The Technology & Green Design Issue

With stories about technology adoption and data use across our industry, and how two organizations are designing spaces for the future. Plus, former Region of Waterloo Chair Ken Seiling (pictured) is inducted into GVCA’s Hall of Fame.
Talk about constructive thinking. At AQ Group Solutions, we know full well that our clients want us to take the tough administrative stuff off their plates. So we build innovative, industry-specific programs from the ground up and handle all of the administration. Last year our dedicated Plan Member Advocacy Team saved our clients an average of 2 ½ weeks of reported employee work time by taking care of employee claims and queries. Saving time and money.

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This year, Canadian construction workers lost 1,489 lunch buckets, 43 jackhammers and 3 sets of dentures.

Fortunately, 2,246 of them found AQ Group Solutions.

Benefits Built for Construction
It is an honour to serve as Chair of the GVCA for the next year. Having spent four years on the Executive Committee, I have had a chance to watch and learn about all aspects of the industry and the importance of connecting. Each Chair brings something unique to the table, and I want to follow this tradition.

My focus for the year ahead is innovation and technology. We will continue promoting collaboration with all stakeholders in the industry, and encourage innovation and technology to help us get there. We will do this by continuing to look for new ways to connect with industry stakeholders. We will continue to engage members in forums and events to help members become aware of opportunities that can be incorporated into their business practices, and help them search out the tools they need to remain competitive.

We all know that change is here. We need to keep pace with it while still running our businesses. We also have multiple generations in our businesses, and we need to learn to draw on the strength of each generation, because they all bring expertise and unique viewpoints to the table.

Let GVCA be the conduit for you. Your association is constantly looking for ways to help members. Please do not hesitate to reach out if I can help in any way.

In this issue, we focus on technology and innovation. These are words we hear all the time, but we seldom take the time to think about these ideas and how we can best use them to our advantage. Is that because we don’t know where to start, or how much change will affect us? Possibly.

Change is constant. We all know that. And we’ve seen the effects of change throughout our lives: in the weather, in finance, in social circles—and everywhere else. The challenge for us as business owners and employees is to understand the scope and potential impacts of technological changes in our working lives. What can the gig economy, or blockchain, or artificial intelligence do for us? How can we leverage them, or any other innovation, to our advantage?

My answer to you is this: you won’t know if you never study these trends. Take the time to explore technology. Understand its implications. Use it wisely. Because if you don’t, someone else will. And that person (or company) will be better positioned than you to succeed.
Crystal Ball Report: Unmatched Construction Intelligence

GVCA's Crystal Ball Report is a unique and insightful member service. Updated daily by GVCA staff, the report tracks planned projects during the pre-bidding phases, following them from concept to design to prequalification, construction and completion.

11-storey building at Weber and Scott streets
Kitchener, ON
Value: $17,000,000
Project details
This project will add 173 mainly one- and two-bedroom apartments. Construction should begin by the end of 2019, with occupancy in 2021. The 1.8-acre site is an assembly of parcels on a wedge-shaped site on the northeast corner of Weber and Scott streets. It includes two buildings on the city’s heritage register: a two-storey office building at 82 Weber Street East occupied by EIWO property management, and a two-storey brick house at 87 Scott Street. Those buildings will remain, although there are plans to renovate the two rental units in the house. There are no plans for affordable housing in the building, but the development will add life to a long-vacant lot, with a public plaza and pathway connecting Weber and Pearl Place, and a landscape buffer closest to homes along Pearl. The developer hopes to see a coffee shop or restaurant open on the ground floor.

University of Waterloo Davis Centre food services renovation project
Waterloo, ON
Value: $1,500,000
Project details
The University of Waterloo is seeking prequalification submissions from general contractors for construction associated with a renovation to the existing Food Service Facility in the Davis Centre at the Waterloo Campus. The work is at 200 University Avenue West and will commence in early spring 2019. All work for this project must be completed by August 19, 2019. The work consists of the renovation of approximately 1700 sq. ft. of interior space within the existing facility.

For more information or to have your project profiled, contact GVCA’s pre-bid reporter Rob Agley at rob@gvca.org

Market Snapshot Q1 2019
Waterloo Region & Guelph

Waterloo Region & Guelph is home to one of the fastest growing tech talent markets with growing office and industrial market. There is currently 976,724 SF of office and industrial space under construction in 13 buildings across the 4 cities. There has been an slight increase in the number of buildings under construction, from 10 to 13 buildings, this quarter with additional construction planned to begin in Q2 2019.

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For more market statistics and information please contact: Connor Ward, Research Analyst, connor.ward@cushwakewr.com
A Legal Recap

The news cycle has been turning a little faster than usual. Here is a recap of various news stories that we have been following at the GVCA.

