

LE TAG

A WORD FROM THE PRESIDENT

Hi everyone!

This winter season is much slower than last year's. The saying « *Season comes, season goes and everything stays the same* » certainly does not apply here!

The turmoil experienced by the construction industry and the weather that was much harsher than last year are the main causes for the slowdown that we are currently living.



This winter again, our Estimation Department works very hard to obtain new contracts to start the year strong, and our order book compares favorably with the last year.

However, new competitors combined with the expected lower volume of work in the industry herald a most competitive season and this is why we must work twice as hard in all departments in order to remain at the forefront.

Indeed, our estimation, project management, manufacturing and installation teams will all have to be most efficient if we want to keep the same pace as in the recent years. But I am convinced that everyone will collaborate to help us stay on top of the game!

Éric Bernier, President



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IN THIS ISSUE:

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT	2
MISCELLANEOUS	2
PROJECT: SAINTE-JUSTINE'S HOSPITAL	3
OCCUPATIONAL HEALTH & SAFETY	4

Good news!

Here are some of the new contracts recently obtained by ABF:

- 👍 Le Signature Condos / South Shore of Quebec City
- 👍 Domaine Mont Laval Building C & parking facilities / Laval
- 👍 Barrhaven South Recreation Complex / Ottawa
- 👍 New detention facility / Roberval
- 👍 Sonia by the Rideau Condos / Ottawa
- 👍 Les Belvédères sur le Fleuve / Beauport (Quebec City)
- 👍 Hydroelectric dam and water intake / Val Jalbert

Did you know?

People who regularly jog add years to their lives. Many years! In average, men add 6.2 years and women add 5.6 years.

To come to this spectacular conclusion, 19,000 men and women have been followed since 1976, runners and non-runners, to see the long-term benefits of jogging.

As we have seen, the results are very positive. Here are other interesting facts: no need to run for very long periods to obtain results. Sixty to 180 minutes per week, spread over 2 to 3 sessions, is the norm. According to researchers, the goal is to feel « out the breath, but not too much ».

Last good news? There is absolutely no contra-indication for jogging if you are in your forties or in your fifties, as long as you start with moderation and slowly increase your pace.

With spring at our doors, let's go get our running shoes!
And let's add more years to our lives!!!

MESSAGE FROM THE VICE PRESIDENT



In this issue of the TAG, I would like to share a very interesting newspaper article concerning the reputation of organizations.

Employers in this country now have further reason to take care of their company's image. The reputation of the organization no longer serves to attract patrons alone, but is a key element in employee engagement.

That is the conclusion made by Andrée Mercier, Senior Vice President at Aon Hewitt, after analyzing the results of the study « *Best Employers in Canada 2013* », study prepared each year by the organization she represents. « There is now a direct link between an employer's reputation and employee engagement, she says. That's a novelty for us this year and it really stands out in the study. »

The study in question, done in the form of a survey among the employees of participating enterprises, measures the employee commitment to their organization.

« If an employer succeeds in reflecting a better image, there will be a major impact on employee engagement, explains Andrée Mercier. On the other hand, the opposite can also be verified. »

Dimensions of a reputation

According to Andrée Mercier, in the eyes of employees, an employer's reputation depends on three main criteria.

First, the employee **wants to be proud** of the products and services of the organization he works for. « He wants to work for an organization that looks good and is well regarded in his entourage », she says.

But pride is not the only factor creating a sense of belonging with an employee. According to Andrée Mercier, **the values emanating** from the organization are also involved. « Employees want to recognize themselves in the organization », she explains. For example, she highlights the importance given by some of them to issues like work-family balance or environmental protection.

Here's another dimension to the reputation: **keeping promises**. According to André Mercier, employers engaged in competitive sectors should be cautious during job interviews and avoid making promises that they won't be able to keep. « Things have changed, she says. When talented people are not easy to find, it is the employees who choose for whom they will work. »

Thus, honoring commitments has become a criterion that will weigh heavily in terms of employee motivation – and maybe even employee retention in the organization. « Instead of making promises, it would be more realistic to say something like: Here, this is the direction we wish to go in », she advises.

And what about the « Y » generation - these young people who are new on the workforce? According to Andrée Mercier, they will be committed if they get feedback on the quality of their work from their employer and/or their boss. « They are used to interactivity and instant information, she explains. It also holds for the relations they have with their organization. »

ABF remains an employer of choice in these troubled times for the field of construction. **Stay and be proud of what we've achieved together!**

François Vallières, Vice President

Source: Martin Primeau, Journalist, La Presse

Miscellaneous

Thought of the Month

The optimist laughs to forget:
The pessimist forgets to laugh !

Welcome to all new employees in the ABF family.

Statutory holidays to come

Friday, March 29: Good Friday

Monday, April 1: Easter Monday

Monday, May 20: Victoria Day

PROJECT : SAINTE-JUSTINE'S HOSPITAL

The Sainte-Justine UHC is the only mother-child university hospital centre in Quebec. It is one of the most important pediatric centres in North America and the largest mother-child centre in Canada. The expansion currently underway is part of the modernization work undertaken by the Quebec Government with its project « **Grandir en santé** » (Growing up Healthy). The value of this project is estimated at \$995 M.

The modernization work will include two new buildings, a power plant and 1200 new underground self-financed parking spaces. One building will be dedicated to Specialized Care Units (BUS) and the other one will be a Research Centre. With these additions,

the hospital will increase its total surface area to 200,000 square meters, a 65% increase from its actual surface area. It will also allow for 261 more beds in the Specialized Care Units building.

