

June 11, 2018

WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

www.journalofcommerce.com

Journal of Commerce

by ConstructConnect®

Increased road safety and work zone awareness inspire Hanschke

PETER CAULFIELD
CORRESPONDENT

Sarina Hanschke did not set out to become an advocate for roadside workers facing uniquely hazardous working conditions. Her original career plan was to be a teacher.

But even the best ideas sometimes change in life and today Hanschke is the president and CEO of Vanguard Road Safety Network, an organization she founded earlier in 2018.

Based in Surrey, B.C., with associates in Canada and the U.S., Vanguard's goal is to combine training, education and advocacy to protect roadside workers from injury or death.

"We want to be at the forefront of development and change for roadside workers, and to raise the profile of roadside safety with labour, government and industry," said Hanschke. "Our goal is to increase situational awareness (also called visual intelligence) of roadside workers and improve site safety and productivity through better communication and pre-planning."

In addition to traffic control personnel (TCP) — flag persons — with whom all Canadian drivers become familiar during the summer, there are many other types of roadside workers.

They include, for example, ambulance workers, landscapers

and gardeners, roadbuilders and heavy equipment operators, municipal workers, utility workers, police and firefighters.

In B.C. alone there are more than 25,000 roadside workers, of whom Hanschke was once one of.

"To pay for university, I followed my father's footsteps into the roadbuilding industry," she said.

"I became a third-generation labourer, with my grandfather, dad, uncles, brother and me working on various road infrastructure projects throughout B.C."

After completing her education, Hanschke worked for a short time as an elementary school tutor for young children with learning and language problems.

Soon, however, the road called her name, Hanschke answered, and she was hired by Winvan Paving Ltd. as a TCP.

For eight years Hanschke worked for Winvan, where her duties included training other TCP. That was followed by a stint with the BC Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA), where she helped manage its traffic control program.

"The negative perception of TCP helped to spark my activism,"

Sarah Hanschke
Vanguard Road Safety Network

After four years with BCCSA, Hanschke decided to spread her wings and founded Vanguard.

Hanschke says she loved the action and movement of traffic control.

"It was unique and it prompted me to be more vocal and to learn the art of interacting with other people," she said.

Hanschke enjoyed the camaraderie that came with being a TCP, making new friends and mentors.

"But there are also a lot of other things I wish were different, such as the perception held by some people that traffic control is an unskilled and menial occupation," Hanschke said. "We expect workers to know and to understand the engineering terms used in road work, apply them to specific site, weather and road conditions and, at the same time, to focus carefully on everyone working in the cone zone and keep everyone safe, at the same time as traffic is coming at and from behind them. That's a lot to ask of someone, don't you think?"

"The negative perception of TCP helped to spark my activism, to move onto the safety side and then to move on to starting Vanguard," Hanschke said.

Too many roadside workers are injured and killed — or almost injured and killed — every day, she says.

"Despite worker harm, and the fact that it's well publicized, driver behaviour hasn't changed much. In fact, drivers seem less attentive than they were years ago.

"And roadside safety isn't helped when the laws pertaining to the cone zone can vary considerably from jurisdiction to jurisdiction. In addition, the training requirements for TCP are different in different jurisdictions, too."

Hanschke says roadside safety is a "huge topic" that needs to be broken down into smaller, more manageable subjects and examined carefully, in order to identify the reasons why roadside work can be so dangerous.

"We are often told that the best way to learn is on the job," she said. "Although practical experience is certainly helpful, I have found that anything I learned at work about road safety had already been said many times before in research papers and studies that I either found online, by attending conferences or meeting and working with other safety experts.

"The research that is being undertaken will help combine the theoretical and the practical, and the results will enable TCP and the people who train them to feel confident that they are doing all the right things, to the best of their ability, to bring everyone home safely from the roadside at the end of the working day."

Is your employee benefits plan as flexible as you are?

Ommm... we offer plan flexibility along with great service and experts every step of the way so that you can get on with your business (or your yoga class). Give us a call for a benefits plan that works for you.

Built for the construction industry.

bc employee benefits

www.bccabenefits.ca
info@bccabenefits.ca
604 683 7353
1 800 665 1077

Busting myths. Building careers.

BC BUILDING TRADES
WE BUILD BC

BUILD TOGETHER
WOMEN OF THE BUILDING TRADES



Steele drives to make safety simpler and embrace the moment

PETER CAULFIELD
CORRESPONDENT

Before Vancouver-based safety trainer Tanya Steele became a safety professional, she worked in the film industry doing ambulance standby for stunts.

