



CELEBRATING 20 YEARS OF BEST PRACTICES

A HISTORY OF THE
CONSTRUCTION OWNERS ASSOCIATION
OF ALBERTA

1973 — 2011

MAY 15, 2012

The Construction Owners Association of Alberta Marking Twenty Years of Best Practices

Introduction and Highlights

In 2013, COAA will celebrate its 40th year of leadership in Alberta heavy industrial construction, and 2012 marks the 20th annual Best Practices Conference. This history booklet has been prepared in celebration of these milestones. It will remind us of the vision, the persistence and the personalities which have made such an impact on our industry.

During 2012, we invite COAA members who have facts, anecdotes, or photographs relevant to our history to drop them off or e-mail them to the COAA office—they will be added to our archives and highlights will appear in an updated history booklet in 2013.

1973 Incorporates as a not-for-profit company.

It will be a forum for the exchange of ideas and information by consumers of construction manpower and materials.

The first president is D.W. Scott of Syncrude.

1976 Priorities in the early years include improvement of construction labour relations and workforce forecasting.

On a part-time basis, an Association manager, Mr. C.A. Hames, is hired for the first time. Mr. Barney Benson assumes the role, as managing director, early in 1978.

1977 After having borrowed or rented out facilities, gets its own office at 9947 Saskatchewan Drive, Edmonton.

1980 Commissions a major study on construction industry productivity.

1985 The Construction Safety Committee is formed.

The COAA joins the Alberta Chamber of Resources consortium. Don Currie is the Managing Director of both organizations.

1988 Holds its first safety seminar.

1993 Holds the first Best Practices “workshop.” About 80 delegates attend.

2000 BP VII attracts 400 registered attendees.

Don Currie retires and is replaced by Brad Anderson.

2002 Becomes a founding member of the Work Safe Alberta Mentorship Program.

2012 The little workshop that could celebrates its 20th as a full-fledged Best Practices Conference attracting hundreds of delegates.

1973



The COAA's articles of incorporation are issued in Edmonton in January 1973.

The four founding members—Calgary Power Ltd., Imperial Oil Limited, Proctor and Gamble Cellulose, Ltd., and Syncrude Canada Ltd.—hold the first annual general meeting within a month and appoint directors from each of their companies. The first president is D.W. Scott of Syncrude.

The Construction Owners Association of Alberta is incorporated as a not-for-profit company in Edmonton on 30 January.

The Association's key objectives are to:

- Encourage and promote by all lawful means research into various facets of the construction industry including manpower, labour relations, and personnel training.
- Encourage and promote by all lawful means a responsible and equitable relationship among owners of projects and works, the various segments and factions comprising the construction industry, all levels of government, and the general public.
- Provide ways and means for discussion, the exchange of ideas, and the dissemination of information relating to all matters within the ambit of either or both of the above.

A meeting of subscribers (the first directors and members of the company) to the Memorandum of Association is held on February 6 attended by Joseph J. Stratton and James C. Koshman (both of whom resign immediately after conducting the original business of the organization).

The first Full Members, paying \$100 and agreeing to contribute to the assets of the COAA in the event of its wind up within one year, are: Calgary Power Ltd. (R.H. Umbach), Imperial Oil Limited (W.B. Dingle), Proctor & Gamble Cellulose, Ltd. (E.D. Canfield), and Syncrude Canada Ltd. (D.W. Scott). Mr Scott is elected the COAA's first president.

The first annual general meeting of the COAA is held at the Imperial Oil Building in Calgary in June, by which time there are ten members (the original four plus Shell Canada Ltd., Canadian Utilities Ltd., Canada Cement, Dow Chemical of Canada Ltd., Hudson's Bay Oil & Gas Co. Ltd., and Aquitaine Company of Canada Ltd.).

Inspiration...

"The Business Round Table was the model for the COAA. These were the guys who ran business in the United States and put out superb, industry-generated data and published other information, and they were something else. They were down to earth and the early guys in the COAA looked at themselves in the same way. They weren't formally aligned but they were 'friends.'"

—Don Currie, COAA
Managing Director, 1985 - 2000

The meeting summarizes the events leading to the formation of the COAA. "It began in 1972, when a steering committee was formed to determine whether an association of this type would be useful and necessary. A committee was formed to set up the initial objectives of the association. [Among] the objectives [was] upgrading of knowledge and understanding of the mutual problems of the major clients of industrial construction...."

Members on hand hear presentations from Canada Manpower, the Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association, and the Alberta Construction Labour Relations Association. Mr Scott also gives "an outline of the [Syncrude] project in the Fort McMurray area that is planned for the near future.... Areas of immediate concern are such things as labour shortages—growth of construction trades; attitudes towards working at remote projects;... turnover effects;... [and] community development."

The COAA's head office address is noted in official documentation as 700, One Thornton Court, Edmonton, with a letterhead mailing address of PO Box 2528, Postal Station A, Edmonton.

A Manpower Study meeting is held on August 1 attended by two government economists (federal and provincial) and the COAA Director of Manpower Studies, Peter Kilgour (also of Shell Canada Ltd.). It is agreed that the need for a manpower study is becoming acute and that the government should have the primary responsibility for its completion. A meeting is subsequently held with the Minister of Manpower and Labour.

As at December 18 the COAA's bank balance is \$8,578. Each of the four original members had loaned the Association \$1,000 earlier in the year. The only registered expenses are for items such as legal fees, post office box rental, and printing fees of \$107.52, possibly for the Association brochure.

As with the COAA's older-sister organization, the Alberta Chamber of Resources (often but errantly said to have been launched in 1935), the mists of time occasionally obscure the COAA's early history. An otherwise thought-provoking article on the COAA's Project Rework Reduction Tool in a 2004 edition of an engineering periodical, for example, claims that the COAA "was established in 1990 to unite owners and contractors in this oil-rich province."

1974

Among activities over the year: discussions with the Alberta government on manpower supply and demand and on labour issues pertaining to the Syncrude project.

1. The name of the Company is CONSTRUCTION OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA.

2. The objects for which the Company is established are:

- (a) To encourage and promote by all lawful means, research in and for various facets of the construction industry including, but not limited to, manpower, labour relations and personnel training.
- (b) To encourage and promote by all lawful means a responsible and equitable relationship among owners of projects and works, the various segments and factions comprising the construction industry, all levels of government and the general public.
- (c) To provide ways and means for discussion, the exchange of ideas and the dissemination of information relating to all matters within the ambit of either or both subclauses (a) and (b) above.
- (d) The doing of all such lawful things as are incidental or conducive to the attainment of the above objects.

SAUCIER, JONES, BLACK, GAIN, STRATTON & LAYCRAFT

The COAA's Memorandum of Association specifies the name and objects of the Company and the liability and undertakings of its members.

The authorization of Directors to borrow money and give security is among the first uses of the COAA corporate seal.

RESOLUTION TO AUTHORIZE THE DIRECTORS TO BORROW AND GIVE SECURITY

CONSTRUCTION OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

CAPITAL: Authorized \$ _____ Subscribed \$ _____ Paid-up \$ _____

INCORPORATED UNDER THE _____ COMPANIES ACT

RESOLUTION

BE IT RESOLVED THAT:

The Company is hereby authorized to borrow money for the purpose of carrying out the objects of its incorporation; to hypothecate, pledge or mortgage its real and personal property; to issue debentures secured by mortgage or otherwise; to sign bills, notes, contracts and other evidences of or securities for money borrowed or to be borrowed for the purposes aforesaid; and to pledge debentures as security for temporary loans.

The Directors of the Company are hereby authorized and empowered from time to time to execute all or any of the foregoing powers on behalf of the Company in such a manner and subject to such regulations and restrictions as they may see fit.

Dated this _____ day of _____ A.D. 19__ 73

CERTIFICATE

We, the undersigned, President and Secretary of CONSTRUCTION OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA Limited, hereby certify that the foregoing resolution was unanimously passed at a general meeting of the shareholders of the said Company, duly called for the purpose of considering the same, and held on the _____ day of _____ A.D. 19__ 73.

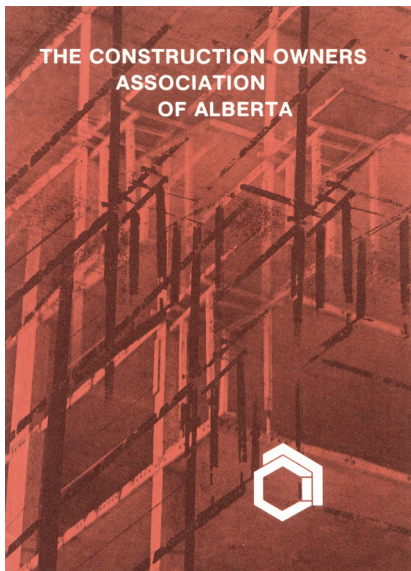
We further certify that the said resolution is in full force and effect and has not been repealed or varied, nor is there any resolution or article of association of the Company in force which restricts, varies or modifies the same.

WITNESSE our hands and the seal of the Company this _____ day of _____ A.D. 19__ 73.

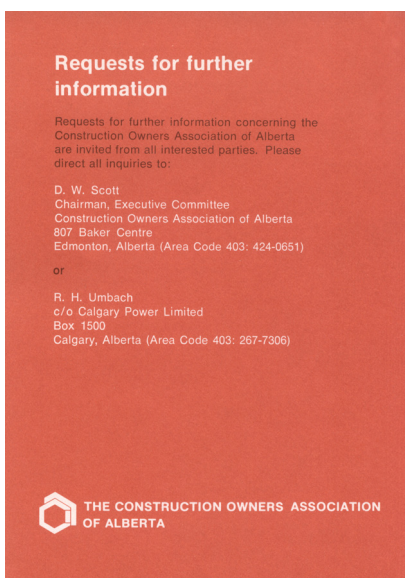
CONSTRUCTION OWNERS ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA

(CORPORATE SEAL) _____ President

_____ Secretary



The first brochure is eight pages long. It describes the COAA as a "forum within which ideas and information can be exchanged by consumers of construction manpower and materials." It also explains the rationale behind the COAA's formation, what the association has done, and what it hopes to do.



As of February, there are 17 Full COAA members.

