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MHCA supports prompt payment review as part of law reform project

Chronic payment delays discussed at Executive Committee meeting

The MHCA Executive Committee agrees the Manitoba Law Reform Commission's study of the provincial Builders' Liens Act should concurrently include reviews to legislatively support prompt payment on public and private sector construction projects, to address existing chronic delays in payment.

"Delays of 90 or 120 days and longer for payment once work is completed — an issue that subcontractors are particularly vulnerable to — are unacceptable," MHCA President Chris Lorenc said Wednesday.

Prompt payment legislation was on the table at the meeting Jan. 17 of the association's executive committee, where a full slate of topics was considered.

MHCA supports the concept of prompt payment legislation applying to both the public and private sector owners. There have been other proposals and privately sponsored bills prepared to address the long-standing problem.

"Rather than trying to feed into a number of draft bills or proposed efforts on this pressing issue, it's better to have the benefit of an in-depth review of the problems and also the best practices in use in other jurisdictions. That can be done by the Manitoba Law Reform Commission's coming review of the Builders' Liens Act," Lorenc said. Ontario recently passed prompt payment legislation after extensive research and review. Saskatchewan has undertaken a similar legislative review.

Other priorities discussed by the committee included:

- The provincial Pits and Quarries Advisory Committee has received a consensus document prepared by the MHCA and some rural municipalities and the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. Recommendations to the Municipal Relations minister should be submitted in the near future
- The MHCA is awaiting a reply to the request for a meeting the Sustainable Development minister and key political officials regarding the province's Climate and Green Plan, and the carbon tax that is proposed
- The MHCA is exploring new ways to use heavy equipment simulators for operator training; suggestions from executive members included devising a way to make the simulators mobile to get them into schools and heavy construction companies, and partnering with other training associations to broaden access to the simulators
- Discussions are underway with MNP to facilitate a 'clean sheet' strategic planning session to determine what future advocacy role, if any, the Western Canada Roadbuilders & Heavy Construction Association could or should discharge

MHCA will begin an annual membership survey of MHCA services and of the WORKSAFELY™ program. The in-house survey will follow up on the results of a large survey conducted in 2014 to track progress.



Canadian
Construction
Association

How new roadway material tech could help save infrastructure

Mary Tyler March, January 10, *Construction Dive*

Dive Brief:

- Scientists in Switzerland and the Netherlands are developing new technologies to replace traditional roadway materials with self-healing asphalt, according to Architect Magazine.
- Dutch researchers from Delft University of Technology have created an asphalt composition that resembles closed-loop circuits and is infused with electrically conductive fibers.
- Meanwhile, Swiss scientists have created a method that enables iron oxide nanoparticles in surface cracks to heal the surrounding asphalt in only a matter of seconds when exposed to an alternating magnetic field.

Dive Insight:

Concrete has been around since the Ancient Romans, but its durability and environmental impact have changed the material's composition since that time. MIT researchers are even exploring the material at its atomic level to study how concrete can be fortified by additives like slag and volcanic ash.

Self-healing concrete, in particular, has gained traction as researchers have taken aim at finding long-lasting fixes for U.S. infrastructure. Louisiana State University scientists are testing micro-encapsulation of chemical additives to trigger a self-healing process when concrete starts to crack.

Still others are testing concrete that breaks traditional norms entirely with a composition comprising naturally grown bacteria. Researchers, also from Delft University of Technology, are infusing traditional concrete with bacteria that stays intact during mixing before dissolving and becoming activated by water seepage in cracks.

Scientists' push to develop more resilient sustainable concrete alternatives comes at an opportune time for the United States infrastructure. A 2017 report from the American Society of Civil Engineers gave the U.S. a D+ on its Infrastructure Report Card, with roads scoring a D grade on the assessment. According to that report, one in every five miles of paved road is in poor condition, and the backlog for repairing those highways is only increasing.



Career Opportunity



The MHCA is seeking a Marketing and Communications Coordinator. For more information please go to www.MHCA.mb.ca and click the link posted under NEWS.

Bank of Canada hikes interest rates; cites NAFTA's future as a caution on economic outlook

Here's the Bank of Canada's official statement issued Jan. 17

The Bank of Canada today increased its target for the overnight rate to 1.25%. The Bank Rate is correspondingly 1.5% and the deposit rate is 1%. Recent data have been strong, inflation is close to target, and the economy is operating roughly at capacity. However, uncertainty surrounding the future of the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) is clouding the economic outlook.

The global economy continues to strengthen, with growth expected to average 3.5% over the projection horizon. Growth in advanced economies is projected to be stronger than in the Bank's October Monetary Policy Report (MPR). In particular, there are signs of increasing momentum in the US economy, which will be boosted further by recent tax changes. Global commodity prices are higher, although the benefits to Canada are being diluted by wider spreads between benchmark world and Canadian oil prices.