Preparring for adjudication

Prompt payment and adjudication are scheduled to go into effect for contracts signed with an owner on or after October 1, 2019, and any related subcontracts.

An adjudicating nominating authority will oversee the training and certification of adjudicators. The provincial government has not yet selected the nominating authority, but the procurement process for the authority started in late January.

Most Liberal employment law reforms were repealed

Bill 47 repealed most of the employment law reforms introduced by the previous Liberal government in Bill 148. Among the highlights of Bill 47 is that the minimum wage will remain at $14 per hour instead of increasing to $15 per hour. The 10 days of personal emergency leave has been repealed and replaced with three days of unpaid sick leave, three days of unpaid family responsibility leave, and two days of unpaid bereavement leave. The three-hour minimum pay for on-call employees was also repealed.

Prompt payment on federal projects

In August, the federal government released a report by lawyers Bruce Reynolds and Sharon Vogel recommending a system of prompt payment and adjudication for federal construction projects. In its November 2018 economic statement, the Liberal government announced that it would introduce legislation to implement the recommendations. Look for the feds to reaffirm their commitment to prompt payment and adjudication in the upcoming federal budget.

The Ontario College of Trades is winding down

Bill 47 also repeals the Ontario College of Trades and Apprenticeship Act, 2009 on a date to be proclaimed. The Ontario College of Trades will continue to operate while the ministry develops a replacement model.

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A BC court rules that reprisal clauses are valid

Various municipalities have passed by-laws that prevent contractors from bidding on municipal contracts if the contractor is engaged in litigation with the municipality. In August, the B.C. Supreme Court ruled that these so-called reprisal clauses are valid and enforceable provided that they are enacted in good faith.

"Fair and open tendering" is on the horizon

On December 6, Bill 66 passed first reading. If it becomes law, this omnibus bill would amend the Labour Relations Act to deem municipalities, school boards, hospitals, community colleges, and universities to be non-construction employers. Bill 66 would open up tendering on all municipal projects to both union and non-union contractors.

Ted Dreyer is a construction and insurance lawyer at Madorin, Snyder LLP in Kitchener. He can be reached at 519-744-4491.
This article should not be relied on as legal advice.
Have you ever received or submitted an expense report and thought to yourself, “there must be a better way”? Well, there is. Expensify is a company that has built its business around improving the expense reporting process. Filling out and approving expense reports isn’t everyone’s favorite task, but it’s something that we all spend a considerable amount of time doing. From a business perspective, this is a necessary evil that eats away at your bottom line. You need to be able to offer employees the ability to submit legitimate business expenses for reimbursement, but the process needs to be seamless and time-efficient to keep employees focused on their job rather than their expenses.

These days, everyone and their dog has a smartphone. With a well-designed app and functional workflow, Expensify allows users to quickly snap a picture for their receipts and send them to their supervisor or accountant for approval and reimbursement. Users can submit individual receipts or submit a batch of receipts that are all related to the same task. It’s also useful for small businesses that have trouble tracking their expenses, as users can simply snap a picture of the receipt and tag it based on category. The app is so good that it can recognize text and numbers on the receipt to automatically input the amount of the expense, as well as guessing the category of the expense. This makes it easy to tally all the expenses at the end of the year and can save you some costly fees by making things easier on your accountant.

Expensify integrates with your daily life and doesn’t require too much additional effort on your end. It does a great job of tracking mileage for business purposes using your phone’s built-in GPS. Expensify works with businesses of all sizes to offer a variety of features that are uniquely tailored. It’s easy to set up an expense limit for meals and accommodations while also applying your business’s standard mileage rates for reimbursement. In addition, Expensify works with your company-issued credit cards to reconcile the transactions on the card with the employee’s submitted receipts. The customization features are endless and provide you with ability to tweak the software to suit your company.

Businesses can often take upwards of a month to reimburse simple expenses such as a meal with a client, or mileage to and from a meeting. Expenses begin to pile up and can cost substantial amounts in administrative labour to catch up. Expensify provides a single repository for expense reports, easily sortable by employee or category. It also seamlessly integrates with most of the top accounting software, such as Quickbooks, Sage and Xero as well as all major credit cards. This allows you to spend less time on expenses and more time on your business.
So what?

Expensify is one of the top solutions for streamlining expense reports. So why should you care?

Aside from saving you and your employees time and money, Expensify will cut down on your accounting costs by providing your accountants with a seamless and secure repository of expenses. In the event of a CRA audit, you’ll never need to worry about an expense being disallowed because the support is conveniently saved and accessible through your online profile.

