

SUMMER 2025

Sheet Metal

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British Columbia

Annacis Island Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion

Also in this Issue:



Prompt Payment in BC



SMACNA National in Whistler



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PROMOTING GROWTH AND STABILITY IN OUR INDUSTRY

Formed in 1969, the British Columbia Sheet Metal Association (SMACNA-BC) was the first international chapter of the Sheet Metal & Air-conditioning Contractors National Association (SMACNA). Founded in 1934, SMACNA traces its history to the National Association of Sheet Metal Contractors established in 1910, and has 2,300 members worldwide.

SMACNA-BC is a member-driven association representing unionized sheet metal contractors in the Mainland of BC, and suppliers to our industry. It promotes the growth and stability of the members and industry.

OUR MANDATE

- To improve the financial stability and business conditions of the sheet metal industry, and to develop and promote methods to improve managerial proficiency
- To improve quality, efficiency and productivity of this industry, and to implement high standards of work
- To establish and maintain high ethical standards of conduct between members of the Association, and between members and owners, architects, engineers, other contractors, and the public
- To promote harmony in labour relations
- To study and help in the development and enforcement of governmental codes and regulations, and such legislation as may be necessary for the best interest of the public and the sheet metal industry
- To exchange technical, professional, and educational information with other contractor associations in the sheet metal industry and its allied trades in Canada and other countries
- To affiliate as a Chapter with the Sheet Metal & Air-conditioning Contractors National Association, Inc.

BC Sheet Metal Association (SMACNA-BC) • Executive Director: Jeremy Hallman

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SUCCESSFUL NEGOTIATIONS, NEW LEADERSHIP, AND COMING EVENTS

Summer is winding down and we are thankfully free of wildfire smoke. Unfortunately, the same can't be said for our neighbours to the south, where both literal and economic fires continue to burn. The recurring threat of tariffs appears far from over, creating continued uncertainty in the market. While many contractors report that business remains strong—mirrored by our current hours—there's growing concern about a shrinking pool of projects to bid on. We're also hearing that some developers, particularly in the residential high-rise sector, are hesitating on planned projects, waiting to see how the market evolves.

If you are starting to feel the effects through purchasing or through cross border work, I would like to hear about it. Stan Kolbe, Director of Legislative Affairs for SMACNA National, is looking for specific stories to help illustrate how these tariffs are hurting business on both sides of the border. Please send me an email or contact me in the office.

New Labour Agreement Ratified

We're pleased to announce that a new three-year labour agreement with SMART Local Union No. 280 has been ratified, covering the period from May 9, 2025, to April 30, 2028. Amid global uncertainty, we hope this brings contractors added stability and predictability in labour costs for the next few years.

A heartfelt thank-you goes out to everyone who participated in our open forum prior to negotiations, and to the dedicated members of the SMACNA-BC negotiating committee:

1. A. Paris – Apollo Sheet Metal
2. D. Sidhu – Boston Sheet Metal
3. M. Kuelle – Austin Metal Fabricators
4. M. McLaren – Ridge Sheet Metal Co.
5. T. Knowles – Piedmont Sheet Metal
6. P. McDonald – Summit Sheet Metal



Jeremy Hallman,
Executive Director, SMACNA-BC

7. B. Lancaster – Northern Sheet Metal
8. P. Dalzell – Keith Panel Systems
9. D. Taillefer – Viaduct Sheet Metal
10. B. Wendel – Allied Blower

ALTERNATES

11. A. Smith – Smith Sheet Metal
12. P. Charbonneau – Cascade Metal Design
13. P. Demeule – Modern Niagara Vancouver

This group committed over 40 hours in direct negotiations, not including the significant time spent preparing. Special thanks to past SMACNA-BC President Mark McLaren for his role as chairperson—your leadership and commitment were instrumental.

We also extend our appreciation to SMART Local Union No. 280. Their professionalism and preparation at every meeting helped shape a strong, mutually beneficial agreement. I believe that they represented their membership well.

To be candid, I had some concern going into these negotiations. A recent SMACNA National bargaining course I attended highlighted that new leadership on both sides can increase the risk of strike action. With both Local 280 and SMACNA-BC under new management, we were aware of that risk. Fortunately, with seasoned representatives on both sides, we worked collaboratively toward a successful outcome.

Industry Events & Engagement

In June, I joined SMACNA-BC President Al Benning (Ames Metal Fabricators) at the MCABC Leadership Conference, held at the Vancouver Island Convention Centre in Nanaimo. The three-day event brought together industry professionals for networking, insights, and shared learning.

Conference Highlights:

- Day 1: Registration, a new member meet & greet, and welcome reception
- Day 2: Keynote by Jeff Butler, panels on BIM adoption,

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BC's energy future, permit delays, and a political discussion with Keith Baldrey

- Day 3: Innovation-focused panels on AI in business, BIM, and product design, with a keynote by Mandy Gill

Community Impact & Recognition

The SMACNA-BC Board recently approved two \$500 charitable donations:

- Father's Day Walk (Prostate Cancer Foundation of BC)
- Pacific Open Heart Association (POHA)

Congratulations to Jacob Charbonneau and Lisa Clutchey, recipients of the SMACNA British Columbia Endowed Scholarship, administered by the SMACNA College of Fellows. Each receives \$2,000 USD, and SMACNA-BC has matched with \$2,000 CAD per recipient, beginning in 2024.

