



Celebrating 75 **GROUND BREAKING** years in 2018



30 YEARS OF WORKSAFELY™

IN 2019, MHCA MARKS THREE DECADES OF KEEPING WORKERS SAFE AND HEALTHY

BY PAT ST. GERMAIN

Heavy construction is hazardous by nature. The workplace is outdoors, on rough ground and often adjacent to moving traffic, overhead electrical wires and underground utilities.

Add to that the inherent dangers of working on or close to heavy machinery, drilling and blasting operations and it's easy to understand why the Manitoba Heavy Construction Association saw the need to create an industry-specific safety program back in 1989.

Brandt Tractor branch manager Peter Paulic, who has worked in the heavy construction industry for 28 years and currently serves as MHCA's WORKSAFELY™ committee chair, has witnessed the evolution of MHCA's safety services almost from Day 1.

"We're one of the most progressive and proactive associations out there. So, it's been a real treat for me to see the growth and what's happened, and I truly believe in what they do and how they do it," Paulic says.

"The positives that came out of the safety program — it's second to none."

Before moving to Winnipeg a year ago, Paulic had logged 27 years with Thompson-based Smook Contractors Ltd. Under the leadership of former owner Ted Smook, the company was one of the first in northern Manitoba to get onboard with the MHCA

safety program, which was rebranded as WORKSAFELY in 2010.

Paulic recalls that 70 per cent of staff members involved in the initial safety discussion had suffered an injury of one kind or another — damaged knees, hips and at least one eye injury, all common afflictions before safe-work procedures and training came into play under MHCA's guidance.

"It was amazing, the change in the culture, and it didn't take very long to make that change. And, it's just the right thing to do, knowing that people are going home at the end of the day safely," he says.

"If there was an incident, the employees out in the field knew what to do, and that only happens if the training was correct."

Nelson River Construction president and CEO Gord Lee says his company was ahead of the safety curve, even back in the mid 1970s.

"We had what we thought was a pretty solid safety program — self-made, self-driven, self-monitored, in trying to instill into the people the importance of not only looking out for the safety of your own health but those around you," he says.

"And the industry itself jumped in with both feet to make it an official part of its service to its members to help them build safety programs and improve performance in general around the world of safety."

A former MHCA board chair, Lee sat on the association's safety committee in the early years, when it was a challenge to convince some workers, particularly old-timers, that there was a good reason to change their ways.

"There were guys in the industry who had worked for 20 years and never got hurt, but not because of safe practices — in many cases they were just lucky," he says.

"Just getting people to wear a hard hat years ago was a big deal. It always falls off, it's too hot, it just gets in the way — there was a host of arguments. Then you get them to wear a hard hat, you get them to wear a safety vest, you get them to wear hearing protection and gloves and long-sleeve shirts where you need to.

"Now it's a deeply rooted way of life in the industry as a whole."

Since 2000, when WORKSAFELY began administering the nationally recognized COR™ (Certificate of Recognition) safety program, 340 companies employing 75 per cent of Manitoba's heavy construction workforce have become COR-certified.

COR certification is required to bid on provincial government construction contracts worth more than \$100,000 in Manitoba and it is recognized as equivalent to SAFE Work Manitoba's SAFE Work Certified program, which means companies certified for a full year receive a 15 per cent rebate on

WCB premiums.

Lee says safety programs have brought other unexpected benefits. When daily hazard assessments became routine, worker engagement improved, since people were better informed about the work they were expected to perform and understood the company's goals for each day.

"They were improving their skills as a business and they were improving their productivity because all of a sudden, we have this new requirement to communicate regularly with your people. So, safety was adopted and communication became more regular and improved business in general."

Lee adds the focus on safety has also helped to attract skilled workers to the industry.

"It has highlighted the world of heavy construction as not only a place to make a great career, but it's a place where you can make a great career and not be concerned about the environment in which you work as being overly hazardous," he says.

"People know that they can come here, earn a good dollar, and do it in a manner that is safe and reflective of (the fact that) the best practices in the world are right here in good old Manitoba.

"I think it's come a long way — in a good way. It's helped our industry become a career of choice for many." ❦



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A HISTORY OF SAFETY AT THE MANITOBA HEAVY CONSTRUCTION ASSOCIATION



1989 - FIRST SAFETY ADVISOR HIRED by the MHCAs

1989

MHCAs developed a separate environmental safety program. Through the two programs, MHCAs offered comprehensive safety and environmental accreditation to any company willing to go through the process. The accreditation was recognized throughout Canada. In 2000, MHCAs amalgamated the two programs under one banner, called the SAFETY HEALTH ENVIRONMENTAL PROGRAM (SHEP).

1990

MHCAs designed a SAFETY-AND-HEALTH TRAINING PROGRAM to reduce injuries among workers.

1997



2000

COR™ (Certificate of Recognition) program established by the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations and MHCAs begins delivery of the nationally recognized COR Safety Program in the Manitoba Heavy Construction Industry. BY 2001, 40 COMPANIES HAD ACHIEVED COR CERTIFICATION



2004 - MHCAs LED THE ESTABLISHMENT OF SAFE ROADS MANITOBA, a community initiative to educate and encourage motorists to engage in respectful and safe driving practices to protect the safety of those who work on or adjacent to our roadways.

2004

2007

WCB introduced a 5% DISCOUNT ON PREMIUMS for COR-certified companies

MHCAs introduced ROAD BUILDERS SAFETY TRAINING SYSTEM on-line training

2008

MHCAs delivers WINTER ROAD SAFETY TRAINING on behalf of the provincial government

2010



MHCAs's safety program was rebranded as WORKSAFELY™

2012

WORKSAFELY introduced the E-COR DIGITAL SAFETY APPLICATION for company safety program documentation and management



2014 - FULL-TIME SAFETY ADVISOR HIRED IN NORTHERN MANITOBA AND BRANDON/WESTMAN REGION. WORKSAFELY became the only IBSP to have full-time safety advisors located in northern Manitoba

2014

MHCAs and other members of the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations ENDORSE THE NATIONAL CONSTRUCTION SAFETY OFFICER (NCSO) DESIGNATION

COR BECAME MANDATORY for government construction projects exceeding \$100,000

WCB INTRODUCED 15% REBATE FOR COR-CERTIFIED COMPANIES and other industries (replacing former 5% discount)

2018

340 COMPANIES ARE COR-CERTIFIED, covering approximately 75% of the workforce

INJURY RATE PER/100 WORKERS

2000: 7.5	2014: 4.49
2011: 5.06	2015: 4.71
2012: 4.56	2016: 3.70
2013: 4.53	2017: 3.60

Note: WCB does not have stats going back further than 2000



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