In Canada, real GDP growth is expected to slow to 2.2% in 2018 and 1.6% in 2019, following an estimated 3% in 2017. Growth is expected to remain above potential through the first quarter of 2018 and then slow to a rate close to potential for the rest of the projection horizon.

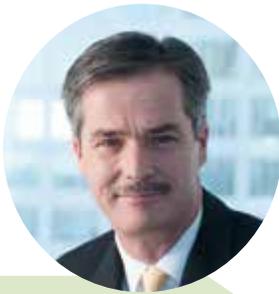
Consumption and residential investment have been stronger than anticipated, reflecting strong employment growth. Business investment has been increasing at a solid pace, and investment intentions remain positive. Exports have been weaker than expected although, apart from cross-border shifts in automotive production, there have been positive signs in most other categories.

Looking forward, consumption and residential investment are expected to contribute less to growth, given higher interest rates and new mortgage guidelines, while business investment and exports are expected to contribute more. The Bank's outlook takes into account a small benefit to Canada's economy from stronger US demand arising from recent tax changes. However, as uncertainty about the future of NAFTA is weighing increasingly on the outlook, the Bank has incorporated into its projection additional negative judgement on business investment and trade.

The Bank continues to monitor the extent to which strong demand is boosting potential, creating room for more non-inflationary expansion. In this respect, capital investment, firm creation, labour force participation, and hours worked are all showing promising signs. Recent data show that labour market slack is being absorbed more quickly than anticipated. Wages have picked up but are rising by less than would be typical in the absence of labour market slack.

In this context, inflation is close to 2% and core measures of inflation have edged up, consistent with diminishing slack in the economy. The Bank expects CPI inflation to fluctuate in the months ahead as various temporary factors (including gasoline and electricity prices) unwind. Looking through these temporary factors, inflation is expected to remain close to 2% over the projection horizon.

While the economic outlook is expected to warrant higher interest rates over time, some continued monetary policy accommodation will likely be needed to keep the economy operating close to potential and inflation on target. Governing Council will remain cautious in considering future policy adjustments, guided by incoming data in assessing the economy's sensitivity to interest rates, the evolution of economic capacity, and the dynamics of both wage growth and inflation.



Why are prices so tame?

Peter G. Hall, Vice President and Chief Economist

If exporters have a lot of worries these days, prices are not on the list. Prices – or inflation – together with the unemployment rate, are the elements of the ‘misery index’, the brainchild of economist Arthur Okun. Inflation’s recent track record – and we are talking years – should have us jumping for joy. Why are prices so tame, and will they stay that way for long?

Their track record is surprising. Many predicted that by now, inflation should be a problem in the world economy. Those expectations have been repeatedly wrong. Consumer prices in the vast bulk of the developed world have averaged annual growth of 1.7 per cent in the 2010-2016 period.

Why were the pundits so wrong?

Pessimists thought they had their moment when prices began a multi-month upswing in 2016. However, that too came to a swift end, and against fears of worse to come, prices sunk back to growth rates well within central bank target levels.

The misery-hounds have given a lot of reasons for an imminent run-up of prices. Gloom-and-doomers have long since expected that quantitative easing – or as they put it, printing of endless amounts of money – in the post-recession period would inevitably lead to runaway inflation.

Years on, the Fed’s QE program is now in retreat, without a hint of the price nasties that were foreseen. And while Europe’s program is dialing down more slowly, Continental worry-warts have little to show for their post-recession grey hairs. Prices across the Euro-area have been remarkably well-behaved. While full victory is still a number of months away, so far it seems that QE has deftly avoided the fallout that pundits feared the most.

Commodity prices

Commodity prices were another inflation bugbear. Sky-high pre-recession prices fed fears that we were running out of everything from oil and gas to basic metals, and other raw goods. Even after the Great Recession, commodity prices zoomed back to previous peaks on those same tight-supply fears. All that did was to attract investment – boatloads of it – into the commodity space, producing a supply glut that will be ample for years to come. This group of prices is going nowhere fast for a long time.

Canada might have expected to see higher prices as a result of currency swings. The commodity price tumble in 2015 felled our dollar, increasing the prices of imports. But fears of the pass-through of import prices have not materialized; in spite of this, all is still well.

Will we see inflation growth in 2018?

There are more pressing and imminent inflation concerns, though. For years, business in multiple countries has lamented a lack of skilled workers. This is in good part related to the ageing of the population, and is now being exacerbated by a tightening supply of workers in general.