Leadership Updates

Following our AGM & Convention at the Westin Resort & Spa in Whistler on May 10, 2025, we welcome and congratulate the following members:

Board of Directors (four-year terms)

- Mark Kuelle – Austin Metal Fabricators LP
- Paul Charbonneau – Cascade Metal Design Ltd.

Joint Conference Board (five-year term)

- Blake Lancaster – Northern Sheet Metal Ltd.

Sheet Metal Industry Training Board (four-year term)

- Mark Kuelle – Austin Metal Fabricators LP

Honorary Life Memberships I'm also pleased to announce that the following individuals both received SMACNA-BC Honorary Life Membership:

- Rolly Charbonneau (formerly Alliance Sheet Metal Ltd.)
- Mark Green (formerly Austin Metal Fabricators LP)

Thank you to all who attended and to those who put their names forward. Your ongoing engagement is critical to the health of our association.

Welcome new SMACNA-BC Contractor members

- Tempest Balancing Ltd. • www.tempestbalancing.ca
- Ventus Sheet Metal Ltd. • fourlakes.ca

Welcome new SMACNA-BC Associate members

- Highrise HVAC • www.highrisehvac.com
- UBS Industries • www.ubsindustries.com

Upcoming Events

Growing and Developing Foremen by Kevin Dougherty

A “must” program for any foreman in today’s tough market, this eight-hour training is designed specifically for the construction foreman and supervisor. Learn how to take control of the job from the start, establish effective productivity habits and communication, understand the difference between leadership and management, learn how to coach and mentor for improved team performance, and learn how to properly delegate.

November 19, 7:30 am–4:00 pm | Courtyard Marriott Prince George

November 20, 7:00–3:30 pm | Civic Hotel, Surrey, BC

2025 SMACNA Inc. Annual Convention

Get ready to join the 2025 SMACNA Annual Convention in Maui, Hawaii, on October 26 – 29, 2025, for the largest gathering of members, chapter leadership, and industry partners.

This one-of-a-kind event will give you access to professional and industry-specific educational sessions to learn about emerging trends while allowing you to experience the unique culture and landscape of the beautiful Hawaii island. **October 26 to October 29, 2025 | Wailea Maui, HI**

If you have any questions about this event or would like more information, please contact me in the SMACNA-BC office. ■



Business Manager & F.S.T.	Steve Davis
Assistant Business Manager	Owin Baxter
Business Representative	Troy Clutchey
Business Representative	Jeff Lind
Organizer	Derek Robinson



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ASHRAE-BC GOLF SEES GREAT ATTENDANCE

SMACNA-BC members were just a few of the attendees who made ASHRAE-BC Golf another great success. Held at Westwood Plateau Golf & Country Club, the event hosted a buffet breakfast, followed by 18 holes, each sponsored by an industry expert.



Phil McDonald, Summit Sheet Metal; Mark Kuelle, Austin Sheet Metal and SMACNA-BC past-president; Jeremy Hallman, SMACNA-BC executive director; and Al Benning, Ames Metal Fabricators and SMACNA-BC president, took to the greens for a day of great golf, food, and camaraderie.

Don't miss this highly anticipated industry event coming again in May 2026. ■



Scan the QR code to view the complete gallery of event photos.

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BE4ALL TOOLBOX TALK: CREATING A CULTURE OF COLLABORATION

BE4ALL Toolbox Talk: Creating a Culture of Collaboration looks at how creating a safe, respectful workplace in the sheet metal industry helps people speak up, work better together, be more productive, and avoid accidents.

Collaboration is essential in the sheet metal industry to create a workplace where employees feel comfortable speaking up, asking questions, and reporting concerns in good faith without fear of retaliation or embarrassment. A psychologically safe environment leads to better teamwork, increased productivity, and fewer accidents.

Learn more at smart-union.org/resources/be4all-toolbox-talks ■

TYPE II HELMETS ARE STRENGTHENING PROTECTION AGAINST HEAD INJURIES FOR CONSTRUCTION WORKERS

Canada's largest construction employers are mandating Type II protection for their employees and trade partners

For years, regulations in jurisdictions across Canada have offered a choice between Type I hardhats, designed to reduce force as a result of an impact to the top of the head, and Type II helmets, designed to reduce force as a result of an impact to the front, back, sides, and top of the head.

Accumulating evidence indicates that wearing Type II helmets is reducing the number of severe injuries and fatalities for North American construction workers. What's making the difference?

Type II helmets feature a retention system that includes a chin strap to keep the helmet in place, providing a more secure fit and providing protection against dropped objects. In addition to providing the same topside protection, they also provide front, side, and rear impact protection—even when workers slip, trip or fall.

The US Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA) reported that in a six-year period from 2015 to 2021, 68 percent of all work-related traumatic brain injuries (TBIs) in the construction industry were caused by falls, the type of incident that tends to separate workers from their head protection. Falling objects caused 12 percent of work-related TBIs.