Included in the manpower debate are expressed concerns with the industry's/economy's ability "to cope with the inevitable shortfall of skilled construction labour necessary to carry out known major projects over the next few years" and of a lack of forecast data.

Mr Kilgour provides a report on manpower to the Board in February. "The deeper I get into the problem of the accurate determination of long term construction manpower demand/availability forecasts the more concerned I become about whether the needs of the Association's membership can be realistically accommodated." He sees, however, the greater value of such a forecasting effort to lie not so much in its capacity to help industry plan as to alert government and labour to the magnitude of the challenge and provoke a coherent response.

In a presentation to the annual general meeting in June, A.W. Wirth, responsible for the construction of a \$230-million refinery for Imperial Oil (and soon a COAA Director), notes that "Our country faces a very real and significant shortage of skilled personnel... [Alberta] is on the threshold of an industrial construction boom, a boom that creates for us a potential crisis situation with respect to availability of construction craftsmen and other human resources. It is very important that our Province manage and pace their way into and through this period wisely and well. Unless this is done, some industrial development opportunities for the Province will be lost, the labour scene will become chaotic, and the pace of inflation accelerated to incomprehensible levels." He predicts shortages of up to 10,000 workers by 1976 and recommends, as fixes, better training, increased immigration, and improved utilization of human resources.

President Scott suggests that the new COAA board of directors, elected at the annual general meeting, "begin to make contact with similar organizations in other jurisdictions, with a view to considering interprovincial affiliations."

Great Canadian Oil Sands Limited, Oxford Development Group Ltd., and Fiberglas Canada Ltd. are among new members this year. Dues for 1974 – 75 are set at \$300 per member.

A \$10,000 investment in short-term notes yields 10.5% interest. The COAA's cash balance in September is \$2,566.

1975

Revenue for the fiscal year is \$7,357 on expenses of \$1,459, the largest item of which is conference room rental and catering.

1976

The COAA has 22 corporate members at the beginning of the year. They include electrical utility companies, oil companies, chemical and petrochemical companies, and commercial developers.

The Association has four officers, a president, two vice-presidents, and a secretary treasurer. Its business is managed by a seven-member Board of Directors.

Many of the members have head offices outside Alberta.

The COAA's year-end is changed from May 31 to September 30. Under the old system, revenue for the year is \$7,190 but expenses have skyrocketed, thanks to a \$8,657 legal charge, producing a loss of \$2,458.

The maximum number of directors permitted per the COAA's articles of incorporation is amended through special resolution from seven to 12.

Mr C.A. Hames is hired by the COAA in October as Manager to work "on its behalf rather as opposed to relying entirely on voluntary assistance." Among Mr Hames' anticipated duties: helping with the establishment of a Membership Committee that will work to expand COAA representation.

1977

As at the end of March there are 27 COAA members.

By May of 1977 there is an unexplained need to refill the post of COAA manager. The Board agrees to define more precisely what is expected from the incumbent of the position before rehiring to it.

New members this year include Sherritt Gordon Mines Ltd., Luscar Ltd., Inland Cement Industries Ltd., North Western Pulp and Power Ltd., and Diamond Shamrock Alberta Gas Ltd.

It is proposed and approved that the COAA establish standing committees as warranted (Communications, Manpower, Productivity), that a manager continue to be employed on a part-time basis, and that a permanent office and budget be established for this purpose. With the annual PO box expense thus disappearing from the expense ledger, the COAA's corporate address is subsequently listed as 9947 Saskatchewan Drive, Edmonton, Alberta, where the annual rent is about \$1,400.

Revised wording for membership eligibility is accepted by the Board as follows: "Membership in the Association is open to users of Construction services in Alberta, whether it be for the erection of new plants or expansion of existing facilities for the prime function of distribution, manufacturing or processing of products, saleable in Alberta,

It is very important that our Province manage and pace their way into and through this [industrial construction boom] wisely and well. Unless this is done, some industrial development opportunities for the Province will be lost [and] the labour scene will become chaotic....

—A.W. Wirth, Imperial Oil, June 1974

Canada or World markets. Also included are, utilities (production and transmission) and Commercial Development companies.”

As at January 14, the COAA’s assets are valued at \$23,451.

1978

There are seven COAA committees this year: Government Relations, Labour Relations, Membership, Combines, Productivity, Manpower, and Education/Communications.

Early in the year, Mr Barney Benson is appointed Managing Director.

Imperial Oil’s Mr Nucomb Bloomer resigns as COAA Secretary/Treasure, effective December 1, a position he has held since inception in 1973. The Board recommends that the position “not be filled on a permanent basis at the present time.” (However, Mr D.B. Mitchell of Alberta Power Limited is appointed to the position early in 1979.)

Burns Foods Ltd., Union Carbide Canada Ltd., Petro-Canada, Celanese Canada Ltd., and Olympia and York Developments Ltd. are among new COAA members this year.

The annual general meeting is held September 21 at the Four Seasons Hotel in Edmonton. Mr William Nevins, Chief Economist of the Canadian Construction Association, is the guest speaker. He forecasts less than average performance for the building construction market due to demographic factors and government spending restraint.

For the year ended September 30 (the Association will convert to an August 31 year-end next year), the COAA’s total assets are \$15,161 comprised mainly of cash and term deposits. Revenue from membership fees amounts to about \$35,000. The largest expenses are professional and secretarial services and office supplies and postage. The phone bill comes in at about half the value of the rent.

1979

In his President’s report, Mr Chuck Collyer (father of David, future CAPP president) calls 1979 an “active” year for the COAA. He notes that membership consists of 39 companies and municipalities, but expresses some dismay at the lack of representation in commercial con-

Dedication...

“The first time I met Barney [Benson, the COAA’s first full-time managing director], shortly after I was hired on to the COAA, the board told me to go to a particular address, and it was his home in the basement of an apartment building, and all the COAA records and other material were in a closet. Barney was 65-ish or so and thinking of retiring. He was a good guy, a nice man.”

—Don Currie, COAA
Managing Director, 1985 - 2000

struction. Labour relations have been a key area of focus and activity this year. The lack of reliable labour demand and supply forecasts is a perennial challenge.

“Our objective,” he says, “is not only to achieve wider dissemination of more meaningful forecasts but also provide data sufficiently creditable to be evaluated by the industry to improve the development of strategy and planning to meet future manpower needs.”

He addresses the work of the productivity committee and of efforts to maintain strong communications links with stakeholders such as government and related associations.

In his Labour Relations Committee report, chairman J.W. Phillips notes that “... it is evident that our Association has moved a long way toward its goals in the few years since it was formed in 1973. It has become recognized as a credible non-aligned group interested in the entire industry and not just one particular part of it.”

Shell Canada Resources Ltd. joins the COAA. Membership dues are \$800 per annum.

As at March 31, the COAA's assets have more than doubled from the last entry: to \$33,160.

1980

In the face of apparent drops in labour productivity noticed throughout the Western World since the mid-1970s, the COAA commissions a study (published as “Construction Productivity Standards” next year) of the major factors that affect productivity in the construction industry in Alberta. Among the study's findings:

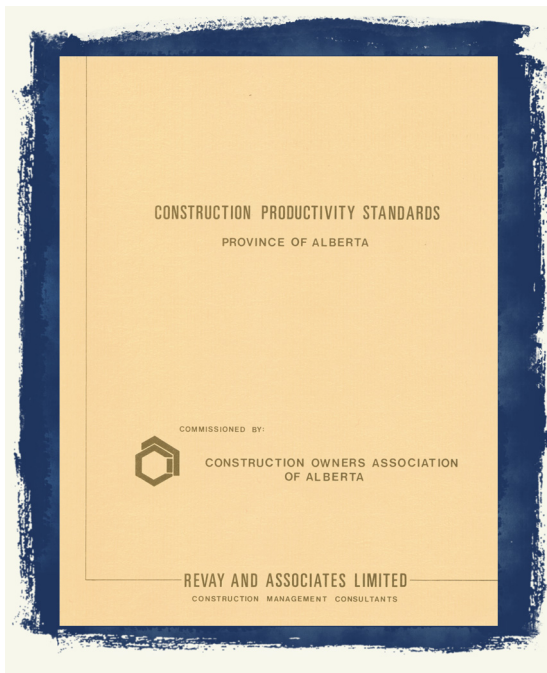
- Urban projects are more productive than rural projects.
- Large projects are less productive than smaller projects, although the gap may be bridged by technological variation.
- Firm price contracts are more productive than cost-reimbursable contracts.
- Motivation probably “has the greatest influence on productivity and it is a burden upon management to ensure that motivators exist on a project and, conversely, that demotivators are obviated.”

President Collyer notes that “Our credibility continues to be high and we are viewed by the Minister of Labour and his senior staff as a highly objective third party, concerned for the health of the construction industry, capable of contributing solutions and able to defuse some of the confrontation so prevalent in the industry.”

The annual general meeting is held at the Calgary Convention Centre on September 25.

No other group outside the construction industry exists which has demonstrated a significant capability to be a constructive influence.

—COAA President Chuck Collyer
September 20, 1979



The COAA commissions the "Construction Productivity Standards" project in 1980 and this report is published the following year. Companies had established their own productivity standards, but it was hard to say whether performance ranked above or below the norm since there was no basis for area-wide industry comparison. The project aims to address this gap and offer recommendations for improvement. Two groupings of indices are developed that allow productivity comparisons based on factors such as project type, location, or size.

The Government Relations Committee notes: "It has been the policy of this Association to initiate dialogue with government whenever we believe we have constructive contributions or recommendations to make which warrant government attention, or when owner concerns are of sufficient importance to ensure government awareness."

The COAA takes a lead role in proposing a manpower conference for 1981. "The need for this conference has been prompted by the absence of any available meaningful representation of the national/regional manpower outlook which can be used as a planning basis for those concerned with construction." The conference takes place in two phases (tiers) over the next two years.

The COAA's assets as at August 31 are \$24,316, mostly in term deposits. Revenues are \$37,411 on expenses of \$35,453. At \$5,000 a Mega Projects Study is among the largest expenses this year.

1981

In April, there are 39 members of the COAA. Recent additions include Alsands Energy Ltd., Texaco Canada Resources Ltd., and Nu-West Development Corporation Ltd.

