

20
23

OCS YEAR IN REVIEW





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PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

JODI TRAVERS

On behalf of the Board of Directors, welcome to the Ontario Construction Secretariat's (OCS) 2023 AGM & Conference. This event recognizes the celebration of OCS's 30th Anniversary, commemorating three decades of dedicated service to the unionized ICI construction industry in Ontario.

During my inaugural year as President of the OCS Board, I have witnessed the unwavering dedication of the OCS staff and Board to enhance and promote Ontario's unionized construction industry.

The OCS fulfils its mission by fostering relationships, facilitating constructive dialogues, and conducting valuable research within the industry it represents. Our core strategic objectives revolve around improving market performance, fostering positive perceptions of unionized construction, and advocating for supportive public policies.

In the past year, the OCS introduced several noteworthy Labour Relations initiatives, such

as the Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course and the Labour Relations Forum held in June. The goals of these ongoing initiatives are to encourage collaboration among industry stakeholders and promote constructive labour relations. Attendees can engage in open discussions aimed at enhancing collective bargaining and improving relationships. I am hopeful that our industry will reflect on the past to improve the future; to not only talk about the need for change, but to change the way we approach bargaining and productivity, thereby increasing the footprint of unionized construction.

I appreciate the relentless commitment and hard work demonstrated by the OCS in addressing the industry's needs within the framework of its mission and look forward to revisiting our strategic plan. I take great pride in contributing to the OCS's mission and am optimistic in the direction we are headed.





CEO'S MESSAGE

ROBERT BRONK

Thank you all for your unwavering support as I welcome you to the *2023 AGM & Conference*. These are undoubtedly busy times for our industry, the construction market is hot, and we face challenging economic conditions as well as an ageing workforce. However, despite this, the industry has a lot to be proud of as it remains successful due in part to its ability to constantly adapt and evolve.

This year marks the OCS' 30th anniversary, a great time to reflect on our past accomplishments and to look ahead at the next thirty years and what's to come. The OCS continues to deliver high-quality research that addresses the specific needs of the industry. The *Post Bargaining Survey* was conducted this past Spring and presented at the *OCS Labour Relations Forum* in June. There are a number of other research projects in the pipeline that I'm sure will prove valuable to the industry as well.

Enhanced market performance is a core objective of the OCS strategic plan, and two new events focused on this initiative were launched this past year. The *Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course* was piloted this spring with the goal of educating industry members on several areas within labour relations which include the evolution of labour relations, jurisdictional disputes,

collective bargaining, and many more related topics. After a successful pilot, the OCS is opening the course to a broader audience, and officially launching with sessions this fall and next spring. The *Labour Relations Forum* was held this past June in Niagara-on-the-Lake. This event brought together bargaining agents and other industry stakeholders from both labour and management to discuss important issues within the collective bargaining process and potential solutions to some of the identified problems. A second forum will be held next spring to help prepare the industry for the upcoming round of bargaining.

The OCS has a busy agenda, and I am fortunate to work alongside an amazing team. This past year, we have worked hard and diligently to address the needs of the industry and I could not be prouder of what we have achieved.

All this would not be possible without support from you, our industry partners, who come to our events and provide us with your input in completing valuable research studies. We hope you enjoy the rest of your time at the JW Marriott.

RESEARCH

Research is at the core of the OCS mandate. Providing our stakeholders with valuable information that helps pave a clear road for the industry to follow. This past year the OCS has funded and worked on several different research projects.

Research Projects

- Project Labour Agreement Study
- Union Certification and Organizing Study
- Post Bargaining Survey
- 2023 Contractor Survey
- Market Share
- Economic Bulletins



Project Labour Agreement Study

Project labour agreements (PLAs) have been used for decades by some of Ontario's largest industrial companies. Although *Ontario's Labour Relations Act* (OLRA) somewhat constrains the use of PLAs to the industrial sector, there has been increasing interest in utilizing PLAs in other sectors. To explore the current role of PLAs in Ontario and to inform policy discussions about modernizing the OLRA to promote the use of PLAs outside of the industrial sector, OCS engaged a team of academic faculty experts from both Canada and the United States. The final report explores PLAs from a legal, labour relations and economic perspective.