The Canadian Construction Safety Council (CCSC), established in 2024 by a dozen of Canada's largest construction companies, recently mandated the use of Type II helmets with integrated

adjustable four-point straps for all of workers employed by its members. All trade partners working with CCSC member companies will be required to wear Type II helmets in 2026.

While safety statistics on the effects of the CCSC switch are being compiled, anecdotal information supports the decision, says Steve Chaplin, senior vice president, health, safety, and environment at CCSC member EllisDon.

“With the old style hardhats, our workers experienced falls from step ladders and ended up in the hospital,” he says. “Since we’ve moved to the new helmets, people have fallen and cracked the helmet and liner, but they’ve gotten up. Instead of a traumatic brain injury, they may have a minor concussion.”

EllisDon employees were initially concerned that Type II helmet chin straps might be uncomfortable, but most of the company’s workers now say they’ve found the helmets more comfortable than Type I hardhats. The Type II helmets are also designed to be outfitted with accessories such as visors, hearing protection, and head lamps.

“When we explain that it’s like a bicycle or skiing helmet that needs to stay on when you fall, it’s not much of a stretch to think about construction helmets the same way,” Chaplin says.

For CCSC member Bird Construction, efforts to ease employees into the transition included working with manufacturers to describe the safety advantages of Type II helmets, presenting

SMACNA-BC / SMART Local 280 Partnership



*Left: Jud Martell, Local Union No. 280 President.
Right: Al Benning, Ames Metal Fabricators 82 Ltd., SMACNA-BC President.*



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- B. Flaherty, Cornell University, Syracuse, N.Y.



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and discussing statistics on head injuries, and highlighting the improved comfort factor. Bird also issued new helmets with near-field communication (NFC) tags that store medical and contact information that can be scanned by the company's emergency response team in case of an incident.

“Our CEO and COO appear in a roll-out video describing the connection between better head protection, our company values and eliminating serious injuries and fatalities,” says Peter Lineen, executive vice-president, health, safety, and environment with Bird.

Mark Scherer, executive vice president, chief safety officer with CCSC member Aeon Group, notes that many Type II helmets are available, but that companies in every province and territory should ensure that regulations covering their workplace support a particular model.

“Some jurisdictions allow CSA or ANSI certifications, while others allow only CSA,” he says. “One example is a Type II helmet, which has ANSI certification but not CSA. Even though we believe it's one of the best quality helmets, it can be used in some provinces but not all.”

The evolution toward Type II helmets is gaining momentum. They've been endorsed by the US National Academy of Construction. OSHA has mandated their use for its own safety

inspectors across the United States and recommended them as a better alternative for construction workers.

“BC regulations offer employers and workers a choice between the two types of head protection, but with the emergence of new evidence, Type II helmets are emerging as the safer choice,” agrees Mike McKenna, executive director of the British Columbia Construction Safety Association (BCCSA). “The BCCSA supports the member companies of the CCSC who put their workers and trade partners first by making informed choices about the type of personal protective equipment that demonstrates the greatest effectiveness in reducing fatalities and serious injuries.”

Read more at bccsa.ca ■

SMART CANADA: BUILDING A STRONGER FUTURE

In his latest update, SMART Canada Director of Canadian Affairs Jack Wall highlights how major investments, new legislation, and historic projects are creating opportunities for members across the country. With the rise of green energy, expanded training initiatives, and stronger partnerships with government, SMART is building a stronger future for Canada's skilled trades.

Continued on page 19

Get the Best in the Business Working for You. Reach out to SMACNA-BC Membership Today.



SMACNA-BC contractors demonstrate unmatched technical and managerial expertise enhanced by an exceptionally skilled and professional workforce. In fact, SMACNA-BC contractors employ only Red Seal certified sheet metal journeypersons and registered apprentices, and they work exclusively with reputable suppliers to secure the highest quality materials and services. SMACNA-BC is also the ultimate source for standards-based products and services, including technical manuals, guidelines, and consultancy. That means when you hire a SMACNA-BC contractor or buy from an affiliated supplier, you are building your project's sheet metal scope to North America's highest professional standards.

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CONTRACTOR MEMBERS

- Alliance Metal Fabricators Ltd.
- Allied Blower & Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Ames Metal Fabricators 82 Ltd.
- Apex Pneumatics Ltd
- Apollo Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Austin Metal Fabricators L.P.
- Boston Sheet Metal Ltd.
- CC Industries (2021) Ltd.
- Cascade Metal Design Ltd.
- Century Plumbing & Heating Ltd.
- City Sheet Metal (2022) Ltd.
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- Crosstown Metal Industries Ltd.
- Downtown Custom Metal Works Ltd.
- Duncan's Ltd.
- ECCO Supply
- Equity Plumbing & Heating Ltd.
- Evergreen Sheet Metal (2018) Ltd.
- Harbourview Sheet Metal Ltd.
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- Horizon Metal Systems Inc.
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- Keith Panel Systems Co. Ltd.
- Kendall HVAC Ltd.
- Modern Niagara
- Northern Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Novagreen
- Pacific Rim Industrial Insulation Ltd.
- Piedmont Sheet Metal (1997) Ltd.