The Hon. Les Young, Minister of Alberta Labour, is the guest speaker at the semi-annual meeting in April. His topic is the "Role of the Construction Industry Relations Council in Alberta."

As at August 31 total COAA assets are valued at \$45,200. Total revenues have skyrocketed to \$113,905, thanks mostly to \$70,000 earned from the productivity study assessment. An expense is incurred in an equal amount, however. An additional \$8,000 cost has been booked for an unidentified brochure.

1982

The annual general meeting is held at the Calgary Convention Centre on September 21.

Membership this year stands at 41. "All major sectors—commercial, industrial and municipal—were represented with reasonably good geographical distribution throughout the province."

The COAA's financial statements for the year indicate assets of \$26,734, revenues of \$49,019 (\$40,450 from membership fees) and net earnings of \$1,534. The largest expense items include professional services (\$22,500) and work on the productivity study (\$7,800).

1983

Foothills Pipe Lines (Yukon) Limited is one among new members this year.

The fifth manpower demand survey is distributed at the annual general meeting in September. The forecasts are split between northern and southern Alberta with strong demand expected by next year for the latter, thanks in part to Calgary's LRT and other municipal projects.

Association assets as at August 31 are valued at \$28,122. Revenues are down substantially as cumulative membership fees have dropped below \$29,000. Still, the COAA earns \$1,388 over the fiscal year.

1984

COAA assets have dropped slightly, to \$25,566 at year-end. Revenue holds steady, but the Association registers a loss for the year of \$1,556. Financial statements for the year include a proposed budget.

1985

The Construction Safety Committee is formed consisting of 15 construction managers and safety professionals from member companies. Elements of its mission include encouraging the sharing of safety information across the industry, encouraging COAA members to adopt a common standard for performance expectations, to support the development of skills that will help individuals to continuously improve safety performance, and to promote COAA member recognition of contractor safety performance.

In the minutes for the September 26 annual general meeting it is noted that "Arrangements have been finalized with the Alberta Chamber of Resources to combine the COAA offices and administration in the ACR offices in Edmonton under Managing Director Donald V. Currie..... B. Benson to assist in the transfer of facilities and responsibilities through the month of October."

The COAA joins the Alberta Chamber of Resources consortium. The ACR was founded in 1936 as the Edmonton Chamber of Mines and, in addition to having changed its name and organizational direction to encompass all natural resources in its mandate in 1977, is about to undergo another transition as managing director Harold Page retires and is replaced by Don Currie. Don holds a B.Sc. and an M.Sc. in Geology from the University of Alberta, and a B.Ed. from St. Francis Xavier. He was a Yukon prospector with Stride Exploration in his early working life, a high-school teacher midstream, a ground-water geologist and geological consultant, and, representing Mobil Augers, a COAA and ACR director prior to his appointment. Among its advantages, Don says, the ACR-COAA union brings together a group skilled at attracting investment with one capable of putting funds to their best economic use.

At the annual general meeting COAA President Mike Halpen notes that COAA's mission "is to foster a highly productive and competitive construction industry in Alberta so that economic growth will be encouraged. This objective begs the question: why can't we simply leave its attainment entirely up to the con-

Geologist, educator, and published poet Don Currie becomes the new COAA Managing Director with the "merger" of the Association with the Alberta Chamber of Resources in 1985. "It was the best job I ever had," he says today. "You couldn't wish for a better one. You just walk into that boardroom, sit in a corner and listen and you think 'Oh, good!'"



Arrangements have been finalized with the Alberta Chamber of Resources to combine the COAA offices and administration in the ACR offices in Edmonton....

—COAA annual general meeting, 1985

tractor associations and/or individual contractors? Quite simply, it is not the contractor associations who ultimately pay construction bills—rather, owners do! Owners pay for construction inefficiencies, whatever the cause. It was this realization that led to the formation of COAA and provided an organization that could effectively present owner interests to government, contractors and labour.”

In a presentation to labour legislation administrators, new COAA president, J.K. Hogan, speaks to opportunities and challenges in the oil and gas industry. Among his remarks:

- *Simply stated, the end of the National Energy Program (the infamous and ill-advised NEP) and the recently announced Western Accord have unshackled a giant industry that has the capability to provide very significant growth opportunities for the entire country.*
- *[The industry needs to avoid] mega projects wherever possible. Big projects will be broken down and handled separately in manageable sized pieces.*

The value of COAA assets at year-end is \$24,257. At \$28,991, total revenue comes in under budget, but so do expenses. The loss for the year, at \$2,309, is nevertheless a little higher than expected.

1986

Chaired by Al Lepine, the inaugural meeting of the Safety Committee is held February 11 in the COAA/ACR boardroom in Edmonton. The mandate is to “seek out data on current Alberta construction industry performance and comparisons to others, communicate same to COAA members, and research available information on successful client approaches to construction safety and share same with COAA members.”

The semi-annual meeting, held May 8 in the Quebec Room of the Edmonton Inn, coincides with election day in Alberta. At the meeting, the president points out that the revised priorities and objectives of the Association, per the new sharing of space and resources with the ACR, have two major thrusts: improving communication with membership and increasing COAA focus on contractor safety.

The annual general meeting is held in the McLeod Room of the Skyline Hotel, Calgary, on October 1. According to the minutes, in his re-

Humble beginnings...

“Harold [Page], who was brilliant about bringing the whole ACR-COAA consortium together, left some ball point pens behind and that was about it... probably the entire inventory of the COAA. But you couldn’t get a better match in heaven as far as covering the proposed industrial advancement in Alberta at that time. You can’t really think of one without the other.”

—Don Currie, COAA
Managing Director, 1985 - 2000

port for the year, President Kevin Hogan takes “an upbeat approach in this difficult time for construction in Alberta, and urged those present to take charge of opportunities that were presenting themselves in the construction field.” The speaker at the event is Willard Kirkpatrick, President of the Merit Shop Contractors Association.

COAA Mission: “To foster a highly productive and competitive construction industry in Alberta so that economic growth will be encouraged.”

—COAA President, Mike Halpen, 1985

The Safety Committee is experiencing some growing pains with “very little or no impact on owners that were not already committed to a safety program.” A great deal of study and discussion is conducted to improve the reach and effectiveness of the work.

COAA assets are valued at \$22,915 at year end. Increased income from interest offsets a small drop in membership revenue. The loss for the year comes in at \$6,083 due, in part, to a big and unbudgeted phone bill (\$1,500) and equally unforeseen (though minor) moving expenses (the ACR had moved offices in the fall of 1985 to 1410, Oxford Tower, Edmonton).

1987

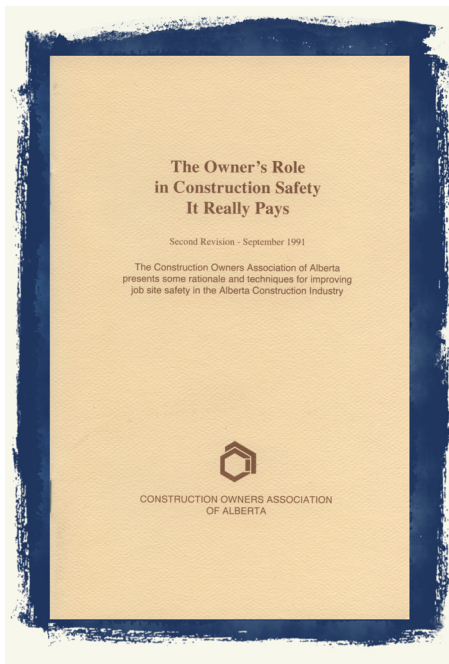
The COAA University Liaison Committee notes a looming funding crunch for new civil engineering courses at the University of Alberta. A U. of A. Advisory Committee, which includes COAA representation, asks the COAA to “promote awareness among its membership regarding the need for program funding and for either summer or permanent jobs for graduates.”

COAA Managing Director Don Currie sends a construction manpower demand survey to members designed, in part, to help identify future craft shortages with sufficient lead time to permit corrective action.

The annual general meeting is held in October in the McLeod Room of the Calgary Convention Centre where it is noted: “Paid up membership as of October 22, 1987 is 23. The COAA requires at least 5 new members. Effort in this area is required during the coming year.” The luncheon speaker is William Denault, Director, BC Construction Industry Health and Safety Council.

The publication “The Owner’s Role in Construction Safety: It Really Pays” goes into its third printing (total 1,750 copies). Among others, the brochure is distributed to the Business Round Table, the BC Construction Industry Health and Safety Council, and Alberta Occupational Health and Safety.

At a presentation to a function of the Construction Industry Advisory Council on “Critical Elements for a Positive Climate in Alberta’s Construction Industry: The Owner’s View,” COAA President Thane Waldie says, “Our members are interested in new capital construction programs and the utilization of construction organizations and their trades people in the maintenance of their facilities. The construction



"It Really Pays" is a popular COAA publication that goes through several printings and revisions. The edition pictured is 21 pages in length and speaks to the COAA Safety Committee's mission, the owner's influence on safety performance, the variety of benefits forthcoming from a sound program, and ways to measure performance. Included is the "iceberg" graphic that details the significant extent of hidden indirect costs associated with poor safety performance.

industry, its policies and practices have a real effect on the bottom line costs of many of our members' organizations." He also discusses ten COAA priorities:

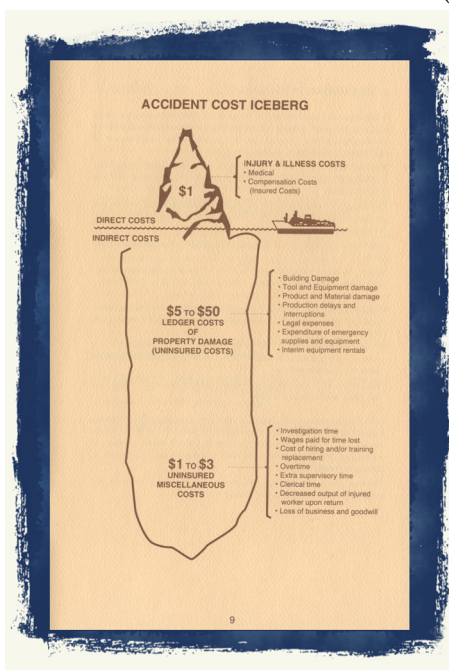
1. To improve safety performance.
2. To promote efficient, flexible and uniform non-restrictive work practices.
3. To support programs that will result in a balanced supply of qualified tradespersons.
4. To help owners improve their skills at project management.
5. To liaise with The Business Round Table in the US.
6. To promote innovative technology.
7. To support the elimination of unnecessary government regulation.
8. To try to promote construction labour stability.
9. To promote the use of sub-journeymen or tradesmen helpers.
10. To help improve flexibility in trade agreements to minimize inefficient work assignments.