PLAs are designed to promote timely completion of large-scale, complex projects by ensuring access to skilled labour, assuring coordination between trades, expediting dispute resolution, reconciling compensation and work hour provisions across trades, and an agreement to prohibit work stoppages. The report provides a thorough analysis of the legal framework of PLAs in Ontario and speaks specifically to the process for achieving a PLA. It also briefly touches on various Charter challenges and a current,

ongoing complaint to the federal Competition Bureau.

An analysis of 25 PLAs ranging in value from \$25 million to \$2 billion, all in the industrial sector reveals that the most common goals of current PLAs are "timeliness, stability and cost control".

The final section of the report speaks to the economic impact of PLAs. A thorough analysis of the American academic, peer-review literature has a consistent message – "PLAs do not have a statistically significant effect on construction costs." It is difficult to directly assess the economic impact of PLAs in Canada given the absence of quality, academic research. However, given similarities between the US and Canada, the findings of US studies are highly applicable to the Canadian experience. Furthermore, the report debunks studies by quasi research think tanks such as Cardus and the Montreal Economic Institute (MEI) by unravelling their assumptions and methodology and clearly notes "estimates offered in the MEI study are, at best, unreliable, and are likely misinforming public discourse."

Union Certification and Organizing Study

In collaboration with Queen's University, the OCS is exploring trends and developments in union certification activity in Ontario's construction trades.

The initial phase of this project looked at data available from the Ontario Labour Relations Board to assess general trends. The second phase of research was the implementation of a survey focusing on:

- Profile of union organizers
- General insights on current union activity across all trades
- Barriers and facilitators to union organizing activity
- Insight into successful union organizing strategies
- Specific tactics used by unions and employers
- Impact of COVID-19

Researchers are currently collating the survey responses and a final report is expected in the near future.

Post Bargaining Survey

The OCS engaged Crunch Research to conduct a survey with members of the various ICI sector bargaining committees. Developed in conjunction with the Construction Industry Advisory Group, the survey posed questions to explore the successes, challenges, and obstacles encountered in the 2022-2025 round of collective bargaining. Survey responses have been collected and were shared at the OCS *Labour Relations Forum* in June 2023.

The survey identified four key themes that would help enhance the Labour-Management relationship.

KEY THEMES:

- Enhancing Trust
- Transparency + Openness
- View each other as partners in the industry
- Change in attitude and approach from adversarial to partnership

2023 Contractor Survey

The annual Contractor Survey was distributed at the *State of the Industry & Outlook Conference* in March 2023. The OCS has been conducting this annual survey to gain better insight on how contractors are feeling about the unionized ICI construction sector.

▼ KEY TAKEAWAYS

81% POSITIVE

Reasons for Positive Outlook



35%

ABUNDANCE
of work

10%

INCREASE
in construction activity

Contractor Top Concerns



COST AND
AVAILABILITY OF
MATERIALS



AVAILABILITY
AND QUALITY OF
SKILLED TRADES
LABOUR

INTENSITY OF CONCERN (Mean score on a 7-point scale)

Availability of experienced labour	5.6
Material costs	5.3
Labour costs	4.9
Material availability	4.8
Transportation costs (transportation, bonding, insurance)	4.6
Increasing contractor risk	4.2
Availability of salaried staff	3.9



Market Share **COMING SOON**

The Ontario Construction Secretariat recognizes the need to develop appropriate tools for measuring union market share in the Industrial, Commercial and Industrial (ICI) sector of Ontario's construction industry. To this end, a Request for Proposals (RFP) has been issued to identify key indicators of market share at the trade and regional level, to provide a methodology for tracking market share and to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each potential indicator and tool. It is imperative that both labour and management agree to any market share tools and indicators. This project is expected to be awarded before the end of 2023 and work will continue into 2024.

Economic Bulletins

Economic Bulletins provide stakeholders with an easy-to-access and digestible summary of economic trends, specifically those trends that affect the unionized ICI construction sector. Below are some of the key trends discussed over the past year.

