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Consult first, break ground later

Consultation with First Nations key to Ring of Fire development

Canada is one of the most resource-rich countries in the world. From freshwater lakes to agriculture, oil and gas, potash, gold and diamonds, the list goes on and on.

Until recent years, some of those resources have been considered too costly to obtain—those located in remote areas with little or no access to markets. But after the Ontario Liberal government committed to a $1 billion investment to develop the Ring of Fire in 2014 in northern Ontario, which is estimated to have between $30 billion and $60 billion worth of chromite, nickel, copper and platinum, serious infrastructure development was beginning to look like a reality for the region.

But here we are nearing the end of 2017, and no roads have been built and little progress had been made, something the Progressive Conservatives and the NDP have pointed out to the Liberal government. But in August, Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne countered criticisms related to the lack of progress by announcing the province is working with three First Nations communities before construction start date of 2019.

Premier Wynne’s divisive approach to working with First Nations communities could backfire and throw a wrench into development plans for the region.

Think of the development of the Ring of Fire the same way you would think about tackling a complex puzzle. Before devoting the time and effort into building a 1,000-piece puzzle (and we may find that the Ring of Fire development has about that many pieces), you might want to make sure all of the pieces are in the box? After all, why start a project if there were no way to complete it? That just seems like a waste of time and energy.

Perhaps Wynne’s government felt agreements with individual First Nations were more feasible on such complex resource development projects, and maybe they are. But don’t pop the champagne bottle until you’ve got all the agreements in place.

Hopefully the Ontario Liberals’ plan to iron out agreements with all affected First Nations communities before construction starts in 2019.

Otherwise, I suspect any construction projects around the Ring of Fire will encounter delays and stoppages due to fierce protests, and the region’s economic potential may never be realized.
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Trimble creates two new divisions for transportation

Trimble announced that it has created two new divisions as part of its transportation segment: Trimble Transportation Mobility and Trimble Transportation Enterprise.

Brian McLaughlin, president of PeopleNet, has been appointed to president of Trimble Transportation Mobility. The newly-formed division will include Trimble business units PeopleNet, Innovative Software Engineering, Trimble Oil & Gas Services, Trimble Final Mile Mobility, Trimble Mobility Solutions India and several other mobile startup initiatives.

The creation of Trimble Transportation Mobility aims to address fleet challenges ranging from driver shortages and reduced capacity to increased safety and compliance with industry-wide regulations by developing solutions that connect drivers, trucks, freight and data to improve performance and ROI.

David Wangler, president of TMW Systems, has been appointed president of the newly formed Trimble Transportation Enterprise division, which comprises TMW Systems and ALK Technologies.

The Trimble Transportation Enterprise division will serve thousands of for-hire and private fleets, freight brokers, third-party logistics providers and other businesses through a portfolio that includes transportation management systems; routing, scheduling, mileage, mapping and mobile navigation solutions; business intelligence and data analytics; asset maintenance software; and cloud solutions.

Toromont to buy Hewitt for more than $1 billion

Toromont Industries Ltd. announced that it has entered into a definitive agreement to acquire the businesses and net operating assets of the Hewitt Group of companies in exchange for consideration of $917.7 million cash plus the issuance of 2.25 million Toromont shares for a total consideration of $1.0177 billion.

Hewitt Equipment Limited is the authorized Caterpillar dealer for the province of Québec, Western Labrador and the Maritimes, as well as the Caterpillar lift truck dealer for most of Ontario. Hewitt is also the MaK dealer for Québec, the Maritimes and the eastern seaboard of the U.S., from Maine to Virginia. Headquartered in Pointe-Claire, Que., Hewitt sells, rents and services the full line of Caterpillar and other products through its six operating business entities: Hewitt Equipment, Atlantic Tractors, Location Hewitt/Hewitt Rentals, Hewitt Material Handling, Montréal Hydraulique and SITECH QM. Founded in 1952, Hewitt has 45 branches across Eastern Canada and employs more than 2,000 people. Hewitt is privately held.

Upon close of the acquisition, Toromont’s Caterpillar dealership will operate 120 branches in Nunavut, Manitoba, Ontario, Québec, New Brunswick, Prince Edward Island, Nova Scotia and Newfoundland & Labrador.

NRCan offers ESTMA update

With the first ESTMA reporting cycle coming to a close, Natural Resources Canada (NRCan) announced that, as of Aug. 10, 2017, links to 683 individual, consolidated, and substituted have been published on the NRCan website (nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/estma/18198).

In addition to the links to reports already published, many companies have notified NRCan that they had no reportable payments (i.e., a “NIL” ESTMA Report) following the end of their 2016 financial year.

Reporting entities with no reportable payments for the year are not required to file or publish a “NIL” Report, they must only inform NRCan via email at nrcan.estma-lmtse.rncan@canada.ca.

ESTMA officials will be following up with the remaining companies that have not yet contacted NRCan for the purposes of ESTMA reporting in the last reporting cycle. Companies meeting the criteria of “Reporting Entity” under section 8 (1) under the Act that have not yet enrolled are encouraged to do so as soon as possible. Steps for enrolling are available at: nrcan.gc.ca/mining-materials/estma/18186.

Source: NRCan.
Aggregate guys like you made it clear: John Deere needed a loader in the “two-pass class.” Heard and addressed. The Aggregate Handler configuration of our updated 844K-III can load out up to 26 short tons of non-heaping, lower-density processed aggregate in just two passes. An Enhanced Production Bucket means easier filling, less spillage, and improved operator visibility. And with beefier articulation joints and linkage pins, plus improved routing for hoses and electrical harnesses, even uptime is improved. We're always up to help you Run Your World.
Construction of the Gordie Howe International Bridge over the Detroit River at Windsor is on track to begin in 2018, as originally promised, according to Michael Cautillo, president and CEO of the Windsor-Detroit Bridge Authority (WDBA) that is managing the project.