Later, at the annual general meeting, President Waldie notes that the bulk of activities over the year have been concentrated in a few key areas including: regulatory reform discussions with ERCB and owner safety issues. "The issues your association has been working on are ones which have bottom line impacts for companies planning capital investments in Alberta," he says.

Overdrawn in cash, COAA assets drop to \$17,271 at year-end. Total revenue holds steady at \$26,000 and, due in part to lower than expected travel expenses and legal fees, the loss for the year (\$903) is lower than budgeted. Secretarial fees, which had earlier been recorded in amounts greater than \$2,000 a year, are no longer booked.

1988

New COAA members this year include Novacor Chemicals Ltd. (Ernie Tromposch), Union Carbide Canada Ltd. (Dave Todd), Dai-Showa Canada Company Ltd. (Thomas Hamaoka), and Sherritt Gordon Ltd. (Werner Bink).



The COAA submits input on proposed changes to WCB operations regarding issues such as no fault insurance, compensation based on wage loss, and proactivity in accident prevention.

Considering that expenditures have exceeded revenues by several thousands of dollars per year over the last few years, the Board approves a \$200 increase in annual membership fees for the following fiscal year.

Membership revenue for fiscal 1988 is budgeted at \$29,000, unchanged from the previous year's actual revenue.

The June safety seminar is a highlight of the year. Sponsors include the Energy Projects Engineering Contractors Association and the Al-

berta Construction Association. The theme is “Partners in Safety.”

President Thane Waldie, summarizes COAA activities of the past year, “a period of relatively low capital investment in the province,” as having, among other things, provided input to the Alberta government on environmental and regulatory review issues, workman compensation issues, labour legislation, health and safety, and the review of the Manpower Development Act.

In his review of the year’s activities, Mr Waldie also makes note of the value of COAA membership: “What have members received for \$1,000 per year? Like most organizations we get out of the COAA what we put into it.”

CLR-A president, Neil Tidsbury, gives a presentation to the COAA Board on the unionized construction situation in Alberta.

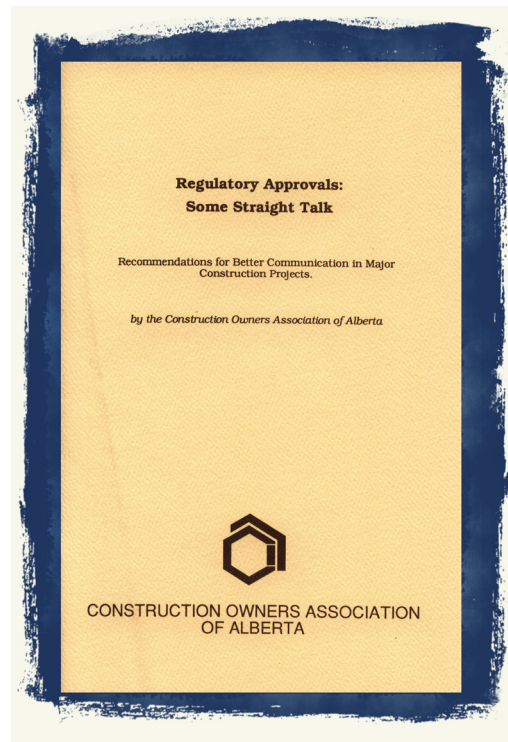
The COAA’s “The Owner’s Role in Construction Safety—It Really Pays” is distributed throughout Canada and the U.S. and is used as a text at a Texas A&M executive construction course. The booklet is issued in a revised edition next year.

Publishes “Regulatory Approvals: Some Straight Talk.” The short pamphlet contains recommendations for better communications in construction projects including on topics such as keeping elected officials in the picture, disclosing project descriptions early, and joining the community (having official opening ceremonies, for example).

The cost per person for attendance at the October annual general meeting at the Skyline Hotel in Calgary is \$25. The luncheon keynote speaker is Mr Richard Kibben, Executive Director, Construction for the Business Round Table of New York, New York. Project execution presentations are given by representatives of the Prince Albert, Saskatchewan, pulp mill and Regina upgrader.

As of November, there are 27 members of the COAA.

With the cash position well restored, COAA assets are valued at \$29,209 at year-end. And with membership fee revenue up slightly, total revenue is steady. Meeting expenses are down significantly (to just



With a first printing in 1988, “Some Straight Talk” is added to the growing COAA library of shared experience and guidance. It comprises seven straightforward recommendations on how to “save time, money and effort in planning and implementing major construction projects.” One recommendation is to Define Information Requirements: “Because incomplete submissions lead to more steps and longer delays, the public, regulators and owners all benefit from making the effort to define the kind, scope and detail required early in the process.”

Making a difference...

“In my view, it was in the early 1990s that COAA really hit its stride. There had been some fatalities on pulp mill construction sites, and an impassioned appeal for owners to come together to share their experiences and practices in respect to safety. Contractors were looking for forums to improve construction in respect to safety, performance, and workforce development and delivery.”

—R. Neil Tidsbury, President
Construction Labour Relations – An Alberta Association

\$197 for the year), although travel expenses have tripled (to \$1,067). The COAA earns \$1,623 for fiscal 1988.

1990

There are five COAA committees this year: Government and Industry Liaison, Construction Industry Ministerial Advisory, Construction Industry Safety, and University Liaison.

1991

The COAA publishes the second revision of “The Owner’s Role in Construction Safety: It Really Pays.” What would probably be considered a best practice in later years, the 21-page booklet is subtitled: “The COAA presents some rationale and techniques for improving job site safety in the Alberta Construction Industry.”

1992

Premier Don Getty invites the COAA to the 500-delegate Premier’s Conference on Alberta’s Economic Future, the “culminating event in the Toward 2000 Together public consultation process leading to the development of a new economic strategy for Alberta.”

The COAA holds a one-day conference in April called “Construction Partnerships for the ‘90s: Identifying the Challenges Ahead.” President Terry Waters describes its purpose as taking steps to reduce fragmentation in the industry. “Alberta has an opportunity to be a leader and a pioneer in Canada in construction excellence and show how we can adapt successfully to the new world order.” Speakers include Elaine McCoy, Minister of Alberta Labour, and Rick Singleton, chairman of the Construction Industry Ministerial Advisory Committee.

1993

Best Practices I, a “workshop,” is held May 12 at the Edmonton Inn. Paying \$25 admission each, 81 delegates attend.

A Bridging Committee is formed post-BP workshop to consider recommendations from the event.

COAA President George Jackson outlines the COAA’s position on a number of issues including the need to encourage the Apprenticeship and Industry Training Board to find ways to upgrade the competence of

Safety focus...

“The impetus for COAA safety initiatives and the first Best Practices workshops was that people were getting hurt. If I had to pick a guy who worked especially hard to change that and get all the COAA safety initiatives started it would be Al Lepine of Imperial Oil. He helped develop the concept of *sharing* safety information and passing on lessons among member companies.”

—Don Currie, COAA
Managing Director, 1985 - 2000

scaffolders through additional training programs rather than by the designation of a new trade.

Several members resign their membership this year and there is some Board discussion about how to maintain COAA viability over what appears to be a coming downturn in construction.

The COAA's assets drop more than \$10,000 to \$33,000 for fiscal '93. Membership fee revenue holds steady at \$34,000. The first Best Practices workshop generates revenue of \$1,873 on expenses of \$1,519.



1994

Member fees for 1994 – 1995 are set at \$1,500.

A desired outcome of Best Practices II, held May 18 at the Edmonton Inn, is to "Further the cooperative spirit and commonality of goals among owners, contractors and labour so that all facets of the Alberta Construction Industry are improved."

The COAA Workforce Development Committee is established. It aims to help build a workforce with the right skills, the right mix, at the right time, in the right numbers. Among its focus areas: Encouraging construction as a career choice including enhancements to the Careers in Construction CD-Rom and providing data on apprenticeship growth in construction.

A variety of corporate brochures are published over the years, including this colourful one. It incorporates panoramic shots of in-process and completed construction projects in a variety of areas: utilities, commercial, mining, agriculture and food processing among them. It also describes the COAA's background and objectives. Among goals is a "balanced supply of labour and supervision to meet the demands of the construction industry." Don Currie's business card is attached to each copy.

BP II attracts 135 delegates with a good mix from the contractor (about 30% of the audience), labour (16%), and construction owner (42%) groups. Delegates are asked to fill out event-evaluation questionnaires. Among results: the overall value of morning presentations scores 3.38 (out of 4.0) and the afternoon workshops 3.37.

At the conclusion of BP II, future COAA President Ben Magnusson states: "The Construction Best Practices initiative will continue. The COAA is committed to continue fostering and sponsoring industry-wide best practices."

1995

The COAA publishes "An Owner's Guide for a Contractor's Health and Safety Management



The aim is to “further the cooperative spirit and commonality of goals among owners, contractors and labour so that all facets of the Alberta Construction Industry are improved.”

—The stated purpose for BP II in 1994

Program,” which aims to improve workplace health and safety by helping owners design and create a contractor’s health and safety management program and contractors develop a program consistent with owner expectations. The document includes discussion of contractor prequalification, contractor selection, prejob activities, and performance evaluation. It is presented and distributed at BP III in May.

Holds a workshop on “Value Engineering and Constructability” designed to get the industry to adopt best practices in those areas. Members of the task force formed to put the workshop together come from Shell Canada, Cosyn Technology, Fluor Daniel, Nova, Alberta Pacific, and the universities of Alberta and Calgary.

Membership consists of 20 full member companies, 13 association members, and three supporting members.

Approximately 140 delegates attend the COAA’s Best Practices III at the Edmonton Inn on May 10. Including tax, the cost per delegate is \$85. Billed as “Building Partnerships: A How-to Workshop” the event follows the model of the previous two, described as having “produced useful, practical concepts that have been applied on recent construction projects in our province.”