“When I wasn’t on-set, I was teaching the emergency medical responder and Occupational First Aid Level 3 courses part-time. One day they needed a first aid attendant for set construction, which propelled me into construction and the start of my safety career.”

“I then took every safety course known to man and started my own company, called ER Plus Risk Management Group. We supplied first aid attendants and construction safety officers to construction sites. Over the next 10 years I went on trips around the world to such places as the Congo, Venezuela, and Malawi. I supplied medical help and taught first aid in the orphanages to ‘house moms.’ I also taught safety to the construction workers who were building homes.”

Steele had to teach her students creativity. “They don’t have the medical resources or supplies, including bandages and splints, that Canadians take for granted,” she said. “So we often took the simple materials on hand, such as the thin mats they sleep on, and improvised new, medical uses for them.”

She has since sold her company and moved on.

“Now I am a regional safety advisor with the BC Construction Safety Alliance (BCCSA), as well as safety trainer, education adviser and speaker for other organizations,” she said.

Steele says she “loves” being a BCCSA regional safety advisor.

“It gives me the opportunity to mentor new, up-and-coming safety personnel,” she said. “I had hit a time in my life when I started to ask ‘What is my legacy?’, ‘What am I leaving behind?’

“Since I have no children, safety is my baby. I want to give back, make a mark, make a difference in the industry. Whether it’s a new construction safety officer, someone in HR who has recently become a company’s safety person, or an occupational health and safety manager or small business owner who is trying to figure it all out, I spend my days



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tanya Steele is a regional safety advisor with the BC Construction Safety Alliance. The opportunity to mentor new safety personnel is one of her favourite aspects of her career.

mentoring, coaching and teaching them to succeed.”

Steele says she wants to change the safety industry through education.

“My personal goal has always matched the BCCSA’s mandate to ‘Make Safety Simpler,’” she said. “To be effective, an organization’s safety instructions to its workers don’t need to be long and complicated with a lot of convoluted lingo. They just need to be understandable.”

“There is nothing more rewarding than when you visit someone who is feeling overwhelmed with life, business and safety, and you can give them practical, efficient tools

and skills that makes everything simple.”

Steele says safety should focus on interpersonal relationships.

“Relationships are about spending time with people, being authentic and good com-

munication,” she said.

Steele says the foundation of everything she does is service.

“I believe that when you serve and help someone with their need, find out how to make their life a little easier, you will become a person of influence. Maybe even save someone’s life.”

Steele is an advocate of in-person training. “Although some information can be given online or in a video format, having someone talk to you and show you always make a huge difference for retention. I once did a session at a conference called ‘Influencing Behaviour Change Through Effective On-site Training.’ We divided the room into five different generations and asked each one how they would like to be taught.”

All five generations in the room said they like to be shown how to do it, and then do it for themselves.

“Electronic training has its place, as do videos, books and manuals, but we learn better in-person. We want somebody to show us, even Millennials.”

On the landing page of Steele’s website, she has written the following: “Nothing extraordinary in life has happened, except by those who dared to believe that there is something inside of them bigger than the circumstance.”

Steele says the statement shows her belief in the power of positive thinking.

“I heard someone say something similar to this when I was in my 20’s. It always reminded me that no matter what life throws at you or what people say, you have to dare to believe that you are created for such a time as this.

“You are created perfectly, and even if we make poor decisions sometimes, sometimes we just need to be dared, to believe we can. I hope someone else will read it and their life will be impacted too.”

BuildForce B.C. Summary construction/maintenance workforce forecast (2018-2027)



VANCOUVER
While the overall pace of construction employment growth will be slower across Canada over the next decade, British Columbia’s picture is rosier with fairly significant employment growth expected over the next few years, indicates the latest labour market forecast released by BuildForce Canada.

Major projects such as

proposed transportation, pipeline, mining sector and LNG projects will boost the province’s construction workforce by 24 per cent, which is almost 17,000 workers over the next five years, reads the 2017-2026 National Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward forecast.

Industrial, commercial and institutional building will

also continue on an upward trend while new housing is expected to slow down this year following an extended period of expansion.

“It’s potentially the most rapid rise we’ve seen in B.C.’s construction workforce in the past decade,” said Rosemary Sparks, executive director of BuildForce Canada.

JOC NEWS SERVICE



YOU CAN REPLACE THE CONE. NOT THE WORKER.



It’s your responsibility to keep your employees safe – properly setting up and managing your Cone Zone can save lives.