A formal request for proposals (RFPs) was given last fall to three teams of finalists selected to bid on building the massive span and the WDBA has been working with them to ensure they have the information they need to understand the project and complete their bids.
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“We are in constant dialogue with the proponents to understand their needs as they complete their proposals,” notes Cautillo.

The timetable for proponents to submit information is being reviewed, which isn’t unusual for such a large construction project, the WDBA maintains, as it will ensure the procurement process will yield the best possible results without compromising the start date.

However, Cautillo says that since issuing the RFPs, the WDBA has been clear that the private-sector partner would be announced sometime in 2018 – and that has not changed.

“WDBA remains committed to having a private-sector partner in place in 2018 and construction starting on the bridge in 2018,” he says.

While the bidding process is underway, the WDBA has been putting in place other pieces to ensure the private-sector partner can begin work as quickly as possible.

Work crews have been busy readying the ports of entry on both the Canadian and U.S. sides.

About $200 million was earmarked for work at the Canadian port-of-entry. Much of it has been completed, including a perimeter access road, placement of fill, grading and drainage. Two high-pressure natural gas pipelines were also relocated to allow for the bridge.

Work crews are finishing up on relocating a complex network of high-voltage electrical distribution and transmission lines. The lines are being relocated underground or to new overhead locations. The lines are part of a massive transmission system that circles Lake Erie, and brings power from New York north to Ontario, then across the river to Detroit and back to New York.

The Canadian port-of-entry is about 53 hectares and will have inbound and outbound inspection facilities, toll collection booths and a maintenance facility.

On the U.S. side, preparatory activities are underway and include utility relocation, survey work and site investigation. The Michigan Department of Transportation has acquired more than 70 per cent of the required property for the U.S. port-of-entry.

The U.S. port-of-entry is 68 hectares and will have inspection facilities. Ramps to Interstate 75 will be reconfigured and four bridges will be built across a railway to connect to I-75. Local roads will be widened and four road bridges and five pedestrian bridges will be built.

> The WDBA has been clear that the private-sector partner would be announced sometime in 2018 – and that has not changed.

WDBA director of communications Mark Butler says the venture is the largest infrastructure project along the Canada-United States border and addresses a number of issues.

“The bridge project addresses future needs and will provide six lanes – three in each direction – to meet the anticipated growth in traffic over the years to come,” he says. “It will also provide for redundancy at the busiest trade corridor between Canada and the United States, with improved border processing and highway-to-highway international connectivity.”

The bridge will cross the Detroit River about two miles downstream from the Ambassador Bridge in the west end of Windsor. It will connect Windsor and Detroit by linking an extension of Highway 401 called the Rt. Hon. Herb Gray Parkway with Interstate 75 in Michigan.

The bridge will be either a cable-stayed or suspension bridge about 2.5 kilometres long. Once completed, it will be among the top five longest bridges in North America. A dedicated multi-use path 3.6-metres-wide will accommodate pedestrians and cyclists. The WDBA has asked the bidders to include the path in their design, with it located on the east side of the bridge. Barriers will separate pedestrians and cyclists from vehicular traffic.

The span itself will be publicly owned by Canada and Michigan and is being delivered through a public-private partnership.

Butler says increasing transportation capacity and minimizing delays at the border will encourage new investment between Canada and the United States, ensure that manufacturers remain competitive and help to create thousands of jobs, either directly as a result of the construction, operation and maintenance of the corridor and through economic spinoffs.

The three proponents vying to build the bridge are Bridging North America, CanAm Gateway Partners and Legacy Link Partners. They were pre-qualified through a Request for Qualifications stage.

The WDBA has asked the proponents to put bids together on designing, building, financing, operating and maintaining
the bridge, adjacent ports of entry and an interchange. They’ve also been asked to include a fixed price and construction schedule.

Once proposals have been submitted, they will be evaluated by a team comprised of WDBA officials, partner organizations and experts, and overseen by an independent fairness monitor.

Butler says once a preferred proponent is selected the WDBA will then work to finalize terms of a project agreement, resulting in financial close.

He says the WDBA anticipates that construction of the bridge will start as soon as possible after financial close.

WDBA board members have said in the past they expect it will take four years to build the bridge, pushing its opening back to at least 2022.

The WDBA isn’t ready yet to put a price tag on the bridge, or say when it will be completed.

“To protect the best interests of taxpayers, it is not appropriate to discuss cost estimates for the entire scope of the contract during the procurement phase,” explains Butler. “Doing so could jeopardize the competitive process. A final contract cost will be announced once a successful private-sector partner has been selected.”

The WDBA will have more certainty around the construction timeframe once it receives proposals from the proponents, he says.

The mega-project had been on tenderhooks while months of tense negotiations took place between Detroit and officials with the WDBA. In July, Detroit city council signed off on a $48-million (U.S.) deal that hands over city-owned land required for the bridge and provides support to residents living in the community of Delray, an industrial area in southwest Detroit, where it will be located.

Canadian taxpayers are fronting the money to pay for the deal but the plan is to recoup the money through tolls after the bridge is built.

Butler says Canadian authorities are pleased with the announcement by the City of Detroit to invest the money from the sale to neighbourhood redevelopment, job training and health monitoring for residents in the Delray community.