Receives a Partnerships award from Alberta Labour recognizing COAA’s commitment to raising the standards of worker health and safety in Alberta.

The COAA’s assets are valued at \$44,000, up fourfold from the year before. Revenue from membership fees over the fiscal year amount to \$39,000, up from \$32,000 the year before. The Best Practices Workshop generates \$12,000 in revenue on \$4,000 in expenses.

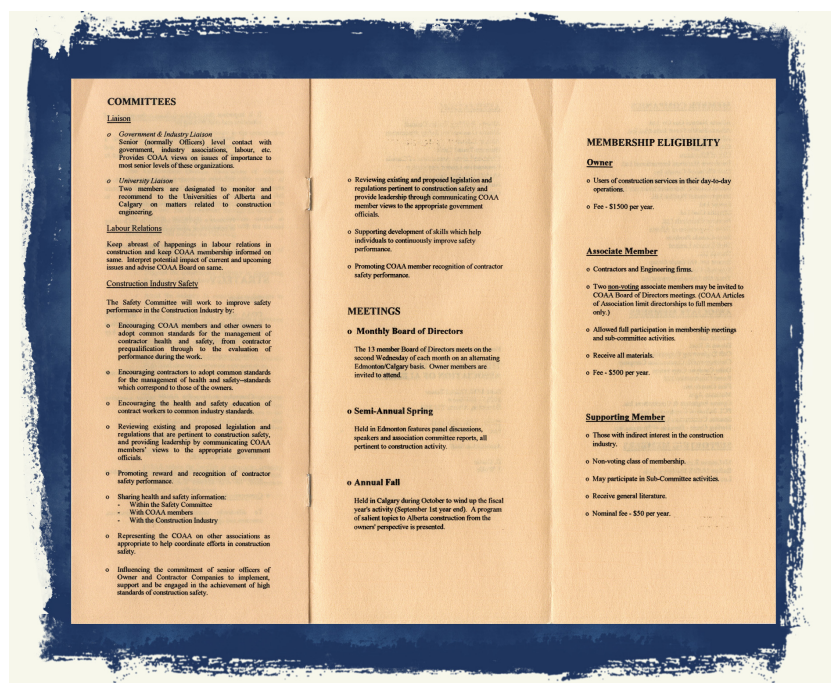
This brochure, titled “The COAA, What It Is, What It Does” is published with some economy in the mid-1990s. It lists the COAA’s goals in the areas of construction health and safety and labour stability and availability. It speaks to strategies, such as being “proactive in the pursuit, and highly influential in the achievement of construction excellence in Alberta.” The three panels pictured list three committees and their activities, the 14 meetings scheduled every year, and the three categories of membership. Along with Don Currie, Judy Wolfe is listed as COAA staff; she had replaced Lillian Brice as Administrative Assistant.

1996

Construction Best Practices IV is held May 8 in Edmonton at the Chateau Louis Conference Centre with about 150 delegates attending.

COAA President Ben Magnusson welcomes delegates: “This is the biggest participation that we ever had in these workshops and it signifies the unique atmosphere of cooperation that has developed across all the different facets of the construction industry in Alberta.”

He continues: “The Best Practices Workshops were borne out of neces-



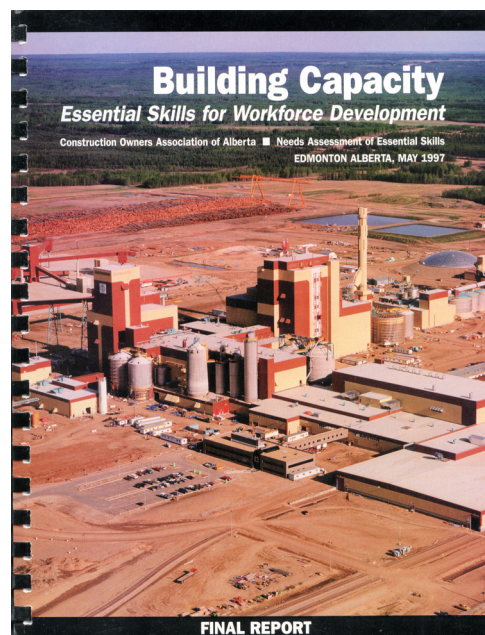
sity. The slim years of the early nineties taught us that we had to be efficient to survive. In being efficient, you cannot afford to waste energy on fighting internal barriers. Hence, cooperation and joint effort are the keys to future success.”

1997

In May, COAA publishes the final report of “Building Capacity: Essential Skills for Workforce Development.” More than 200 members of Alberta’s construction industry had contributed their time and perspectives, including a group of participants from BP IV. Other contributors or supporters include Alberta Education and Career Development, the Calgary Learning Centre, and Alberta Vocational College, Edmonton.

Along with Alberta Labour, Advanced Education and Career Development, the Alberta Construction and Contractors and Labour Organizations, and Human Resources Development Canada, the COAA produces “Maintaining the Advantage: Alberta Construction Workforce Supply/Demand, 1997 – 2001, Final Report.”

The COAA publishes its first Best Practice, an Owners Guide to Contractor Health and Safety, which addresses owner requirements for contractors’ health and safety management systems and includes a standard pre-qualification process. More than two dozen Best Practices will be completed, and will become a key, visible, and particularly valuable activity of the COAA. Future COAA executive director Brad Anderson credits John Brogly, future COAA president and perennial chair of the Best Practice Committee: “His fingerprints are all over everything in there and he has this ability to attract people,” Brad says. “John is a gifted manager and leader who does a great job with 200 volunteers beaver away on best practices. That’s the secret to the success of the COAA.”



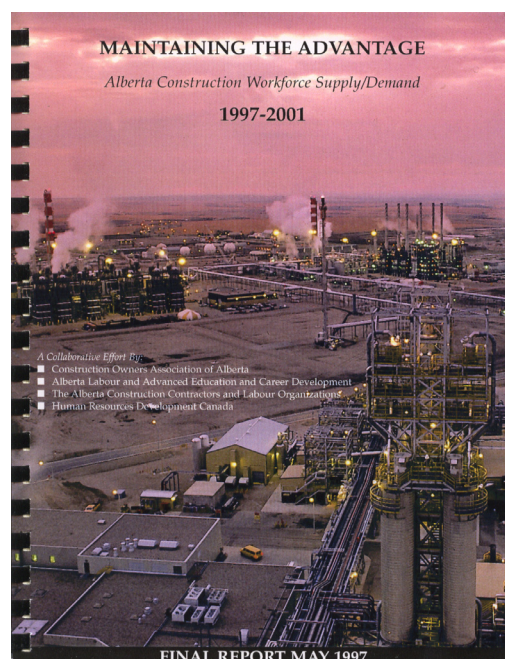
“Building Capacity” examines the reading, writing, math, and oral communications skills used by trades and occupations in the construction industry. It draws on feedback from more than 200 members of the industry, including many participants of the 1996 Best Practices workshop. “Maintaining the Advantage,” leveraging the involvement and support of several organizations including the COAA, is prepared, in front of a looming skills crunch, as a means of helping to assess market conditions in the coming years. The report forecasts annual average construction industry growth of up to 7.0% 1997–2001 and cumulative employment increases of up to 29,000 jobs.

1998

Best Practices VI is held at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton under the theme “Implementation.”

2000

The theme of Best Practices VIII, still called a “workshop,” is “Enhancing the Advantage in Safety & Competitiveness in the Alberta Construction Industry.” The event is held at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton. Among workshops: Flexibility and Stretching, Careers in Construction, and Behaviour-Based Safety. The Hon. Lyle Oberg, Minister of Alberta Learning, delivers the afternoon keynote. There are over 400 registered attendees, the highest enrolment yet. Post-workshop, the questions are posed: “Are we trying to expose people to too many topics? Should we have fewer workshop topics but more sessions?” The Safety Committee is asked to solicit feedback from participants.





Don Currie retires in 2000 and is replaced by Brad Anderson, a geologist and a member of APEGA with expertise in oil sands and energy policy and research.

Co-chair, Peter Dunfield provides a Safety Committee update at BP VIII. “The COAA has set an aggressive and challenging Vision that, ‘No one gets hurt in Heavy Industrial Construction.’ Now many of you may feel that this is an unrealistic objective and that we will always have injuries in the work place. But if we continue to think that injuries will happen and that they are inevitable, then they will in fact keep happening. But my hope today is to help to change your mind about this and show you that we can do better by continuously working towards zero injuries.”

The COAA Workforce Development Committee begins work on a plan to develop apprentices on the work site. In the process, it discovers there is a real need to help apprentices further their skills and knowledge development for the benefit of all involved. As a result, in 2007, the Effective Use of Apprentices Subcommittee publishes the “Apprentice Mentoring Program” best practice.

Upon his retirement, Don Currie is replaced by Brad Anderson. “... during the course of my education,” Brad says at the time, “I took a course from Don Currie. He had a very simple phrase that he passed on to all us fledgling geologists: Observe, Interpret, Predict. That’s turned out to be one of the most important things anyone has ever taught me. If you base your work in intelligent science and if you follow those three words in that order, you won’t ever go too far wrong.” He adds, today, that he was fortunate to have Don available for guidance during the transition into the job: “The greatest four months of my career was working six feet away from Don Currie.”

The annual general meeting is held at the Calgary Merriot Hotel on October 11 from 9:00 am to noon. It includes a presentation from Alberta Human Resources and Employment minister Ron Hicks and from Derrick Kershaw, general manager of Syncrude’s Aurora Mine.

The COAA’s assets, consisting mostly of cash, amount to \$84,000 at fiscal year end. Revenues are up almost \$20,000 over the year before to \$141,000. The Best Practices Workshop generates \$46,000 revenue on a \$19,000 expenditure. Among expenses is a previously unlisted charge (\$2,100) for computer and website.

2001

Publishes the “Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace: Al-

Succession...

“I told the board, about two years ahead, that I’d be retiring on my 65th birthday. They got more than a hundred applications, interviewed ten or twenty, but couldn’t decide. I hadn’t kept up with him too much, but I called Brad [Anderson] and I said, ‘Brad do you want the best job in the province?’ And he said, ‘I sure do!’ They interviewed him, and they hired him, and it’s a good thing they got him.”

