



**Toronto
Construction
Association**

Since 1867



Toronto Construction Association

PASSIONATE ABOUT

CONSTRUCTION

When the Toronto Construction Association (TCA) was founded in 1867, it was with the mandate to promote the highest possible standards of professionalism for its stakeholders. Today, almost 150 years later, that mandate remains unchanged. What has changed, however, is the industry – and as it's grown infinitely more complex, the scope and diversity of TCA's services have grown to accommodate it.

The TCA – unlike the majority of associations across Canada and even globally – now

serves the entire industrial, commercial and institutional building sectors. That includes professional constructors across all disciplines, as well as owners, architects, consulting engineers, lawyers, brokers, cost consultants, insurers, manufacturers, suppliers, and industry service providers.

As one of Canada's oldest and largest associations – their constitution predates Canada's, and they have more than 2,200 member companies across the GTA – the TCA's greatest strength is their diversity. The asso-



ciation most significantly benefits that variety of members by providing networking opportunities, and their diversity ensures there is a deep well of knowledge and opportunity for each member to draw from. “We believe in the notion of members supporting members,” says President and CEO John Mollenhauer. “We play host at a variety of social events, seminars, and committee meetings. We publish magazines and books, post project and employment opportunities online and commonly act as the ‘voice of the industry.’”



The TCA also act as advocates for the industry. They are constantly working with the government to improve legislation and procurement protocols on behalf of their members.

“We lobby the federal, provincial, and municipal governments in an effort to level the playing field,” Mollenhauer explains. “We

want to make the tendering process more transparent and fair, and we want to standardize documents to cope with the unfair transference of risk. That affects everybody in the industry.”

In addition to those basic offerings – which Mollenhauer admits provide an “intangible value” members can’t exactly quantify –



the TCA also aims to offer programs and opportunities that provide real immediate value. Those can take a variety of forms. For example, the association offers discount programs. Because of their size, they can offer programs that would only otherwise be available to corporations with literally hundreds of thousands of employees.

“We also offer personal benefits for staff members of member companies,” Mollenhauer adds. “So they can go to a movie inexpensively, or buy tickets to the Rogers Cup without paying retail prices. Savings on Park’N Fly can be as high as 25 per cent. We have a fairly broad spectrum of opportunities, some targeted at businesses and some targeted at employees.”

Even more, the TCA also offers events, conferences, and symposiums – and are creating more all the time. Just this month, for example, they hosted a small business symposium that was designed to help the owners of small-to-medium sized enterprises “align wealth creation with business growth and development,” thus giving them the tools to build bigger and more profitable businesses.

LIFE-LONG EDUCATION

Mollenhauer has personally been in the construction industry since childhood. Over the course of his career he’s been a Senior Development Officer at Cadillac Fairview, a Vice President of Real Estate at National Trust, and the Director of the Mollenhauer Group of Companies, which is a family-owned firm that was consistently ranked among Canada’s ten largest building companies with an-



nual volumes measured in the hundreds of millions.

Today, in addition to serving as President & CEO of the TCA, Mollenhauer is also the President, CEO & Vice-Chancellor of the Construction Institute of Canada (TCIC). So his career has been long and varied.

“Unlike most teenagers who wrestle with finding themselves and deciding what they want to do, I knew right away,” he says. “I’ve always loved being a part of the construction industry and continue to love being part of the construction industry. I’ve never been short on passion.”

As President of TCA, Mollenhauer now ap-



plies that passion towards problem solving. He sees “no shortage of challenges” in the near future, and he’s excited and energised about drawing on his experience and expertise – and the collective experience and expertise of the association – to help overcome them.

In the near future, for example, the construc-

tion industry will be faced with a skilled labour shortage. In addition, the market has always been competitive but competition has grown particularly stiff in recent years and margins have at times been razor thin.

The industry is also becoming “infinitely more complex,” Mollenhauer says, as well as very litigious. Buyers of construction are also getting into new and different forms of procurement and the size of projects is expanding.

As a result of these changes, the role the TCA plays has never been more vital – “and it’s fun to be a part of it.”

One of the ways TCA is addressing these future challenges is by educating their members about them. In early 2003, the association formally entered the education business by founding The Construction Institute (TCI), which provides accreditation, certification, and continuing professional development for industry executives in a self-regulated, membership-based, chartered institute.

“Education is a life-long endeavour,” Mollenhauer explains. “So continuing professional development is about staying current and



developing the skills we need to be leading edge. It's also about keeping up with modern tools and technologies, and grasping the changing nuances of the way we build and the way we procure.”

Through TCI, the association is also helping develop the next generation of building industry professionals. Recently, for example,

they formed partnerships with roughly a dozen colleges and universities across Canada to create a “big competition.”

“That’s an opportunity for third-year students to actually learn about the tendering process first-hand,” he explains. “We recruit fourth-year students of these institutions to review their submissions. It’s one of many

ways we're working in concert with the education sector to make sure graduates are more work ready than ever before."

"I believe the contribution we make to the industry with respect to education will become increasingly more important with time," he adds.

When it comes to the upcoming labour shortage challenge in particular, the TCA is also taking action. The association's Speaker's Bureau and Future Building Show volunteers have made attracting qualified new talent to the industry a fulltime job.

Years ago, the TCA also went through a "brand redevelopment process" in order to become more marketing and communications driven. They formed their own marketing and communications department, so they now have some real experience they can use to aid their members – many of whom don't even have a website, or who don't capitalize on the low-cost opportunities that social media and the internet present.

"We're now developing enough expertise in that area that we can make a meaningful difference for our member companies," Mollen-

hauer says.

Moving forward, the association will continue to work tirelessly to address those needs, and the other future needs of the industrial, commercial, and institutional building industries in the GTA.

"In order to grow and remain profitable, businesses have to be more dynamic than ever before," Mollenhauer says. "The same can be said of associations. We need to evolve and change, and capitalize on new technologies and new communication tools. We have to challenge ourselves to be more about tangible benefits and be certain that we actually provide a genuine return on investment."

"We need to remain meaningful," he adds in summary. "We need to ensure we add value to all our members' businesses – whether they're a small general contractor, or a large manufacturer. When somebody chooses to belong to our organization, we want them to feel a real value."

To learn more about the TCA, their upcoming events, and their multitude of opportunities, visit <http://www.tcaconnect.com/Home.html>



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