



20
25

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 2025 AGM & Conference. It's hard to believe that I'll soon be entering my fourth year as President of the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS). This was a uniquely challenging and unpredictable year but another brilliant showcase of our industry's resilience and dedication to growth.

The industry successfully concluded another round of collective bargaining without any work stoppages. Given these challenging and volatile economic times, the industry worked together to reach collective agreements. These agreements are a strong foundation for the continued growth of Ontario's unionized ICI construction industry over the next three years.

The OCS continued the course that the 2024-2027 Strategic Plan set us on and welcomed new Chief Executive Officer, Brian Barron, to lead the way and execute these new initiatives outlined in the plan with OCS staff. Brian has been involved in the sector for many years and has already proven his expertise in guiding the OCS since the beginning of February 2025. Along with the rest of the Board of Directors, I look forward to continuing to see the OCS prosper under Brian's leadership.

The OCS has continued to undertake valuable research projects where the industry has identified needs, host insightful and productive events to further the industry and connect with its members, and promote the unionized construction industry and the building trade union advantage.

I am confident the OCS will continue to address the needs of the industry through its research, collaboration, and communications.

Thank you to our members, partners, and affiliates for your support and dedication to enhancing Ontario's unionized ICI construction sector. I look forward to a year of growth and collaboration.





CEO'S MESSAGE

BRIAN BARRON

I was honoured to step into the role of Chief Executive Officer of the Ontario Construction Secretariat (OCS) in February of this year. From day one, I have been inspired by the organization's tremendous potential to strengthen and advance Ontario's unionized ICI construction industry. I want to sincerely thank our Board of Directors for their trust in both myself and the OCS team.

While 2025 has brought its share of economic uncertainty and potential challenges, our industry has demonstrated remarkable resilience. Notably, this year's bargaining process concluded successfully across all agreements without a single work stoppage, a testament to the professionalism and collaboration within our sector. At OCS, we remain steadfast in our commitment to providing members and affiliates with high-quality data, research, and opportunities that foster collaboration among labour, management, and government.

Our 2024–2027 Strategic Plan clearly defines our mission: to inspire industry leaders to work together, strengthen labour-management relationships, build industry knowledge, and promote the value of the unionized ICI construction sector. To further guide our initiatives, we have launched two new advisory committees; the Research Advisory Committee and the Labour Relations Advisory Committee. Each is comprised of respected leaders representing both labour and management.

Delivering unbiased, data-driven insights remains at the core of our work. The Market Intelligence Study continues to progress, engaging directly with the industry to better understand unionization trends on job sites. Our research continues to highlight the benefits of Project Labour Agreements, reinforcing the value they bring to both public and private ICI procurement practices.

Education remains another cornerstone of our mandate. This year, two sessions of the Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations course are underway, each with approximately 25 participants. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, and we are already exploring advanced course offerings for the future. Our Connections & Cocktails summer networking event also returned for a second year, once again providing a great opportunity for industry professionals to connect and collaborate.

We were proud to launch our Responsible Procurement Campaign this year, which included active participation at the 2025 Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual Conference and the development of new procurement resources designed to promote unionized construction in public projects.

It has been a busy and productive year, with many exciting initiatives still to come. I am incredibly proud of the work our team has accomplished and energized by the opportunities ahead.

Finally, I want to extend my deepest thanks to all our industry partners. Your engagement, whether attending our events, contributing to research, or championing our initiatives is what makes our work possible. Together, we will continue to strengthen and grow Ontario's unionized ICI construction industry.

STRATEGIC PLAN



Vision

Contractors partnered with building trades unions are the preferred choice for industrial, commercial, and institutional construction.



Standards of Excellence

As a joint labour-management organization, the OCS is uniquely positioned to address industry issues and foster strong partnerships resulting in innovative solutions to enhance the competitive position of Ontario's unionized ICI construction industry. OCS research initiatives adhere to the following:

- Research ethics standards and best practices
- Clearly articulated research goals and methodologies
- Unbiased and data-driven research
- Focused on outcomes



Values

- Collaboration
- Communication
- Credibility
- Integrity
- Partnerships
- Knowledge



Mission

Inspire industry leaders to work as partners to strengthen labour-management relationships, build industry knowledge and awareness, and promote the building trade union advantage.



