

June 2024

What's Inside

Construction Act Reform – Update

Government Faces Difficult Choices

COCA Awards for Outstanding Achievement

Summer LCBO Strike Possible

Chair Thanks Outgoing CISC Executive
Director

CISC Hires New Executive Director

The Gravy Train Keeps Rolling

Fifty-Five Year Old Ontario Science Centre
Shuttered For Good?

Early Election Rumours

Thoughts on the Federal Tory By-election
Victory in St Paul's

CONSTRUCTION ACT REFORM – UPDATE

We have it on good authority (if there is ever reliable authority when the timing of legislative or regulatory change is concerned) that Phase 1 of the two-phase review of the Construction Act is proceeding on schedule. Phase 2, the consultation phase, is expected to take place over the summer months. And despite the extended summer recess and a mere seven weeks of total sitting time in the legislature's Fall Session, we've been informed that amendments to the Construction Act will be made before the year's end as promised by the Attorney General when he announced the review back in February.

GOVERNMENT FACES DIFFICULT CHOICES

The government of Canada will be holding a 30 day consultation to consider imposing various barriers to trade including tariffs on Chinese manufactured electric vehicles (EVs) and EV parts and components. The consultation may also address specifically which EVs are eligible for the federal government's consumer incentive program (<https://tc.canada.ca/en/road-transportation/innovative-technologies/zero-emission-vehicles/incentives-zero-emission-vehicles/program-overview>)

Our federal government and the Ontario and Quebec provincial governments have provided billions of dollars in direct grants and incentives to various private multi-national corporations to help them finance the construction of electric battery and battery component manufacturing facilities and EV assembly plants here in Canada. The expected payback comes in the form of both the construction jobs and the longer term manufacturing jobs for Canadians that generate tax revenues for those governments and contribute to a more robust economy.

It has been alleged that China has embarked on a state-directed policy to manufacture an oversupply of EVs and to dump surplus units in Canada at prices that undercut our domestic production. It's estimated that China's excess production of EVs amounts to 10 million per year, equal to 2/3rds of North American output in 2022.

However, the imposition of trade barriers on imported Chinese manufactured EVs will reduce the array of choices offered to consumers, will increase the cost of Chinese made models here in Canada, will contribute to a less competitive EV market place and reduce the pressure on domestic manufacturers to become more efficient and will slow Canada's transition to a green economy.

What's in the best interest of Canada, good long-term Canadian jobs and a robust economy or low cost EVs and a fast transition to a carbon-free economy?



COCA AWARDS FOR OUTSTANDING ACHIEVEMENT

On June 20, 2024, COCA recognized outstanding contributions to improving the Ontario construction industry. The awards were presented at a June 20th ceremony at The Inn of the Twenty in Jordan, Ontario.

COCA Construction Hard Hat Award

Conceived by our Past Chair, Gary van Bolderen, the Construction Hard Hat Award is given to individuals who do something remarkable to advance the construction industry's interests.

This year's recipient is Steve Dietrich. Steve graduated with an Engineering degree from Western University and owned and operated Dietrich Steel in London, Ontario. He then sold his company to AGF, where he served as vice president.

In 2022, Steve retired after 42 years at Dietrich Steel and AGF. He recently formed ClearStar Consulting, offering his services as an executive business coach.

Steve remains actively involved in the industry, currently serving as chair of the London and District Construction Association and as COCA Chair from 2018 to 2021.

Industry Ally Award

COCA's Industry Ally Award is presented to individuals outside the COCA federation who have contributed significantly to the construction industry's success or improvements to Ontario's industry environment. The 2024 recipients are:

- Elise Teitler is the Director of ODACC (Ontario Dispute Adjudication for Construction Contracts), CanDACC (Canada Dispute Adjudication for Construction Contracts) and Manager of ADR Services at ADR Chambers.
- Brian Barron is the Senior Manager of the construction health and safety program at the Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training and Skills Development.
- Mary van Buren is a former president of the Canadian Construction Association and is a governance and strategy advisor at TNG.
- Office of the Employer Advisor provides Ontario employers with expert, free, and confidential advice, representation, and education on all workers' compensation issues under the Workplace Safety and Insurance Act and on unjust reprisal issues under the Occupational Health and Safety Act.

The Chair's Award

Given at the discretion of the COCA Chair, this award recognizes those who have made extraordinary contributions to the success of our provincial federation. Chair Ted Dreyer presented the award to:

- Patricia Penney-Rouzes, Executive Director of the Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario (AMCO).
- Roger Hubbard, President of The Reinforcing Steel Institute of Canada (RSIC).
- Darryl Stewart, Executive Director of the Ontario and Toronto Sheet Metal Contractors Association (retired)

The President's Award

Presented at the discretion of the President, the President's Award recognizes the outstanding contributions made by a member association or by a staff member of a member association to the success of COCA in any or all aspects of its business. This year, the COCA President Ian Cunningham presented the award to:

- Martin Benson, Operations Manager, Council of Ontario Construction Associations

SUMMER LCBO STRIKE POSSIBLE

Workers at the LCBO are in a position to go on strike as early as July 5th. Company management has extended operating hours of stores so that Ontarians can stock up. Fair warning!

CHAIR THANKS OUTGOING CISC EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



At the COCA Board of Directors meeting held on Thursday, June 20th, Chair Ted Dreyer reported that Director Ed Whalen has tendered his resignation as he will be leaving the role as Executive Director of the Canadian Institute of Steel Construction, a position in which he served for almost 16 years, to pursue other interests. Ted thanked Ed for his service to COCA noting his help on the Construction Lien Act reform initiative and the pursuit of prompt payment legislation.

Best wishes Ed as you begin the next chapter!