To access tools and resources to improve the safety of your roadside workers,

visit ConeZoneBC.com.

WORK SAFE BC

BRITISH COLUMBIA

JUSTICE INSTITUTE
of BRITISH COLUMBIA

WORK ZONE
SAFETY ALLIANCE

Wilson loves walking the sky and wants to go higher

DON PROCTER
CORRESPONDENT

Cara Wilson has been a farmhand, worked for Canada Post, drove a school bus and even tended bar at strip clubs. As a bank teller once she was held up at gunpoint.

"There's not a job I did not do," says the 43-year-old single mom.

"If you have a cold, tough it up buttercup. Take Dristan and get back on the iron,"

Cara Wilson
Ironworker Local 720 in Edmonton

These days Wilson is "walking the sky" as an ironworker — a job like no other and one she is passionate about sticking to.

It came about after the 5'2" mother of five with "a respectful fear of heights" attended a job information session organized by Edmonton-based Women Building Futures (WBF), a non-profit society that helps women needing a chance launch careers in building trades through training and mentorship initiatives.

It was there that she heard the moniker "king of the trades" applied to ironworkers. That and the trade's reputation for grit, hard work, pride, "fierce independence" and teamwork clinched it for her.

"I knew it was for me," Wilson says, signing up immediately for the four-week Ironworker Readiness class offered through WBF in partnership with Ironworkers Apprenticeship and Training Plan (Local 720 in Edmonton) and the North West Redwater (NWR) refinery project.

Theory and a good dose of practical — erecting an iron structure — were part of the curriculum which also included a segment on what to expect working in a male-dominated world.

"That was a no-brainer for me because I am used to being one of the boys."

Wilson stuck it out and moved onto work at a refinery project in Sturgeon County, Alta., where the owners had made a priority of recruiting and retaining women in



WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES

Cara Wilson became an ironworker thanks to an initiative created by Women Building Futures with Ironworkers Apprenticeship and Training Plan (Local 720 in Edmonton) and the North West Redwater refinery project. Wilson says she knew the ironworker trade was for her after learning more about it and completing a four-week ironworker readiness class.

the trades. Placed with a journeyperson, she completed the requisite 1,500 hours for the first year of a four-year apprenticeship program. The job included putting in stairs, reaming holes, rigging, crane signaling and partaking in laydowns "where you learn all the components that build your structure."

First year apprentices don't normally get off the ground but Wilson did, doing "some bolting up" and "beam walking. I got a flavour for what the work is like." The shifts were long and she worked 12 days on, two days off.

She says meeting the challenge of ironworking isn't just about being able to handle the physical nature of the job.

"You have to use your head," explained Wilson.

At times, ironworkers have to "MacGyver things" because some details in engineering drawings are vague or prove impractical on the job.

"You have to make a way to make things fit."

The diminutive woman says her height hasn't gone against her.

"There are places where I can fit where tall guys can't," Wilson says, adding that doing the work safely is always a priority.

"When you are up there walking the sky, you want to go home alive and you want your partner too as well. You depend on each other."

Wilson will be going back to school for her second year apprenticeship in September. From her experience in first year and what she's heard about the second it will be an intense six weeks, she says, because class time is crammed with information you are required to learn in a short period.

Her goal is to get a generalist ironworker ticket by 2020. That certification covers structural/ornamental work as well as rebar.

"I am going for the long haul (the four-year program) because you are more employable and you don't take a pay hit when you have to take a job tying rebar (if you are a generalist)."

Some day when she tires of working on iron Wilson eyes a job as instructor in the field.

"I love teaching people and, my God, I'm in my 40s."

She advises women thinking about a career in ironwork to give it a try — if they are willing to meet the physical and mental challenges.

"You have to have a good work ethic."

Wilson adds that she has a saying: "If you have a cold, tough it up buttercup. Take Dristan and get back on the iron."

Moreover, having a thick skin is essential "so that you can banter with the boys. You are not there to change the culture — you are there to work."



WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES

Cara Wilson's goal is to earn a generalist ironworker ticket by 2020. That certification covers structural/ornamental work as well as rebar. Ultimately, she would like to become an ironworker instructor in the field.

Welcoming women into skilled trades boosts business.

Power up women in the trades, and learn best practices to gain, train and retain a valued workforce.