Strategic Pillars



Research That Matters



**Collaborate:
Strengthen The
Network**



**Communications:
Knowledge To
Build On**



**A Best-in-Class
Association: Effective
Governance**



OCS AWARD OF EXCELLENCE

2025 AWARD RECIPIENT

LARRY BROKENSHERE

The OCS Award of Excellence is presented to an individual or group to recognize leadership excellence within Ontario's unionized ICI construction industry, specifically, in one or more of the following areas:

- Health & Safety
- Labour Relations
- Training
- Workforce Development

In alignment with our mandate, we believe leadership excellence means to inspire industry leaders to work as partners to strengthen labour-management relationships, build industry knowledge and awareness, and promote the building trade union advantage.

This year's recipient of the OCS Award of Excellence is none other than Larry Brokenshire.

Larry Brokenshire has devoted himself wholeheartedly and unselfishly to Ontario's unionized ICI construction industry. Here are just a few of his achievements.

- Respected leader and mentor in the industry for over 50 years
- Continues to work for AECON in a consulting role
- Is an expert on labour relations history and practices
- Revolutionized negotiation processes and played critical role in multiple negotiations
- Shaped how contractors and unions work together
- Revitalized the nuclear industry in Ontario
- Makes presentations to various EBA groups and to the International Foundation of Employee Benefits (IFEB)
- Boards and Committees
 - Association of Millwrighting Contractors of Ontario (AMCO)
 - De Novo Treatment Centre
 - Ontario Erectors Association
- Volunteer/Neighbourhood Support
 - Cambridge Rotary Club
 - Woman's Crisis Services of Waterloo Region

Thank you, Larry, for your dedication to this industry and for being the epitome of what it means to be a leader!



This is just a small portion of what the industry has to say about Larry Brokenshire...

"There is no other person that I can think of that compares to young Brokenshire when it comes to the quiet honesty, morality, and decency that he exhibits as he negotiates each day."

Kevin Bryenton

"When you speak to anyone in this industry, somehow Larry has assisted them, mentored them, or helped them navigate their way through. He is truly one of a kind, and unlikely one that we will ever see again."

Patricia Penney-Rouzes

RESEARCH THAT MATTERS

Research is the foundation of the OCS. The OCS is committed to supporting our labour, management, and government stakeholders with respect to the following – Collective Bargaining, Workforce Development & Resiliency, Market Trends & Intelligence, and the Union Value Proposition.

Over the past months we have delivered regular economic and market trend data to ensure our stakeholders have the most current and reliable data to inform their negotiations. We also initiated an update to the Union Safety Effect study and continued to explore assessing union market intelligence (see project showcases for an update on this initiative).

With the help of our industry partners, we look forward to continuing to perform and deliver Research That Matters.

Research Advisory Committee & Labour Relations Advisory Committee

To help shape and guide the OCS research agenda and labour relations mandates, we have assembled two volunteer committees of industry experts and leaders.

Research Advisor Committee

- Dan Krupa
- Dave Griffiths
- David Hurlly
- Jarett Patey
- Melissa Atkins-Mahaney
- Michael Leone
- R. Graeme Aitken
- Stephen Callender
- Stirling Munn
- Wayne Peterson

Labour Relations Advisory Committee

- Cosmo Mannella
- Jason Campbell
- Jason Collins
- Jim Miller
- Jodi Travers
- John Graham
- Margaret Taylor
- Melissa Atkins-Mahaney
- Steven Pankow
- Tomi Hulkkonen
- Tony DiMaria
- Tony Fanelli

2025 PUBLISHED REPORTS



2025 Contractor Survey (March)



The Economic Costs and Benefits of Project Labour Agreements in Ontario (April)

Project Showcases

Market Intelligence Initiative

In 2024, the OCS engaged Prism Economics & Analysis to develop a system to collect market intelligence that will allow us to assess and monitor union market competitiveness at the trade, regional, and market segment levels. Work completed to-date includes:

- An updated master database of union and non-union general and trade contractors
- A comprehensive database of awarded construction projects over the past 5 years that is representative of market segments, project types, and sizes across geographic regions
- An analysis of the general contractor market which identifies top general contractors by project value and number of projects across specific market segments

The next stage of the project involves a pilot project in the Niagara region to validate our research objectives and assumptions, share initial findings, identify priority market segments, and collect relevant local area information that will enhance the measurement of market share.