CISC HIRES NEW EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR



COCA member association the Canadian Institute of Steel Construction recently announced the hiring of Keanin Loomis as its new Executive Director. Here's what the CISC's news release says about our new colleague:

- He is a graduate of the University of Waterloo and William and Mary Law School
 - He practiced law in Washington DC before relocating to Hamilton where he first launched Hamilton's Regional Innovation Centre "Innovation Factory" and then served as President and CEO of the Hamilton Chamber of Commerce for nine years
 - In 2022 he placed a close second in his bid to become Mayor of the City of Hamilton, losing by only 1.17% of the vote behind former City Councillor, former MPP and former NDP Leader Andrea Horwath
 - Prior to becoming the Executive Director at the CISC, Keanin was Vice President of Member Services with the Ontario Chamber of Commerce
- Also qualifying Keanin for his new position, he is married to the daughter of a steel worker

You can find the CISC's news release at the following link:

<https://www.cisc-icca.ca/keanin-loomis-announced-as-new-president-ceo-of-the-canadian-institute-of-steel-construction/>

Very best wishes for success in the new role, Keanin. We look forward to working with you as we pursue our mutual goals and objectives together.

THE GRAVY TRAIN KEEPS ROLLING

Following the elections of Zee Hamid in Milton and Steve Pinsonneault in Lambton-Kent Middlesex, the PC's majority in the Ontario legislature was restored to a total of 80 seats.

Shortly after being sworn-in, Hamid was appointed Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Finance and Pinsonneault was named Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Rural Affairs. Of the 80 PC members of the Ontario legislature, 36 are Cabinet Ministers, the largest Cabinet in the province's history and another 34 are Parliamentary Assistants, both positions that come with pay increases. Others serve in positions such as Government House Leader, Chief Government Whip, Deputy Whip, and Committee Chair, roles that also have attendant pay bumps. Seventy-nine members of the PC caucus have been appointed to positions that receive boosts in salary above the base MPP salary of around \$116,000.

I don't begrudge MPPs their salaries. On the job 24/7, all day, every day in the spotlight whether it's at work at Queen's Park or in the shopping mall, at the community centre, in the park, in church, walking the dog or doing the groceries in their ridings. Quite frankly, I think all our MPPs should be paid at a level commensurate with the work they put in and in relation to the prevailing compensation environment.

But unnecessarily boosting salaries of government-side MPPs in order to earn their loyalty is off-brand for a Premier who earned his stripes with an agenda of cutting the waste and stopping the gravy train.

FIFTY-FIVE YEAR OLD ONTARIO SCIENCE CENTRE SHUTTERED FOR GOOD?

The Ontario Science Centre was suddenly shuttered for good on Friday, June 21st pursuant to an engineering report that identified deteriorating roof panels in need of replacement and repair. Here's what we know:

- The 55 year old Science Center designed by famous architect Raymond Moriyama sits on land owned by the City of Toronto and the Toronto Region Conservation Area
- Infrastructure Ontario says the cost of needed repairs totals \$450 million and that the roof repairs amount to \$40 million
- Emergency roof repairs to keep the facility open in the short term could cost as little as \$500,000 and it's been reported that a wealthy philanthropist has stepped-in and offered up the funds
- It's not clear if the decision to close was made by the province or by the Centre's board of directors
- The province is in the beginning stages of constructing a new building and relocating the Science Center to Ontario Place on Toronto's waterfront, but that plan will not be completed for several years
- Activists gathered at the Science Centre on the weekend following the closure to protest

This may not be the end of the story as Toronto Mayor Chow has appealed to Premier Ford to find a solution that will allow the Science Center to carry on at its current location, at least for the time being.

EARLY ELECTION RUMOURS

While Ontario's next general election is not scheduled until June 2026, rumours about the possibility of an early election call continue to swirl in the wind. All parties appear to be getting election-ready, assembling their campaign teams, getting their war chests in shape and nominating candidates. Could it be called for the Spring of 2025 after the provincial budget?

THOUGHTS ON THE FEDERAL TORY BY-ELECTION VICTORY IN ST PAUL'S

Here are some thoughts about the recent by-election in St Paul's, the riding in which I happen to live (so at least it's interesting to me):

- Last night's CPC victory in St Paul's, believed to be a Liberal stronghold, even if only by less than 600 votes, is definitely a shot across the Grit's bow
- From my vantage point, the Liberals ran a much stronger get-out-the-vote campaign; in my personal experience, on election day a door knob hanger, three phone calls and one person at my door – nothing from the Tories
- Was St Paul's truly a Liberal stronghold or was it more of a Carolyn Bennett (the former long time MP) stronghold?
- Was this a meaningless protest vote from voters who normally vote left-of-centre, to send a message? (When the Wynne government at Queen's Park was thrown out of office in the Doug Ford sweep in 2018, they voted NDP. That NDP MPP went on to distinguish herself at Queen's Park, connect with her constituents and was re-elected in 2022.)
- Will the freshly minted Tory MP Don Stewart be a strong performer in Parliament, make his mark and elevate his profile among constituents or will the riding return to Grits' hands when it matters, in the next general? (the next federal general election is scheduled for October 20, 2025 but the PM could call it earlier.)
- The Liberals poured everything into the riding including numerous cabinet minister visits; by contrast CPC leader Poilievre was in the riding only once (is Poilievre a drag on the Tory vote in St Paul's?)
- 84 candidates listed on the ballot was the cause of confusion for some voters but an equal confusion for candidates of all stripes in a riding comprised of a significant number of confusable seniors
- The Grits should let Trudeau carry their bright red banner into the next general and crash and burn, let Trudeau wear the defeat; the Party should then begin its renewal from there, select a new leader, develop a new book of policies and drive on from there

These are some of the considerations that make politics so dynamic and interesting.