



Provincial Election Priorities Impact the Industry

On September 10th the official writ will be signed and dropped for the October 10th provincial election. Although the 'official' campaign has yet to begin, the parties have been positioning themselves throughout the summer with announcements of platform priorities and political advertising. These 'policy platform priorities' will be sure to affect the construction industry.

Under John Tory, the Ontario PC Party introduced their policy platform in late Spring of this year with continual updates regarding details of the plan. Whereas, the Ontario Liberals, and Premier Dalton McGuinty released their policy platform yesterday with some detailed costing information. These platforms are available on each party's website, respectively: <http://www.ontariopc.com/planforthefuture.asp> and <http://www.ontarioliberal.ca/en/Previewpage.aspx?id=46>.

The following are the highlights of the specific released platforms: (NB – The NDP has yet to release an official policy platform, although some info is available on their website at www.ontariondp.com)

Infrastructure Investment:

PC Platform

- Increase capacity in healthcare facilities by modernization and building new facilities via partnerships with communities, the public and private sectors. The focus for investment will be on high growth areas.
- Fix and maintain sub-standard schools with extensive repairs and upgrades.
- Dedicate all gas and fuel taxes to fix and build transportation and transit systems within five years (i.e. in 07/08 this would mean a \$1.17 billion increase in transportation investment).
- Focus on northern and rural roads and bridges, and extend and improve the Eastern Ontario Development Program by working with the Feds.
- Streamline the application process for urban and rural municipalities' infrastructure funding, with long-term planning.

Liberal Platform

- Investing \$60 billion over the next 10 years in critical infrastructure, such as public transit, roads and bridges, water systems, waste solutions and culture and community recreational facilities. Essentially this dollar amount is an extension of the current ReNew Ontario \$\$'s and the figure includes \$\$'s for other infrastructure projects such as Move Ontario 2020 (\$17.5 billion rapid transit plan for the GTA).
- \$100 million in growth funding for hospitals in Ontario's fastest growing communities.
- \$20 million for the Eastern Ontario Development Fund, and \$100 million annual boost to the Northern Heritage Fund.

Environment:

PC Platform

- Conserving the greenbelt area, while creating a Land Conservation Challenge Fund to assist people near the greenbelt deal with its impact. Tax incentives for conservation easements.
- Implement an integrated waste management strategy focusing on increasing diversion and using new technologies for waste management.

Liberal Platform

Will consider applications by regional and county governments to grow the Greenbelt.

Training and Education

PC Platform

- Breakdown the credentials barrier by simplifying the process of credentialing and credentialing newcomers before they arrive in Ontario.
- New Ontario Job Market Opportunity Secretariat dedicated to finding out what kind of skilled workers Ontario needs.

Liberal Platform

- Implementing a distance grant for students from remote areas.
- Increase new apprenticeships by 25%.
- Add a new Second Career strategy to the Rapid Re-Employment and Training Service, to help Ontarians who have suffered job loss build new skills and find new employment.

- Textbook and technology grant of \$300 for university and college students to assist getting started each year.

Fiscal, Municipal & Regulatory Policy

PC Platform

- Long-term, multi-year funding arrangements with municipalities to enable predictability.
- Phased out elimination of the 'Health Tax'.
- Proposed regulations pre-published for public review prior to going to Cabinet.
- Decentralize government by moving 10% of government office space to smaller communities in Ontario.
- Seek to join Interprovincial Free Trade Agreement (TILMA between Alberta & BC)

Liberal Platform

- Reduce paper burden on business through a 'cap and trade' system for government regulations. Every time a new regulation is put in place, an old one will have to be removed.
- Eliminate downloading of the Ontario Disability Support Program and the Ontario Drug Benefit program relieving \$900 million from local property tax payers.

COCA will provide further detailed analysis on the policy platforms and will have additional information available in the coming weeks on our website.

The Results Are In!

Website poll results show that the industry is in 100% agreement that something should be done to encourage reducing, re-using, and recycling on construction materials. The top three recommendations were to ban all construction recyclables from landfills, educate the industry on their obligations under the 3R Regulations, and increase the number of available facilities that will handle recyclables. There was less support of the idea to require all new buildings in the province to achieve LEED certification, as well as having government and municipal projects include mandatory diversion specifications in all tender/bid documents.

Visit www.coca.on.ca to voice your opinion on our next polling question:

What is the most important issue that you will base your vote on in the next provincial election?"