—Don Currie, COAA
Managing Director, 1985 - 2000

Growth and improvement...

"I think it is clear that the network that comes together under COAA's flag, to build a better construction industry in respect to safety, workforce development, contractual relationships, and performance, is unmatched in Canada. The dedication and commitment of those that toil on the respective Best Practices committees are beyond what anyone could have predicted in those early gatherings in the 1990s. The suite of Best Practices initiatives has profoundly affected the industry here and elsewhere. The annual conference is anticipated throughout the year, and envied by other stakeholders across the country. It is a unique gathering in respect to the mix of stakeholders that confer together. The annual meeting of the COAA is similarly emerging as a place one has to be if one is going to grow in this industry."

—R. Neil Tidsbury, President
Construction Labour Relations – An Alberta Association

cohol and Drug Guidelines and Work Rule." The best-practice standard is the result of work begun under the COAA's direction in 1998—a time of "confusion, redundancy and discrepancies" for drug and alcohol policy in the construction-industry workplace. The model is intended to be part of an overall approach to safety and strives to establish a minimum industry standard for safe workplaces. In the years to come, the model will be updated and enhanced as required, and a great deal of progress will be posted.

COAA president John Brogly is pictured in a front-page Edmonton Journal Business section feature headlined: "A dangerous culture, Industry groups work to improve Alberta's abysmal construction safety record." The COAA assertion that Alberta has one of the worst construction safety records in the world bucks the prevailing view, but represents an early and vital impetus, the following year, to the development of Bill 37, later known as Work Safe Alberta. "This was the first COAA home run I was involved with," COAA executive director Brad Anderson recounts, also crediting the leadership of Bill Bacon, Brogly's successor. "The owners raised the issue, they argued it rationally and logically, they convinced the minister [Hon. Clint Dunford, Alberta Human Resources and Employment] to champion the cause and change the culture of safety in this province. It was just a huge win for everybody."

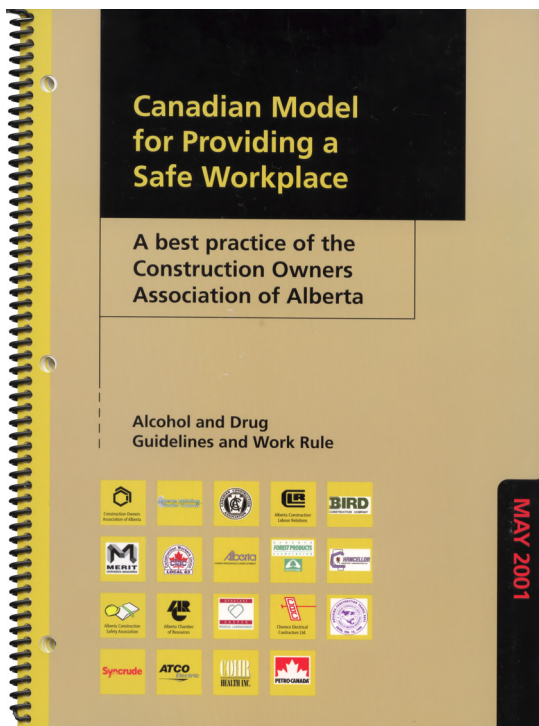
COAA Offsite is held in June in Red Deer. The agenda calls for a "Recap of John Brogly's Hole in One" but, the minutes note, "there was no need for this item."

The theme of BP IX is "The Fragile Advantage in Safety and Competitiveness in the Alberta Construction Industry." Three keynote

Inheritance...

"I had three interviews, and then the final one was with the Executive Committee of the ACR. And they said, 'Oh, by the way, if you get the job, you'll have to look after this COAA outfit as well.' And I said, 'Who the heck is the COAA?' I'd never heard of it. But, OK: that's going to take up 25 percent of my time. And it was OK. It was all good. Today, I'd say it's one of the most interesting organizations I've ever worked with."

—Brad Anderson,
Executive Director, COAA



The first published COAA Best Practice, an Owners Guide to Contractor Health and Safety, which addressed owner requirements for contractors' health and safety management systems and included a standard pre-qualification process, is completed in February 1997, and more than two dozen have been issued since then, including May 2001's Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace, which focuses on alcohol and drug policy and guidelines. Under the direction of COAA, construction industry stakeholders initially came together in 1998 and then again in 2000 to develop consistent guidelines and policy that would standardize the approach, testing, application and rehabilitation of workers with respect to the use of alcohol and drugs. "The intent is to establish a best-practice standard that all stakeholders within the industry can follow." The "Canadian Model" has been updated and improved several more times over the years.

speakers—Mel Giles, Chris McEwen, and Dr. Louis Franscutti—give presentations on the umbrella subject of “New Workers in Construction.” Although an early bird discount is available, the normal fee is \$175.

Participant feedback on BP IX indicates that, while most comments are positive (e.g. topics relevant, speakers energetic), there are opportunities to improve upon forum logistics such as lighting and sound volume.

In summing up the calendar year, John Brogly notes that “we’ve taken a quantum leap in progress with the Cost Committee’s focus on re-work.” There are four best practices under development and a number of examples of success working with the Alberta government on workforce development (e.g. supply-demand forecasts), safety (e.g. reducing lost time incident rates), and other issues.

The COAA’s assets increase to \$98,000. The Best Practices Workshop generates \$57,000 in revenue on \$29,000 in expenses.

2002

Through participation in the Alberta Workplace Safety Forum this year, the Construction Owners Association of Alberta subsequently becomes a founding member of the Work Safe Alberta Mentorship Program, an initiative launched to help reduce the number of Albertans who die because of workplace injury or disease. The Program aims to improve health and safety performance. Senior executives from companies with excellent safety records volunteer to help improve safety management systems in other organizations.

The Alberta Apprenticeship and Industry Training (AIT) Scholarships are created. They are designed to recognize the excellence of Alberta apprentices in a trade or trainees in designated occupations, and to encourage recipients to complete their apprenticeship or occupational training programs. Today, the COAA supports the AIT Board with four scholarships: Neil Tidsbury Apprenticeship Scholarship; Jeph Virtue Apprenticeship Scholarship; Brian Bickley Apprenticeship Scholarship; and the Stephen Revay Apprenticeship Scholarship.

The University of Alberta, Department of Civil and Environmental Engineering, publishes “Effective Integration of Apprentices: A Pilot Study,” for the Workforce Development Coordinating Committee of the COAA. The study establishes a collection methodology for data that will help identify where and when apprentices can be used safely and effectively in construction projects. It contributes, too, to ongoing and future work to develop best practices such as the “Apprentice Monitoring Program” and the “Apprenticeship Best Practices” booklet.

Best Practices X, held at the University of Alberta, is organized un-

der the theme “Courageous Leadership: Securing the Future of Safety and Competitiveness in the Alberta Construction Industry.” Workshops include Women in Construction, Measuring Rework, and Making Zero Injuries a Reality. The Hon. Clint Dunford, Minister of Alberta Human Resources and Employment, hands out the Best Practices awards while astronaut Mike Mullane delivers the day’s keynote: “Lessons Learned from the Challenger Disaster.”

The COAA’s assets increase to \$135,000 for the year. Membership revenue is up by just over \$10,000 to \$67,000. The Best Practices Workshop generates \$80,000 revenue on \$46,000 spent to host it.

2003

Begins Benchmarking Committee activities and by 2005 a formal relationship is established with the Construction Industries Institute at the University of Texas in Austin which leads to the development of a web-based benchmarking survey/questionnaire based on a CII model and modified to meet the specific needs of the COAA Benchmarking Committee. Training on the questionnaire is conducted in 2006 and 2007, followed by data input and culminates in the production of the Alberta Report in 2009.

Publishes a two-page spread on drug and alcohol awareness and policy and promotes the COAA Project Rework Reduction Tool in the industry directory “Construction Pages of Alberta.”

Continuing work begun in the mid-1990s and in collaboration with several other organizations, issues the “Alberta Construction Workforce Supply Demand Forecast, 2003 – 2007.” The report notes some shortages in the short term that are expected to ease or be eliminated over the medium term.

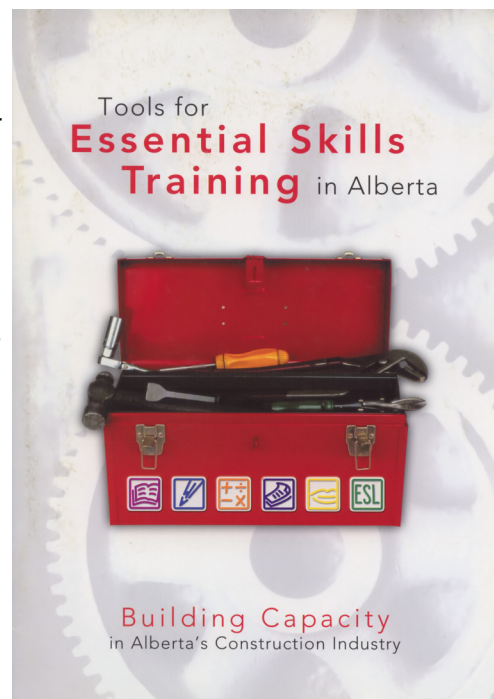
Completes “Building Capacity: Essential Skills for the Construction Industry” funded by the National Literacy Secretariat, Human Resource Development Canada.

The theme of BP XI is “Building Performance: Applying Lessons Learned.” Mike Percy, Neil Camarta, Murray Smart, and Real Doucet speak to the subject of “Alberta Projects: Past, Present and Future.”