The company continues to get rave reviews for their intuitive software and seamless. If you’re looking for an expense reporting solution, or if you simply think “there must be a better way”, then consider Expensify as a solution to your expense reporting woes.

Written by Jonas Postons, Senior Accountant at RLB LLP. Contact him at 519-822-9933 or visit rlb.ca.

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Knowledge, a Texas-based construction-technology consultancy, recently published its seventh Construction Technology Report. Produced annually, the report provides a snapshot of how builders across North America plan to implement, have implemented, and are using technology across their operations.

The 2018 edition of the survey polled more than 2,800 respondents. Nearly 80 percent were subcontractors, general contractors or construction managers. Nearly 60 percent hailed from large companies—those with at least 100 employees, and some with more than 1,000.

The annual survey of builders’ adoption and use of technology reveals some encouraging trends—significant IT expenditures included—and some stubborn resistance (an unwillingness among some to adopt new ideas).
One of the report’s principal findings is that construction companies spent more on information technology resources in 2018 than they did in 2017. About 68 percent of respondents said the companies they work for spent between $21 million and $500 million on IT last year, a fact that aligns closely with the significant number of large companies that responded to the 2018 survey.

More telling, perhaps, is the percentage of annual sales volume companies allocate to their IT budgets. As in 2017, 46 percent of respondents indicated their companies spent less than one percent of their annual sales volumes on technology. Meanwhile, more than 41 percent indicated their companies did not bill IT expenditures to projects.

The good news is that a large number of companies employ dedicated IT personnel. Better than 65 percent said so.

Having said that, the number of people they dedicate to the task is small—only between one and five people. Respondents indicated that the size of their IT staff is still directly dependent on the number of people who work at the company overall, rather than the number of solutions to support or scope projects.

Asked whether they had the IT support they needed to do their jobs, nearly three-quarters of respondents said they did.

Interestingly, half of those surveyed said that the training they receive on new technology is adequate.

Data-security trends are revealing. A significant number of companies are using employee training and mobile device management as their principal means of securing data in the cloud. This suggests that companies are giving their employees the power to change their approaches to data security, as opposed to acting passively through means such as cyber liability insurance coverage. The survey also asked whether companies had been the victims of data breaches in the past year. Seventy-eight percent said they had not. This figure stands in contrast with a June 2018 report from Risk & Insurance that showed that more than 75 percent of companies in our industry had experienced a cyber attack in the past year.
Mobile strategy and apps
More builders say mobile capabilities are important to their everyday workload. Fully 84 percent said mobile strategies were either important or very important, which is a slight increase from previous editions of the survey. That said, there isn't much in the way of consensus about securing mobile devices. More than half of respondents said they secure employees' mobile devices or don't allow their people to use their own devices at work. A third of the companies have no mobile-data security strategies. By far the most used mobile technology was the smartphone; laptops and tablets followed.

When it comes to apps, builders are using their mobile devices for a variety of functions. The survey revealed that they most commonly use apps for taking photos and videos, for daily reporting functions, and for time, plan and safety management.

Workflow strategy
Builders love their spreadsheets. And while use of these tools as a principal means of data integration is dropping, spreadsheets are still used for critical business functions such as estimating, accounting, project management and bid management, and project scheduling. That said, there is a growing trend toward using dedicated software packages for functions such as accounting, estimating, project management and project scheduling. Change, it seems, is coming—slowly.

Building information modelling
With BIM taking sectors of the industry by storm, the survey asked whether companies have strategies in place to adopt or refine their processes for BIM. Twenty-eight percent said they don't even bid on projects involving BIM; 24 percent said they have a BIM department, and 22 percent said they have one or two people on staff that can work with BIM.
Of those companies that use BIM, more than 61 percent reported using the technology for coordination and clash detection; 47 percent say they use it for visualization, and another 47 percent said they use it for project planning. In 46 percent of the cases, respondents indicated they let general contractors take the lead on using BIM.

What are some of respondents’ biggest challenges to using BIM? They struggle with:

- finding qualified BIM staff
- communicating and getting buy-in from project participants
- setting and agreeing to reasonable timelines
- budgeting for resources and training of existing staff
- consistency of use and knowledge of BIM tools throughout the project
- integrating changes without perpetuating a never-ending feedback loop
- allocating BIM staff costs and overhead
- owner buy-in and enforcement

**Innovation**

The survey concluded with a look at innovation. It asked whether respondents had dedicated research and development budgets in their organizations. Nearly 57 percent said they did not. This was a slight increase from last year’s survey when 54 percent said they had no such funds allocated for investment.

On balance, a third of respondents have between two and five employees dedicated to R&D; 29 percent said they had none.

