

SCA President's Remarks
Launch of the Bachelor of Construction Management Degree Program
Saskatchewan Polytechnic
Wednesday, September 20, 2017

Good morning! As the President of the Saskatchewan Construction Association I often have the privilege to speak to others about the importance of the construction industry to our great province.

There really can't be any doubt that construction, as an industry, is a significant contributor to our economy and our way of life:

- There are more than 9,000 companies that work within the construction space in Saskatchewan;
- These companies collectively employ more than 55,000 workers;
- These workers make, on average, 30% more than the provincial average;
- The industry directly contributes more than 9% to provincial GDP while indirectly contributing to almost all of the rest of it; and
- As a percentage of our workforce, construction has one of the highest representation rates for Indigenous workers.

Construction is important to Saskatchewan, but its true importance isn't reflected in these numbers. Its true importance is reflected in the fact that construction is essential to growth.

If you think about the main drivers of our provincial economy – agriculture; mining; oil and gas; and manufacturing – none of these can take investment and turn it into positive return without construction playing a role somewhere. Construction is literally a facilitator for growth for all components of our economy and

society. We depend on everyone else for work, and everyone else depends on construction in order to grow.

As the importance of the construction industry in Saskatchewan has grown, our workforce has undergone considerable change. From a perceived place where construction work involved poorly educated and low skilled workers who worked in unsafe conditions in transient positions, to a modern workforce that is: better educated than ever before; highly skilled and trained; demonstrating increasingly specialized skillsets; working on job sites that are exceedingly safe; and securing permanent full-time work. All of this is leading to the continued professionalization of the construction workforce.

Meanwhile, three large global forces are changing the face of the construction industry:

- 1) Ever-evolving expectations of the buyers of construction services, who demand products that are: cheaper; more durable; faster to construct; and sustainable;
- 2) Technology that is rapidly changing the construction job site. In fact, a recent report from England suggested that within 30 years, due to growth in 3D printing, robotics, and AI, we may have construction job sites with no human beings on them; and
- 3) Plunging construction productivity. A global trend that is worse in Canada, and worse still in Saskatchewan. It means that more units of input are producing fewer unit of outputs. We are literally doing less with more. Not a sustainable or growth friendly pattern.

Fortunately, into the maelstrom of these three forces steps the Saskatchewan Polytechnic and their Bachelor of Construction Management degree. They couldn't come at a better time.

As the Saskatchewan hub of applied research the Polytechnic can assist the construction industry in navigating these challenges and in so doing leave our industry both more efficient and more productive.

Meanwhile, as the best industry-focused workforce educator in the province, the Polytechnic can respond rapidly to the changing needs of our construction workforce. That's what this degree program is all about.

Thanks to the Bachelor of Construction Management program, we will have better educated and better prepared leaders driving success in our industry. The future we imagine will be here even sooner than we thought possible as the graduates of this program LITERALLY help Build Saskatchewan.

For that reason, and many more, I am pleased to offer the support and congratulations of the Saskatchewan construction industry as the Polytechnic launches this fantastic program. Well done!

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