- Quest Metal Works a div. of Russell Food Equip. Ltd.
- R.H. Jones & Son Mechanical Ltd.
- Ridge Sheet Metal Co.
- Rocky Point Commercial HVAC Inc.
- Samson Metals Ltd.
- Smith Sheet Metal Works Ltd.
- Spectrum Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Summit Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Tempest Balancing
- Tin Tech Incorporated
- Tri-Metal Fabricators
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- VETS Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Viaduct Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Walker Sheet Metal Ltd.
- Western Mechanical Services (1977) Ltd.

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- Crossroads C&I
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- EMCO (HVAC Division)
- EMCO HVAC - Burnaby
- Engineered Air
- Envirotech Air Inc.

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- Flo-Matrix Air Ventilation
- Gripple Canada Inc.
- Highrise HVAC
- HVAC Systems and Solutions Ltd.
- Intercon Insurance Services Ltd.
- Johns Manville
- Manson Insulation
- Master Group
- Maxam Metal Products
- Modern Tool B.C. Ltd.
- Nu-West Construction Products
- Pacaire HVAC Supplies Ltd.
- Progressive Air Products Ltd.
- Raider Hansen
- Raven Hydronic Supply Ltd.
- Riada Sales Inc.
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Upgrading a Legacy

Crosstown Metal Industries Ltd. and the Annacis Island Wastewater Treatment Plant Expansion

By Natalie Bruckner • Photos courtesy of Crosstown Metal Industries

The Annacis Island Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP) in Delta, BC, serves as a vital part of Metro Vancouver's infrastructure, treating approximately 175 billion litres of wastewater annually. Originally built in 1975, the plant stands as the largest secondary treatment facility in the region, serving over one million residents across 14 municipalities.

As Metro Vancouver's population has continued to grow, it became clear that the existing facility was nearing its limits. To address this, the expansion project was launched, aiming to accommodate an additional 250,000 people, enhance seismic safety, and prepare the plant for future climate challenges.

One major component of this ambitious upgrade is Crosstown Metal Industries Ltd.'s work. Crosstown is no stranger to the Annacis Island WWTP; in fact, it has played an integral role in the plant's development for more than three decades. Their involvement in this latest major refurbishment focused on the replacement and installation of ductwork—an intricate task made more challenging by the operational constraints of the facility.

The company previously worked on the plant's ductwork installation during a major upgrade back in 1994, so when the current expansion began, they were selected due to their deep familiarity with the project. "The original installation used



continuous operation at the WWTP. With millions relying on the plant for wastewater treatment, shutting down sections of the facility was not an option.

“The plant had to remain operational throughout construction,” Kisser says. “We started work on the first trickling filter [a type of wastewater treatment technology that uses microorganisms attached to a medium to remove organic matter] back in 2019, and the last one was completed in 2024. There’s still one portion left, and we’ll be returning to do additional work in 2026.”

Given the operational constraints, Crosstown’s team had to work within very narrow timeframes, with limited windows for installation. “They could only shut down one trickling filter at a time, and only during the drier months,” Kisser explains. “That meant our work window was essentially from May through the end of September. Though we had ample time for fabrication, the installation schedule was tight so once our window opened, we had to move fast.”

The challenges weren’t limited to time constraints. The COVID-19 pandemic added further complexity to the project, disrupting supply chains and causing delays in obtaining critical components. “One of the biggest delays was with the special dampers we needed—they were held up for about four months. The manufacturer couldn’t source the resin needed for the gaskets. It’s amazing how something so small can cause such a big delay,” Kisser reflects.

Despite these setbacks, Crosstown’s team relied on their experience and pre-planning to keep their portion of the project on track.

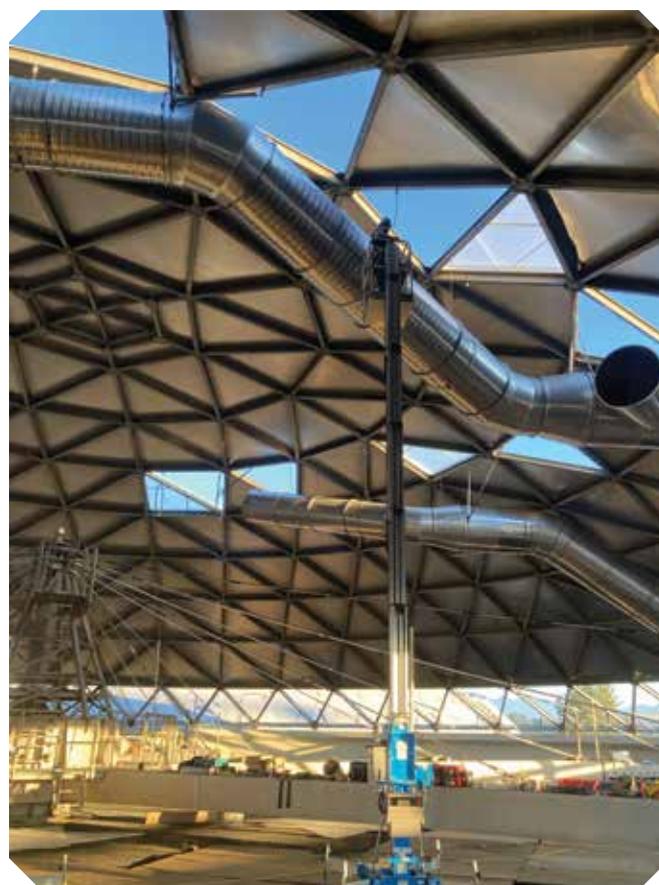
The Annacis Island WWTP’s design also posed unique challenges for Crosstown’s ductwork installation. “What made it particularly challenging was that all the ductwork had to be suspended from the geodesic domes covering the tanks,” Kisser explains. “Nothing was level or consistent, which made the installation tricky.”