Employment and Labour Force

Employment and labour force hit record highs in the summer of 2022, before gradually cooling off as the winter months approached. At the start of 2023, employment saw a somewhat steeper decline but slowly climbed back to surpass previous highs and reach an astounding 625 thousand by the end of August. Given healthy growth in the labour force, the unemployment rate rose to a more comfortable 3.9%.

Permits and Investment

Construction intentions (permit values) soared in November 2022, with the industrial sector seeing record high permit value (around \$1B), and institutional sector permit value at a 5-year high (\$607M).

Investment (an indicator of current construction activity), hit record highs in May 2023 in both the commercial (\$1.36B) and industrial (\$575M) sectors, when measured in current dollars.

Inflation

Headline inflation saw steady declines over the later months of 2022 and early 2023. Recently inflation has started to tick up again, reaching 3.8% in August 2023.

As for industrial product prices, lumber and other wood products prices experienced a significant decline (annually) over the year, with a massive 39% drop between March 2022 and March 2023. Energy and petroleum product prices dropped for 5 consecutive months from March to July.



31
Bulletins
released



Open Rate

40%



Click Rate

4.1%

*August 30, 2022 – August 30, 2023

EVENTS

Labour relations was a major focus over the past year. As such the OCS implemented two new events focused on enhancing the collective bargaining process and strengthening labour-management relationships. The *Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course* provided stakeholders with a basic understanding of how labour relations work in Ontario's ICI sector. The *Labour Relations Forum* provided an opportunity for bargaining agents to build connections whilst working together with their colleagues to brainstorm ways of improving the bargaining process.

Along with new labour relations initiatives, the OCS continues to host an AGM & Conference and the State of the Industry & Outlook Conference. The OCS has built an impressive resume of events over the past year, hearing from speakers like Andrew Coyne, Dan Riskin, and Daniel Shapiro, while providing networking opportunities for stakeholders outside of meeting rooms.

Events

- **Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course** (May 2023)
- **Labour Relations Forum** (June 2023)
- **2022 Annual General Meeting & Conference**
- **2023 State of the Industry & Outlook Conference**



Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course

The OCS piloted its *Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course* on May 15-17, 2023.

This in-person course spanned over three full workdays and served as a foundation for positive labour relations practices in Ontario's unionized ICI construction sector.

The OCS partnered with Constructionlab and numerous industry stakeholders to develop a curriculum that provides participants with the opportunity to learn in an interactive setting through eight-course modules which cover: the Evolution of Labour Relations in Construction, Current Legislative Framework, Understanding Collective Agreements, Grievances & Jurisdictional Disputes, Collective Bargaining/Negotiation, Labour-Management Collaborative Partnerships, Health & Safety, and Human Rights.

A select group of industry leaders were invited to the pilot course and gave plenty of great feedback. After this successful pilot and some minor modifications to the course curriculum, the OCS has officially launched the course, with sessions in November 2023 and April 2024. The course is currently accredited through McMaster University's continuing education program and is CCA Gold Seal certified.

Labour Relations Forum

The *Labour Relations Forum* was held on June 7-9, 2023, at the Pillar and Post, in Niagara-on-the-Lake. Designed as a working retreat, the *Labour Relations Forum* brought together labour and management bargaining agents as well as other industry personnel involved in the collective bargaining process.

The goal of the event was to identify areas for improvement within Ontario's ICI collective bargaining process in an effort to enhance how we bargain. This was executed in several different ways.

Daniel Shapiro, PhD., and head of the Harvard Negotiation Program, ran an interactive session and discussed the importance of trust and relationships when negotiating.

At the end of each day's session, forum facilitator Warren Wilson led a discussion focusing on what could be taken away and applied to the unionized ICI industry. These discussions generated a lot of interaction and conclusions which focused on streamlining the bargaining process and building relationships with bargaining counterparts.

The *Labour Relations Forum* actively created networking opportunities to encourage our stakeholders to build relationships, and to do so outside of the bargaining room in a more relaxed environment.

Based on participant feedback, the forum proved to be a resounding success. As such, we will continue to work with our stakeholders as we plan for the next Forum in 2024.