The WDBA is working, and will continue to work closely with many partners, including the City of Detroit and the City of Windsor, to move the project forward, he says.

“With each achievement we are one step closer to the Gordie Howe International Bridge becoming a reality.”

Ontario Premier Kathleen Wynne said in a statement that two-way trade between Ontario and Michigan totalled $74 billion in 2015, highlighting the importance of the trade relationship.

“Moving forward on the Gordie Howe International Bridge project will support the growth of this significant trade relationship, help create jobs and enable us to remain competitive in today’s global economy.”

Photo taken from a drone flight in April 2017 showing the future point of entry on the Canadian side under construction with concrete perimeter access road.
Ed Sykes started his business with two gas-powered tandems to offer hauling services for aggregate and farming operations in the Chatham-Kent, Ont. area in the early 1970s. Now, more than 40 years later under his son Don’s management, Sykes Trucking Ltd. has grown to 16 employees in peak season with nine full-time staff.

The company’s growth includes the creation of Sykes Aggregates Ltd. more than 15 years ago, the company’s own aggregates production business, which includes its Eastman pit in Blenheim, Ont. and its Orford Sand & Gravel operation in Muirkirk, Ont.; as well as some pit shares with other local producers.

The Eastman pit is mainly used for producing B gravel, although the company also hires Harris Brothers Ltd., a local custom crusher to come on site and crush imported stone to create 2” to 3” and 3/4” railway ballast as well as crush recycled concrete down to 0” to 2” and 0” to 3/4” piles.

“Recycled concrete is becoming a big thing here,” says Don Sykes, who is no stranger to the aggregate business. Now 53 years young, the industry veteran has been working in the business for 35 years.

“A lot of the ballast goes to farms. If you want to make a
Ed Sykes (left) started up the family-run business in the early 1970s, which is now managed by his son, Don Sykes (right).

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Ed Sykes (left) started up the family-run business in the early 1970s, which is now managed by his son, Don Sykes (right).

Driveway, that’s the material.”

Orford Sand & Gravel is currently used solely for sand production. This location has no scale and no need for one. That is because the company invested in Trimble’s Loadrite system close to 15 years ago – originally installed into a green Terex loader but now resides in the company’s Volvo L90 wheel loader.

“I find it very simple to use,” Don says, adding that he finds the system is not difficult for training new employees.

The company liked the Loadrite system at its Orford location so much that they installed another Loadrite system at its Eastman location.

“When we started with the railway ballast seven years ago we put one into the Komatsu 220 excavator,” Don recalls, saying that it saved his company time and money since he was previously paying between $5 and $10 per load. “Now they can load the truck, print off the waybill and they deliver the load where it needs to go. The savings, just in time, when they can hand them the ticket and say hurry back is great… if you’re not overloading then you don’t have to go back and start over.”

Don also finds the systems stand up well to the dust that is produced on site.

“Dust doesn’t seem to affect the printer, it’s a well-sealed unit,” he says. “We haven’t had any problems other than wear and tear on [keypad buttons].”

THE FLEET

In addition to the Komatsu 220 and the Volvo L90, the Eastman site is equipped with a Komatsu 450 equipped with a Loadrite scale mostly used for loading B gravel, a Komatsu 420 loader, Komatsu 400 excavator, and three different buckets for loading.

The screening at the pit is mainly done by an Astec Mobile Screens Fold & Go that then transfers some of the materials
This one-day event, exclusively for quarry and pit owners and operators, will offer attendees case studies and panel sessions presented by industry experts covering a wide variety of topics including telematics, drones, automated vehicles, crushers, conveyors, emissions-reduction technologies, water conservation, dust and noise control.

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Quarry and pit operations managers and owners, process engineers, optimization staff, researchers, design consultants, fleet managers.

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Rock to Road is now accepting presentation proposals for the inaugural Quarry Tech forum. Presentation proposals are currently being accepted for the following topics: telematics, UAVs for aggregate operations, automated vehicles, crushers, conveyors, water conservation, scale solutions, and dust and noise control.

Presentation proposals must be submitted by no later than October 20, 2017.

Speakers selected to present at Quarry Tech will be notified by November 1, 2017.

Any questions regarding presentation proposals can be sent to Rock to Road editor Andrew Snook at asnook@annexweb.com.

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over to a McCloskey stacker for piling. The company also uses an older Powerscreen screener with a Powerscreen stacker in its operations.

“It’s been a great a machine. You can just pack it up and move it where you need it to go,” Don says.

At Orford Sand & Gravel, all loaders and the excavator are of the Komatsu brand.

The sand is processed by an Assinck screener and stacked using an old stacker that came with the pit when the company purchased the location.

Although the sand at the site is a high enough quality for use as concrete sand with the installation of a wash plant, the company is not planning on investing in washing equipment for the time being. The company currently produces mortar sand and weeping bed sand, although they do sometimes mix it with salt during the winter to help battle black ice when maintaining roads. The company has one steady plow truck it uses for plowing the Chatham-Kent Municipal Airport and the driveways of some of the local wind turbines.

CHALLENGES

The upcoming changes in trucking legislation and finding qualified people are at the top of the list when it comes to challenges the company is currently experiencing.

That said, Don isn't losing any sleep over it. The sand in the Orford location is plentiful and the company owns licences for a few pits in the area that currently sit idle.

“We’ve got a couple of licences we’re not using right now that we can dig into [in the future],” Don says.

Other than investing in new equipment whenever needed, Don says the company doesn’t have any big plans for growth at the moment.