aluminum ducting, which over time needed to be replaced with 316 stainless steel [low carbon], a stronger and more corrosion-resistant material,” explains Dave Kisser, project coordinator at Crosstown.

The decision to upgrade to stainless steel was indeed crucial, given the plant’s exposure to moisture and harsh chemicals. The material’s durability and resistance to corrosion make it ideal for an environment like this, ensuring long-term reliability in a critical infrastructure project.

One of the major hurdles faced during the project was maintaining



To overcome these obstacles, Crosstown's team provided CAD drawings for the entire ventilation system. "This allowed us to layout and install the hanger system when the geodesic dome was on the ground while having an unobstructed area to work with," Kisser says. "Having this done earlier in the schedule also lessened the ducting installation time once the dome was reattached to the tanks."

The Crosstown team also designed custom engineered 316 stainless steel hangers for the ductwork to be suspended from the domes, ensuring that they met both seismic requirements and installation constraint of the project. Inside the geodesic domes, 60-inch roundup ductwork made from 22-gauge spiral pipe was used due to weight restrictions. "We used Accu flanges inside the dome strictly because of weight restrictions," Kisser explains.

Outside the tanks, heavier 18-gauge welded flanged ductwork was necessary to accommodate the larger fittings and external stresses.

The next challenge was the installation. "We initially thought we'd need scaffolding, but ended up using lightweight Genie

lifts instead," Kisser says. "The filter media inside the trickling filter couldn't support heavy equipment, so the general contractor built a plywood floor over the filter media, allowing us to use smaller 45-foot man bucket lifts to install the ductwork."

The tight timelines, logistical challenges, and collaborative nature of the project made it a unique experience for everyone involved. "It was a well-coordinated effort, but the tight timeline and logistical challenges kept things interesting," Kisser says. He credits both Pat Siebens and Perry Dicks from Crosstown for their exceptional work.

"The teamwork between everyone involved including the other subcontractors and general contractor was exceptional," he says. "It was great working with a team where everyone was dedicated and working together toward the same goal."

As the project nears its final phase, slated for completion in 2026, Crosstown continues to play a vital role in ensuring the Annacis Island WWTP can meet the growing demands of Metro Vancouver. "When my kids were younger, we'd drive over the Alex Fraser Bridge and pass those big domes, and they'd say, 'Look, there's Daddy's work,'" Kisser reflects. "Now that they're grown, they still chuckle when we pass by, and it's a nice feeling seeing something so impressive looking, knowing that you were a part of it. It's a reminder of the lasting impact of the work we do." ■



Prompt Payment in BC

By Natalie Bruckner

After nearly two decades of persistent advocacy, the British Columbia Construction Association (BCCA) and fellow industry partners have brought the construction sector one step closer to seeing prompt payment legislation enacted in British Columbia.

The pace of progress elsewhere makes BC's delay all the more striking. Ontario introduced its prompt payment legislation in 2019, followed by Alberta and Saskatchewan in 2022, with New Brunswick following suit in 2023. In 2025, Manitoba also established a prompt payment regime, and Quebec is moving toward similar measures, reflecting a growing nationwide recognition of the need for payment certainty in construction. Yet in all this time, as BCCA president Chris Atchison points out, BC has remained "willfully and woefully behind."

For those in the sheet metal industry in BC, prompt payment would mean contractors can submit timely invoices and receive payment regularly throughout a project, rather than waiting months to get paid in full. Under the proposed legislation, owners are required to pay contractors within 28 days of receiving a proper invoice, unless a non-payment notice is issued within 14 days to explain any dispute or delay.

"Some owners or contractors who already see timely payment may see this as unnecessary or disruptive," Atchison says. "But we know from our annual industry survey that 91 percent of

trades and general contractors are paid late. The legislation is aimed to set a benchmark and protect those left vulnerable under the current system. We want to set a standard that allows everyone to thrive."

Despite recent concerns that progress has stalled, Atchison assures it is anything but. In fact, the BCCA has been pressing even harder. "In April 2025, during Construction and Skilled Trades Month, the province committed to assigning a team in the attorney general's office to review our recommendations and to bring forward draft legislation, with the intent to table it in the fall sitting," he says. "It is now in the hands of legislative drafters, hence the silence, and we're optimistic it will be introduced and passed, and then followed by the drafting of regulations."

