Cathy Domanico

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Subject:	Bulletin #18-24 Reissue Address PBCTCO Annual Conference
Attachments:	CECCO Address to PBCTCO 2024 Conference.pdf

Bulletin #18-24 Reissue

Good afternoon.

I have been advised that some did not receive our bulletin #18-24 with our presentation to the Building Trades Annual Conference therefore we are reissuing the bulletin to all.

Wayne Peterson
Executive Director
Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario
CECCO

CECCO

Wayne Peterson, CECCO
Remarks to the Building & Construction Trades Council of Ontario
October 17, 2024

Good afternoon.

Last year, when I addressed you all as the last speaker at the conference, half in jest I made a comment of wanting a better timeslot if I was invited back. It's great to discover that someone was listening.

A thank you to the organizing committee for the invitation to address the conference again this year - and for this much better timeslot.

This year's conference theme of "Solidarity at Work - Excellence in Action", certainly puts a focus on the Building Trade's excellent work over the past few years - both in bringing the trades together, and in launching programs such as:

- Construction Training & Apprenticeship Ontario,
- Ontario Building & Construction Tradeswomen,
- Tomorrow's Trades,
- The Strategic Workforce Planning System, and
- Your commitment to lead DeNovo.

  ALL excellent programs.

The word "solidarity" in the theme caught my attention and it initially conjured up troubling thoughts.
Was this a US AGAINST THEM statement?

Forgive me, I'm of advanced years and remember some old-time rhetoric...
But this forced me to look up the word "solidarity".

Let me share with you the definition:

Solidarity: unity, or agreement of feeling or action, especially among individuals with a common interest; mutual support within a group. This definition certainly exemplifies the Building Trades with no negative connotations.

That brings me to CECCO - The Construction Employers Coordinating Council of Ontario:
CECCO certainly has common interests with the Building Trades.

Of course, the Building Trades are union - but so is CECCO.

CECCO

You must be related to the Building Trades Unions to be a member of CECCO.
And we must ensure that CECCO is PART of the solidarity at work.

Moving forward in solidarity, we will be facing some challenging times.

We need a strong labour-management partnership to address the numerous issues facing our unionized construction industry. We need solidarity.

To date, I do not believe CECCO has kept up its end of the partnership.

CECCO has been slower than the Building Trades in getting its act together.

That being said, at a recent meeting, CECCO unanimously approved a new strategic plan.

CECCO's VISION?

- Management working collaboratively with labour, to advance the unionized construction industry.

The three main objectives of the plan are:

1. Coordination of the management Employer Bargaining Agencies.
    - We need to bring them together by breaking down the silos they currently live in, for the well-being of the overall industry.

2. Effective member and industry partner engagement.
    - Hitting on things such as CECCO's value proposition, advocacy, and talent development.

3. Advance Unionized Construction by fostering industry collaboration.

To move forward, CECCO still has a considerable challenge to overcome, and that is FUNDING.

CECCO's total yearly budget was once compared to your former business managers annual expense account.

We will get our financing in-line to the needs, and we will be the partner the industry deserves.

CECCO

Earlier I mentioned challenging times.

We need to get through the next six months without shooting ourselves in the foot.

CECCO, like the Building Trades, has no say in the negotiations.

In fact, CECCO's by-laws state as it relates to bargaining:

- CECCO shall not acquire any bargaining rights, nor exercise any authority or veto powers over Employer Bargaining.

There are rumours out in the marketplace of the unorganized sector's self-serving approach to the buyers of our services warning them of potential work stoppages.

CECCO will be producing positive messaging, to curtail any major negative press taking a shot at our unionized construction by the unorganized sector.

CECCO will be producing positive messaging such as - yes, we are going into contract negotiations, but reminding people - we are not like UNIFOR or CUPE - we have strong working relationships with our industry partners.

In our industry, we have partnerships that are continuously working together as joint trustees on benefit plans and pension plans, apprentice and journeyperson upgrade training, and on charity events.