Learn more at itabc.ca/WITTBestPracticesGuide

ita | witt

KickAss Careers aims to give the boot to the skilled trades gap

PETER CAULFIELD
CORRESPONDENT

Jamie McMillan, a journeyman ironworker and apprentice boilermaker in Hamilton, Ont. is on a mission to encourage more young people, especially girls and young women, to enter the skilled trades.

“I tell everyone I meet about the great opportunities in the skilled trades,” said McMillan. “I encourage all young people, especially those who, like me, aren’t academically inclined, to give it serious consideration. I didn’t like school but I’m very mechanical, practical and good with my hands and I’ve found a career that I do well and that I enjoy.”

Originally from Timmins, Ont., McMillan relocated to Hamilton, where she was employed — unhappily — as a personal support workers and part-time restaurant server.

“By chance I met an old high school classmate on the street one day,” said McMillan. “I told her I was looking for a change and she told me she was a journeyman ironworker and that I should sign up as an apprentice.”

McMillan became an ironworker in 2002 and a few years later, an apprentice boilermaker.

In 2006, Skills Ontario, which promotes the skilled trades and technologies in that province, asked McMillan to speak at a mentorship banquet for girls on the subject of career pathways.

That engagement was such a success that it led to more public speaking, as well as regular appearances on radio and television.

In 2014 McMillan and co-founder Pat



KICKASS CAREERS

KickAss Careers is a school and community outreach program whose goal is to engage, educate and encourage young men and women to consider careers in the mechanical, industrial, technology, construction and advanced manufacturing industries.

Williams, a retired stationery operating engineer in Los Angeles, started KickAss Careers to promote the skilled trades.

(The unusual and forthright name was chosen by some high school students who had particularly enjoyed one of McMillan’s presentations.)

KickAss is a school and community outreach program. Its goal is to engage, educate and encourage young men and women to consider careers in the mechan-

ical, industrial, technology, construction (MITC) and advanced manufacturing industries.

to promote opportunities in the skilled trades to their students,” said McMillan. “It’s also when the post-secondary institutions where young people would do the academic part of their apprenticeships want to make themselves known.”

McMillan says KickAss Careers is performing an important service for the skilled trades in Canada.

“There is a huge shortage of skilled trades workers,” McMillan said. “The shortage has been caused by, in addition to the number of people retiring, the failure of many schools to promote the skilled trades to their students. And it (the skilled trades gap) won’t be closed by bringing in foreign workers.”

Not everybody wants to be a lawyer, doctor or a white-collar professional, she says.

“Many people prefer mechanical, practical and visual means of learning to academic programs in college and university,” McMillan said.

KickAss are also at creative marketing and promotion. For example, its eco-friendly, paperless, do-it-yourself KickAss photo booth lets students dress up in authentic MITC work gear, using tools and personal protective equipment as props with a customized built-in frame. Students can immediately upload their photos to social

media through the KickAss photo booth application, which automatically includes hashtags of its brand, partner brands, the event and all applicable sponsors.

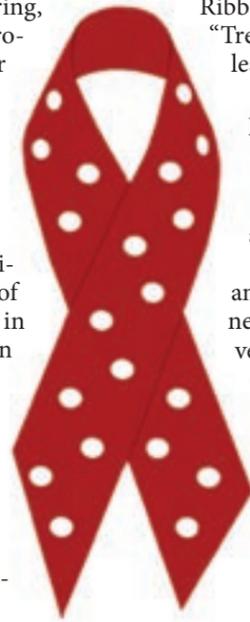
The goal is to increase traffic to KickAss’s social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram Snapchat and LinkedIn) and the kickasscareers.org website, which provides a resource page for promoting careers in MITC.

Another KickAss promotion is the Workplace Equality (WE) Awareness Ribbon Campaign. Its tagline is “Treat Everyone the Same Regardless of Differences.”

The purpose of the WE campaign is to raise awareness of the challenges women face in occupations dominated by males and to help them to fit in and be treated as equals.

The campaign features a red and white polka dot ribbon awareness piece that “supports the conversation about the importance of a diverse and equal workplace free from all types of harassment, bullying and discrimination regardless of differences.”

“Our hope is that one day the WE Ribbon will be recognized globally as a simple statement, identifying an employer who supports integrating all the core values of what a diverse, equal and inclusive workplace should embrace.”



KICKASS CAREERS

The Workplace Equality Awareness Ribbon was launched by KickAss Careers to raise awareness about the challenges women face in male-dominated occupations.

“There is a huge shortage of skilled trades workers,”

Jamie McMillan
KickAss Careers

ical, industrial, technology, construction (MITC) and advanced manufacturing industries.