“Nothing on the books right, but I’d never say ’Never.’”
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The traditional three-part recipe for a railroad – rock, creosote-soaked hardwood ties, and ribbons of steel rail – has remained essentially unchanged since the first iron horse was put to work. And just as ties and rails require maintenance and eventual replacement, the rock, known as ballast, also wears down, and out. A string of 286,000-ton railcars exerts enormous forces quite capable of displacing ties and rails. It is the ballast that keeps rail lines from coming apart. The best ballast has mostly fractured surfaces, which lock together under pressure and hold the ties and rails in place (Think of how stable a mass of assembled Lego pieces is, compared to how unstable underfoot a beach is, with its smooth stones).

But years of constant grinding under those trains inexorably smooth those fractured surfaces so they no longer interlock.
effectively—a process that wears out ballast in 25 to 35 years. Ballast also gradually gets fouled with plants and dirt, which ruins its critical ability to drain water away from the rail bed. Unstable subsoils can swallow up ballast, which then requires replenishment.

Take the sections of the Great Sandhills Railway (GSR) in Saskatchewan that are built on something the locals call ‘gumbo’.

“We have five trouble spots. They are 100- to 200-feet long. You put the ballast in and lift the track. The weight of the train pushes the track back down. But it pushes the ballast out the sides, like squeezing down on a cupcake. This clay moves when it is really wet or really dry. If you have one of these conditions, at either extreme, it wiggles all over the place,” says Gerald Poh, track maintenance supervisor with GSR.

Ballast deterioration, and the increasingly unstable track, forces trains to slow down, way down, until the problems are fixed. Railway companies work constantly on their ballast in what must add up to staggering quantities across the industry.

Take GSR, one of Canada’s roughly 52 shortline railway (SLRR). Usually quite short, in the “downstream” direction, SLRRs function primarily like tributaries, picking up product from customers along their lines, and delivering it to CN and Canadian Pacific (CP), Canada’s two huge mainline railways. In the “upstream” direction, they interline goods and raw materials from the mainlines for delivery to companies and communities along their routes.

Established in 2009, and operating 198 kilometres of track purchased from CP, GSRs first few years of maintenance planning included laying lots of ballast of several varieties to spruce up the track.

“We’ve flirted with different types of rock; for example, 3.0 ballast [which is] three-inch fractured mountain rock out from British Columbia. We used that ballast for the first three to five years the railway was open, about 3,000 to 5,000 tonnes a year. 3.0 is very common and used in most branch lines,” says Aaron Wenzell, transportation manager for GSR (after that initial outlay, the company has been using an average of about 4,000 tonnes a year).

Compare that outlay with that of the Fortress Investment Group, which bought the bankrupt Montreal Maine & Atlantic SLRR in 2014, after the Lac Megantic explosion in 2013. Renamed the Central Maine & Quebec Railway (CMQ), in the first three years the company dumped 48,000 tons (it’s an American company) of ballast along the 481-mile-long track. The new ballast, plus some other improvements, allowed CMR to increase the average train speed from just 10 mph, to 25 mph.

And if that sounds like a tidy pile of rock, well, Huron Central Railway, a 173-mile SLRR running from Sault Ste. Marie to Sudbury, Ont., used 125,000 tons of ballast in its track rehabilitation. But these

> The best ballast has mostly fractured surfaces, which lock together under pressure and hold the ties and rails in place.

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“Pit run, which consists of rocks of various sizes and shapes mixed with sand,” he says. “This is good for a quick fix but is not good for any length of time; as the sand pushes out under load and does not grip the rocks or ties to create a stable road bed. Two-inch minus gravel consists of gravel that has the sand and rocks larger than two inches removed. The gravel is not crushed, so there are round rocks in it. The gravel is good for fill but will push out over time with the railroad equipment moving over top. Two-inch to four-inch crushed rock, this is better, as it has fractures on the faces of the stones and will knit together or pack and hold the track and ties in place and form a good road bed.”

But circumstances demand compromises, which works, if not for as long, as long as track speeds are low.

“Not everything is always available and it is not affordable. Yard track does not need the higher grade of ballast. If maintenance crews are doing yard track, they may use leftovers. Leftovers (undersize) are perfect for that application,” Wenzell says.

“We get some from the Rural Municipality of Happyland,” Poh notes. “They have a big pit along the South Saskatchewan River. They screen the sand and rock. We usually get the two-inch-minus rock from them. It is not the best rock, but it is rock. It is not something you want to use on a daily basis.

There is great sport to be had in researching the different materials used as ballast over the decades; for example, cinders, and even slag has been used.

“Slag is good stuff, but it is so hard it would damage the ties,” Poh says.

Looking for a trans-continental point of view of the different rock that is used for ballast, I contacted Vulcan Materials Company, the largest producer of construction aggregates in the United States. Vulcan has scores of quarries across the U.S.

“Most ballast is either granite, trap rock or basalt. Sometimes a high-quality limestone is acceptable. Certain limestone can be used on industry track or small railroads with low annual tonnages as long as it meets a slightly higher standard which is explained in the AREMA (American Railway Engineering & Maintenance of Way) Manual,” says C.H. Coleman, manager of rail sales with Vulcan.

Trap rock is a construction industry term for igneous rock used to make crushed stone. The rock types most commonly referred to as trap rock is basalt, gabbro, diabase and peridotite. One source characterizes trap rock as having excellent freeze-thaw resistance and good abrasion resistance, both of which sound like perfect characteristics for ballast, given the conditions they must endure.

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For almost as long as Canada’s aggregate industry has been harvesting the country’s natural resources to build much-needed infrastructure and thousands of other products, there have been individuals and groups that are opposed to the process. Aggregates producers, like most companies operating in resource-based industries, have met resistance to their production that has come in the forms of environmental groups, concerned neighbours, and various levels of government, to name a few.