Some of the factors limiting respondents’ adoption of new technology included a lack of staff to support the technology, a lack of budget, hesitance on the part of employees and management, and a lack of knowledge about the technology available.

Drones are one of the more commonly used technologies in our industry—and one of the simplest to adopt. Yet 59 percent of respondents said they don’t use drones at all. The survey also asked which technologies could give their companies a strategic advantage. More than 42 percent said none. Nearly 38 percent said prefabrication, and 28 percent said augmented reality/virtual reality applications.
Employers

a more positive workplace culture begins with you!

Define civility
Engage everyone in conversations and educational opportunities, like discussion groups, about what civility means to them. Consider posting a code of conduct that outlines respectful and civil behaviour, relating it back to your organization's values and ethics.

Train and develop
Provide training and resources on listening, giving feedback, conflict resolution, interacting with customers, recognizing uncivil behaviour and how to address it.

Incorporate civility and respect in communications
Adopt non-discriminatory language and maintain the confidentiality of personal information in all communications. Ensure that communications are easy to find and accessible to all.

Address uncivil behaviour
Create and enforce policies detailing consequences for inappropriate behaviour. Allow for constructive problem-solving. Manage conflicts in an effective and timely fashion, and follow-up with all parties involved.

Be a role model
Promote and reinforce respectful leadership behaviour and recognize everyone's respectful behaviours. Provide managers, supervisors and staff with ongoing training and supports, and ensure that they are available, present, and in contact to recognize and resolve issues.

CIVILITY and respect in the workplace

Where everyone is respectful and appreciative in their interactions with one another and with customers, clients and the community.

A civil and respectful workplace

Better teamwork
Improved morale
Greater perceptions of fairness
Engagement in problem resolution
Civility and Respect in the Workplace

Editor’s note: this infographic was created by the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety. For more information, visit www.ccohs.ca.

Saying hello, giving your full attention, expressing appreciation—in a respectful workplace, everyone is courteous and considerate in their interactions with each other, as well as with customers, clients and the public.

A civil and respectful workplace is related to many positives, including greater job satisfaction, improved morale, enhanced relationships, and reduced sick leave and turnover. In a stressful, frustrating or toxic work environment, politeness and support can give way to resentment, rudeness, and even bullying and harassment. There are many actions that employers can take to champion and prioritize workplace civility.

This infographic explains how civility and respect is related to a more positive workplace culture, what employers can do to promote respectful behaviours, and small, everyday acts that can help workers feel safe, comfortable and valued at work.

Tips for everyone:

- **Give your full attention**: Focus on the conversation at hand. Turn off your cell phone or any distracting device.
- **Value others’ time**: If you’re going to be late for a meeting, let the organizer know in advance.
- **Say “hello”**: Next time you pass a colleague in the hallway, say hello. Acknowledgement and courtesy help build positive morale.
- **Use respectful language**: Simple words such as ‘please’, ‘thank you’, ‘excuse me’, and ‘I’m sorry’ are easy ways to establish civility.
- **Be considerate when you speak**: Before making a joke, consider the audience. Humour is great but may not be appropriate in all situations.
- **Be inclusive**: Bridge social barriers by looking for opportunities to include others. Invite them to lunch, chat about the weekend, or ask for their input.
- **Practice humility**: Elevate people around you by giving them credit when they do a good job. Share in the satisfaction.

**Enhanced relationships**

**Greater job satisfaction**

**Reduced sick leave and turnover**

**Greater interest in personal development**
The challenge was clear, if not easily mastered: build a spectacularly innovative building while keeping costs under control. That was the mandate for everyone involved in the construction of evolv1, the Cora Group’s 100,000-square foot, multi-tenant office building in the University of Waterloo’s David Johnston Research & Technology Park.

The building had to be the first in Canada to earn a Zero Carbon design designation from the Canada Green Building Council. And it had to be affordable, in order to attract tenants.

That was the task presented to the architects and designers at Stantec, and to the builders at Melloul Blamey.

According to Jeff Shantz of Melloul Blamey, construction managers and general contractors on the project, “basic construction methods were kept simple to achieve economies of scale… the overall design from Stantec was about as standard as you can get,” while completely non-standard green innovations were built in, everywhere.

The result, according to Richard Williams, a principal at Stantec, who has written about the project, is “Canada’s first commercially-driven, net-positive, zero-carbon building. Simply put, it produces more energy than it consumes, while producing no carbon emissions.”

Williams adds that in addition to being healthy for the environment, evolv1 is also a healthier space for the people who occupy it. He wrote, “While we’re extremely proud of evolv1’s zero-carbon certification and net-positive energy status, that’s just one piece of a larger story. We’re really making a difference in how buildings support our communities and human wellness – something we believe is essential for a sustainable future.”