AGM 2022

The OCS' 2022 AGM & Conference was held at JW Marriott The Rosseau Muskoka Resort & Spa on October 5-6. OCS stakeholders came together at the annual event to network with their labour and management colleagues, hear from a variety of speakers, and learn about OCS projects, upcoming research and future events.

Opening the conference with the keynote address, Brian Baeumler, a popular TV personality, teacher and entrepreneur, left everyone with something to think about after his passion-filled presentation on his dedication to the skilled trades and his path to success.

The Founder and CEO of Leadership Surge, Alex Willis shared insights on how embedding values of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) in every facet of your leadership team results in improved communication, engagement, productivity, creativity, and job satisfaction. During his 2-hour DEI workshop, Alex focused on why DEI is important and provided practical techniques and examples for creating an environment of belonging, leaving

the audience feeling empowered and motivated.

Muskoka provided a beautiful setting for networking and hospitality. The OCS Bargaining Chips Casino & Lounge treated us to a culinary experience and an opportunity to make new connections while mingling on the casino floor.

Day two of the event started with Adam Melnick from the Provincial Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario. Adam gave an update on the Construction Training & Apprenticeship Ontario (CTAO) project, providing insight on the trades hub website and how it helps job seekers get their careers started.

Melissa Young, CEO and Registrar of Skilled Trades Ontario (STO) was the final speaker who discussed the trades, harmonizing apprenticeships, developing partnerships with First Nations communities, Indigenous groups, labour and management, and influencing the national landscape of apprenticeship.

Cosmo Mannella, the former OCS Board President, chaired the formal business of the AGM which provided

reports from the Auditor and OCS staff. A moment of silence was observed to remember Andy Pilat, who served the OCS as a Director from 1994 to 2005.

Robert Bronk gave an update on OCS activities and projects over the past year. The 2023 Budget was also presented and Robert highlighted the focus and attention on labour relations, including the launch of the Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations pilot course.

Katherine Jacobs, OCS Director of Research, reported on the OCS' major ongoing and completed research studies and projects over the past year.



2023 State of the Industry & Outlook Conference

The OCS hosted its 23rd *Annual State of the Industry & Outlook Conference* (SIOC) on March 2nd, 2023, at the International Centre in Mississauga. This well-attended event provided participants with an overall economic outlook, a review of the OCS' annual Contractor Survey, and a glimpse at two significant ongoing construction projects.

BMO Director and Senior Economist Robert Kavcic delivered the annual economic outlook presentation. Robert discussed the current state of the economy, focusing specifically on the potential for a recession, and how the construction industry is handling different economic challenges. Robert held an overall positive outlook, feeling that Ontario would avoid a recession in 2023, and noted the continuing strength of the construction industry.

Katherine Jacobs, the Secretariat's Director of Research, delivered the

annual contractor survey presentation, highlighting the findings from the 2023 OCS Contractor Survey. Contractors retained an overall confident view of the industry given the significant pipeline of work, even despite issues like rising material prices and labour market challenges.

Those in attendance had the opportunity to hear about two ICI sector project showcases. Dave Stroz, General Superintendent at PCL Construction, and Andrea Gauthier, Construction Manager at EllisDon (ED) spoke in detail about the work being done on the Centre Block Rehabilitation Project which is a joint venture by PCL and ED. The project is a massive undertaking and contains tons of different moving parts. Andrea and Dave opened many eyes to the complex work and tremendous amount of planning that goes into a mega-project. The second project showcase featured Greg Brokenshire, President of Alberici Constructors Limited, and the construction of the NextStar Energy Windsor Battery Plant. Greg spoke about project specifics and the overall positive

impact that building an EV battery plant can have on Canada and more specifically the city of Windsor.

Delivering the keynote address to wrap up the day was the Globe & Mail's Andrew Coyne. Andrew is an accomplished columnist, writing for a variety of notable publications, and a weekly panelist on CBC's *The National*. He provided insightful comments on the future of Canada both from an economic and political perspective.

