

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ONTARIO CONTRACTORS WILL BE BUSIER IN 2020

Ontario's ICI contractors began 2020 with heightened confidence in their businesses and the industry in general. The province is expecting an increase of work compared to 2019.

Thursday, March 5, 2020

Toronto, ON. – For the past fourteen years, the Ontario Construction Secretariat's (OCS) Contractor Survey has captured the industry's business outlook for the coming year, while monitoring critical issues affecting the industry. This year's Contractor Survey provides insights on construction activity, skilled labour shortages, and the adoption of new technologies in the construction industry.

The *2020 Contractor Survey* is released as part of the 20th Annual State of the Industry and Outlook Conference, being held today at the Toronto Congress Centre. This informative and well-attended half-day conference hosted by the OCS, is where industry experts unravel economic indicators and give insight on where the construction industry is headed in 2020.

The 2020 Contractor Survey has found that contractors' business confidence has gone up this year in every region of the province. Overall, 39% of contractors in Ontario expect to conduct more work this year compared to last, while only 12% expect less. Confidence is highest in the GTA where 43% of contractors anticipate more work. Looking at Ontario's ICI construction industry as a whole rather than their own business, 44% expect that there will be more construction activity this year, up significantly from 2019 when only 31% expected more activity.

Recruiting skilled workers and the aging workforce are contractors' top concerns for the third year running. About three-quarters (74%) of contractors now consider recruitment a significant concern, with 57% of contractors indicating that the aging workforce is a significant concern. Sixty-nine percent (69%) of contractors anticipate that getting skilled labour will be more difficult this year than in 2019. Six-in-ten contractors report being affected by skilled labour shortages in the past three years.

Ninety percent of contractors now believe that adopting new technologies is important to their firm's future, up from 71% two years ago. General contractors are leading the way in adopting new technologies, with 26% now reporting a dedicated budget for new technologies, up from 16% in 2018. Drones, augmented and virtual reality, 3D printing, and BIM are among the technologies with the biggest increases in adoption in the industry over the past two years.

Delivering the economic address, CIBC's Deputy Chief Economist Benjamin Tal states, "The real estate market has 9 lives...every time it's supposed to slow down due to higher interest rates, something bad happens elsewhere that takes interest rates lower and keeps the market going."

Known as one of the most influential political analysts of our time, David Frum brings Canadian ethics into the forefront of the often-divided realm of American politics. He provides insight into how Canadian businesses will be affected if Trump is re-elected.

In addition to presentations by Benjamin Tal and David Frum, other conference speakers included:

- Keira Liberte, Ironworker, Local 736
- Michael Lindsay, President, Project Delivery, Infrastructure Ontario
- Katherine Jacobs, Director of Research, Ontario Construction Secretariat
- Yuri Bartzis, BIM/VDC Regional Manager, Pomerleau
- David Moses, Principal, Moses Structural Engineers
- Zenon Radewych, Principal, WZMH Architects

To view the full agenda and learn more about the Conference, visit www.iciconstruction.com.

About the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS)

The OCS was formed in 1993 as a joint labour and management organization representing 25 unionized construction trades and their contractor partners in Ontario's industrial, commercial and institutional (ICI) construction sector. Its mandate is to enhance Ontario's ICI construction industry by developing relationships, facilitating dialogue, providing value-added research, disseminating important information to client groups and promoting the value of ICI unionized construction across Ontario.

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