Located west of the actual Sainte-Justine UHC building and immediately south of Chemin de la Côte-Sainte-Catherine, the BUS will have a total surface area of 49,000 square meters and include 7 above ground levels and 4 underground levels linked floor-by-floor with the existing facility via bridges and underground passages. The Research Centre will be located west of the actual building and north of Ellendale Avenue. The building will develop roughly 27,500 square meters of floor space. It will have 9 floors above ground. The Research Centre and the BUS will be linked together by an atrium giving access to lobbies with public elevators.



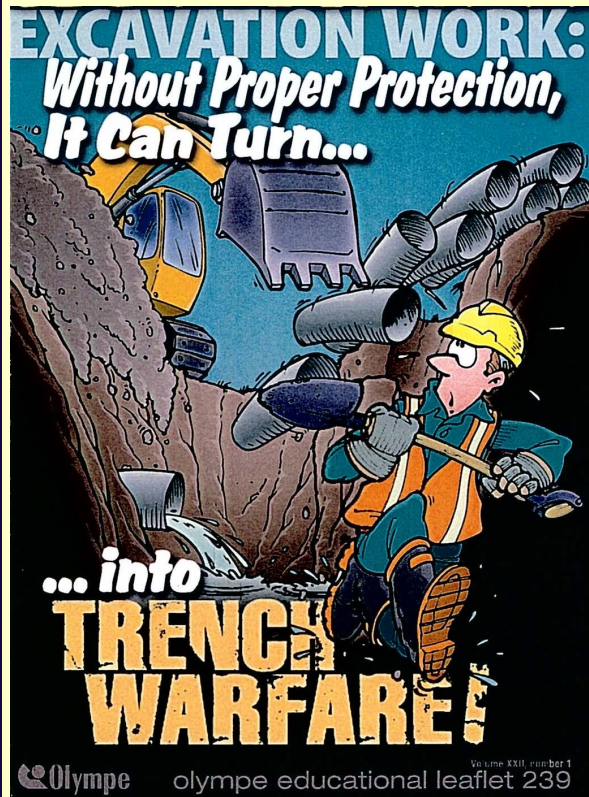
Regarding ABF's work in this project, Foreman Dave Drouin and his team will have to install close to 6,700 m.t. of rebar under the supervision of SNC-Lavalin Construction. This project, which began in September 2012, should be completed by May 2014 if all goes as planned.

ABF is particularly proud of being part of the modernization of such a highly regarded institution as the Sainte-Justine University Hospital Centre.

Eric Nadeau ing

Eric Nadeau, ing.
Vice President Construction

Health and safety at work



Each year, outdoor excavation work is the scene of an alarming number of accidents, the consequences of which range from light wounds to permanent disabilities, and even deaths.

A major safety pitfall...

Special safety measures must be applied when carrying out trench work because of the specific hazards associated with this type of activity, namely:

- ☞ The nature of the ground (clay, gravel, sand, soil).
- ☞ The presence of underground water, aqueduct pipes or other underground utility network.
- ☞ Space restrictions (urban environment) that result in the digging of trenches with near-vertical walls.
- ☞ The often urgent nature of the work being done.
- ☞ Coactivity, or parallel work going on nearby or on the same site.
- ☞ Difficulties in getting in and out of the trench (ladder).

An in-depth analysis...

When the walls of an excavation start caving in, those working at the bottom of the trench can be buried in less than a second. This is why all trench work must be done in compliance with the following rules:

1. The walls of the trench must be shored (braced) in the appropriate manner.
2. Supplies and excavated material must be deposited at least 1.2 meter away from the edges of the trench.
3. No vehicle or machinery must be operated or parked within 3 meters of the edges the trench.
4. The bottom of the trench must be kept reasonably dry and free of hazardous clutter.

Laying the groundwork for prevention

Shoring plays a central role in preventing accidents, provided that it meets the following requirements:

- ☞ Choosing the right type of shoring equipment (trench box, cage, pipe or hydraulic jacks).
- ☞ Bracing solidly, with quality material.
- ☞ Complying with an engineer's specifications.
- ☞ Setting up adequate signage and making sure it stays there until the work is finished.
- ☞ Installing access ladders in the required locations.
- ☞ Making sure that all work is done under the supervision of a qualified person.

Shoring may not be required if the slope of the walls is less than 45 degrees, starting 1.2 meter from the bottom of the trench, and an engineer certified that there is absolutely no risk of caving in.

Safety first... and always!

Adequate training, the use of proper working methods and tools, and the adoption of safe behaviors are essential conditions for preventing accidents, whether performing excavation work or any other kind of work. So make safety your priority!

Alain Perron, Health and safety manager

Digging for the truth...

Off the top of your head, can you tell which of these statements are common misconceptions, and which are the "hole" truth?

- | | True | False |
|---|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. The presence of overhead lines means that there is no underground utility network | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 2. Accidents occur almost exclusively in deep trenches (2 metres or more) | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 3. There is no way to tell early enough that the walls of the trench are about to cave in | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 4. Shoring is not required in winter time when the ground is frozen | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 5. An inspector can order work to be suspended if he judges that the site is unsafe | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |
| 6. Inexperienced workers are more likely to be buried than others | <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> |

1. False. There may be underground cables even where there are overhead lines.
2. False. Most accidents occur in shallow trenches.
3. True. It may take less than a second for the walls to cave in after the appearance of the first crack.
4. False. Shoring is mandatory in all seasons.
5. True. In addition, the people in charge of the site may incur severe sanctions.
6. False. Even the most experienced workers can become victims of negligence.