

# ELECTRICAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION OF SASKATCHEWAN INC.



Construction House, 1939 Elphinstone Street, Regina Saskatchewan, S4T 3N3

FEBRUARY 2005

## President's Message

~ By Glen Gerow

2005 promises to be a very busy year again for The Association. In February, the Saskatchewan Construction Association, including myself, met with the Premier Lorne Calvert and several cabinet ministers to discuss the necessary involvement of the construction industry in providing consultative advice to the legislature on issues important to the construction industry, including the electrical industry. The positive end result was an agreement with the Premier that the cabinet will meet annually with the Saskatchewan Construction Association in the future.

In October 2004, the Apprenticeship and Trade Certification Commission advised the Association that officers will now be writing up non-compliance reports on contractors who are in violation of the ratio based on company and not on job site.

With respect to Bill 9 – The Electrical Inspection Act, the Association has met with Sask Power and their legal counsel on two occasions to discuss the proposed amendments addressing vicarious liability and also to further address the issue of electrical inspectors holding a contractor's license, which in the opinion of the Association, is a conflict of interest. A further meeting has been scheduled in the future to discuss in more detail these issues and their importance to our industry. If you have any comments or concerns which you believe should be addressed in our next meeting, please contact myself or our Executive Director, Michael Fougere.

To show our appreciation for the continued support by company members, the Association is adopting a policy of awarding a scholarship to a company member employee who is the winner of the Provincial Skills Competition and will be representing Saskatchewan at the Skills Canada Competition.

The Annual General Meeting of the Association is scheduled for April 2005, during which new executive members and directors of the Association will be appointed for the various Boards governing our industry. If you wish to be more involved in the electrical industry, please contact one of the members of the ECAS Executive Committee or an ECAS Director.

In closing, I would like to thank all the members of the Association and the Executive Committee and Directors for their continued support in the last two years.

### ECAS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE 2005

President: Glen Gerow, Humboldt Electric Ltd.  
1<sup>st</sup> Vice President: Ken Pickering, Globe Elite Electrical  
Treasurer: Rob Istace, Alliance Energy Ltd.  
Past President: Wayne Kirby, Kirby Electric Ltd.  
Executive Director: Michael Fougere

### ECAS DIRECTORS 2005

- Len Bykowsky, Bridge City Electric Inc.
- Allan Gibb, Amtec Electric Ltd.
- Bryan Leverick, Alliance Energy Ltd.
- Bob Lightfoot, Aim Electric Ltd.
- John Kirby, Kirby Electric Ltd.
- Fred Hodel, Fred Hodel Electric Ltd.



## **Saskatchewan Electrician Trade Board Report**

By Wayne Kirby

The Saskatchewan Electrician Trade Board met on Tuesday, October 5, 2004 in Davidson and the following is a report of main meeting topics:

### APPRENTICE COMPLIANCE

Al Douglas from the Apprenticeship & Trade Certification Commission gave a report on Journeyman to Apprentice ratios. He indicated that officers now will be writing up non-compliance reports on contractors who are in violation of the ratio based on company and not job site. Reported contractors can correct their situation and a compliant report by the commission will be filed.

He also noted that names of contractors who are in violation can be published for the public to see.

### HOMEBUILDERS

The Homebuilders Association have applied for sub-trades in the areas of Framer, Former, Interior Finisher and Exterior Finisher. They have indicated that the application process was taking too long and have said they may establish their own program. The Homebuilders plan to apply for sub-trades in Electrical, Plumbing, HVAC and Repair Technician.

It was the feeling of the board that the Homebuilders had somewhat of a selfish agenda.

The Board asked that Apprenticeship Commission to contact the Homebuilders and ask why the present system of Apprenticeship for full Tradesman is not adequate.

The Board was opposed to any sub-trade divisions in Electrical and we, as contractors, must be sure to make that clear to the Director of Licensing so it does not allow him to issue restricted licenses to the Homebuilders.

### SIAST

Jim Martin from Palliser reported that

- a Level 1 Review Website has been established at <http://programs.siastr.sk.ca/electricalapp/>  
He said this site could be used for all students, as it is a good review on algebraic equations, etc.
- He also reported that he proposes to change and condense banner or subject titles to simplify.
- The 9th week in 3rd year has started this term, which includes Fire Alarm and Data Communication wiring.
- Thanks should be given to Notifier and Hubbell Premise Wiring for their special contributions to the new program. It is good to see new partners in the Apprenticeship system, joining along with Schneider's generosity.