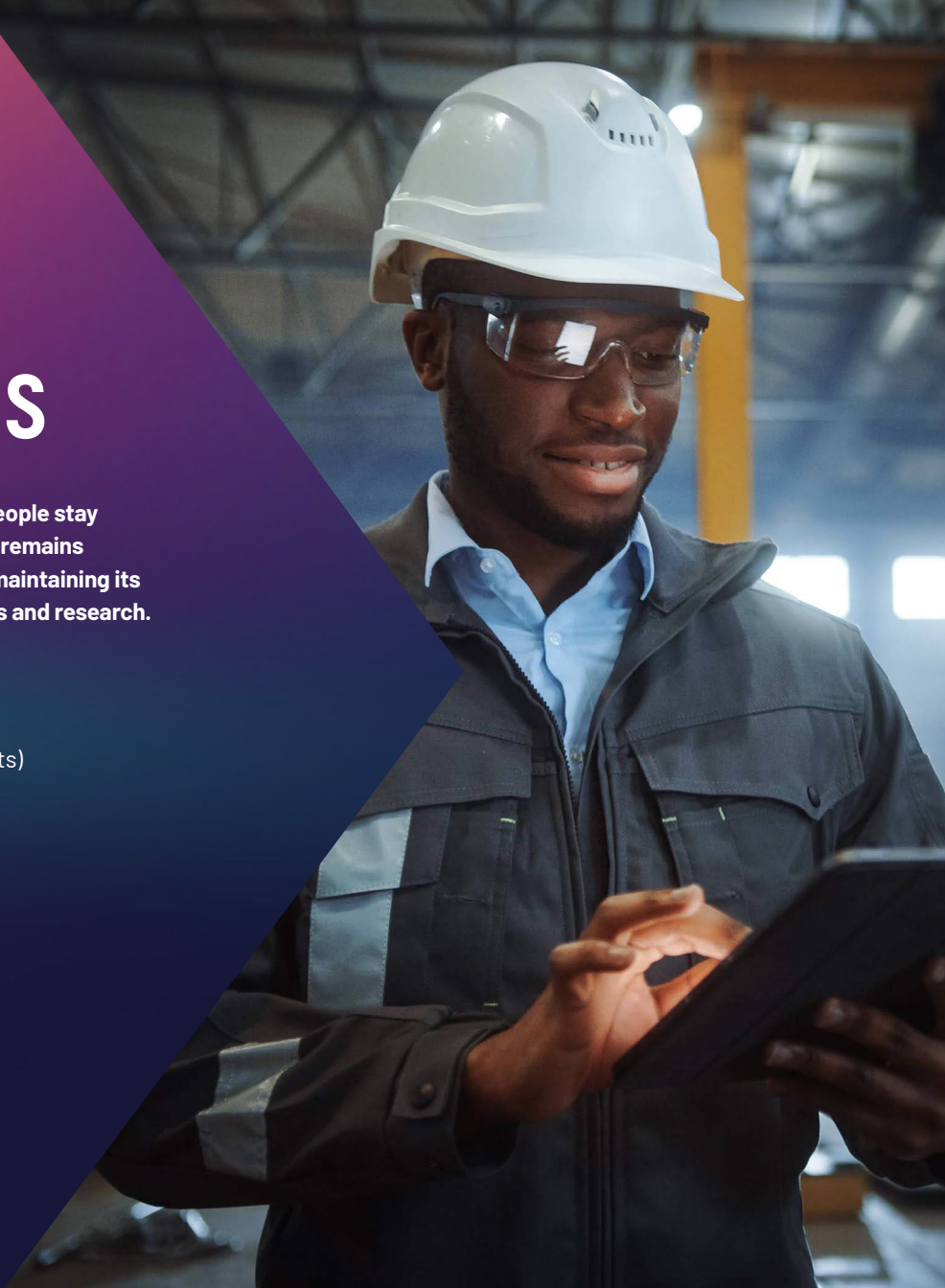


COMMUNICATIONS

Reliable and accurate communication is the key to helping people stay connected and feel a part of their work community. The OCS remains committed to growing its engagement and influence, while maintaining its professional reputation as a reliable source for industry news and research.

