



## Construction Rebounds in 2010

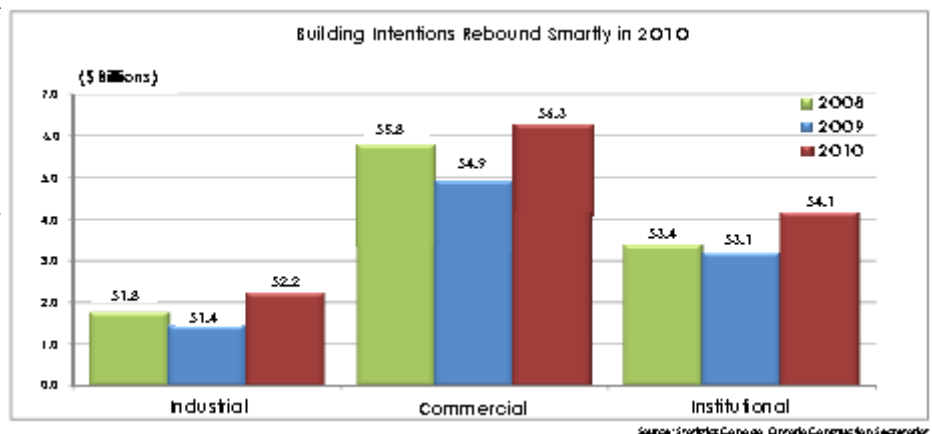


As was reported in a previous issue, contractors had indicated, in an Ontario Construction Secretariat study, that they expected a relatively positive outlook for 2010. Well those expectations were well founded as total ICI building intentions advanced by a healthy 33% in 2010 to a level of \$12.6 billion. Led by the industrial sector which grew the fastest in 2010, industrial construction showed signs of life with a 57% increase - fuelled by strong growth in the transportation (i.e. terminals, airports) sector. Major transit work in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) was the big contributor to this growth, though a general pickup in manufacturing activity also played a major role as the growth in factory and plant construction improved in 2010. However and although industrial construction grew the fastest out of the three ICI sectors last year, it is still at a relatively depressed level.

The value of commercial building intentions also managed to increase last year. Regionally, commercial permit values were higher in 4 out of the 5 major provincial economic regions with the south western area leading the way with an 85.6% increase. The northern region was the worst with an actual decrease of 8.7%. With an improving labour market coupled with substantial projects in some regions commercial building activity was propelled higher in 2010.

Taken together, commercial and industrial building intentions grew 34% in 2010. Because the bulk of these investments come from the private sector it is of major significance given it could indicate that the private sector is helping to drive the economy of the province. This may also indicate that after a turbulent 2009, the private sector made somewhat of a comeback last year and tentatively suggests that it may be ready to lead the way in 2011.

The government's infrastructure stimulus program generated an estimated \$3 billion dollars worth of stimulus spending according to the Parliamentary Budget Officer. In fact, the value of institutional building intentions increased 32% to \$4.1 billion dollars. According to the OSC's latest survey contractors were fairly supportive of the infrastructure stimulus program. The majority of firms (69%) agreed that the stimulus package was successful at generating new work in the construction industry, with a full 25% of contractors strongly agreeing with the positive impact of the funding on construction activity. Moreover, 39% reported that they personally realized an increase in business as a result of the infrastructure funding. Let us hope these positive signs continue in 2011.



## Acoustical Association Ontario

### *The Mathews Dinsdale Minute*



For this month, the Mathews Dinsdale Minute returns to the issue of Occupational Health & Safety. In early April, the Ministry of Labour announced that it would be engaging in workplace health and safety inspection blitzes. While these blitzes are announced generally in advance, the specific workplaces are randomly selected and not identified in advance.

The blitzes, that will start in May of 2011 and carry through the year, cover virtually every sector of the economy in Ontario, including construction. The Ministry of Labour's materials indicate that, in the construction sector, two areas that will receive attention as part of the blitz are low rise residential construction generally and access equipment (ie: ladders and suspended stages) in all areas.

While the blitz may be triggered with a focus on particular areas or subjects, inspectors can issue orders relating to any violations they observe during inspections. Inspectors can make orders against employers, supervisors and/or workers relating to compliance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act and any of its regulations. The Ministry of Labour has stated that it is taking a "zero tolerance" approach to contraventions.

It is always a good idea to be aware of blitzes and to take the opportunities to remind your supervisors and workers that they need to be vigilant at all times in ensuring all work is performed in compliance with the Occupational Health & Safety Act. The costs associated with failing to do so are simply too high.



### *Register Lost Jobs on the Web Site*



Members are reminded that the Association has established an area of the WEB site ([www.aao-online.ca](http://www.aao-online.ca)) for registering jobs lost to **non-union** competition. We strongly urge members to register any work they have lost to non-union contractors. By providing this all important information, we will be able to compile data with specific information, putting us in a better position in the next round of bargaining to assess our share of the market in relation to the non-union competition. It will allow us to gather the empirical data to support proposals at the bargaining table. This information is exceedingly important so that we may effectively represent members in collective bargaining. If you have misplaced you log-in ID and password please contact us and we will forward this off to you. Your support in this matter is greatly appreciated.

### *Important Dates & Notes*

**AAO Conference:**

July 14, 2011—July 17, 2011—Niagara-on-the-Lake



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