COCA Members

- Acoustical Association of Ontario
- Architectural Glass & Metal Contractors of Ontario
- Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario
- Canadian Farm Builders Associations—Ontario Division
- Canadian Fence Industry Association
- Concrete Floor Contractors Association
- Construction Association of Thunder Bay
- Electrical Contractors Association of Ontario
- Grand Valley Construction Association
- Hamilton-Halton Construction Association
- Heavy Construction Association of Toronto
- Interior Systems Contractors Association of Ontario
- Kingston Construction Association
- London & District Construction Association
- Mechanical Contractors Association of Ontario
- Ontario Demolition Contractors Association
- Ontario Electrical League
- Ontario General Contractors Association
- Ontario Industrial Roofing Contractors Association
- Ontario Painting Contractors Association
- Ontario Refrigeration & Air Conditioning Contractors
- Ontario Road Builders' Association
- Ontario Sewer & Watermain Construction Association
- Ottawa Construction Association
- Pipe Line Contractors Association of Canada
- Reinforcing Steel Institute of Ontario
- Resilient Flooring Contractors Association of Ontario
- Sarnia Construction Association
- Sault Ste. Marie Construction Association
- Sealant & Waterproofing Contractors Association
- Scaffold Industry Association of Ontario
- Sudbury Construction Association

Recommendations for Apprenticeship from Action Table

Minster Chris Bentley signaled the conclusion of the Minister's Action Table on Apprenticeship with a summary of the Action Table's recommendations that were adopted by the government. The Action Table was formed in September 2005 to provide advice to the government on achieving its goal of registering 26,000 new apprentices by 2007-2008. COCA was an active participant at the table, and as a result the COCA Apprenticeship Working Group was formed to provide advice on the issues arising from the Action Table.

One of the more significant results from the Action Table was the appointment of Tim Armstrong to review an expansion of Compulsory Certification in Skilled Trades. Mr. Armstrong has commenced his review and if any COCA member wishes to contact Mr. Armstrong with their opinion on the expansion of compulsory certification he can be reached by phone at 416-326-5904 or compulsory.certification@ontario.ca.

Members of the Action Table urged the government to extend the Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit to support employers of apprentices. As such, the Tax Credit has been extended to January 1st, 2012 as part of the 2007 Ontario Budget. However, as COCA and other

construction employer groups requested, a construction specific apprenticeship tax credit has not yet been introduced.

The Action Table identified the need for additional financial support to assist union-employer training centers in upgrading or replacing equipment essential to maintaining a competitive workplace. In response, the Ontario government announced a \$25 million plan in the 2007 budget, under the new Skills Training Infrastructure Program to enable the centers to continue to modernize key resources.

Finally, a promotional subcommittee of the Action Table identified a need to provide improved access and information re: apprenticeship to a more diverse group of stakeholders. Through the signing of the Labour Market Development Agreement with the federal government, MTCU introduced Employment Ontario (www.ontario.ca/employmentontario) – a new network for training and employment services.

Although the Action Table has concluded COCA has and will continue to work with government on the above mentioned initiatives as labour market challenges continue in the industry.

Construction Buyers Embrace Accreditation

Major buyers of construction are keenly interested in the WSIB's proposal to offer a program to accredit employers who demonstrate that they have integrated safety into their business policies.

The program, to be piloted this January, still does not have a specific program design and the financial incentive is yet to be established. However, the process to achieve accreditation and the program model have now released. Paul Casey, Director of Prevention Services, indicated that he has been surprised by the high interest from both construction buyers and contractors, and he believes that the program will be dominated by the construction sector, which is expected to have 60% of the applications.

COCA has been actively promoting a model of accreditation that will promote an integration of safety into more businesses with a financial incentive that will support the business case for safety. It is also important that the WSIB sets a standard for a safe company based on its commitment and performance. This will give buyers a standard to qualify for safety. Currently, there is a confusing set of new standards, many of which are not reliable. The recent draft program framework is available on our website at www.coca.on.ca.

Beware: Poster Scams

Recently, both the Ministry of Labour and the WSIB have begun warning employers about visits from private providers of workplace posters and workplace safety training. These high pressure sales people imply a connection with the MOL and/or WSIB and mislead employers regarding their legal obligations to display information about employment standards and health and safety. These people are in no way affiliated with the MOL or the WSIB. **Employers are required to display and/or have available the following materials:**

- “[What You Should Know About Employment Standards](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/pdf/poster.pdf),” available at www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/es/pdf/poster.pdf
- The “[Occupational Health & Safety Act](http://www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/ohsguide/ohsag_appa.html)” booklet can be printed for free from www.labour.gov.on.ca/english/hs/ohsguide/ohsag_appa.html.
- A copy of the company's own [Workplace Health and Safety Policy](#)
- “[In Case of Injury -1234](#)” poster; available free of charge from the WSIB. Call 416-344-1016 or 1-800-663-6639.

[Workplace Hazardous Material Information System \(WHMIS\)](#) – certain employers in Ontario are required to identify hazardous materials, ensure that proper data sheets on the materials are readily available and containers are properly labeled, and to make sure that employees are properly trained in handling and use of the material. WHMIS is regulated by the MOL setting out the employer requirements under the Occupational Health and Safety Act. For more information please see the Occupational Health and Safety Act; WHMIS Regulation; and Regulations for construction projects at www.e-laws.gov.on.ca.