



President's Annual Message

2019 was again a busy year for our association and for our members.

What happened in 2019?

- The WSIB is eliminating the charge for unfunded liability in January 2020.
- The WSIB unfunded liability was eliminated in the fall of 2018, almost 10 years ahead of the legislated deadline of December 31, 2027. However, the charge was continuing. The unfunded liability refers to the difference between the projected future costs of paying benefits to injured workers with existing claims and the money in the board's accident fund. Great news for our industry in that we believe we were over paying for this.
- Non-exempt executive officers rates in construction will remain under the new WSIB Rate Framework, effective January 1, 2020.
- This was originally excluded from the new WSIB Rate Framework. At every COCA meeting in 2019 when WSIB President Tom Teahen was present, AAO was tenacious in its efforts to have this retained and this was reiterated at meetings with then Minister of Labour Scott. This is a win for the construction industry as we fought so hard to originally obtain it.
- The WSIB introduced a new voluntary Health and Safety Excellence Program, (replacing Safety Groups, Workwell and Small Business) with significant financial incentives and other non-financial recognition. AAO supports all members getting involved in this program.
- In the fall, the Minister of Labour took over additional responsibilities for Training and Skills Development.
- The Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development recognized that there is a skills shortage in the province and initiated several steps to address.
- The Minister of Labour, Training and Skills Development announced at AAO's AGM that the Construction Advisory Panel would be formed.
- The Ministry of Labour finally introduced a voluntary "Accreditation" program called Supporting Ontario's Safe Employers. The program, almost 10 years in the making, will recognise employers that go above and beyond to promote health and safety practices on the job and provide financial incentives in the form of rebates.
- The Ministry of Labour made amendments to requirements for temporary stairs, effective January 1, 2020. This clarified where temporary stairs should start and end, now clearly requiring in underground levels such as basements. There is an exemption where such installation may not be possible (i.e. where formwork or falsework is erected to a suspended slab).
- The second set of regulations were implemented for the Construction Lien Amendment Act and took effect October 1, 2019 (Prompt Payment).
- Bill 66, Restoring Ontario's Competitiveness Act, received Royal Assent in the spring deeming municipalities and certain local boards, school boards, hospitals, colleges, universities and other public bodies to be non-construction employers, proposing open tendering legislation on all publicly funded construction contracts.
- Trade unions that had represented employees of these employers, or who may be employed, in the construction industry, no longer represent those employees. Any collective agreement binding the employer and the trade union will cease to apply in so far as it applies to the construction industry. In other words, this opens bidding to all, both union and non-union. An opt out clause of this change was included in the legislation.
- Only the City of Toronto opted out, retaining its relationships with the unions.
- Provincial bargaining wrapped up in the spring of 2019 with wages on average meeting government inflation targets of 2 percent per year.

President's Annual Message continued

What will be happening in 2020?

- The future state of Ontario's skilled trades and apprenticeship system that was put on hold in 2019 will be put back on the front burner.
- Training material for the new Construction Lien Amendment Act including Prompt Payment should be available in early 2020.
- We expect the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development to continue to promote the skilled trades to young people and parents and to remove the stigma that some may have about those careers.
- Again, 2020 will be a busy year. I would like to thank the Board of Directors and all members for their continued support. I would also like to thank Paul Gunning for his hard work throughout the year and for keeping AAO as a leading force in our industry.
- I hope that everyone met with great success in 2019 and that success extends into a prosperous 2020 for you all.

Bob Grassing

AAO President

Upcoming Events

2020



AWCI Annual Convention and INTEX EXPO March 22 – 26, 2020 Las Vegas, NV

JANUARY 2020



UPCOMING Mathews Dinsdale Seminars/Webinars

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If you have any questions, please call me at 519-671-5930.

All the best in 2020!

Paul Gunning
Executive Director