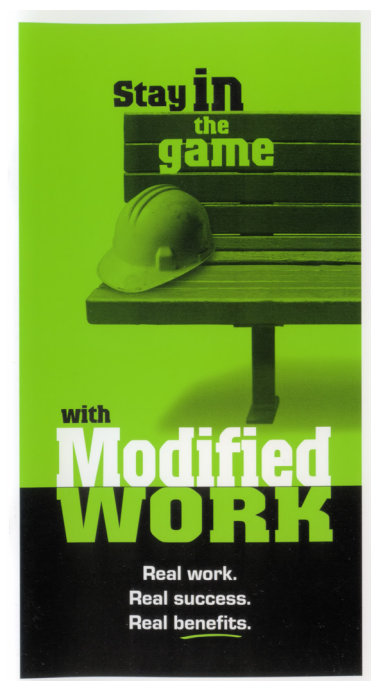
2004

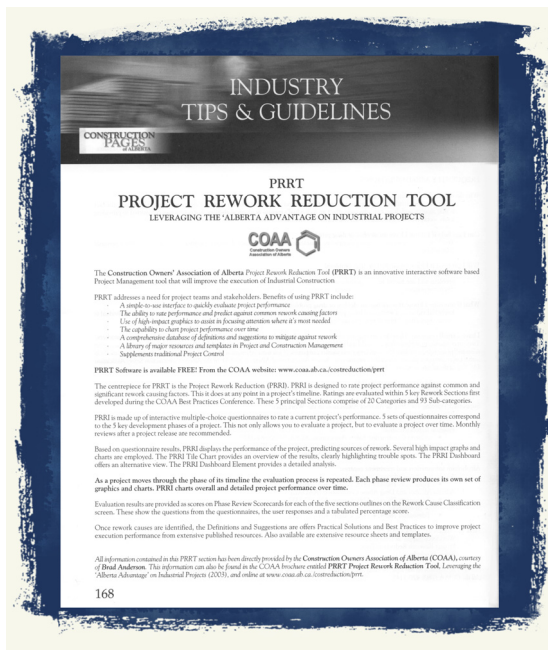
Data generated on behalf of the COAA (the “Batman graph”) portends a series of potentially severe labour shortages ahead and enables preventative and positive action in advance. “We got everyone talking about the future labour shortage in this country,” COAA executive director Brad Anderson says, looking back. “We started the movement that encouraged a collective response, and the COAA was a leader in proposing solutions and developing programs that would help forestall the roadblocks, a process that continues to this day.”

A board member sums up his role: “Most members actively partici-



The COAA combines forces with a variety of other organizations to help develop the construction industry workforce. The effort includes these two mid-decade booklets. “Essential Skills” documents the training network that has grown from the Building Capacity initiative and provides information on six CINESTA (Construction Industry Network for Essential Skills Training in Alberta) organizations. “Stay in the Game” outlines 11 guiding principles for a modified work program and includes a description of workers’ rights and responsibilities.





The COAA's Project Rework Reduction Tool (PRRT) is advertised in the 2003 - 04 edition of "Construction Pages of Alberta." PRRT is an interactive software project management tool, the centrepiece of which is Project Rework Reduction, designed to rate project performance against common and significant rework causing factors. The impetus to develop the PRRT comes from the simple reality that disasters in project execution can more often be averted if there is early and honest recognition that deficiencies exist. PRRT was created to facilitate identification and improvements in project execution. It is targeted for all stakeholders and to be used at the earliest possible instant in the schedule. Used in a responsible and disciplined manner, it will dramatically improve success of projects by avoiding expensive and frustrating field rework.

pate in COAA by populating the various committees and helping to fund the various studies." He adds that best practice publications are the concrete outcomes of a mission to deliver practical solutions to safety, workforce, and project management and construction challenges that can be implemented by all members. Best practice committee members, he says, "have often commented that the process to regularly meet and share ideas is as rewarding as the final document."

The Hon. Dr Lyle Oberg, Minister of Alberta Learning (also responsible for immigration), attends a COAA board meeting and speaks to the new agreement for skilled workers for oil sands projects.

There are 20 principal members this year, 26 associate members, and six supporting members.

The theme of BP XII is "Constructing Confidence by Delivering World-Class Safety and Predictable Results." Mike Percy, Brant Sangster, Murray Smith, and Kevin Nabholz speak to the keynote issue of "Delivering World-Class Safety, Cost and Predictability." Since 2001, there have been 70 nominations in three categories of Best Practice awards. The normal entry fee is \$275.

At the annual general meeting in October, COAA president Ernie Tromposch reflects on "a very good year" that included the addition of 12 new members. Among some of the highlights of the year: being better recognized by the Alberta departments of Energy and Economic Development, COAA support of Work Safe Alberta initiatives, and the exercise of leadership in developing drug and alcohol guidelines.

Total assets at year end amount to \$239,397. Revenues total \$240,972, about half due to BP XII.

2005

Work on updating a Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace, a COAA best practice, is ongoing. Building on work the COAA had begun in 1998, the model aims to ensure a safe workplace by reducing the risks associated with the use of drugs and alcohol. The effort includes solicitation of advice and other feedback from the Alberta Human Rights and Citizenship Commission and the Alberta Building Trades Council on drug and alcohol testing.

Funding is requested of Alberta Energy for the development, in part-

Benchmarking...

"It was another big win and a huge accomplishment getting the data in. Now, it's rolling in quite freely. We're developing expertise and the release of the Alberta Report was huge. Nobody has ever done anything like this before. "

—Brad Anderson,
Executive Director, COAA

nership with the Construction Industry Institute, of a benchmarking initiative to capture and understand performance metrics of heavy industrial construction projects on an ongoing basis.

Alberta Energy and Alberta Economic Development invite the COAA to a Stakeholder Forum focusing on “validating and prioritizing strategies for action that have been recommended in the Alberta Economic Development Authority report Mega Project Excellence: Preparing for Alberta’s Legacy—An Action Plan.”

The COAA is one of several partners supporting “Stepping Forward 2005.” The two-day Calgary conference is designed to address the shifting face of labour in the construction industry and includes panels and presentations from a variety of industry experts and leaders.

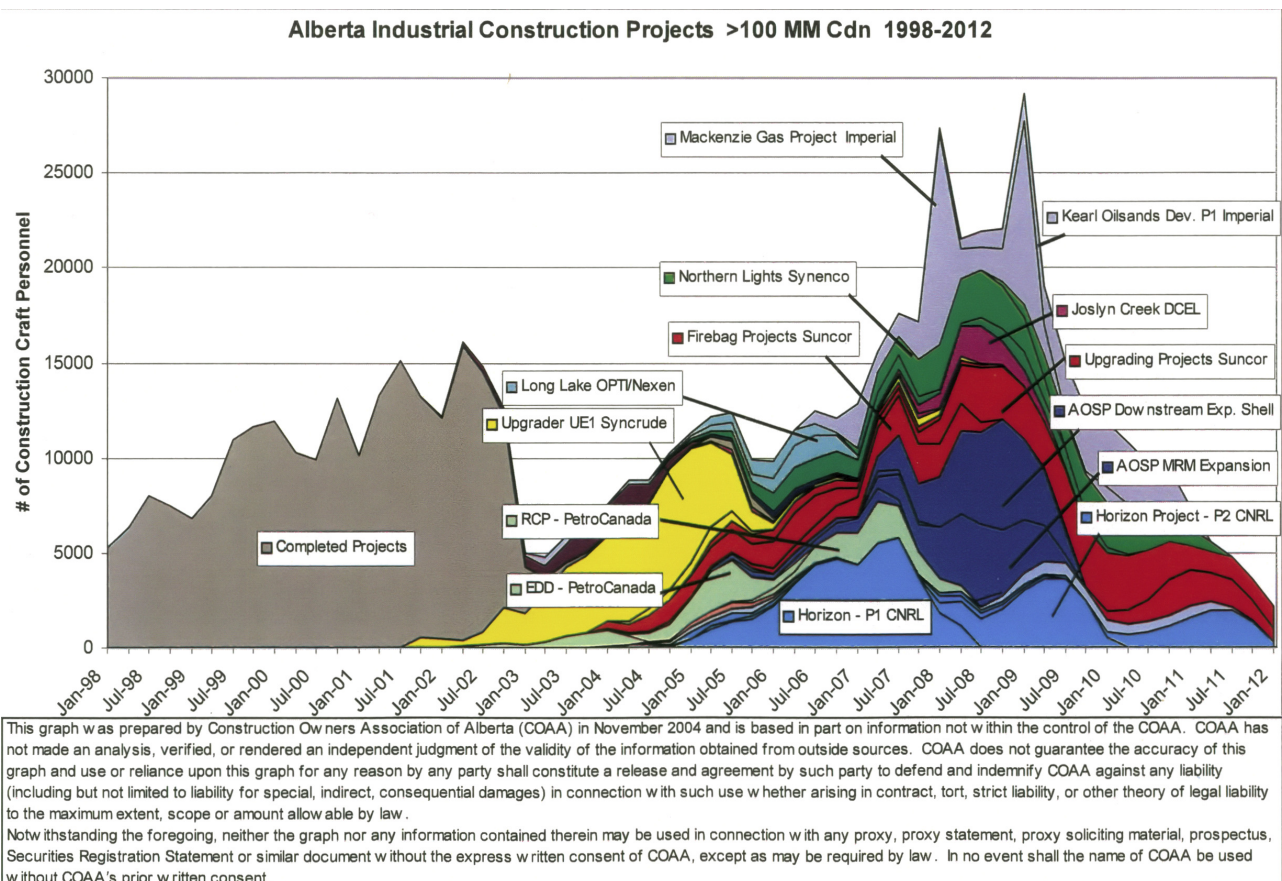
The theme of BP XIII is “Preparing, Positioning, Performing: Rising to the Challenge.” In the fifth year of Best Practices awards, there are now four categories: Safe Implementation and Performance Improvement, Safety Leadership and Innovation, Workforce Development, and this year’s new award, Workforce Diversity. Despite some venue challenges, post-BP feedback draws comments that it “was the best yet.”