This pilot research will allow us to gain a better understanding of established relationships between owners, general contractors, architects, and trade contractors across various project components (e.g. site work, structural, electrical, mechanical, finishing, etc.) and to determine what proportion of projects were built employing union versus non-union labour.

Stay tuned for more information. If you are interested in being involved in the Pilot, please reach out to Director of Research, Katherine Jacobs.

2025 ICI Sector Post-Bargaining Survey: What Worked Well, What Did Not, and What Lessons Were Learned

Once again, we are reaching out to labour and management bargaining committees to explore the complexities impacting bargaining, and find out what worked, what didn't work, and what lessons were learned.

This survey is expected to be infield in October and the results from the survey will be presented at next year's Annual Conference.



Collective Bargaining Resources

In early December, we emailed you a copy of our Collective Bargaining Resources. This document contained market trend data to help inform your bargaining discussions and was updated on a monthly basis and housed on our members' website.

We trust you found this information useful during bargaining. Over the next few months, we will be collecting wage and language settlement information as well as 2025-2028 Collective Agreements. This information will also be made available on the OCS members' website.

OCS Members Website



If you do not have a login, simply request a new account to have access to updated materials.



Economic & Market Trends

OCS provides regular economic bulletins throughout the year to ensure our labour, management, and government partners have an up-to-date picture on economic and industry trends. Below is a brief recap and update on economic conditions in 2025.

Economic Uncertainty

Just as we were recovering from the interest rate hikes of the past few years, the US political and economic shift threw a wrench into the global economy. Tariffs of 25% were imposed on all non-CUSMA (Canada-US-Mexico) agreement compliant goods. After the initial wave of panic and numerous analysts calling for a severe recession, nerves eased, and worst-case scenario thinking subsided. In Q1 2025, we observed growth of 2.2% in Canadian GDP (primarily due to businesses scrambling to get ahead of tariffs by accelerating goods orders), and inflation remained relatively under wraps due to falling energy prices. Even after the recent tariff hike to 35%, most goods remained untouched as they fell under the CUSMA provisions. However, steel, aluminum, and auto still took a hit, and Q2 results showed a contraction of 1.6%. Forecasts on average are still penciling in just under 1% growth for all of 2025, but much uncertainty remains.

Construction Labour Market

Employment continued to moderate in Q1 2025 before starting to gain strength in Q2. Accompanying this growth in employment was a stronger increase in the available pool of workers (labour force), increasing from an average of 612.7K YTD in August 2024 to 626.2K in 2025. As a result, the YTD average unemployment rate in 2025 has been much higher at 7.5% compared to the 5.5% over the same period in 2024. In recent months, employment has begun to catch up with the outsized gains in the labour force, returning the unemployment rate to more normal levels; August 2025 unemployment rate was 4.5%. One factor contributing to this resilience is the continued strength of the non-residential market, particularly in the institutional sector; the labour market fluctuations may be attributable to the more sensitive and shifting nature of the residential sector.

Building Permits and Building Construction Investment

Commercial sector year-to-date investment was higher in June compared to 2024 (up 9%), but intentions fell slightly, with permit value down 4.2%. The industrial sector displayed a similar trend, with relatively steady investment in the first part of 2025 (up 2% from 2024) and somewhat lower permitting activity (-2.5% from 2024). Institutional sector activity was booming, with year-to-date investment tracking 22% higher in the first half of 2025. Institutional sector building construction permit intentions were even stronger, with year-to-date permit value up 29.1%. Despite some potential future slowdown in the commercial and industrial sectors (as indicated by slowing permit activity), overall, the ICI sector is not currently showing any significant broad-based slowdown, consistent with what our stakeholder surveys have suggested.