(report continued on page 3)

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(Saskatchewan Electrician Trade Board Report - continued...)

## HUMAN RESOURCES

The Saskatchewan Apprenticeship Commission have also established an informative website <http://www.saskapprenticeship.ca>

- It is worth noting that on the Interprovincial Journeyman's exam, Saskatchewan has had a 72% pass rate with an average mark of 76%. In comparison, Alberta's pass rate is 52%. Alberta has a great deal of competency based training locations.

The Board discussed the demand for Electricians and Apprentices in the upcoming year and it was felt the need would decline this year.

Discussion also led to the so-called skilled shortage crises and it was felt, especially for Saskatchewan, that there really doesn't seem to be a shortage.

The Apprenticeship Commission has also stated that for Apprenticeship, they will no longer recognize High School grade levels as entry into Apprenticeship, and individual assessment will be given.

The Board asked the Commission to explain its assessment procedure and assessment policy.

I stressed again, the desire of the Electrical Contractors was to have a Grade 12 high school level for minimum entry.

### Upcoming Events

**SaskPower Liaison Committee  
Meeting May 18th  
Davidson**

**Canadian Electrical Contractor's  
Association  
Annual General Meeting  
Jasper, Alberta  
June 15 - 18, 2005**

### Upcoming Events

**Saskatchewan Construction  
Association Summer Meeting  
Waskesiu  
June 9 – 11, 2005**

**Electrical Contractors  
Association of Saskatchewan  
AGM  
April 20, 2005  
Town Hall, Davidson**

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## **Saskatchewan Electrical Contractors Association Safety Report**

Respectfully submitted by Ken Pickering

The year 2004 was a very good year for the Saskatchewan Construction Safety Association. The Certificate of Recognition (COR) program continued to be active with 19 new companies receiving COR certification in 2004. A COR inspection process has been developed, creating an additional measurement tool for worksite safety. In 2004, the association was also involved in the creation of a National COR Audit through the Canadian Federation of Construction Safety Associations. This national audit will allow for increased mobility for COR companies when bidding on work. A COR performance based audit has also been developed to be utilized through the Quality Assurance Program.

The Small Business Safety Certificate had an excellent year in the number of companies registered into the program. A Quality Assurance program has been under development to ensure the quality and integrity of this program. A growing number of buyers of construction services are listing this certification on bidding documents for certain projects.

The Construction Safety Officer (CSO) program was active in 2004 with the certification of 29 individuals. Organization for the 2005 CSO conference is underway for March 11<sup>th</sup> in Regina with a program aimed at the continued education of CSO's. Prior Learning Assessment Recognition (PLAR) is now in place with SIAST for the Applied OH&S Certificate and the SCSA CSO program. Anyone interested in applying for PLAR is encouraged to contact SIAST for further information.

The Construction Safety Training System (CSTS) program had a successful year with 5 additional contracts being signed in December. In total, 47 contracts were signed in 2004. There were also 3115 people trained in this program, surpassing the 2004 goal.

An Aerial Work Platform awareness course is under development with plans to introduce this course in Regina on March 24, 2005.

The SCSA continues to support the education of young workers through involvement with Skills Canada. Nationally and provincially the SCSA assists the safety for the competitions through the Competition Safety Standards Committee. Provincial involvement also includes the organization of the Worksite Safety competition. The provincial competition will be held in Moose Jaw on April 8<sup>th</sup> and the National competition will be held in Edmonton from June 3<sup>rd</sup> to June 6<sup>th</sup>.

Total certificates issued for 2004 for CSTS and other courses was 9649, surpassing the 2004 benchmark by 2649 certificates.

## News from Saskatchewan Construction Association

By Michael Fougere

### SCA Board Meets with Provincial Cabinet

On February 7, 2005 the SCA Board of Directors met with Premier Calvert and Cabinet. By all accounts the meeting was productive and served to advance the interests of SCA and put many of our industry's priorities on the government's agenda. This meeting was an excellent way to build a constructive and positive relationship with the government as the SCA advances our agenda.

Board members received a copy of the power point presentation that was presented at the meeting with Cabinet. The SCA had 4 objectives going into the meeting:

- To provide background on SCA,
- To discuss SCA initiatives that advance the Government's objectives and strategies,
- To comment on issues of mutual concern, and,
- To request annual meetings between Cabinet and SCA for consultation and to work to resolve issues facing the construction industry.