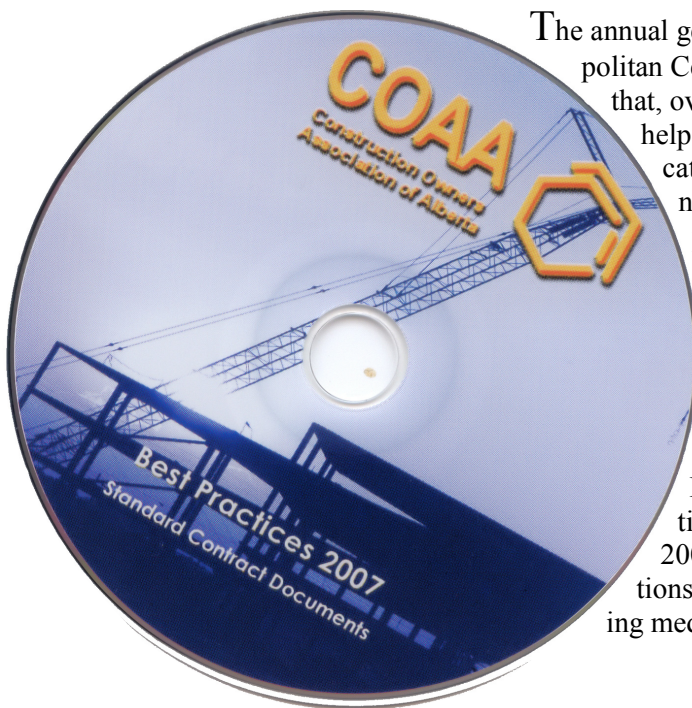
2006

BP XIV attracts 550 delegates. Best practices conferences, in general, have become a good way to either launch new Best Practices or to roll out concepts for and gather feedback on a prospective new one.

Work is completed on a new COAA website.

The “Batman” or “Lori Miller” graph. The ear-like , superhero peaks were, when the forecasts were made in 2004, projected big-project construction booms, but also harbingers of prospective and potentially severe labour and productivity shortfalls. The graph helped alert the construction industry to some key challenges ahead and sparked a “giant push,” by industry and other stakeholders, towards building and bolstering the workforce.





The annual general meeting is held October 13 at the Metropolitan Centre in Calgary. President Ramzi Fawaz notes that, over the year the COAA was at the forefront of helping stakeholders understand the scope and implications of Alberta's skilled labour shortage. He notes, too, that a number of companies are in the process of adopting the principles laid out in the new COAA alcohol and drug policy best practice.

After several years of hard work, COAA team members Andiea Hermes and Cindy Likes leave the COAA to pursue other opportunities. Lloyd Dick has been working as contract communications and research specialist for some time; in 2008, he will become the full-time Communications, Membership and Research Manager before taking medical leave in 2009.

2007

The Contracts Committee was formed in 1998 to attempt to standardize construction contracts in Alberta, reducing the contract development effort required by owners and contractors and ensuring a balance in risk sharing. Standard contracts also enable the other best practice committees to include (where feasible) the requirements for their best practices in the construction contract. Contracting philosophy and standard documents have been developed for Stipulated Price Contracts, EPCM Contracts, and EPC Contracts. Contract documents are, of course, shared at every opportunity with members, other stakeholders and, as in the case pictured, Best Practices conference delegates.

Through its Workforce Development Committee and Effective Use of Apprentices Subcommittee, the COAA publishes the Apprentice Mentoring Program best practice. It is intended to help improve the skills and knowledge of apprentices on a work site so they are more able to effectively contribute to a project's success.

BP XV is held May 15 and 16 and the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton. Approximately 640 delegates attend. The evening keynote address is shared by Dr David Foot, Professor of Economics at the University of Toronto and Dr Mike Percy, Dean, School of Business, University of Alberta.

The annual general meeting is held October 10 at the Metropolitan Centre in Calgary. It includes presentations from Ulysses Currie, Deputy Minister of Alberta Employment, Immigration and Industry, who speaks about temporary foreign workers, the Construction Workforce sub-strategy, collective bargaining, Work Safe Alberta, and drug and alcohol testing.

A new COAA strategic plan is developed. Its mission is "Industrial Construction Excellence in Alberta."

Leadership...

"The COAA directors are project managers with vision. Their livelihood depends on delivering a project that can cost hundreds of millions of dollars and employ thousands of people on budget, on schedule, safely. Every day counts and there are huge risks. But, for all that, they're amazingly calm people. Safety, productivity, workforce development: these are among the areas where they cooperate and they just do a magnificent job of it. And no where else in the world, that I'm aware of, is there anything similar. "

—Brad Anderson,
Executive Director, COAA

There is some discussion of bringing ACR-COAA office operation expenses more in line with the growth of COAA to a size essentially equivalent to ACR: "COAA has increased in size, committees and usage of Board room to the point it is equal to ACR but the expense split does not reflect this."

2008

Thea Hawryluk joins COAA as Executive Assistant early in the year and later becomes Administration Manager, as well.

Pursuant to COAA board discussion last year, an electronic registration option is offered for Best Practices XVI.

642 people attend BP XVI at the Shaw Conference Centre in Edmonton., "a huge improvement over previous Best Practices conference venues." The conference nets about \$120,000, revenue that goes towards best practices development.

Fees for the conference have held steady at \$400 since 2005.

2009

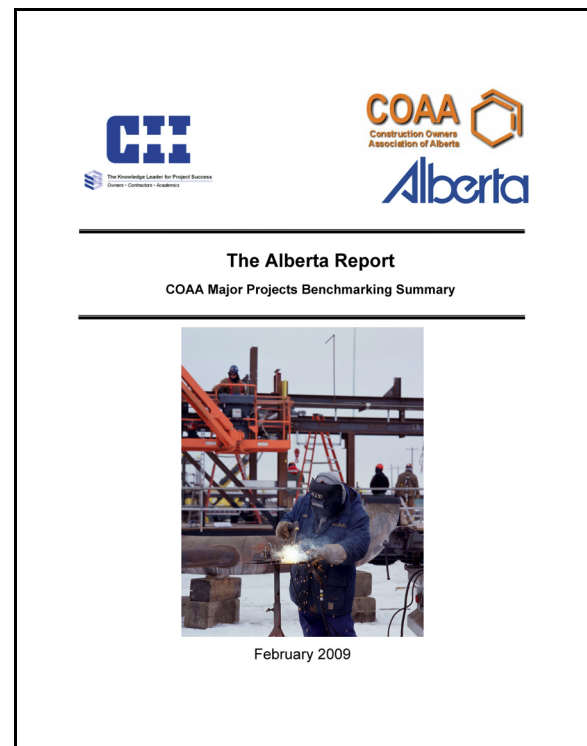
The COAA's legal counsel offers two options for extending the term of Association Directors from one to two years: amend the Articles of Association or work within them through a process of retirements and re-elections.

Best Practices Committee Chair John Brogly publishes a paper detailing the development and delivery of the COAA's 23 published Best Practices to date in the areas of safety, workforce development, productivity, and contracts.

Larry Staples, former president of APEGGA and Leanne Hawryluk join the COAA.

2010

The COAA website is updated. "The COAA website is used primar-



Prepared by COAA with and co-sponsored by Alberta Finance and Enterprise and Albert Energy, "The Alberta Report," issued in 2009, summarizes the results of the first series of comparisons (completed in October 2008) between Alberta projects and similar ones in the Construction Industry Institute database. Project performance metrics include cost, schedule, safety, change and re-work. Productivity metrics assess both engineering and construction productivity, overall and in specific disciplines.

Collaboration...

"In my view, one of the most remarkable features of the COAA community is that all that come together under the Association's umbrella are, on one or more dimensions, competitors of one another. It is that collaboration among competitors for the advancement of all that is the mounting legacy of the COAA. "

—R. Neil Tidsbury, President
Construction Labour Relations – An Alberta Association

Legacies...

“From my perspective, there’s no other job like it in Alberta. Collectively, this little organization—with a big reputation, not much money, and an army of volunteers—manages to consistently put great things out there... whether in safety or productivity or whatever... things that make a difference and help stakeholders stay ahead of the curve. No one else is doing it, as far as I know. And maybe no one else will: where we can get big wins in the future is on *research* in a kind of construction unique to Alberta that makes it safer and more predictable.

—Brad Anderson,
Executive Director, COAA

ily as a communications tool to convey Best Practices documents and other information from COAA committees to users in the Alberta heavy industrial construction industry.”

Publishes the “Serious Incident and Investigation Guideline.” The best practice stems from the work of a group of industry stakeholders (begun in the spring of 2008) to enhance understanding of the investigation process and aid in the collection and preservation of reliable due-diligence evidence regarding steps taken to create an injury-free workplace.

Attracting a record crowd (about 140 people), the annual general meeting is held October 13 at the Telus Convention Centre in Calgary.

CAPP president, David Collyer, speaks to “Canada’s Oil Sands—Opportunity and Challenges” at the event, noting that governments and industry must provide leadership and that broad public support is essential.

The Hon. Thomas Lukaszuk, Minister of Alberta Employment and Immigration also speaks , emphasizing the importance of workplace safety.

2011

Publishes a new best practice: “Workplace Health and Safety: Serious Incident Reporting and Investigation Guideline.” It is intended to be a user’s guide to help industry personnel understand what may occur and help guide their actions during an industrial incident investigation involving government officials.

Publishes “Heavy Industrial Construction and Maintenance: Workforce Challenges in Alberta.” The position paper documents demand for 320,000 new construction workers across Canada over the period 2011 - 2019. A 40,000 worker gap could arise for Alberta construction projects. “Nowhere will the scarcity of skilled trades be felt more acutely than in the Alberta heavy industrial construction and maintenance industries. Because heavy industrial projects are key building blocks in the Alberta resource-based economy, constrained delivery of projects will translate to constrained provincial and national economic performance.” A number of recommendations are offered to help

match supply with demand including improving productivity within the existing workforce, developing a long-term vision, and improving inter-provincial and international access to temporary workers.

Publishes “Respect in the Workplace Toolkit.” The best practice is an update of an initiative first introduced at the 2004 Best Practices Conference. It focuses on fostering an environment that protects personal integrity and provides a foundation on which to build a workplace free from bullying, harassment, and workplace violence.

Michelle Mondeville is hired on a one-year term as Acting Government Relations and Communications Advisor.

The theme of BP XIX is “Global Competitiveness: What Is It Going to Take?”

This is the first year of rotating Best Practice awards at the Best Practices Conference. The 2011 award is for Safety Leadership. The Workforce Development award will be handed out in 2012, the Construction Performance award in 2013.

Sources

Along with the reflections of several current-day personalities, archival material kept by the COAA was used to compile this chronology. It might be noted that the length of an entry from one year to another does not necessarily reflect the relative manageability of any particular annual workload; it is, more likely, an indication of the inevitable gaps in the 40-year record, of projects begun in one year but finished or abandoned in another, of the constraints of Father Time, or of the occasional propensity of people, who did not consider record-keeping their chief aim or responsibility in life, to clean house and live in the moment.