Institutional Permits
January-June 2025

\$2.07B ↑ **UP 29.1%**

Final Word

In short, while the economic landscape became increasingly uncertain over the course of 2025, Ontario's construction sector stayed relatively healthy. Employment initially lagged the labour force but quickly caught up by the summer, lowering unemployment rates to match the year prior, while maintaining near record participant numbers. The ICI sector shows continued strength due to steady investment, and significant activity in the institutional sector. Infrastructure continues to be a driving force of Ontario's construction sector, and a key pillar of economic resilience.

COLLABORATION

In organizing dynamic events and initiatives, we create meaningful opportunities for our labour, management, and government stakeholders to build collaborative relationships. All our events are hosted in the spirit of partnership where open communication and dialogue can take place. Whether through social events, educational sessions, or roundtable discussions, the OCS is committed to fostering industry cohesion and effective collaboration.

Annual General Meeting & Conference 2024

The 2024 AGM & Conference was held on October 23-25, 2024, at the JW Marriott in Muskoka. We were happy to welcome 100 professionals and stakeholders from the unionized ICI construction industry to the annual event. Those in attendance were treated to interactive social events and entertainment, engaging keynote presentations, constructive workshops, and updates on ongoing OCS projects and initiatives.

David Coletto, Founder, Chair, and CEO, of Abacus Data, opened the conference presenting data from surveys they've performed across the country. With a career spanning over two decades, David has devoted his life to exploring what people think and feel about their work, their lives, and their politics. At the time, David suggested the Canadian population was experiencing a "scarcity mindset" in terms of spending philosophy.

Following David's thought-provoking presentation, we shifted gears into a panel discussion which featured five prominent leaders in Ontario's ICI construction industry:

- **Sandra Shime**, MLITSD
- **Melissa Atkins-Mahaney**, IUOE Local 793
- **David Gardner**, Heat & Frost Insulators Local 95
- **Jim Vlahos**, The General Contractors Association of Toronto
- **Jeff Spitzig**, Mechanical Contractors Association of Ontario

The panelists delved into the 2022 round of collective bargaining and how they were preparing their teams for 2025. Concerns at the time included membership ratification of proposed deals and implementing successful communications strategies.

Following the panel discussion, Adam Rodricks, National Director of Social Growth & Experience at KPMG Canada, spoke to the impact social media and communications in general can have on its audience and how we can best resonate with our stakeholders.

The conference concluded with additional social and networking opportunities and the formal business of the AGM the following morning.



100
Total
Attendees

30
First-Time
Attendees

Over **90%** of survey
respondents indicated
the conference
was **Excellent**

"It was a great theme for the conference. The social activities are great! One of the best things that this conference does is let us all have time for interaction with the whole group! Just because I bargain with one group, doesn't mean I'm not interested in what others are doing or how they are doing it. The timing of the sessions was spot on." – Conference Attendee

25th Annual State of the Industry & Outlook Conference

The 25th Annual State of the Industry & Outlook Conference took place on March 6th, 2025, at the International Centre in Mississauga. The half-day event brought together over 230 stakeholders from the unionized ICI construction sector to gain insight on the economy and the industry.

Robert Kavcic, Senior Economist & Director at BMO Canada, laid the foundation for the event providing an economic outlook that focused on the potential impact of tariffs and the economic uncertainty that world events had recently brought on.

Following the economic outlook, Katherine Jacobs, Director of Research at the OCS, shared insights from our annual contractor survey that seeks to understand contractors' business outlook of the ICI sector.

Subsequently, Bob Collins, Senior Economist at BuildForce Canada delved into Ontario's project pipeline and ongoing work, breaking things down by each region.

A panel of industry leaders then discussed what they are actively doing to enhance their organization and continue to foster a strong building environment. Panelists included:

- **Bob Collins**, BuildForce Canada
- **John Baker**, Millwright Regional Council Local 2309
- **Tomi Hulkkonen**, Carpenters Regional Council
- **Dean Walker**, Eastern Construction
- **Julie Zulich**, TESC Contracting

Steve Paikin, *now former* Host of TVO's The Agenda concluded the conference with an entertaining speech on the state of Canadian politics.



233

**Total
Attendees**

62

**First-Time
Attendees**

100% of survey
respondents
indicated the
conference was
Excellent/Good



7

**Conference
Sponsors**

\$15.5K

**in Sponsorship
for event**

"All OCS events that I have been to are exceptional. They are organized very well and delivered professionally. I typically reference them as the standard to meet."