We will be advising that we will reach negotiated settlements that meet the workers' needs, allow the contractors to make a profit, and allow us to be competitive.

We have placed a Bargaining page on our website, with the intent of having a space where we can communicate timely and transparent information on the status of our bargaining, and correct inaccurate information.

One of the pages within this new Bargaining section is UNION PROUD.

Perhaps this should be CECCO's new tag line: **CECCO - Union Proud**.

CLAC, Merit and the Progressive Contractors have certainly become more proactive over the past few years. I am sure you have seen their posts regarding their training, their health and welfare plans, as well as charitable endeavours.

CECCO

We need to up our game.

Some feel we need to have a positive message plan, laying out the positives of our unionized construction - others, say 'let sleeping dogs lie'.

I once thought CLAC's rantings to the public were harmless, but I have had a change of opinion: The owners we work for, and their buyers, are members of the public.
Even the Government listens to the public, at times.

And if the rhetoric South of the border has confirmed anything - it is that if you tell the same lie over and over again, people will start believing it to be the truth.

We need to use social media - coming out with positive messaging, extoling the positives that union construction contributes to our society.

Shifting gears, a point I have raised on a regular basis:

I was also a union member, and I grew up in the industry when the workload was cyclical.
We have not seen a major ICI downturn since the '90s, and I do not see one on the immediate horizon.

BUT - we have been lulled into compliancy, and not if but when we see a downturn, will we be forced to acknowledge a huge growth in the unorganized sector.
Certainly, to our detriment.

We - labour, and management in a large part, have abandoned certain areas of our industry.

In most areas of the province, we cannot buy a school or a small commercial project.

In Toronto, a large segment of the high-rise office complex maintenance is now carried out by non-union.

This was once a union stronghold.
What I believe to be coming is a repeat of current Alberta.

With the glut of work they had associated with the oil patch, contractors abandoned their typical work - as their chance of bidding success on oil patch-related work was much higher.

Currently the oil patch work has dried up. And now, attempting to reclaim the work they abandoned is meeting with little success.

CECCO

Recently I was told, that in 2023, the total hours for unionized ICI work in Alberta was approximately. 10 million - a 70 percent decline - while the market availability year-over-year has remained fairly constant. Slowly, and under the cover of a glut of work, CLAC claimed the markets that Alberta contractors abandoned.

People, this is happening in our province NOW.

We do not need a study to show us the markets we have abandoned - or are not competitive in - we know them!

We need to get our collective heads out of the sand.

Labour and management need to have critical discussions to assess this - and to put forward a joint strategy on how to reclaim these and other markets before it is too late.

How do we get the unorganized sectors costs up to meet ours?

A couple of concluding thoughts:

CECCO's third strategic plan objective is to -
Advance Unionized Construction by fostering industry collaboration.

CECCO's prime partner in collaboration must be the Provincial Building Trades.
To be successful, we need both parties working in unison.

Our success is co-dependent.
CECCO and the Building Trades have a good working relationship.

Thank you, Marc, and your executive... BUT

We can, and we need to work to make it better.

We have a vehicle - The Joint Industry Advisory Committee.
We need to challenge this joint committee.

We need to put in place a fixed meeting calendar with agendas listing our agree to industry's issues that need addressing and assign the committee the task of producing potential workable solutions we can take to our individual constituents as Action Items.

CECCO

We currently have an organized labour and particularly construction-friendly government:

- How can we leverage this relationship to our advantage?

- How do we get the LRA revisions our unionized construction industry needs, without opening the Labour Relations Act?

Certainly, a challenge, but by being creative it 12 doable.

Has anyone noticed that I have not mentioned having an in-house solution to JD's, and thus, saving a bag full of money?

Still a top priority goal, but dropping down the list to finding a solution on how to regain markets we have abandoned.

In closing, as I voiced earlier -

At CECCO we are getting our act together.

We will be the active, engaged partner that the Unionized Construction Industry needs to move our unionized construction forward.

Thank you, have a great evening.