The official US unemployment rate, at 4.1 per cent, is about as low as it ever gets. Canada’s, approaching the 5 per cent level, is in similar relative territory. Western Europe is likewise zooming in on its cyclical lows. Although there are few signs of wage inflation, there are lots of fears that it’s not far off.

At the same time, industrial capacity is tightening. The recent runup in orders has fed expectations of more growth to come, putting pressure on already-skinny spare capacity. On these two key fronts, are we staring out the first big price runup in over a generation?

It's possible – but given the current labour and industrial capacity statistics, that should already be obvious. The real question is, why are they still so tame? The simple answer is that there must still be capacity to grow, stats notwithstanding. A second look at those stats is revealing. Unemployment rates in the developed world are artificially low; they don't account for the discouraged post-recession labour force dropouts that are still available to work. It's a similar story on industrial capacity: facing weak growth, firms under-invested, and added to already vast cash-stashes.

At long last, it's time to invest again in production facilities – and guess what? There's plenty of money to do it with. Sure, there may be price pops as things get going, but the constraints will be temporary and manageable.

The bottom line? Central banks have signaled a new concern for imminent inflationary pressures, and are notching up ultra-low interest rates. That's overdue – but prices are showing us that the economy still has a lot of runway.

MHCA welcomes new member

The MHCA is pleased to welcome its newest member:



Canadrone Inspections & Imaging Services Inc.

Canadrone Inspections & Imaging Services Inc. specializes in drone/UAV inspection, survey and mapping services. Site survey/scouting which includes:

- progress, encroachment, surface condition, environmental monitoring
- "as-built" and site remediation documentation
- stock-pile volume measurement/tracking
- structural integrity & building envelope inspections

Canadrone Inspections & Imaging Services Inc. can be contacted at:

Rob Walker
11 Eaglemere Drive
Winnipeg, MB R2K
Ph: 204-955-2647
E: info@canadrones.ca



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ANNUAL CURLING CLASSIC

**THURSDAY,
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The Heather Curling Club
120 Youville Street,
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REGISTRATION

For a full day of curling, networking, and good eats:
\$250^{+GST} per team or \$62.50^{+GST} per individual

Company: _____

Contact Person: _____ Tel: _____

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Card Holder: _____

Signature: _____

I would like to enter a team of four (4) curlers: _____

I would like to enter as a single player: _____

I only plan to attend the luncheon (\$40^{+GST}): _____

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For \$275^{+GST}, your company can
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- Ice Sheet (8 spots available)
- Hog Line Contest
- Morning Coffee & Muffins station

Your sponsorship will include:

- Corporate signage at the end of the sheet of ice for the whole day
- Sponsorship announcement and recognition at lunch time
- A 'Thank You' recognition in MHCA's *Heavy News Weekly* and website

Company: _____

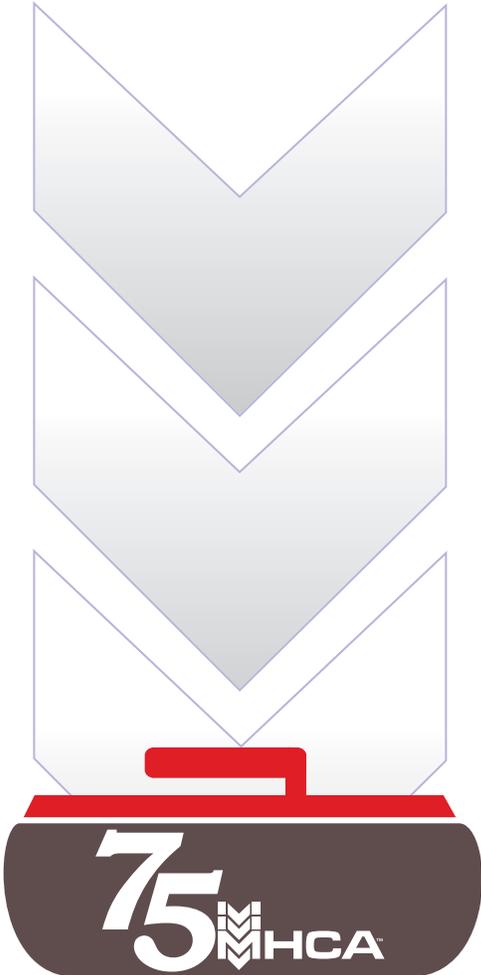
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Card Holder: _____

Signature: _____



Fill out this form in full and fax to the MHCA office at 204-943-2279.

For more information, contact Christine Miller at christine@mhca.mb.ca or 204-947-1379.

As per MHCA Board policy, only registrations cancelled at least six (6) business days prior to the commencement of this event will be refunded.