Many of evolv1’s green features immediately evident, like the three-storey living wall – a vertical indoor garden that Shantz describes as “one of the
focal points of the building, beautiful and also an air filter. And it’s been up and operating for six months.”

Other key green features that are immediately noticeable include the south-facing solar wall, and photo-voltaic installations in the parking lot and on the roof.

Williams will tell you that features that make the place much more occupant-friendly are the large, triple-pane windows allowing maximum natural light.

The location is enviro-friendly, too – three minutes from an ION Light Rail Transit stop.

Some of the innovations are not immediately on display (although there is a digital read-out of the energy being put back into the grid, there for all to see).
The building includes a state-of-the-art mechanical air exchange system (installed by Stecho Electric), and a unique method of tapping into geothermal heat, using only “one pipe in and one pipe out,” according to Shantz.

There are also more typical environmental touches – LED lighting, and ENERGY STAR compliant appliances.

All of this adds up not only to the Green Building Council designation, but also to designation as a LEED Triple Platinum building.

Shantz underlines the significance of this achievement. “This project, Triple Platinum LEED, net-positive building is the first in Canada to be designed.”

The Cora Group and Stantec called in Melloul-Blamey “in the mid-stages of design,” says Shantz. “We worked through design, contracting, right through construction.”

He says that his company’s experience with LEED certified projects, and with “very complicated mechanical–electrical” designs were essential background, but as a project moving beyond anything that had come before, evolv1 nonetheless presented “some unique challenges.”

But the challenges were met. From a contractor’s perspective, says Shantz, the most significant requirement was cost. “We worked with the design engineers from Stantec to ensure cost certainty. So we had some assurance we weren’t going to go sideways on project costs.”

Shantz quotes Adrian Conrad, chief operating officer with the Cora Group, who has touted evolv1 as a totally innovative building “they were able to market because of the simplicity of the building.”

The first tenants moved in October. Today, the building is nearing full occupancy (95 percent, according to Shantz), and the final touches are being completed. The promise of being net-positive is being met, on an annual basis. Shantz explains that the ratio of power taken from the grid and contributed back to the grid changes according to the weather, but on a yearly calculation, the building wins. More goes to the grid than is taken.

Shantz says that Melloul-Blamey was thrilled to be part of evolv1. “The opportunity to be involved in something like this doesn’t come along very often. We’re proud to be chosen to be a partner in this… It’s a feather in our cap.”

Cora’s Conrad, speaking to the Canada Green Building Council, has said, “When we heard about the CaGBC Zero Carbon Building certification, we saw a tremendous opportunity to measure our efforts against a progressive new building standard and to pilot our project within a program that is capturing attention from across the country and indeed, around the world.”

He added, “We envision a day where zero carbon building design will be on the top of a tenant’s wish list when searching for office space.”
It's not easy being green, but Ball leads the way in Green construction. Smithville’s new community centre includes a green wall located within the library. With an eye for future sustainability, this multi-use facility showcases Ball’s experience delivering environmentally responsible green construction.
Construction 2.0

Technology is changing construction, the industry must change with it

The construction industry in Canada is experiencing a transformation. New technologies tailored to the space are creating greater efficiency, but labour gaps are increasing, access to capital is shrinking and a trade war with the U.S. has begun. To adapt to this changing landscape, all parties involved in construction need to become more connected.

As a major industry for Canada, construction is already near its capacity utilization rate. Referencing a report from Statistics Canada, Bloomberg recently pointed out that the construction industry’s capacity utilization reached **92.4 percent in the first quarter of 2018**. In order to sustain this, the industry must go through its own remodel—one that leans on information as its lead material.

Data is king when it comes to managing a successful construction project, with the amount of information digitally recorded on construction sites growing exponentially over the last 10 years. From job site photos and information on materials used to track labour hours and equipment utilization data, the ability to capture information without the worry of a paper trail is a driving force for change.

Construction sites are no longer simply a place for diggers, bricks and concrete; they are changing the world—physically and theoretically. As a hotbed of all sorts of data, construction sites are being leveraged to drive operations and improve efficiencies in the industry.

Take field data tracking, for instance. What used to be a tedious and manual process that involved clipboards and filing cabinets has become streamlined through mobile, cloud and big data analytics technologies so that users can capture and analyze the data in near real-time. The digitization of that process now means construction workers can easily gather and share data with key stakeholders, both on-site and back at headquarters, using a range of tools including apps, smartphone cameras, drones and even robots.