This resistance has built up over time.
for many reasons, from a lack of general knowledge about the aggregate industry by the general public to poor communication between producers and stakeholders and environmentally harmful practices (although the latter is becoming less of an issue due to continuously evolving environmental guidelines, advancing technologies in the pits, a more educated workforce, and increased interest from producers to have environmentally sustainable operations).

Despite stricter environmental regulations and technologies that allow for safer, more efficient practices in quarry and pit operations with smaller environmental footprints, some stakeholders are still hesitant, or completely resistant, to producers operating within their communities. Although producers and industry associations have been actively trying to educate stakeholders about the need for close-to-market aggregates to keep costs under control for vital projects such as the construction and upkeep of roads, and the building of new schools and hospitals, this argument is often not enough to sway them; and is of little interest to NIMBY groups. Part of the challenge for Canada’s aggregates industries is that there has never been certification in place that can be shown to stakeholders as a sort of “seal of approval” that states that certain requirements have been met that prove the producer is operating in an environmentally and socially responsible manner.

In Ontario, industry and various other stakeholders have been working for several years to solve this problem through the creation of the Cornerstone Standards Council (CSC), a charitable organization that was formed in the summer of 2012 by community stakeholders, environmental groups and progressive industry members that came together to find positive, pro-active solutions for existing conflicts and contention over how aggregate sites are located and operated.

The official mandate of the CSC is “to develop and implement certification of responsibly sourced aggregate materials to improve the conservation of the environment, compliance with existing laws and community health and wellbeing in Canada,” while primarily focusing on a voluntary certification system for Ontario.

“CSC’s audit process is a rigorous, on-site, assessment of how well a pit or quarry meets the core requirements of CSC’s Responsible Aggregate Standard,” explains CSC director of certification Krista West. “We go over and above in our efforts to ensure we have a fulsome picture of how the site operates by speaking with the company and also with neighbours, local rate-payer groups and municipalities.”

Since its inception, the CSC has developed the Responsible Aggregates Standard and the CSC Certification Scheme, an integrated program of standards, conformance assessment and communications materials that is developed, owned,
operated, governed and promoted by the CSC.

The purpose of the scheme is to foster a prosperous aggregate materials industry across the country that is recognized nationally and internationally for “setting the bar” for environmental and social practices. The CSC’s certification system is a tool for assessing a pit or quarry’s conformance with CSC standards and manages the issuance and maintenance of CSC certificates. These certificates are issued only when an applicant demonstrates conformance to the requirements of the CSC Responsible Aggregate Standard at a pit or quarry during an on-site audit.

“Aggregate operators who receive certification benefit by being recognized as a more responsible aggregate operation,” says Nicholas Schulz, executive director for the CSC. “This carries both a stronger social license amongst neighbours and the local community but it can also mean preferred procurement from green builders and municipalities who are looking to encourage more responsible aggregate practices.”

PILOT PROJECT
After developing a set of standards, the CSC decided to test out its certification process over a two-year pilot project that began in January 2015. The pilot project allowed the CSC to perform on-the-ground applications of the CSC standard to better assess its strengths and weaknesses so it could be refined and improved.

During the pilot-period six aggregate operations will undertake audits for certification. These sites include CRH’s Acton Quarry and Paris Pit, Lafarge’s Oro and Lawford Pits, Miller’s Carden Quarry and St Marys Cement’s Codrington Pit.

In 2016, CSC officially issued its first certification to CRH Canada Group’s (Dufferin) Acton Quarry in Acton, Ont. Since that time, two more aggregate operations have demonstrated conformance to CSC’s standard and been granted CSC Certification. These include Lafarge’s Oro Pit and CRH’s Paris Pit. The assessment of the Miller Carden Quarry is still in process and the outcome will be announced this fall and St Marys Cement’s Codrington Pit will undergo assessment in September 2017.

These audits are conducted by a team of auditors lead by the CSC’s director of certification, Krista West.

West has several years of auditing experience in social and environmental standards. Before joining the CSC, she completed over 30 Forest Stewardship Council (FSC) Forest Management Audits across Canada. She also managed and oversaw a portfolio of over 40 million hectares of FSC certified forests across the country and trained auditors around the world. Additionally, she works in certification of aluminium as an advisor to the Aluminium Stewardship Initiative, based in Australia.

ASSESSMENT PROCESS
The process for getting assessed by CSC begins with an Assessment Plan, including a detailed schedule.

The assessment schedule is broken down as follows:

- Assessment plan developed;
- Applicant supplies list of interested parties to audit team (60 days);
- Public Notice of Certification posted by CSC and distributed to Aboriginal Groups and interested parties (45 days);
- Evidence received by auditors (14 days);
- Lead auditor identifies interested parties for interviews based on evidence and consultation forms received (14 days prior to audit);
- Phone interviews with identified interested parties are conducted (14 days prior to audit);
- On-site stakeholder interviews begin;
- Opening meeting at pit applying for CSC certification, including site visits, interviews, and document review (2 days);
- Closing meeting at pit applying...
for CSC certification (1 day);
• CSC sends first draft with comments to applicant for CSC certification (14 days);
• Follow-up conference call to discuss findings, as needed;
• Comments received from applicant for CSC certification (28 days);
• Report finalized (60 days);
• If audit outcome is positive, certificate issued and public summary of report released within 60 days.

If an applicant’s pit or quarry is only found to have a few minor non-conformances with CSC’s Responsible Aggregates Standard, it can still receive its certification, as long as the operation remedies those non-conformances within a specified time.