In addition to McMillan and Williams, KickAss has nine ambassadors who take part in events to promote opportunities in the skilled trades in their respective cities and regions.

“I take six months off the tools every year to work on KickAss,” said McMillan.

“The public speaking keeps me very busy. Between the beginning of April and the end of June this year, I will have made about 200 presentations at different venues across North America.”

Spring and fall are the busiest times of the year for KickAss’s public outreach.

“That’s when the high schools want



KICKASS CAREERS

Jamie McMillan is a journeyman ironworker and apprentice boilermaker who is a tireless advocate for skilled trades careers.



CONSTRUCTION LAW

BUSINESS LAW

SHK

shk.ca

Pink Belts' all-female roofing crew hangs out their shingle

IAN HARVEY
CORRESPONDENT

Roofing isn't the most glamorous of trades: it's either too hot or too cold most of the time and it's physically demanding work at heights where dirt and grime are constant factors.

So, perhaps it's a surprise to find an all-female roofing company prospering in the Edmonton area and growing with plans to shift to the United States.

"There are millions of women out there, I just want to help them get into this business,"

Robyn'e Garton
Pink Belts Roofing Company

Robyn'e Garton launched Pink Belts Roofing Company in 2010 and it's just kept growing.

"We've had 700 per cent growth," says Garton who is based out of St. Albert in northwest Edmonton and services the region.

"And now I'd like to move into the United States, along Hurricane Alley, I think there's lots of opportunity there for businesses without all the taxes and issues we face here in Canada."

After working as a property manager and dealing with contractors on a daily basis she got the idea to start her first roofing company, Roof Surgeon, in 2010 which is still running.

"I figured if I started off with roofing, everything else would fall into place," she says.

"So now were doing flooring, tile, paint-



PINK BELTS ROOFING COMPANY

Robyn'e Garton started her all-female roofing company, based in Edmonton, in 2010 and has experienced 700 per cent growth in her business since then.

ing, pretty much everything."

Since then she's surged ahead.

"On my journey I met a lot of women in the trades with their Red Seal, scaffolders, roofers, plumbers and electricians but they were always the first to get laid off an economic downturn," says Garton, 47.

"There's a discrimination factor there because they're women. I started thinking about that and then decided I'd branch out and form an all-women roofing company —

and it kinda went through the roof."

She said roofing is a quick study and most of those coming out of the trade schools end up in flat roof and she targeted residential roofing to start.

"We do some commercial roofing now, as long as it's pitched, we still don't do flat roofing," she says.

She has a core crew of 10 to 15 and hopes she can get most of them back but is pretty confident she can add when needed.

"I'm actually trying to get them to start their own businesses because I'm at the age now where I don't want employees, I really want to help other women get into business," she says.

Roofing is a hard business, she says, and it's the heat in the middle of summer which is the hardest part on the job.

"It does become unbearable," she says but says there's also some push back in the industry.

"When I started Pink Belts I was the laughing stock. People thought I wouldn't last a year. You just put up with it. You have to have a thick skin in this business. I've had death threats, hate mail, my tires tampered with. All that tells me is that I'm shaking up the industry which is what I'm supposed to do."

She's also working to ensure PPE is made for women and is on track to develop a tool belt which fits women better since most are designed for men.

"There are millions of women out there, I just want to help them get into this business if they want," she says.

"And I think we can do that in the U.S. by setting up businesses with them because a lot of them are tired of working in the service sector."

Despite it being a male-dominated field in Alberta, Garton says there's a big upside.

"I think being an all-woman construction company and roofing company is an advantage," she says.

"In residential it's usually the woman who makes the decision and they trust us. They know they aren't going to get gouged or taken advantage of by a rotten contractor. There's a lot out there. In fact, that's another area of business for me, I've been working with a lawyer on the mediation and litigation side. This is a passion for me."

LET'S BUILD CANADA TOGETHER

WE ARE ALL BUILDERS!

PARTNERING WITH WBF IS ONE OF THE BEST BUSINESS DECISIONS YOUR COMPANY CAN MAKE.

Hiring the right workers is critical for success and WBF grads are ready to help you achieve your business goals.

WBF is a leader in construction trades training for women providing a comprehensive assessment, skills training & workplace culture and awareness training.