Modern construction sites are collecting data through mobile devices as a strategy for success for today’s digital age. Information reported and accessed using handheld equipment is no longer seen as a “nice to have,” but rather a valuable resource to help firms stay competitive and understand how resources can be better leveraged to get work done.

AI for actionable intelligence on the job site

The mass adoption of digital techniques, and the transition to a digital economy is also playing an important role in transforming the construction industry. By facilitating better planning and preparation for “what if” scenarios, construction companies are looking to technology to help make projects more profitable.
Implemented effectively, businesses will benefit from both greater transparency and fluidity with their information. This will help ensure that decisions can be made at the appropriate levels within the organization, so that the back office can concentrate on strategy rather than tactical planning.

For construction, it’s all about embracing the benefits of new technologies and creating a plan for using them in a way that complements the workforce, rather than replacing it. With increased communication and faster response times, business growth and world-class customer service can be possible.

Editor’s note: This article was written by Paul Struthers, executive vice-president and managing director of Sage Canada, and was originally published in July 2018 on the On-Site magazine website. We reprint it here with permission. For more information, please visit www.on-sitemag.com.
There can be no question that Ken Seiling has left an indelible mark on the Region of Waterloo. In fact, he may not be done yet.

Seiling stepped down from the role of Regional Chair last fall, after serving for 33 years in that position—a record that will almost certainly never be broken. In the months before he retired, he was coy about what lay in the immediate future. With good reason. Only weeks after his final meeting as head of Regional Council, he was appointed, along with former deputy minister Michael Fenn, to head up a review of Ontario municipalities. The men's mandate: to look at the future of 82 municipalities across the province. Including, of course, the Regional Municipal of Waterloo.

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So when it comes to making a mark in this region, Seiling is probably not done yet.

But as Seiling emptied his office at Waterloo Region headquarters on Frederick Street in Kitchener, dealing with 90 full boxes that awaited sorting, there was no doubt that the Region was facing the end of an era.

He leaves the role as Chair to almost universal commendation. Early in his life, Seiling was curator of the Wellington County Museum and Archives, so it seems appropriate that Regional council re-named the Waterloo Region Museum, the Ken Seiling Waterloo Region Museum. And in late 2018, it was announced that the annual Barnraiser Award would go to Seiling.

And now, in an unusual but universally applauded decision, this retired municipal politician is being inducted into the Grand Valley Construction Association Hall of Fame.

GVCA President Martha George explains, “GVCA inducts an individual into our Hall of Fame each year at our annual general meeting. The candidate is someone who has made a contribution to the construction industry, to our association, and to the community. Ken checks all those boxes. He has been good to the construction industry because of his vision to grow the region. Under his leadership, we have prospered.

“He has been good to and for the community by leading us in an honest, ethical, thoughtful way. He is mindful of growth, respects the rural areas, and is a genuine person. He has supported GVCA events, and spoke often about the growth of our region. I have tremendous respect for him as a leader, and as a person.”

George added, “Ken is very well respected in the Waterloo Region, and is very well aware of the challenges in the construction industry. The region was successful in holding development charges at bay, and used money wisely to maintain our existing infrastructure.”

Seiling described his induction into the GVCA Hall of Fame as “an honour.”
“I think it speaks to the way that the industry and local government in Waterloo Region have had a good relationship which is professional, open and transparent,” he said.

Throughout his career, Seiling has assumed a humble, team-first approach, both with his council colleagues, and with regional staff. Asked to reflect on his personal contribution to the thriving construction scene in the Region, he unsurprisingly deflects the attention from himself, and talks about his beloved Region.

“I am really reluctant to take a lot of credit for a lot of this stuff. It’s really a team effort.”

He adds, “On one side of the ledger, to have ongoing construction projects on the scale we see in the Region is a comment on the Region’s ability to provide good and timely infrastructure which supports development, both greenfield and redevelopment. The Region’s rapid transit project (ION) provided much work and also has seen to date over $3 billion in construction in the corridor.”

And he acknowledges a change that is taking place, involving a controversial issue within the construction industry itself: “In addition, the Region itself has done much construction and has worked with the industry to ensure good tendering and bid processes. Current legislation before the provincial legislature will soon re-open bidding to all qualified contractors.”

Seiling lives in Elmira, and although clearly an adept politician who has headed a largely urban municipality, his rural roots have shown through on many occasions. He has been an avid proponent of the “countryside line” legislation that prevents urban sprawl, and points to the heart of Kitchener-Waterloo—home of the ION rapid transit system—as the key to keeping the countryside green.

He said, “Building the LRT was the key tool to implementing our growth strategy which is based on urban intensification and stopping greenfield sprawl. This can be seen by a drive down the corridor. The restructuring of the bus system will also better encourage development in other areas given better access to transit.”