STAKEHOLDER COMMUNICATIONS
As part of every audit, CSC sends notifications to all Aboriginal groups and interested parties with a known interest in the operation. The audit team follows up with Aboriginal groups and interested parties during the audit process to hear input from all perspectives. Upon completion of the audit, the report is emailed directly to the individuals who participated in the audit and it is posted on the CSC website, thus increasing the transparency and integrity of the CSC audit process.

A BRIGHT FUTURE
Since its initial pilot project was completed, the CSC’s certification system has been increasing in popularity, and the organization has received numerous applications from producers looking for the CSC’s stamp of approval.

In May 2017, the CSC officially rolled out a hiring campaign for recruiting additional auditors for auditing applicants’ pits and quarries across Ontario to test their eligibility for certification.

And it’s not just producers that are pushing the value of CSC certification, municipalities are also realizing the value of the certification. This past July, the Town of Erin became the first municipality to include CSC as part of their procurement evaluation criteria. This means contractors using aggregates sourced from a CSC certified pit or quarry will gain an advantage when bidding on jobs.

“CSC benefits Ontario by bringing together aggregate operators and community groups to find a less contentious approach to the conflicts that arise in the sector,” Schulz says. “Rather than focusing on lengthy and expensive legal battles, CSC acts as a carrot that rewards more responsible operations with procurement opportunities from green builders and like-minded municipalities.”

You can be sure that the Town of Erin is only the first of many municipalities that will prefer their aggregates be sourced from a CSC certified pit; and that push by municipalities will be a monumental force in getting pits all across the province to apply for certification. And with that push will come an increased interest in ensuring pits are kept up to the CSC’s standards, setting a new bar for environmentally and socially responsible aggregates extraction across Ontario; and hopefully one day, all across Canada.

To learn more about the CSC certification process and the CSC Responsible Aggregates Standard, visit www.cornerstonestandards.ca.
Washing away inefficiencies

B.C. sand and gravel operation optimizes washing operation.

Many of the roads throughout British Columbia this past year have been abuzz with road construction projects. The heart of the Peace Region in British Columbia is no exception, and when many of the local road builders and residential contractors are in need of asphalt and other aggregates, they turn to Nels Ostero Sand & Gravel in Taylor, B.C. The majority of aggregate produced by the company goes to supplying the areas from Fort St. John to Dawson Creek and the surrounding areas.

To learn more about the company’s operation, Rock to Road travelled north from Prince George, up the Alaska Highway, and across the Peace River Bridge into Taylor, B.C. and met up with Nilson Ostero. Nilson is the third generation from the Ostero family to operate the aggregate business, which was incorporated by his grandfather, Nels, and father, Tom, in the 1960s. The company employs 20 people during its peak operation, which typically starts up at the beginning of April and runs until the end of October.

“We supply asphalt aggregate for local road builders,” Nilson says, adding that his company is also a major supplier of aggregates for the region’s oil and gas producers as well as for residential and drainage jobs.

The company is also a leading supplier of concrete aggregate and is equipped with a fleet of tandem and tridem trucks and tridem and quad trailers to deliver aggregates to jobsites across the region.

The average annual production for the company hovers around 1 million metric tonnes processed with 250,000 to 300,000 tonnes of concrete aggregates sold.

“We do everything from 1/4” to 16” products,” Nilson says.
OUT WITH THE OLD
Four years ago, the company was looking for new ways to optimize its operations and did a thorough analysis of its equipment to indicate any points of weakness. At the end of the analysis, the company decided it was time to look at replacing its aging washing system.

“The age of the equipment was getting a little long in the tooth,” Nilson says, while pointing out some other aging equipment on site, including some old 66” sand screws originally built in 1952. “It was definitely due.”

The company ended up reaching out to Dave Warden, certified sales manager with Haver & Boecker Rocky Mountains, who recommended a Haver & Boecker wash plant, equipped with new spray systems and screens.

Nilson believed the machine would be a good fit in his operation so he went ahead with the purchase.

The wash plant has been in operation since May 2017 and is looking like a sound investment.

“We always had enough water and the footprint was there,” Nilson says, adding that the investment has increased production while improving his operation’s reliability and the quality of its products.

“Throughout the whole plant we’ve now increased production by 20 per cent.”

ADDITIONAL UPGRADES
The addition of the Haver & Boecker wash plant isn’t the only recent investment Nilson has made in his operation.

“Throughout the entire site we’ve upgraded the electrical and the crushing,” he says.

In 2014, the company upgraded its crushing fleet by adding a new FLSmidth Raptor 400 cone crusher supplied by Machinery Supply out of Calgary; and a used Clemro 24/42 jaw crusher.

They also hired Aggregate Electrical Services in 2016 out of Acheson, Alta., to upgrade all of the electrical throughout the site.

With the wash plant installed and running smoothly, Nilson says that his company is done with upgrading its operations for the time being, but that he’s always looking for new ways to keep improving his operation. For now, he’s going to stay focused on producing.

“When the sun is shining you’ve got to make as much as you can,” he says.

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When it comes to a company the size of Kelly Panteluk Construction Ltd. (KPCL), keeping it staffed with qualified and competent people comes with some challenges. The Estevan, Sask. based company is one of the largest privately-owned heavy equipment earth moving and underground services companies in Saskatchewan. It currently employs 240 people and employed upwards to 300 during its busiest season on record.

KPCL’s busiest seasons took place from April 2015 to December 2016 during the CP Rail Belle Plaine Railway Spur project, where CP Rail had entered into a long-term service agreement with K+S Canada for moving potash to market from the company’s legacy mine near Findlater, Sask., via 30.5 kilometres of newly constructed railway over to the Kalium Spur near Belle Plaine, Sask.