WBF
WOMEN BUILDING FUTURES®
womenbuildingfutures.com

WE CREATE CUSTOMIZED TRAINING PROGRAMS YEAR-ROUND!
Want to know more? Let's talk!
Contact our Industry Relations Team.
Office: 780 452 1200
Toll-Free: 1 866 452 1201



OTTAWA The construction industry in Alberta is facing a significant change in the coming decade as oilsands investment slows and remains well below previous peaks, states the 2018–2027 Construction and Maintenance Looking Forward forecast issued by BuildForce Canada recently.

Transition to a more diverse workforce is underway and new job opportunities will shift toward oilsands sustaining capital and maintenance work, diversification, infrastructure and other construction projects.

"Although construction employment is not expected to return to the peak levels

achieved in the mid to late 2000s, the need to sustain the workforce in the face of rising retirements along with moderate population growth and industrial diversification will keep workforce management issues top of mind for construction industry leaders," the report states.

Challenges will be made more difficult given recent declines in construction activity and a significant out-migration of the existing workforce to other industries or to other provinces. Alberta is transitioning back to a stronger reliance on a local provincial workforce to meet future construction demands, adds the forecast.

In addition, the industry

in Alberta, as in the rest of Canada, will need to plan for an aging workforce and the replacement of retiring workers.

"The industry must replace 20 per cent, or 40,000, of the province's 208,600 construction workers due to increasing retirement demands," the provincial highlights report. "Even if the industry is successful in recruiting the estimated 38,300 new entrant workers available to enter the industry, an additional 6,000 workers from outside the industry, the province, or the country will need to be recruited to keep pace with anticipated demand."

JOC NEWS SERVICE

Five years and growing for Women in Construction group

WARREN FREY
DIGITAL MEDIA EDITOR

A Victoria, B.C. group for women in construction is marking a milestone and pushing forward.

Cheryl Hartman, an estimator and project manager with Victoria, B.C. based Brewis Electric Company Ltd. is one of the co-founders of Women in Construction (WIC), a local networking group that celebrates its fifth anniversary this year.

"I've been in the trades since 1990, and at the time there was limited access to meeting women involved in construction. We got women together across the scope of insurance, trades, management; we were from diverse backgrounds but we were all feeling the same thing," Hartman said.

The group went from 15 to 20 members at first to 250 members in Victoria presently, as well as a group in Vancouver and another in Nanaimo.

Kinetic Construction vice-president of business development and WIC co-founder Katy Fairley said one of the core ideals of the group was to "create an atmosphere that we're not alone in this industry."



WOMEN IN CONSTRUCTION

The Women in Construction group includes women from all facets of construction which network and share their experiences. The group started in Victoria, B.C. with an initial 15 to 20 members and has grown to over 250 members including groups in Vancouver and Nanaimo, B.C.

"There are so many more career options for women that were traditionally closed,"

Katy Fairley
Women in Construction co-founder

"It started when Katy called me up one day and said, 'I have this idea about starting a group for women to touch base and share stories,'" Hartman said.

"An overarching part of the group is friendship and camaraderie. Networking is the foundation, but the connections made between us is what gives the group its value," Fairley added.

Both Fairley and Hartman stressed while WIC is focused on moving women forward

in the industry, it isn't exclusive to women.

"WIC isn't exclusively for women, but you have to be a supporter of women in the industry," Fairley said.

While progress has been made, Fairley stressed until equal pay for men and women is standard across the industry there will be a need for advocacy.

"There are still some huge challenges. Recent census results show women are still paid less in construction than a man makes," she said.

"I'm incredibly proud of WIC getting to five years, but there's still a reason for the group to exist around continuing to encourage women and encourage their careers whether it's in the trades, a project manager or a technologist."

"There is still some lack of acceptance that women can do the job, and you get that from older men, younger guys and other women. But it is way better than 1990, when we were so few and far between," Hartman said.

"Attend any construction association event and there's more women there but that's not a reason to be complacent. Show me the census data that we're at 40 per cent of trades or 50 per cent of women on board, and the fight will be over," Fairley added.

Construction associations, Fairley said, do recognize the importance of diversity and that the industry is changing.

"I do think associations are the most progressive part of the industry," she said, "both at the national level and within their member organizations."

As the industry faces a wave of retirements, the opportunities for women will continue to grow, Hartman said.

"Sometimes it's hard to get women out there into construction, but part of that is everyone else is also looking for female workers," she said.

"I've been in the industry eight years. Attend an Under-40 event and 30 to 40 per cent of people attending are women, that's the future of the industry right there," Fairley said.

"There are so many more career options for women that were traditionally closed. But I would love to see more women in trades, management and senior management. Despite obvious gains in the past 10 years, there's still so much more we can do," Fairley said.