While the incredible growth along the ION corridor may be the most spectacular result of Seiling’s leadership, from a construction industry perspective, the former Chair might argue that it’s what you don’t see that is equally important. You don’t see urban sprawl, you don’t see cities encroaching on farmland.

And there’s something else you’re not going to see, going forward: estate farms—developments of that include only huge, single-family mansions. The region has changed that whole development scene entirely, with rules that now insist on infilling and intensification, both dependent on the skills of the local construction industry.

Ken Seiling may have moved on, but his legacy on the Region of Waterloo construction scene will continue to be built in bricks, stone and glass, for decades to come.
If you haven’t visited GVCA.org lately, you’re in for a surprise. Our new website went live on February 26, and we’re excited to show it off.

What’s new?
In a word, everything. We’ve completely reimagined the site architecture to make the site far easier to use—on mobile or desktop.

We understand how people like to use information on the web. They want to get to the information they want as quickly as possible. We listened and we responded. Our new architecture gets you where you want to go with as few clicks as possible.

Need to search for something? There’s a search bar smack in the middle of your screen when you arrive. Underneath, you’ll find a handful of hot links to a few of the pages on our site that we know our members visit most often: our health and safety, education, plansroom and magazine pages.

Check below the scrolling video for added functionality. You’ll find a Top Stories news feed that brings you the latest in news and developments from around our industry, as well as one-click links to more of the top items our members use on our site everyday: our calendar of events, our online store, our member directory, and our groups listing.

Further below are links to our social feeds, and information on health and safety, CCA and CCDC documents and seals, and Gold Seal certification.

Talk to us!
For the first time ever, we’ve introduced a chat box on our site. Click this interactive feature to ask questions and get responses from GVCA staff members during office hours. Further proof of how we’re here to help you when you need it.

Uniquely GVCA
The look of the site is completely fresh. For example, all the photography and video loaded on the site come direct either from the GVCA offices or from our members. These are shots of real people doing real things. There’s not a single stock image anywhere on the site. And going forward, we’ll integrate more video—from our events and tutorials of the information you want to see. The site will also be populated with blogs, white papers and news of the day.

Measuring and refining
Even more exciting—from an intelligence point of view—is the back-end functionality we’ve introduced. We’re capturing data on which pages are used most often, and refining our site as we go to make those pages that are most popular even easier to find.

Check out the new GVCA.org. We’re sure you’ll agree, whether on mobile or on your desktop, this site is far simpler and easier to use than ever before.

If you have any questions about the new site, contact us anytime.
We’ve scheduled the next instalment of our What the Tech! series for May 1 at Catalyst137 on Glasgow Street in Kitchener. It’s an event you won’t want to miss.

The innovation vacuum
The simple reality today is that construction lags behind so many other industries when it comes to technology and innovation. Collectively, we’re reluctant to bring new ideas into the office or onto the jobsite, and that’s hurting our productivity and our ability to evolve.

With that in mind, innovation is very much the theme of the May What the Tech! event. Our guest speakers, will discuss some of the challenges that contractors face today. They’ll look at the decisions we as an industry have made over the past 30 years to get us to the point where we are today, and they’ll help us understand how those decisions can be reversed so that we can tear down the barriers that prevent us from leaping forward.

Process changes needed
In some ways, our industry is the victim of its own stagnation. Most of us sell our services, and our clients expect to buy our services, on the basis of low price only. This approach does us all a huge disservice. It not only entrenches old processes, but also discourages innovation. Meanwhile, global trends are pulling us in exactly the opposite direction.

We cannot continue to ignore climate change, for example, in our work, and we have the opportunity to respond to these kinds of big-picture issues in ways that add value for our clients, and position our businesses as innovative and responsible.

Join us!
What the Tech! will invite leading speakers, and technology exhibitors to provide attendees with the information they need to understand the push and pull factors for and against innovation, and the tools they need to break our industry-wide resistance to change.

Join us for this important exhibition. Watch for program details and registration information on the GVCA website in March.
Walters Group threw open the doors to its new head office in Hamilton last May. While the company’s goal was to create a space in which all of its employees could come together under a single roof to collaborate, the story of the building’s design speaks to form, function and end-user comfort.

**Flexibility built it**
Early on, the choice for the building’s structure was clear. Structural steel not only is high-quality and robust, but also allows for a range of flexibility in design. Steel offers consistent high-quality standards, precision products and guaranteed strength and durability in the most challenging environments. From a design perspective, steel also allows for longer spans, larger bays and wider frame spacing than wood or concrete construction. This allows for maximized usable floor space and large interior spaces that can be constantly adapted to cope with the changing requirements of the occupants. These factors were all important considerations for the Walters team.