Communication Products

- **Breaking News Bulletins** (E.g. Provincial and Federal Budgets)
- **Earned Media**
- **Economic Bulletins**
- **Multiple Advertising Partnerships**
- **OCS30 Campaign**
- **Regular Social Media Postings**
- **Stay Connected**



MEDIA OUTREACH

The OCS worked closely with Enterprise Canada, a national strategic communications firm, to help promote and increase the reach of its work. With the help of Enterprise, the OCS was able to build up an impressive media outreach resume. Media outlets remain interested in featuring OCS research on their platforms, interviewing senior staff members, and echoing content produced in-house.



44
FEATURES



Podcast



YouTube

5

MEDIUMS



Print



Radio



Online
Magazine

OCS WAS FEATURED IN THE FOLLOWING;

- Caledon Enterprise
- Cambridge Times
- Canadiancontractor.ca
- Canadian Plastics
- CBC
- Consulting.ca
- Crane & Hoist Canada
- Daily Commercial News
- ElectricalIndustry.ca
- Equipment Journal
- Essential Construction News
- Flamborough Review
- Guelph Mercury Tribune
- Glass Canada Magazine
- Hamilton Spectator
- HIR Magazine
- HPAC Magazine
- InsideHalton.com
- InsideOttawaValley.com
- New Hamburg Independent
- Niagara Falls Review
- Niagara This Week
- Northbaynipissing.com
- Northern Ontario Business
- Northumberland News
- On-Site Magazine
- Renew Canada
- Simcoe.com
- Toronto.com
- The Brampton Guardian
- The Construction Record Podcast
- The Hammer Podcast
- The Independent & Free Press
- The Muskokan
- The Niagara Independent
- Urban Toronto
- Waterloo Chronicle
- Welland Tribune
- Windsor Star
- YorkRegion.com
- 610 CTKB
- 900 CHML

*August 30, 2022 – August 30, 2023

STAY CONNECTED



The OCS distributes a weekly e-newsletter, Stay Connected, designed to keep stakeholders up to date on industry news, government activities, events, and a variety of other industry-relevant articles and initiatives.

Stay Connected is sent to approximately 1,400 people every week and on average opened by 38% of those individuals. This year a special emphasis has been placed on not only finding industry-relevant news that our stakeholders should know about, but also sharing articles, studies, or videos that aren't frequently seen by the industry. After implementing this strategy more and more people have been actively clicking on links to view the full article or video.

1,400



Sent to
approximately
1,400 constituents
each week

38%



Open Rate

5.3%



Click Rate

Not subscribed to Stay Connected?

Scan the QR Code to sign up.

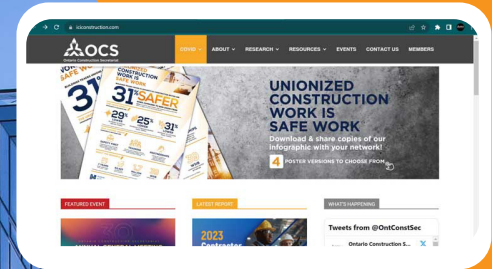


*August 30, 2022 – August 30, 2023

SOCIAL MEDIA SPOTLIGHT

The OCS has maintained consistent growth across several social media platforms over the course of the past year. Each platform serves as a crucial medium in which the OCS can share its own work as well as echo the content being created by other stakeholders.

OCS WEBSITE



SOCIAL MEDIA



385



Followers

65



Posts

5.71%



Post Engagement
Rate

AUGUST 30, 2022 – AUGUST 30, 2023

TOP FACEBOOK POST

"The OCS has welcomed six new members to its Board of Directors this year."