As with any legislation, the process has been slow and arduous. When Atchison joined the BCCA eight years ago, prompt payment was a significant problem but still a low-priority advocacy issue. "Over time, however, more boards, including our regional associations, SMACNA-BC, the BC Building Trades, and electrical and mechanical contractors, formed a 'consortium of the willing' to push for it," he says.

Though prompt payment has never been what Atchison calls a "sexy" political topic, the successive BC governments began to take note. Another major step occurred two years ago



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when Attorney General Niki Sharma engaged with the issue, studying BCCA's cross-jurisdictional research and reviewing the recommendations.

“She has done her homework on this, not just taking our word for it, but conducting her own research,” Atchison notes.

A surprising yet positive factor has been the recent focus by federal and provincial leaders on removing internal trade barriers to strengthen the Canadian economy. This push for harmonization has further fueled momentum for prompt payment legislation in BC.

“It is up to BC to become more aligned, not more alienated, and to be more aligned means adopting a form of payment certainty for the entire supply chain to remain competitive with what other jurisdictions are doing and with what the federal government has done,” Atchison says. “This also supports interprovincial trade harmonization. If BC does not align, we risk losing contractors to provinces where their livelihoods are better protected.”

Given the scale of BC’s construction industry, estimated at around \$330 billion in active projects and employing hundreds of thousands, the current lack of payment certainty is, as Atchison puts it, “unacceptable.”

“This isn’t just about when contractors get paid; sometimes it is if they don’t get paid at all,” he adds. “Being paid late can be just as damaging as not being paid because companies still accrue debt, carry lines of credit, and pay their workers. Government is a major investor in infrastructure, involving large general and trade contractors as well as smaller firms and independent operators. Without prompt payment protections, we put them all at risk. I have told the government this for years—if you are investing in building BC, you cannot be enabling businesses to go out of business.”

While BCCA will continue to advocate persistently, and Atchison credits SMACNA for its engagement, he advises the sector to prepare for what comes next.

“People can go online to promptpayment.ca and petition, and we read all feedback,” he says. “But more importantly, SMACNA members should continue educating themselves on what this new payment framework will look like and the transition toward a system that fully embraces payment certainty.

“As an industry, we are known to adapt. We did it through COVID, and now we need to adapt to a system that has existed in the UK for decades and Ontario for nearly a decade. We need to adopt industry best practices and develop our own version of payment certainty legislation instead of allowing continued erosion of confidence in BC’s construction sector.” ■



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Whistler Hosts SMACNA National Annual Meeting



By Natalie Bruckner

Tariffs, megaprojects, labour-management relations, and even bears were on the agenda at the recent SMACNA National board meeting in Whistler, BC. It is rare for SMACNA National to meet this far north, which made the gathering of more than 50 SMACNA National and SMACNA-BC representatives at the Four Seasons Hotel all the more significant. Jeremy Hallman, SMACNA's executive director, was also in attendance and joined a reception.

"SMACNA National and SMACNA-BC have always been close," says Aaron Hilger, CEO of SMACNA National. "The BC chapter is the most engaged Canadian chapter, and I have a great relationship with former executive director Bruce Sychuk, so it made sense for us to hold our board meetings in Whistler again. Canada is known for very friendly people, and we all enjoyed the experience. A few even got to see a bear for the first time."

The meeting offered more than scenic views. It was an opportunity to compare notes between US and Canadian markets. Hilger says having perspectives from different markets is essential for SMACNA. While the United States and Canadian markets share similarities, they also have key differences. "That's where we can learn from each other to help make us smarter and, hopefully, better contractors," he says.

Bernie Antchak, who represents SMACNA-BC on the National Board, agrees. "The potential lies in learning from each other," he says. "SMACNA National members are viewed as colleagues, not competitors. BC contractors can gain valuable insights when we come together, helping them leapfrog years of experience," he says.

A hot topic of the meeting was US-Canada relations, particularly around tariffs, which have created pressure in the construction industry. "There is a lot of strain coming from the United States government these days, and one of the ways we can work together is to communicate clearly on those uncomfortable issues," Hilger says. "Most SMACNA members are upset about the tariffs. We also don't like seeing our friends treated poorly. Knowing that we are all in this together is important."

These trade challenges and opportunities intersect with the surge of large-scale construction projects in the United States, called megaprojects, which can draw humanpower away from smaller unions and weaken regional labour pools. "The main challenge is getting people to move to busy areas," Antchak says. "Some solutions that arose include reaching out to unions in slower areas and offering a living-out allowance as an incentive. These projects are massive, unlike anything we see up here in Canada."

Business in the United States remains strong as a result. In fact, Hilger notes that American hours are up roughly five percent nationally. "The Canadian markets are also strong, which is great for our members in those areas," he adds.

Beyond market conditions, the meeting explored how SMACNA is helping members adapt to new technologies and maintain a skilled workforce. One outcome was the board's decision to continue investing in the association's AI project. "We have provided a lot of resources for members and will be investing in more tools for contractors. Helping our members embrace technology is important for us to stay competitive. It is also a pretty interesting topic to learn about," Hilger says.