Walters employees designed, fabricated and erected the 160 tons of structural steel required for this building. Its field services team helped to coordinate the erection of the building, once it commenced in the summer of 2016.

**Functionality comes standard**
Walters’ high degree of attention to detail and creativity has resulted in a building that is a highly functional work space. Employee comfort and quality of work life was at the forefront of design considerations. Huge windows surrounding the building allow a significant amount of natural light to enter the open concept layout. Ambient white noise machines located on the ceilings and felt sound-baffling dividers at each workstation were also put into place to lessen noise disruptions. As well, there are plenty of eclectic spaces to encourage inter-departmental interactions and socializing, ample room for seating with various seating styles, adjacent outdoor patios, and several coffee bars and informal meeting spaces located throughout the office.

“We wanted to create a great space that reflects the work we do and feels like Walters,” shared Walter Koppelaar, Walters Group CEO & chairman. “I am proud to say that with the input and hard work of many people, I feel like we have achieved our goal.”
Thinking about the end user

Environmental considerations were also very important when constructing the office. Each workstation was built with natural materials without any off-gassing. Canadian maple was sourced for solid wood desks; no plastic laminate was used. Chilled water bottle re-fill stations and ‘Bean-to-Cup’ coffee machines were implemented to reduce waste. Energy efficient LED lighting was installed throughout the building, along with low-E windows to minimize the amount of heat transfer through the glass which includes UV protection for energy efficiency.

With over 40,000 square feet, the Walters team is delighted that its new office space reflects its work. With a multitude of features, including custom-made workstations, a feature staircase created in-house, and meeting rooms with the latest technological (or hi-tech) features, this office will be a great space for the team for years to come.
EDUCATION CALENDAR

March 28
Construction Industry Ethics (Earn 1 Gold Seal Credit)
*Mandatory for Gold Seal Certification

April 9
Approved Working at Heights

April 9
Healthy Minds, Healthy Workplace - Psychological Health & Safety in the Construction Industry

April 10
Close-out of a Construction Project (Earn 1 Gold Seal Credit)

April 12
Approved Working at Heights REFRESHER

April 11 & 18
Construction 101 (Earn 2 Gold Seal Credits)

April 17
How Does Your Business Compare with Others in Ontario?

May 14
Approved Working at Heights

May 17
Approved Working at Height REFRESHER

May 22
Cyber Security – Are You Prepared for a Breach?

Note
All education & training will be held at GVCA -25 Sheldon Drive (unless noted otherwise). To view a complete list of upcoming education and to register, please visit www.gvca.org/calendar

REGISTRATION REQUIRED
for all courses and events. To register, or request additional information please contact admin@gvca.org or call 519-622-4822 X120 or go to: www.gvca.org.

EVENTS CALENDAR

March 23 – 28
CCA Annual Conference, Bermuda

May 1
What the Tech Event

May 9
Women in Construction Spring Dinner
The Pines, Cambridge

June 20
GVCA Golf Tournament

July 18
Leaders in Construction (LinC) Golf Tournament

August 22
Women in Construction (WinC) Golf Tournament

Note:
To view a complete list of upcoming events and to register, please visit www.gvca.org/calendar

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INTERCONTINENTAL BORDEAUX LE GRAND HOTEL
SEPTEMBER 19/20 - 25, 2020

Contact Martha mgeorge@gvca.org to for more information
Highly trained, safety-conscious and skilled, LIUNA members are the right people for the job.

Employers know that LIUNA provides more comprehensive, advanced training for its members than any other union in Canada. LIUNA is committed to training and has created partnerships with employers including investments by our pension fund in P3 projects.

Hands-on training through the Construction Craft Worker (CCW) Apprenticeship Program is available for all LIUNA members to ensure a safe, productive workforce. Members are ready to work safely from their first day on the job, making them a valuable asset to employers.

LIUNA represents more than 80,000 members in all sectors of the construction industry in Ontario including; industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI), residential, roads, gas pipeline, sewer and watermain, electrical power systems, demolition, utilities and heavy engineering.

Visit liunaopdc.org/affiliated-local-unions to find a LIUNA local affiliate near you.
WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

We designed our new website with ease of use in mind.

Easy navigation and a smart search tool will help you find:

- Bids and Tenders
- GVCA Journal
- Full membership directory
- Industry news and updates
- Education and Events calendar
- CCDC documents and seals
- GVCA special groups
- Career postings

...and much more!

If you still can’t find what you need, use our chat box to contact us for help directly!