B.C. invests in STEM initiatives for women

VICTORIA
B.C. is betting that the future is female.

The Government of British Columbia is giving a \$250,000 grant to the Achieve Anything Foundation to encourage women to pursue careers in science, technology, engineering and math (STEM).

Achieve Anything is a Langley, B.C.-based foundation dedicated to establishing year-round programs to interest girls and women in careers in aviation, aerospace, marine and defence, which are sectors with low female representation.

"Our government is committed to supporting innovation, and that means making sure that we aren't missing out on the talent and skills women can bring STEM disciplines. This funding supports young women to train for good-paying 21st-century jobs, and to become the leaders and drivers of a strong, sustainable economy that builds the best B.C. for everyone," said B.C. Minister of Advanced Education, Skills and Training Melanie Mark

in a statement.

The foundation's two key events are The Sky's No Limit — Girls Fly Too! which encourages families to learn aviation, aerospace, marine and defence through hands-on displays, activities and free flights for first time female fliers, and Operation: This is You! which partners with the Vancouver Police Department, Vancouver Fire and Rescue Services, the Royal Canadian Navy and the Canadian Coast Guard to offer hands-on experience events.

"We all benefit when women and girls are empowered,"

Mitzi Dean
B.C. MLA

"Since 2012, more than 67,600 people have participated in our events, and 9,172 girls and women have enjoyed a free first-flight experience. Our programs employ a unique hands-on

approach toward inspiring girls and women to pursue STEM-based fields," Achieve Anything Foundation president Kirsten Brazier said.

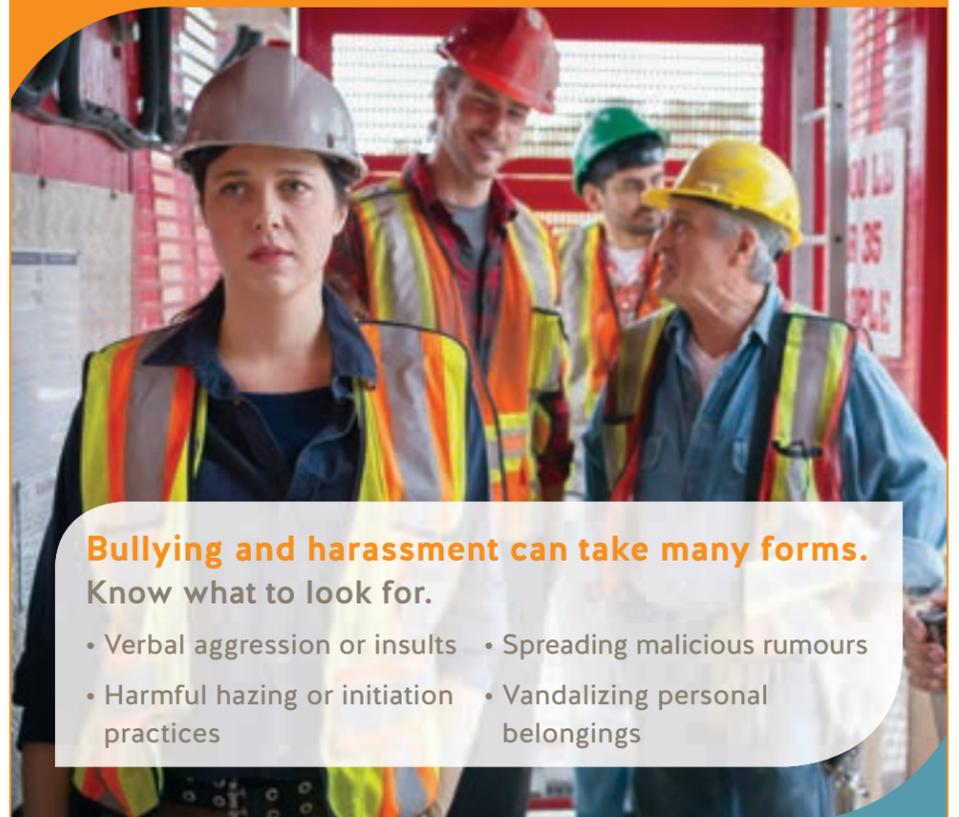
In 2015-16, women represented 54 per cent of B.C.'s post-secondary students but only 37 per cent of STEM-program credentials were issued to women.

Though women make up over half of B.C.'s workforce, only 10 per cent of B.C. women with post-secondary education have STEM-related degrees or certifications compared to 25 per cent for men, and only 5.5 per cent of B.C. women have post-secondary education related to STEM, compared to 13.9 per cent of men.