Black ice: protect yourself against the hazard you can't see

WORKSAFELY™ Back to You with Don Hurst

Although snow can make winter driving difficult, icy roads make winter driving even more dangerous. Black ice – which can be almost invisible – forms when the air temperature is warmer than pavement, which causes moisture to rapidly freeze and create a thin, transparent layer of ice on the roadway.

With this week's weather forecast calling for warmer temperatures and freezing rain, it is important to remember to protect yourself and your workers by understanding and knowing how to deal with this seasonal issue.

To help avoid an incident, observe the following tips:

- Be especially careful when driving on bridges, overpasses and tunnels, and in the early morning when the air temperature rises faster than the pavement temperature.
- Never brake while driving on ice. Applying pressure to your brakes while on black ice will cause a vehicle to skid. Brake only during your approach.
- Keep your distance. The distance needed to stop on black ice is twice as long as for normal driving circumstances. Keep at least a three-car distance behind the vehicle in front of you.
- Salting and sanding can neutralize black ice. However, drivers should be aware that salt loses its effectiveness at about -10° C or colder.

For more information on how to protect yourself and your workers during black ice conditions please see our safety talk at www.mhca.mb.ca.

KNOW YOUR WORKSAFELY™ TEAM

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To contact your WORKSAFELY™ advisor assigned to your area, please see mhca.mb.ca/worksafely/know-your-advisor



Training Schedule

Construction Safety Excellence™

**TO REGISTER,
PLEASE CONTACT:**
Kristen Ranson
kristen@mhca.mb.ca

WINNIPEG - MHCA Office

3-1680 Ellice Ave.

BRANDON - St. John Ambulance

Shoppers Mall, 1570 18th St.

January 2018

- 26 Auditor Refresher 1/2 day AM
- 26 Excavating & Trenching 1/2 day PM
- 30 Inspections 1/2 day AM
- 31 Investigations

January 2018

There is currently no training scheduled for January

February 2018

- 5 Safety Committee/Representative 1/2 day AM
- 5 Transportation of Dangerous Goods 1/2 day PM
- 6 Flagperson 1/2 day AM
- 7 ★ Construction Industry Ethics (*Mandatory for Gold Seal)
- 12-13 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
- 14 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
- 15-16 COR™ Auditor**
- 20-21 Traffic Control Coordinator
- 27 Train the Trainer – Facilitation Skills

February 2018

There is currently no training scheduled for February

March 2018

- 5 ★ Verbal Communication 1/2 day AM
- 5 ★ Written Communication 1/2 day PM
- 6 Preventing Musculoskeletal Injuries 1/2 day AM
- 6 Auditor Refresher 1/2 day PM
- 12-13 COR™ Leadership in Safety Excellence**
- 14 COR™ Principles of Health & Safety Management**
- 15-16 COR™ Auditor**
- 19 Flagperson 1/2 day AM

March 2018

There is currently no training scheduled for March



SAFETY TALK

Slips, trips & falls on icy surfaces

As the temperature drops, the number of slips and falls rises. No matter how well the snow or ice is removed from parking lots, sidewalks and the jobsite, you will encounter slippery surfaces when walking outside in the winter.

What's the danger?

A slip or fall will happen when there is not enough traction between the footwear and the walking surface.

Slips on ice often result in serious injury. Injuries to arms, wrists, back and head are the most common.

Snow that accumulates on the jobsite will create ruts and slippery surfaces.

Accumulation of snow and ice immediately outside of doorways can cause visitors and workers to slip and fall

How to protect yourself

It is important for everyone to be aware of these dangers and learn how to walk carefully on ice and slippery surfaces.

- Always look forward to assess slippery ice surfaces ahead

- Inspect all frequent travel paths and spread sand or salt to make walking safer
- Keep walkways clear of mud, snow and ice
- Use caution when getting in and out of vehicles and equipment
- Use caution when carrying heavy loads on ice
- Watch for slippery floors when entering workshops
- Remove as much snow and water from your boots as you can when entering a building

What would you do?

What behaviours cause the greatest risk of slips, trips and falls at your work site in the winter?

Print and review this talk with your staff, sign off and file for COR™ / SECOR audit purposes.

Date: _____

Performed by: _____

Concerns:

Employee Name:

Supervisor: _____

Location: _____

Corrective Actions:

Employee Signature:



75 in 2018

The MHCA is 75 in 2018 and we're telling our story. The heavy construction industry has helped build this province, its economy and foundational infrastructure: roads, highways, bridges, and water/sewer. As part of the commemoration, which will include celebratory features throughout 2018, we are asking for your memories, your photos or any archived materials that can help tell this tale in displays at our marquee events.

Do you have something to share? Please email Catherine Mitchell at catherine@mhca.mb.ca

Thank you,

Greg Orbanski
Chair, MHCA

Chris Lorenc
President, MHCA