KPCL always on the lookout for top operators

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After a competitive bidding process, KPCL was selected as the general contractor for the project. The scope of the project included managing and constructing the new rail grade, including a 108-metre-long steel girder and precast span bridge to cross the Qu’Appelle River; a multi-plate steel tunnel structure to carry municipal traffic over the railway spur; and the building of the railway grade that included approximately 12 million cubic metres of earth excavation and 11 million cubic metres of embankment construction across farmland and the Qu’Appelle Valley.

“It was the largest project in the history of the company with the company purchasing some larger pieces of equipment to scale up for it,” says Mary Panteluk, vice-president of human resources for KPCL, adding that they still have some staff on the CP site performing clean up operations. “This year won’t be as busy as the previous two, we’ve had a lot of competition come in from other provinces.”

Finding and retaining 240 people for projects across the province can be a big challenge. To help fill positions for KPCL’s contracts in northern parts of the province, the company recently expanded its operation to include a satellite office in Saskatoon. Rock to Road recently met up with KPCL’s vice-president of human resources in Saskatoon to discuss the challenges of finding the right fits for positions within the company.

THE RIGHT APPLICANTS
With the resource market down, Mary says there has been no shortage of applications coming into her office. That said, quantity of applicants doesn’t always ensure that you’ll find the right person for a position.

“It’s always a challenge to find an experienced scraper or grader operator,” Mary says. “There have been more applicants with excavator experience applying lately.”

One of the ways applicants are tested to see if they are a good fit with the company is through the use of a behavioural-based survey. These are used to help assess how safe an operator will likely be on a jobsite.

KPCL currently employs 240 people and has employed upwards to 300 during its busiest season on record.

“It helps us identify what to expect from their natural risk behaviours – for example are they prone to cutting corners, wanting to make decisions instead of taking direction?” Mary explains, adding that it is also a useful tool for assessing an individual’s skills coming in and whether they can be expected to work well under certain supervisors.

When they do find an applicant that is safety conscious and has an attitude that seems like a good fit for the company, KPCL is willing to invest in them even if the applicant doesn’t possess all of the necessary skills or have a lot of experience. KPCL offers equipment training performed by in-house staff to new hires and current employees looking to expand their knowledge base and scope of duties. This can be a big advantage for people who may not have had the opportunity to pursue post-secondary education.

“We do offer that advantage if you want to do the work in heavy construction – there’s no educational barrier,” Mary says. “Having a four-year university degree is not a requirement to be a skilled heavy equipment operator as experience is developed in the seat of the machine, not the classroom.”

LOOKING OVERSEAS
To ensure the company has enough experienced operators in its arsenal, Mary has had to search overseas for a good fit for their operations; although this has not been necessary the last few years.

“We participated in some international recruitment in Ireland in 2012 and 2013,” she says. “At the time, we didn’t have a process set up for receiving [international] applications, so that took some time to develop. The first step was getting KPCL online so applicants from abroad could learn about the company.”

In addition to recruiting workers from overseas to help fill shortages in particular
Mary Panteluk, vice-president of human resources for KPCL, discusses day-to-day operations with Bob Cymbalisty at one of the company’s job sites in Saskatoon.

positions, Mary also has to watch the ratio of overseas workers compared to Canadian hires.

“Less than 10 per cent of our workforce can be international,” she says. “Keeping the company in compliance is part of my duties.”

MARIJUANA LEGALIZATION
One of the issues that Mary and her brother, Riley Panteluk, are always keeping a keen eye out for are operators potentially under the influence of alcohol and/or other intoxicants. Outlining that “while alcohol and drug testing is a condition of employment, you still need to ensure that everyone is reporting fit for duty.”

“We hold our people accountable,” Mary says, adding that the coming legalization of marijuana is an obvious concern for her company when it comes to managing heavy equipment operators that may use the drug, even if they are off-duty.

The federal government announced that it is decriminalizing marijuana as of July 1, 2018. This is especially concerning for companies that employ heavy equipment operators, since the impairment effects from marijuana can last long after the drug has left a user’s system.

“To date there isn’t a defined impairment level or a good way to test for impairment levels yet,” Mary explains.

FUTURE STAFFING CHALLENGES
Due to the company’s geographic location and the type of work they do, their ability to hire and retain staff will always be challenged when the resource market, specifically oil, is strong.

“Competing with the oil patch’s resources for employees can be really challenging,” Mary says, adding that construction companies in Saskatchewan simply cannot match the dollars offered by big oil.

To help prevent the oil patch from taking away skilled operators, KPCL offers its employees quality work sites and accommodations for those employees that work a fair distance from their homes.

“We offer site accommodations within 10 minutes of a jobsite and provide fresh, hot meal services from our camp kitchens,” Mary says. “At the end of a 12-hour shift, that’s what most of our crews want. It saves someone having to go home, get groceries, and cook and clean up after working a long shift.”

Another item that KPCL tries to set up for its employees, whenever possible, is internet service, which is considered vital to its younger and older employees to ensure they can remain connected with family and friends.

“Is internet going to be set up?” is a question I get all the time,” Mary says. “For 18-, 19- or 20-year-olds, or someone that has kids at home, we try to provide that service.”

The company also offers employees accommodations with individual rooms, television service and kitchen facilities.

Even when trying to accommodate employees as much as possible, you’ll always have a few that just don’t work out.