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“Mental health is becoming a major focus because people are under more pressure. Every member should have access to support to maintain well-being.”

—Aaron Hilger, SMACNA National

For Antchak and SMACNA-BC it was also interesting to learn about the efforts being made south of the border on both mental and physical health programs, which is a rising problem. “Mental health is becoming a major focus because people are under more pressure. Every member should have access to support to maintain well-being,” Hilger says. Antchak commended SMACNA National on its efforts to address the issue in the United States.

While Whistler’s mountain backdrop and the Four Seasons’ hospitality offered a memorable setting, timing was just as critical. With tariffs, supply chain pressures, and megaprojects reshaping construction on both sides of the border, building strong cross-border relationships is essential.

“We’re in a time when the challenges we face are increasingly connected,” Hilger notes. “Having that cross-border dialogue in person makes us better prepared to meet them.” ■

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NO MORE HIDING

When it comes to mental health, a little more by all of us means a little more for all of us.

I have one. And I bet you do, too. Someone in our family or friend circle who is struggling. Someone who is up against it. Someone who is dealing with some form of mental illness and is either working on it or it is working against them.

In our industry, nobody wants to talk about it. “How about those Niners?” is as deep as we want to go, especially on the job site. A male-oriented industry where wearing your ego on your sleeve and your body armor over your emotions is the norm. Tough business. Tough people. Tough times? Too bad. Suck it up.

The numbers on this challenge tell a story that we as leaders must act upon.

- 19% of workers surveyed rate their mental health as poor or fair.
- Employees with marginal mental health miss 4x as many days of work.
- The highest concentration of those with mental health issues, particularly depression and anxiety, are those under 30.
- According to the National Alliance for Mental Illness, these issues cost employers \$47.5 billion in lost productivity each year.

This is why construction is always ranked either number one or two, year over year, for occupations where people commit suicide. I find that fact disturbing and tragic. So, let’s break it down: This industry proclaims safety as its number one foundational value. We spend time, effort, and a lot of money on it. Wear your PPE. Lift with your knees. Wear your harness. Secure your ladder. Get that chinstrap for your hard hat. But where is the emotional fall protection? Where is the care and empathy for an industry where so many people are so obviously struggling? Is safety about rules, compliance, and OSHA, or is it about doing the right thing for the man or woman in the workplace?

What if the most dangerous hazards are not the ones easily seen or heard? It is no wonder that construction is up there on the scale of suicide and mental illness. Right at the top with military combat veterans and first responders. Why? Similar cultures. Similar challenges.

- Don’t show weakness.
- Don’t ask for help.
- Hide vulnerability with humor or silence.
- Numb it with alcohol or drugs.
- Pretend it doesn’t exist.

Job site safety without psychological and emotional safety is hypocritical at best and bad business at worst. But the truth is that this is not a business issue, impact, or cost. It is a matter



By Mark Breslin

of human impact and cost. It is incumbent on us as leaders to foster workplace cultures that are more open, considerate, and proactive. It is vital that the employees of our organizations know that they can be open to discussing their challenges, asking for resources or help, or offering the same to those with whom they work.

Yes, I have one in my own family. And you likely do, too. It is even likely that many of you reading this yourself have had times of personal struggles. So, how about we stop turning a blind eye to it? How about we accept that safety needs to be more encompassing and humanistic? A focus on mental health in the workplace and the job site is not a heavy lift; it is truly just a little extra effort by all of us, for all of us. ■

For more information on leadership training and performance or to find Mark’s best-selling books, Five Minute Foreman and Alpha Dog, visit breslin.biz.

PREVENTING SUICIDE IN CONSTRUCTION: KEY COMPANY ACTIONS

Building Support Systems: Just as sturdy scaffolding supports a construction structure, training programs must establish robust support systems. Creating a safe, nurturing environment where employees feel comfortable discussing challenges and seeking help is essential. Mentorship programs, counseling services, or peer support groups can serve as pillars of support.

Raising Awareness: Construction projects often involve high-pressure deadlines, long hours, physically strenuous tasks, and a demanding work environment, contributing to stress and anxiety. Organizing awareness programs, like workshops or guest speakers, shines a spotlight on mental health, reducing stigma and encouraging employees to seek help when needed.

Providing Access to Resources: Just as a well-equipped toolbox helps tackle construction tasks, companies should ensure access to mental health resources. This includes counselling services, online platforms with mental health resources, and information about local support networks.

TEST AND BALANCE PLAN DEVELOPMENT

The demand from building owners to have contractors maintain a construction schedule is ever increasing. Building owners require a substantial construction completion date to be established and expect the team to meet this date.

Before a building can be occupied, there are many processes throughout the course of construction that ensure the building is operating at the design intent. One of the most important is the process of total system balancing by means of testing and balancing the HVAC system.

The testing and balancing process primarily consists of testing the HVAC equipment to verify proper installation and operation, adjusting/balancing the HVAC equipment to obtain optimal system performance, and providing a detailed report of system operation compared to design. The testing and balancing report is typically reviewed by the design team and the owner. The report will document any deficiencies that are preventing a system from operating as designed. The HVAC system performance data documented in the report can be used to make changes to achieve the design intent of the building.

