we know for sure is that the future of projects like Site C and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline are in jeopardy. And if these proponents want security, they'll now have to establish the social license to proceed.

We may not know much about the final outcome of the B.C. election but one thing we know for sure is that the future of projects like Site C and Kinder Morgan's Trans Mountain Pipeline are in jeopardy.

Construction has changed today. Labour relations have changed today. The old boys' club is not going to fly. Project proponents and labour have to come to terms with the social issues connected to major projects, the environmental impacts, and a changing workforce that creates meaningful spaces for women, First Nations, youth, and new Canadians.

This is the future of construction. Those that fight it will go the way of the dinosaur.

For over 16 years, building trades members have been told to pound salt as contracts and projects have flowed to those most closely connected to the BC Liberal government.

With a razor thin electoral outcome, the winds have changed and it's time to come back to the table and start a meaningful conversation about building a province responsibly.

We have an opportunity as members of B.C.'s finest skilled trades workforce to drive the conversation. Instead of fighting over scraps, we can drive for meaningful change that forces development that benefits communities.

The low bid model is broken. Proponents can't continue to exploit workers without the public rising up and saying enough.

No matter how we move forward, I think the electorate has spoken and we in the building trades are prepared to advance our rights and our interests.

I look forward to the next four years. I look forward to working with our affiliates and I look forward to a positive change.

Application deadline June 30th.

B.C. Building Trades Council Fred Randall Bursary

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Write a 250-word essay on the topic "The commitment to trade union principles." You must be a member in good standing of an affiliate of the BC Building Trades and enrolled in a union-recognized trades training program to be eligible.

Many stories to tell in the first 50 years of the BC Building Trades

By Jim Sinclair

On June 2, 1967, leaders representing more than 40,000 B.C. construction unions met to formally accept the charter creating the B.C. and Yukon Territory Building Trades Council. It was the culmination of years of discussion during which time unions kept coming to the same conclusion—we're better off together than when we are divided. The first annual convention of the council was held in October of the same year at the Blue Boy Hotel in South Vancouver. More than 120 delegates were present to endorse founding president Don O'Reilly and lay the foundation for the battles that construction workers would face. For 50 years, the council has been the recognized voice of construction workers in British Columbia.

Two years later, and in response to this development, more than 500 unionized construction companies formed the Construction Labour Relations Association, and the stage was set for years of tough bargaining, strikes, and lockouts.

Through ups and downs in the industry, the council continued to fight for the rights of construction workers to a fair wage and safe working conditions. It's been a dramatic history, full of solidarity and struggle, but also division and difficult times.

For nearly the entire time, the council and its member unions have been in a battle for survival with well-organized and well-funded groups such as the Independent Contractors and Businesses Association (ICBA) who, more often than not, had the government in their corner as well.

Despite the challenges, enormous victories were won over the years, including good pensions and benefits, safer workplaces, decent camp accommodations, the best apprenticeship programs in the country, and a jurisdictional assignment plan that ended most of the infighting between unions.

Information picket in Vancouver, late 1980s



“There’s no question it’s been an uphill battle to maintain and improve conditions for construction workers but there can be no doubt the decent conditions that we do enjoy are the direct result of unions sticking together to fight for all construction workers,” said Executive Director Tom Sigurdson. “We have a lot to celebrate and it’s important for us to take some time to do this and to honour those who sacrificed and fought so hard to enable us to have what we have today.”

More details of the celebrations will be carried in future issues.

A 50th anniversary celebration is planned for October, and the council has contracted Jim Sinclair, the former president of the B.C. Federation of Labour, to produce a book capturing the history of the B.C. Building Trades. Sinclair, who is a journalist by trade, is aiming to have the book finished and printed in time for the anniversary dinner in October. A committee of executive officers will oversee the book and the celebrations.

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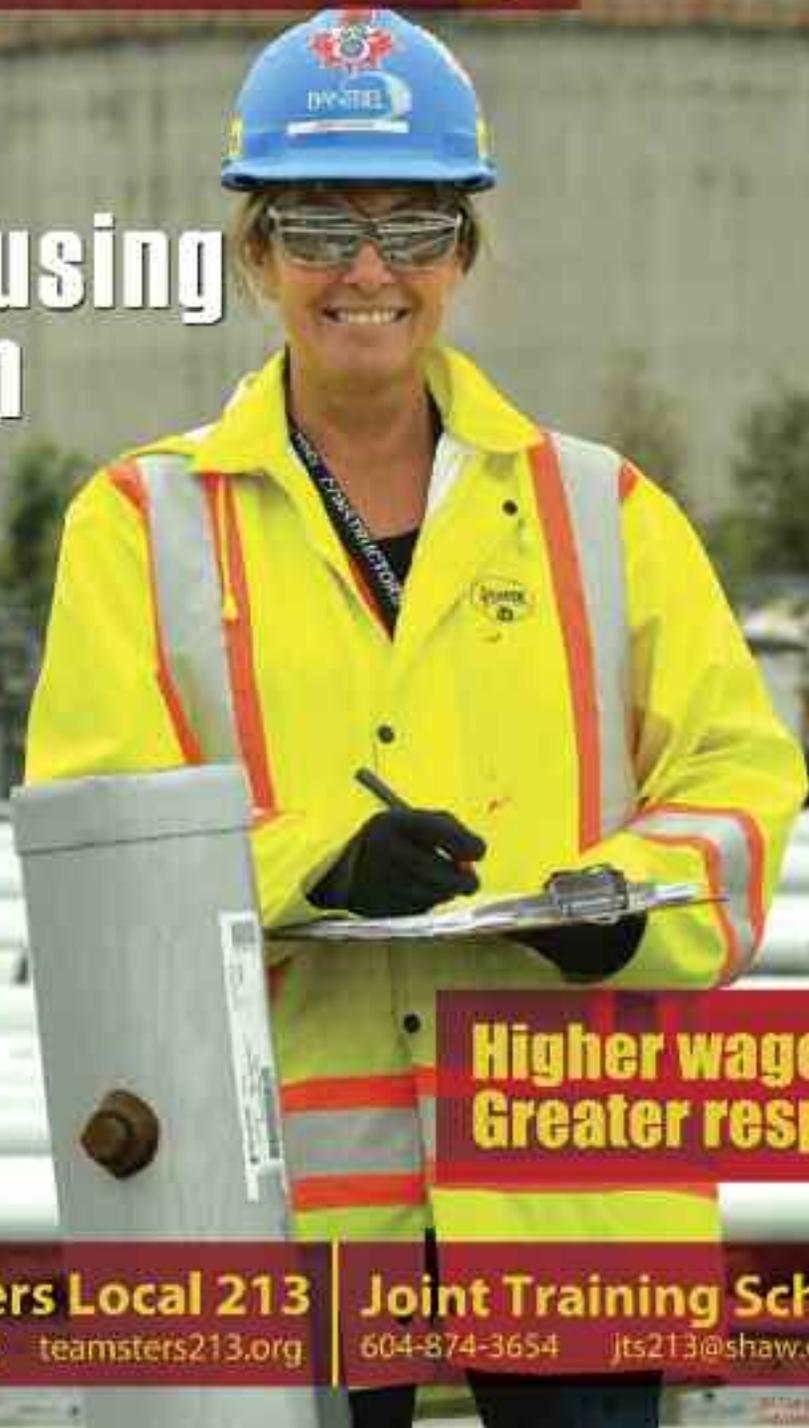
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