“You’ll still have people who will say ‘yes’ at the get-go then the next week want to leave,” Mary says, adding that the younger generation of workers sometimes struggle with adapting to working within a weather-dependent operation. “Sometimes we encounter three or four days of rain on someone’s scheduled days on, and you need to adjust to that and be flexible… that’s the industry we’re in. It’s can be challenging for the younger generation to

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adjust to the seasonality of the work and the weather.”

**A FAMILY AFFAIR**

Mary and Riley, are part of the third generation of the Panteluk family to continue in the family business.

Riley and Mary's grandparents, Walter and Janet Panteluk, originally started as Panteluk Construction Company Ltd. in 1953 with a single dozer and a vision to help build Saskatchewan. Their grandfather started out performing site prep for oil fields and creating access roads and dugouts.

By the 1970s, Kelly Panteluk had joined his father's business and learned the ins and outs of the industry before starting up KPCL alongside his father's company in 1984. By the late 80s and early 90s, Kelly's company was working on dam construction and spillways for SaskPower. In the early 2000’s, KPCL was doing a fair share of its projects in Manitoba, working on floodway water control projects and constructing large berms. Since 2008 the company moved to work its way to central Saskatchewan, working with the potash industry on improving storage for tailings management (tailings are a waste product created during the potash mining process). Now the company works across the majority of the central and southern parts of the province with offices in Estevan and Saskatoon.

As the company took on larger jobs, its fleet grew accordingly. Today, the company has between 225 and 250 pieces of heavy equipment in its fleet, including Trimble GPS-mounted dozers, graders and scrapers. The majority of the company's big iron is of the Caterpillar brand – the newest and largest pieces include CAT 777 haul trucks – although KPCL does own some John Deere tractors as well as some Kenworth trucks for hauling.

**PASSING THE TORCH**

Although Kelly is still very active within the business, he has been slowly handing over various responsibilities to Mary and Riley.

In addition to overseeing the hiring at KPCL, Mary acts as liaison between KPCL's field and head office operations by standardizing administration processes. She also runs the company's marketing program and manages its website.

Riley is the vice-president of operations and provides leadership and direction to KPCL's teams of supervisors, foremen and mechanics at its various job sites. He has worked with the company for more than a decade managing earth moving projects across the province.

Although a formal plan has not been set as of yet, the Panteluk siblings are being prepared to takeover the company for when Kelly decides its time to hang up his hardhat.

“As far as a family succession plan goes, it’s still in the works,” Mary says.
Working with asphalt

Rock to Road checks out some of the latest asphalt-related technologies

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Protecting B.C.'s workers from silica dust

BC Construction Safety Alliance’s Silica Control Tool now “live!”

Walk onto any construction site and you’re bound to encounter silica dust, well recognized as a potential occupational disease hazard.

Until recently, controlling exposures to the substance had been kind of hit and miss; contractors knew it was a problem but weren’t always sure when, how or even if they had to deal with it.

Now, thanks to generous support from the BC Construction Safety Alliance’s (BCCSA) Research Development and Opportunity Fund, companies have access to a free, made-in-BC computerized solution that can be used to quickly and easily assess the risks and identify precautions required to protect workers.

Developed by the BCCSA in conjunction with WorkSafeBC and researchers from the University of British Columbia, the first-of-its-kind web-based Silica Control Tool (ST) brings into one place existing monitoring data gathered from an array of industry surveys and studies on worker exposures to silica dust.

As users enter project-related information (including such variables as weather conditions and existing control mechanisms) into the online platform, the ST draws on the extensive database to create an exposure control plan (ECP) that fits the job and affords worker protection in line with WorkSafeBC regulations. The ST, which can be accessed via computer or smartphone, is available at www.silicacontroltool.com. After creating a password, users have full access to all its features.

“We are very pleased and proud to announce the release of the ST—a first of its kind in B.C. and Canada—coincides with and was driven by WorkSafeBC’s May 1, 2017 update of the OH&S Regulation to clarify employer requirements for protecting workers from silica dust and allow creation of ECPs based on existing monitoring data,” says Jackie Brown, freelance writer who wrote this column on behalf of the BC Construction Safety Alliance.

Although it’s only been “live” since April 10, all indications point to the ST being a winner when it comes to quickly, easily and concisely managing silica dust exposure.

Among its proponents so far is Anita Riddell, Safety Manager of Scansa Construction in Victoria, who had been “eagerly awaiting” the roll out of a tool that promised to take the guesswork out of silica planning.

“Prior to the ST, we used standardized forms to develop ECPs for each project, but there was always a chance of missing a step in the controls and information process,” says Riddell. “With the ST, everything is in one place and it’s impossible to advance to the next level until the previous one has been completed. As a concrete-based company, we will be using this tool as part of our daily planning.”

Echoing Riddell’s positive assessment is Gina Huber, Health & Safety Coordinator for Conroy Exteriors in Kelowna, B.C.

Huber put the ST to the test for the first time on a recent project that involved cutting fiber cement siding.

“We got clear statements about the risks, exposure levels and precautions we needed to take,” she said. “The ECP was easy to read and follow — especially for the installers—and navigating the site was super easy. This is going to save a lot of administrative time because I can simply go online when we have a new job, fill out the information and print off the ECP for workers to review and take to site.”

For both Huber and Riddell, the ST performed beyond pre-launch publicity and expectations. Indeed, it is expected to be a game changer for many companies.

The release of the ST—a first of its kind in B.C. and Canada—coincides with and was driven by WorkSafeBC’s May 1, 2017 update of the OH&S Regulation to clarify employer requirements for protecting workers from silica dust and allow creation of ECPs based on existing monitoring data.
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