### The key messages to Cabinet were

- **that the SCA speaks with one voice for the entire non-residential construction industry and**
- **that we want to be consulted on issues affecting our industry and on the economic policies of the government.**

The presentation allowed the SCA to advance its priority initiatives, which are at the heart of Project Cornerstones. SCA has made considerable strides in advancing these key projects and has received support for two major projects.

During the meeting with Cabinet, the Board discussed Construction Career Projects and the on-going success of the program. Our success in helping to train and find employment for First Nations and Aboriginal peoples is acknowledged as a model for other provinces. This initiative advances the interests of our industry and meets the policy objectives of the provincial government.

We also discussed the Electronic Plans Room North Project, which has received support by both the federal and provincial governments. Cabinet has shown strong support for this project. Details of the support coming from the province are provided later in this report.

In terms of issues of concern to our industry, the SCA Board of Directors advanced the following major issues:

- Additional Hours Regulations. The Board requested that the Government not proceed with the draft regulations.

(report continued on page 6)

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(SCA report continued)

- Workers' Compensation Board issues, specifically the appointment of an Employer's Advocate and recognition of the Certificate of Recognition from SCSA when setting WCB rates.
- The SCA Board requested that our industry be consulted on further developments on the federal government's "New Deal" and the transfer of federal gas tax to municipalities. Also, the industry wants to be included in any provincial government spending initiatives on infrastructure.
- The Board advanced the proposal that the government introduce an Apprenticeship Training Tax Credit, a proposal that is modeled after Ontario.
- Premier Calvert agreed to annual meetings with the SCA Board of Directors. A meeting with full Cabinet will become a regular feature on the SCA calendar.

## **SCA's Annual General Meeting**

The SCA just completed a very successful Annual General Meeting. Highlights include:

- New Board Structure and the creation of Advisory Council. The Annual General Meeting formally ratified a new 11 member Board of Directors with an Advisory Council. These changes will make our Board more responsive to our industry and help streamline our decision making process, making meetings more efficient and productive. In the coming weeks, all members will receive information on the new board structure and the upcoming election process that will take place in Waskesiu in June.
- We had a number of very successful seminars during our AGM. For those who attended the two-day conference, the presentation by Dr. Louis Francescutti on Workplace Safety was particularly informative and entertaining. Other topics included an update on the highly successful Construction Career Projects; a demonstration on Profit and Profitability Improvements Using Schedule Optimization; an update on Gold Seal; and a discussion on Leadership in Energy & Environment Design (LEED).

We had a demonstration on our Plans Room Server by Dave Robertson. There are many new features available to subscribers. Now we need to promote this service to our members.

Paul Martin also gave his usual informative and entertaining presentation on current economic and political topics of the day.

## **Human Resource Coordinator Position**

The SCA has recently received funding for a human resource coordinator position. Human resource development is one of the priorities under Project Cornerstones. The funding was announced at our Annual General Meeting. Please stay tuned for more information on this initiative in the coming days.

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## **Update on Bill 9, the Electrical Inspection Act**

By Michael Fougere

During the fall session of the Provincial Legislature, the provincial government passed the Electrical Inspection Act. Just before the bill passed, the ECAS Board of Directors met with SaskPower officials to discuss our concerns and try to have the bill amended.

There are two main issues for the ECAS and our members. The first issue is the notion of vicarious liability. This new provision would make an owner subject to prosecution for the disputed work of employees, even in the absence of evidence. The ECAS has objected to this provision as unnecessary and onerous. It argued that the government should have consulted our association before bringing this provision into the bill. If the government had approached the ECAS to discuss policing infractions, the association could have offered solutions.

The second issue is ECAS's concern that electrical inspectors can hold an electrical contractor's license. Conducting work while holding the office of inspector can lead to real or perceived conflicts of interest. In addition, having regulators compete for business with the private sector is unfair and can be viewed as a potential for real conflict. The ECAS believes that electrical inspectors should not work after hours in the same field. This restriction eliminates any concern over a conflict of interest.

While the bill received approval, the provisions concerning vicarious liability were not proclaimed. The government agreed to wait until June 2005 to put this provision into force. They agreed to hold more meetings with the ECAS to discuss this provision.

The ECAS board recently met with SaskPower officials to discuss our concerns. Some headway is being made on the issue of inspectors being allowed to hold an electrical contractor's license. On the issue of vicarious liability, SaskPower seems ready to move ahead to recommend proclamation of this provision.

The important issue here is that ECAS has been able to get the attention of the government on this important issue.