Most construction schedules incorporate all the testing and balancing in the final stages of construction. However, often there is not enough time left to do a complete system balance. Failure to complete the balancing in the scheduled time can result in the general contractor and owner being displeased. Typically, project specifications for testing and balancing require a balancing plan; however, specifications usually cover only the balancing techniques and/or testing procedures.

Specifications should call for performance of a total system balance in accordance with Testing, Adjusting, and Balancing Bureau (TABB) www.tabbcertified.org and/or other certified programs.

The typical balancing plan includes the following three components:

1. A list of test instruments and with that the model and application use.
2. A description of each system test procedure and list of equipment to be tested.
3. A list of subcontractors required to assist with the testing and balancing process along with expectations of each contractor. Most importantly, the expectations of the controls contractor should be listed.

**Do you have an interesting story or project idea?
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email jessica.kirby@pointonemedia.com**



By Norm Grusnick, PE
Commercial Sales Rep, PACAIRE HVAC
Suppliers Ltd.

All this information is helpful to the design engineer but still does little to assist the construction manager and owner. The addition of a few extra components to the balancing plan will be of great advantage to the construction schedule. These extra components are:

1. An outline of construction completeness prior to testing and balancing.
2. A realistic estimate of time required to complete the testing and balancing process.
3. A listing of the necessary building accessibility to thoroughly test all HVAC systems.

Time Required for System Balancing

The balancing plan needs to describe in detail the required time to complete a total system balance. General contractors and owners generally assume that the balancing process is something that happens all at one time, and that if the schedule is shortened, then the balancing company can simply put more technicians on the job. This is very unrealistic and leads to many problems near the conclusion of the project.

Many control systems only allow communication with a few systems at a time. Buildings with DDC systems require a great deal of the testing and balancing process to be performed through adjustments to the HVAC systems via the automation system. Network access limitations may prevent more than one operator from communicating with the control system at a time. This hinders having too many balancing technicians on site at the same time as many adjustments can only be made through a single terminal. It is also the balancing contractor's responsibility to address any issues that prevent the system from operating at design performance.

Some of these resolutions may take days or weeks and the general contractor and designer need to be aware of these possibilities and their effects on the schedule. As well as the balancing time requirements, building accessibility during the balancing process is another extremely important matter. Total system balancing requires access to all areas of the building, and large HVAC systems may require repeated access throughout the balancing process. ■

INDUSTRY NEWS

Continued from page 8

“As the nation continues to prioritize sustainability and nation-building projects, there will be an increased focus on green energy projects, which SMART is fully prepared to support with a skilled, job-ready workforce,” he says. “Through a recent \$8.9 million investment in federal funding, more than 2,000 SMART members will be able to upgrade their skills through training curricula and online learning tools focused on the future of clean technology. This funding announcement is a sign that Canada’s federal government sees SMART workers as key to building Canada’s future.”

Read Wall’s full report at smart-union.org/building-a-stronger-future ■

TRAINING: SHOW UP FOR BETTER WORKPLACES

“Show Up for Safer Workplaces” is a new four-day training program equipping people in the construction trades to lead on mental health, addiction, and psychological safety.

This is an innovative new program that helps participants become leaders in identifying where mental health, addiction, and psychological safety issues are hurting people who work in the construction trades. “Show Up” is supporting participants, industry leaders, and organizations with practical strategies and tools to address these issues that are impacting too many workers, employers and communities.

“Show Up for Safer Workplaces” is designed as a four-day comprehensive training program that can help people recognize and support mental health and substance use concerns, prevent

toxic workplace culture, and become active partners in creating healthier and more stable work environments.

Launching Fall 2025—save the dates:

- September 23-26, 2025 at the BCFED Health & Safety Centre in Burnaby
- October 27-30, 2025 at BCIT (Downtown Campus) in Vancouver
- November 25-28, 2025 at the BCFED Health & Safety Centre in Burnaby

Learn more and register at bccwitt.ca/saferworkplacesbc ■

CHALLENGE: WHY ARE YOU PROUD TO BE A SMART MEMBER?

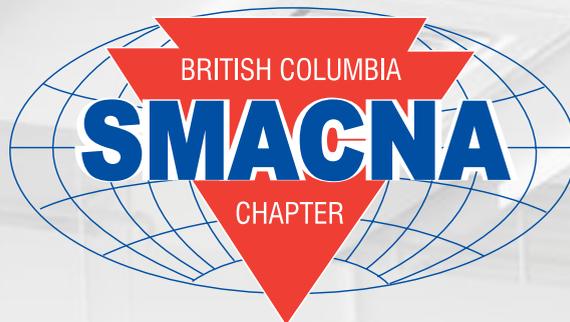
The BE4ALL Summer 2025 Challenge is underway. This quarter’s focus: Why are you proud to be a SMART union member, and how has your membership impacted your family? Submit a written or video response by September 30 for a chance to win a BE4ALL jacket and a \$100 gift card. Enter at form.jotform.com/241964924785169 ■



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