2,220



Followers

155



Posts

4.59%



Post Engagement
Rate

AUGUST 30, 2022 – AUGUST 30, 2023

TOP POST

"Kicking off the conference with a familiar face...
@Bryan_Baeumler.
#OCSAGM2022"



1,449



Followers

95



Posts

5.33%



Post Engagement
Rate

AUGUST 30, 2022 – AUGUST 30, 2023

TOP LINKEDIN POST

"The Ontario construction industry is thriving... we're pleased to have @LIUNACanada rejoin our ranks"



381



Followers

11



Posts

N/A

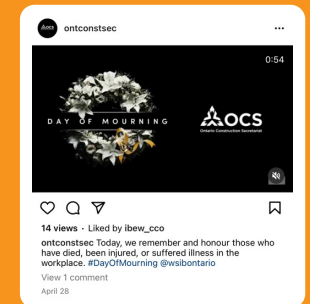


Post Engagement
Rate

AUGUST 30, 2022 – AUGUST 30, 2023

TOP INSTAGRAM POST

"2023 Day of Mourning"



UNIONIZED ICI INDUSTRY GIVES BACK



The demand for charitable and community support continues to grow, stretching the capacity of many front-line agencies to meet the need. The unionized ICI construction sector has a long history of investing in their communities and giving back.

Every year, labour and management stakeholders host golf tournaments, food drives, dinners, and other events to raise funds for different causes. These events are a great opportunity to network, meet others in the industry, and support important causes. The OCS has been tracking the charities and causes the industry has supported over the past year and calculating the combined financial contributions of the unionized sector.

Help the OCS Promote the Industry's Charitable Efforts

Is your organization planning a golf tournament? Holding a food drive? Collecting toys for a local charity? We want to hear about it! The OCS continues to build a database of the unionized construction industry's charitable contributions.

Scan the QR code below to fill out a quick survey letting us know what events your organization hosts.



Lion's Club Dog Guides **Hammer Heads Program**
St. Andrew's Dew Drop Inn **DeNovo Treatment Centre**
Ottawa Food Bank Community Harvest program and other
local charities **Esophageal Cancer** **Shelter Movers Charity**
Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation **Multiple Sclerosis**
Mesothelioma Cancer Research at Princess Margaret Cancer
Foundation **Heart and Stroke Foundation** **The Lighthouse**
Threads of Life **Luso Canadian Charitable Society, and the**
Down Syndrome Association of Toronto **Water First**
Good Shepard Ministries **Mito Canada**
BACU Scholarship Fund **Plus,**
various other local charities.
We Thank You All



30 YEARS OF OCS



KNOWLEDGE TO BUILD ON

In December 1990, George Adams was asked by the Minister of Labour to conduct a review and comment on the effectiveness of province-wide bargaining. In his final report, Mr. Adams offered several recommendations to the government – including the establishment of a Secretariat to represent the collective interests of the unionized ICI construction industry in Ontario. This Secretariat would come to be known as the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS).

The OCS is dedicated to enhancing Ontario's unionized ICI construction industry by developing relationships and facilitating dialogue. However, the lynchpin of the OCS mandate is providing value-added research. As a joint labour-management-government (not-for-profit) organization the OCS has performed impartial research and facilitated prosperous relationships for the overall benefit of the unionized construction sector for the past 30 years.

Looking forward to the next 30 years, the OCS seeks to continue to produce sound research that helps the unionized ICI sector in continuing to deliver high-quality construction and bring labour and management together to facilitate the building of relationships with a specific focus on improving the collective bargaining process.

As an organization, the OCS would like to thank and acknowledge all those who have worked hard over the past 30 years to get the OCS to the point where it is now.

Past Team Members:

- **CEOs:** Scott Macivor, Sean Strickland
- **Employees:** Ashraf Ali, Perry Chao, Robyn Connolly, Adam Cywinski, Ryan Isojima, Fred Lehmann, Erich Schmidt, Rishi Sondhi, Stew Stevenson, Jim Wright, Ian Worte, Frank Zechner
- **Founding Consultants:** Bob Collins, Bill Empey

A big thank you to all those who have served on the **OCS Board of Directors** in the past 30 years. Without your support and interest, none of this would be possible.