– Conference Attendee

Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course

The Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course is quickly becoming a staple for what the OCS is known for. The three-day in person course provides participants with a foundational understanding of positive labour relations practices in Ontario's unionized ICI construction sector.

It can serve as a great refresher for experienced professionals or an introduction for those just starting out in the industry. It focuses on the following seven key topics using a combination of lessons, discussions, and interactive activities.

- **Module 1:** Historical Context
- **Module 2:** Current Legislative Framework
- **Module 3:** Understanding Collective Agreements
- **Module 4:** Negotiating and Collective Bargaining
- **Module 5:** Grievances and Jurisdictional Disputes
- **Module 6:** Occupational Health & Safety
- **Module 7:** Human Rights

Upon completion, participants receive a McMaster University Continuing Education Certificate of Attendance and points towards accreditation by the Canadian Construction Association's Gold Seal Program.

In addition to building foundational knowledge within labour relations, we believe in the course's ability to help build strong relationships within the industry as participants discuss issues and share real-life experiences.



93

Industry Professionals have taken the **Fundamental of Construction Labour Relations Course**

Rated **4.9/5.0** by Course Participants

2026 Course Dates

- April 20-22, 2026
- November 16-18, 2026

Let us know you're interested by scanning the QR Code



"This course is essential for individuals new to construction labour relations. Having discussions with experienced individuals in a classroom setting was extremely valuable."

– Kevin Gaudaur, Fall 2024 Attendee

Connections & Cocktails 2025

Connections & Cocktails returned to Woodbine Racetrack for its second annual edition. Much like the year prior around 100 industry professionals involved in Ontario's unionized ICI construction sector attended for a night of networking and socializing.



Association of Municipalities of Ontario Annual Conference 2025

The OCS attended the Association of Municipalities of Ontario's (AMO) Annual Conference in August of this year. The purpose of attending was to spread the building trade union advantage message to municipal elected officials and decision makers.

The OCS came fully equipped with materials promoting the superior training, safety records, and social procurement practices of building trade unions and their contractor partners.

With over 1,000 people attending the conference and trade show, this proved to be a valuable opportunity to get our message out to buyers of construction.



For more information on our involvement at AMO and our Responsible Procurement Campaign, head to iciconstruction.com.



COMMUNICATIONS

Communications touches on all aspects of the OCS mandate, from promoting the union advantage to fostering collaboration between Employee and Employer Bargaining Agents, we aim to deliver clear and effective messaging across all our channels. We are dedicated to increasing engagement across our network through exploring new and innovative ways to reach audiences.

Communications Products:

- Ad Partnerships
- Breaking News Bulletins
- Feature Articles
- Industry Presentations
- Media Outreach
- OCS Talks (industry podcast)
- Op-Eds
- Social Media Channels
- Stay Connected (e-newsletter)
- Website



Social Media

The OCS has seen significant growth and increased engagement across social media channels. LinkedIn specifically has been a focus as it continues to see increased use across the industry and professional world. The OCS YouTube channel has also been more active this year, as we've uploaded videos from our events and our podcast, OCS Talks.



1,715 Followers **↑ UP 186**



96 Posts



16,260 Page Reach
CONNECTIONS



8.9% Post Engagement Rate **↑ UP 3.1% FROM LAST YEAR**



2,231 Followers



120 Posts



4.5% Post Engagement Rate



6 Posts



1,185 Views



5d 18h Total Watch Time

Stay Connected

Our weekly e-newsletter, Stay Connected, is designed to keep industry stakeholders up to date with industry news, government announcements, economic indicators, and a variety of ongoing OCS activities.

STAY CONNECTED YEARLY SNAPSHOT



31,056
Total Opens

42%
Open Rate

UP 5%
From Last Year



5,904
Total Clicks

9%
Click Rate

UP 2%
From Last Year

July 31, 2024 - July 31, 2025



Not subscribed to Stay Connected?
Scan the QR Code to sign up.