"We all benefit when women and girls are empowered to follow their dreams. Encouraging gender equity in the tech fields of science, technology, engineering and math will have a lasting, positive impact on B.C.'s economy, as well as our society," said parliamentary secretary for gender equity Mitzi Dean.

JOC NEWS SERVICE

Bullying in construction It's not part of the job



Bullying and harassment can take many forms. Know what to look for.

- Verbal aggression or insults
- Spreading malicious rumours
- Harmful hazing or initiation practices
- Vandalizing personal belongings

Help prevent workplace bullying and harassment. Find resources and view our video series at worksafebc.com/preventbullying.

WORK SAFE BC

Attracting women to construction still requires much groundwork: PCA

KERI SALVISBURG MILLER
CONTRIBUTING COLUMNIST

The statistics are a stark reminder that the construction industry still has a long way to go. While there are more women working in construction, change has been slow.

Over the past 15 years, the construction workforce has grown by over 90 per cent, yet women's participation has grown on average by roughly one per cent. While women make up more than half of fields like educational services, accounting and investment, they represent only about four per cent of Canada's skilled construction workforce. Making up that lost ground isn't easy, but it is possible if the construction industry stays focused on showing more young women and their parents why the skilled trades are a great career choice.

The construction industry, government, and organizations are increasing their efforts to promote, support and mentor women in the skilled construction trades. Each year there are more workshops, seminars and career fairs across the country aimed at making young women aware of all the benefits of a career in construction.

At a recent Skills Canada B.C. event, a panel of women in their early 20s shared their experiences working in the skilled trades, including their sense of pride, the freedom, flexibility and good pay that comes with the job. One 23-year-old explained she was about to buy her first home in Vancouver.

BuildForce National Summary construction/maintenance workforce forecast (2018-2027)



The entire time, not one student in that Grade 9 audience pulled out her cell phone. They were engaged and inspired. If only their parents had been there.

Imagine: no school debt. Home ownership. What parent wouldn't want that for their kids? Yet, all too often, students return home from these events to parents who don't share their enthusiasm for the skilled trades. Many teachers and high school career councillors don't see the skilled trades as a first career choice either. To this day, that's one of the biggest barriers. It's simply not enough to raise awareness

among young people.

A seismic shift in attitudes is needed before careers in the skilled construction trades are seen for what they are — leading edge, in demand, requiring a combination of hard and soft skills. And young women don't have to swing hammers or pour concrete to work in construction. The industry really needs people with backgrounds in project management, architecture and technology as well.

Over the years, barriers have been coming down. One of the key challenges for women in our industry, especially young women start-

ing their families, has always been striking that work-life balance.

The passage of MP Mark Gerretsen's private member's bill in the House of Commons last June is a welcome sign of the changing times. Bill C-243, the National Maternity Assistance Program Strategy Act allows women who work at dangerous jobs to collect paid maternity leave early. The inspiration was a Kingston, Ont. mother and welder whose doctor recommended that she stop work early, leaving her without pay for 32 weeks.

"No woman in Canada should have to choose between being a

mother and pursuing her dream job," Gerretsen said. "I believe that we need to level the playing field, so that women have an equal opportunity to participate in all sectors of the labour force."

This decade, up to a quarter of Canada's construction workforce or about 250,000 workers are retiring. Over the same time frame, up to 40 per cent of jobs created in Canada will be in the skilled trades, according to Skills Canada. With the skilled trades playing such a prominent role in the future economy, the timing is ideal for women to pursue construction careers.

However, industry has to do its part by thinking differently about how it keeps women engaged.

For example, BuildForce Canada's recruitment tracking show that while more women are expected to enter the construction trades during B.C.'s peak construction cycles, without further incentives many are likely to leave the industry when projects wind down.

For companies fortunate enough to hire women, the focus now should be on convincing them to stay. Women who feel truly welcome, are mentored and have every opportunity to advance and succeed, are far more likely to make construction their first and long-term career choice.

Keri Salvisburg Miller is Vice-President, Member Services at the Progressive Contractors Association of Canada. To comment on this column email editor@journalofcommerce.com.



Let's Work Together

She could be the solution to our labor shortage.

Construction leaders are joining forces to open doors and develop a strong workforce to take on the labor shortage. Because we're all in this together.

Join us: procore.com/wic

**W O M E N
IN CONSTRUCTION**

EMPOWERED BY **PROCORE**