- **Past Presidents:** Patrick Dillon, Joe Keyes, Cosmo Manella, Neil McCormick, John Schel

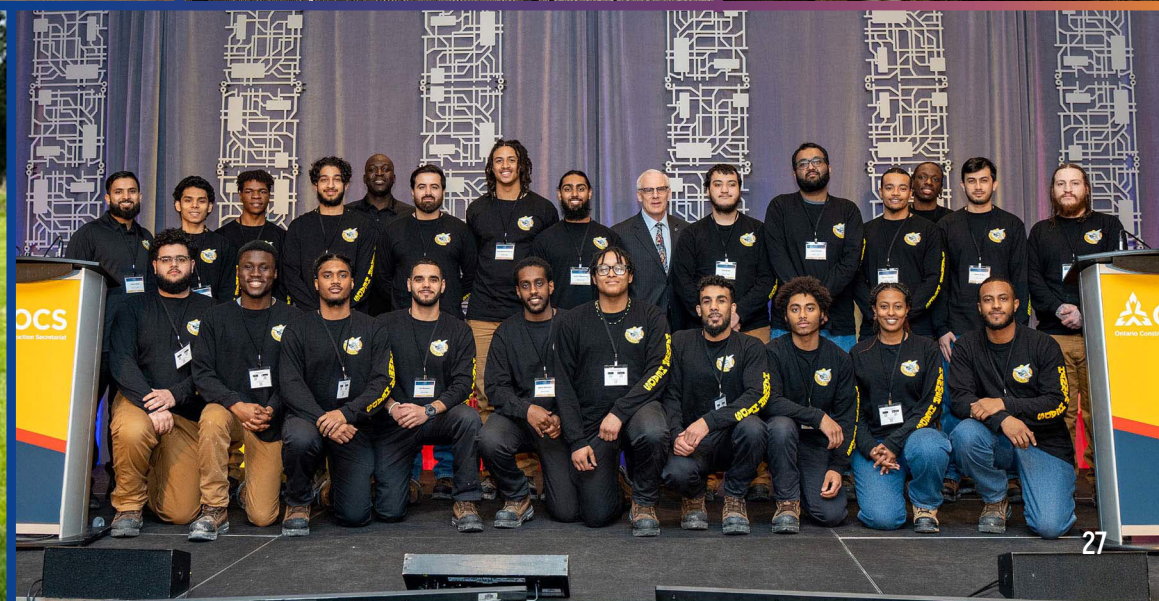
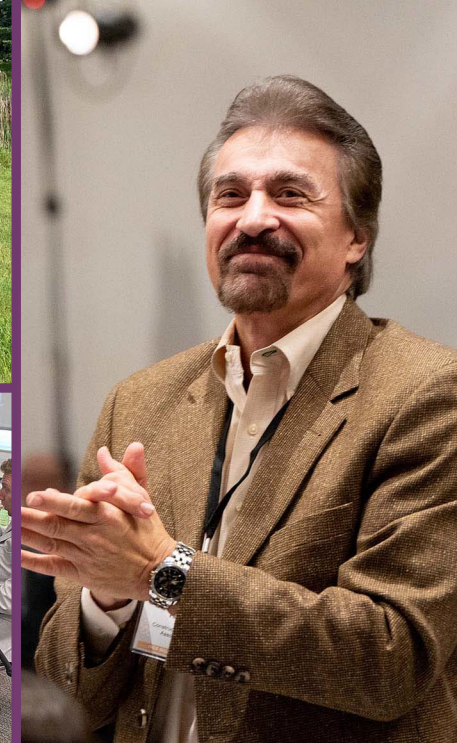


PHOTO GALLERY











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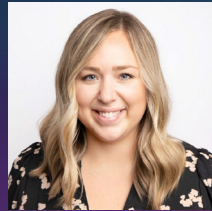
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UPCOMING EVENTS

State of the Industry & Outlook Conference 2024

MARCH 7, 2024

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, MISSISSAUGA

Labour Relations Forum 2024

JUNE 10-12, 2024

THE WESTIN TRILLIUM HOUSE, BLUE MOUNTAIN

Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course

FALL: NOVEMBER 20-22, 2023

COLLEGE OF CARPENTERS & ALLIED TRADES TRAINING CENTRE

SPRING: APRIL 22-24, 2024

LOCATION TBA

Annual General Meeting 2024

FALL 2024

TORONTO (LOCATION TBA)

For more information, scan the QR code to visit the events page on our website



NOTES

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OCS YEAR IN REVIEW



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**RESEARCH DRIVEN.
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