New Initiatives: Podcast & Website

Podcast

In April 2025, we launched OCS Talks, an educational industry podcast that addresses varying topics, challenges, and opportunities within Ontario's unionized ICI construction sector. Episodes feature leaders from across the industry to bring listeners expertise from all corners of construction.

Guests so far have included:

- **Bill Ferreira**, Executive Director, BuildForce Canada
- **Bob Collins**, Senior Economist, BuildForce Canada
- **Cole Carson**, Facilitator, Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course
- **Sandra Shime**, Director of Dispute Resolution Services, Ministry of Labour, Immigration, Training & Skills Development
- **Scott Wood**, Provincial Training Director, Ontario Sheet Metal Workers Training Centre



OCS TALKS SNAPSHOT

WEBSITE

931

Page Views

YOUTUBE

1,085

Views on Episodes 1-4
(avg 11:00 minute
view duration)

SPOTIFY / APPLE MUSIC

50

Downloads



Episodes are available on Spotify, Apple Music, or wherever else you get your podcasts. Video versions may be watched on YouTube.

[Scan the QR Code to learn more.](#)

Website

We are currently in the late stages of updating our website and are excited to announce that it should launch within the next couple of months. The updated OCS website will improve upon our existing website significantly while still maintaining its original character, so our stakeholders may transition seamlessly.

The new website will feature the following:

- Faster loading speeds and increased site stability
- Improved ease-of-use and design features
- An updated members dashboard to help our members find materials more easily
- More integrated event registration and alerts
- Frequent and timely website changes that align with ongoing activities
- Changes in our communications and contact database to target members more specifically
- Several new pages and updates to existing ones to cater to our recent Strategic Plan

GOVERNANCE

The OCS strives to be a best-in-class association and sets a high standard for our governance, policies, and organization. In consultation with legal experts and our dedicated Board of Directors, we have diligently reworked our By-Laws and association policies to reflect the changes to the Ontario Not-For-Profit Corporations Act. We have also instituted numerous policies to oversee our internal governance, promoting a more streamlined and consistent approach to our business.

By-Laws

Changes to the by-laws include:

- **Article 1** – Interpretation
- **Article 2** – Membership in the Secretariat
- **Article 3** – Members Meetings (AGM)
- **Article 4** – Directors
- **Article 5** – Board Meetings
- **Article 9** – Officers
- **Article 10** – Organization and Financial





UPCOMING EVENTS

Fundamentals of Construction Labour Relations Course

NOVEMBER 17-19, 2025 (FULL)

APRIL 20-22, 2026

NOVEMBER 16-18, 2026

DENZEL MEETING SOLUTIONS, GREATER TORONTO AREA

State of the Industry and Outlook Conference

MARCH 5, 2026

THE INTERNATIONAL CENTRE, MISSISSAUGA

Annual Conference

SEPTEMBER 28-30, 2026

JW MARRIOTT THE ROSSEAU, MUSKOKA

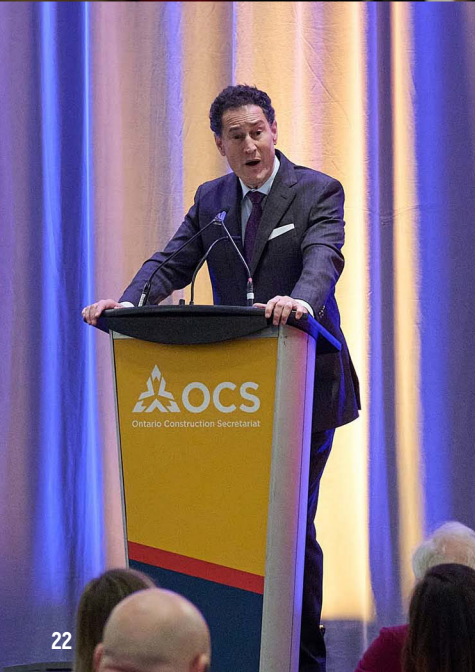


**For more information,
scan the QR code and visit
the events page on our website**

2025 PHOTO GALLERY









**20
25** **OUR
TEAM**



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NOTES

This image shows a single sheet of white paper with horizontal blue ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There are no margins, text, or other markings on the paper.



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OCS YEAR IN REVIEW



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