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On the cover: Chandos Construction recently replaced an aging 60-year-old pool with a modern and resilient recreation asset for one of the most remote communities in British Columbia. Photo courtesy of Chandos Construction.



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A Message from the Public Works Association of British Columbia

As we move into spring across British Columbia, it's a good time to reflect on a winter that tested the resolve of many communities in the province and highlighted the essential, steady work of public works teams across the province.

While this season didn't deliver a single defining weather event, it certainly showcased the resilience and professionalism of our crews responding to challenges both big enough to matter, and small enough to be overlooked. That is unless you were out there with them doing the work.

A season of quiet, critical work

Across British Columbia, the winter season brought a series of localized events that kept crews busy, which reminded us just how essential proactive planning, rapid response, and long-term investment are to community safety.

In early March, Metro Vancouver and parts of Vancouver Island experienced unexpected sea-level snowfall as a cold, unstable air mass moved across the south coast. The flurries weren't record-breaking, but they were disruptive enough to require coordinated plowing, anti-icing, and rapid response along key travel corridors. Environment Canada's special weather statements noted accumulations of up to five centimetres at lower elevations, with significantly more along mountain routes – including the Coquihalla. Crews worked throughout the night to keep priority commuter and goods movement routes functioning safely.

Not to be outdone, the Township of Langley dealt with the impacts of a series of January atmospheric rivers, and crews responded quickly to localized flooding by placing barricades and clearing debris to reopen roads. While the water receded within days, this quick action minimized service disruptions and kept residents moving during a period of heavy regional rainfall.

These events didn't dominate provincial headlines – but they demanded

professionalism, vigilance, and a coordinated response from public works teams who ensured daily life could continue with minimal interruption.

But it wasn't all challenges. Further inland, winter also saw continued progress on multiyear recovery and mitigation projects tied to the 2021 atmospheric river impacts. Along the Fraser–Thompson corridor, permanent repairs on Highway 1 continued to move forward, including the Gladwin Culvert project near Lytton, which is now in its construction phase and expected to reach completion in 2026. This work is essential, not only to protect against future washouts but to keep a critical provincial trade and travel route resilient for decades to come.

Looking ahead

As we shift our focus toward warmer seasons, I want to extend my thanks once again for the steady, essential work you all deliver every day across British Columbia. Public works may not always make the headlines when things go right but our communities feel the impact of your service in every safe commute, every reliable utility, and every well-maintained public space.

Looking ahead, remember to mark your calendars for October 5-7, 2026, for the upcoming joint conference with the BC Municipal Safety Association in sunny Penticton, where we are excited to bring our networks together for an event that will offer valuable training, shared expertise, and a chance to reconnect in person.

Also, as always, keep an eye on our website and social channels for details on new courses, workshops, and professional development opportunities that are rolling out through the year. Your engagement strengthens our chapter and our profession, and I look forward to seeing you at an upcoming event.

Taryn Scollard

President
Public Works Association of British Columbia



You can learn more about the Public Works Association of British Columbia on their website: www.pwabc.ca.



A Message from the Canadian Public Works Association, Alberta Chapter

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You can learn more about
the American Public Works
Association, Alberta Chapter on
their website: alberta.apwa.org.

Did you know that the Alberta Chapter was first founded in 1979 to enhance the services of the APWA to the Alberta public works community and to improve the quality of public works products and services to Canadian citizens.

As I write this message, it is starting to feel like spring, thanks to a Chinook blowing through the province and the warm winds eating up much of our snow. I am positive that everyone has noticed and is out prepping for their spring maintenance activities.

I recently returned from Victoria, British Columbia, for the Region 9 Delegate meeting. The meeting featured great presentations and amazing speakers and was very well-attended, which allowed us to accomplish a lot. We also had the opportunity to watch Olympic hockey and, while Team Canada failed to capture gold, it was great hockey played by both the men and women's teams and there was lots to be proud of.

While I was there, I was able to take pictures of different public works projects. I always enjoy seeing what others are working on and how they do things outside of Alberta.



*A floating crane working in Victoria's harbour.
Photo courtesy of Peter McDowell.*

I also appreciate networking in person and being able to hear about the daily work and challenges other public works professionals face. American Public Works Association (APWA)

Alberta Chapter used to host Idea Group Meetings around the province, doing just that – sharing ideas and doing tours of new or modified equipment, new buildings, shops, and infrastructure. We want to get these Idea Group Meetings up and running around the province again, and I have had a few towns and cities reach out to me recently to ask about how they can host a meeting. It is very exciting.

The road ahead

Going forward, we are looking for Idea Group Committee members – in addition to others – who would like to be more involved with our activities. We are always seeking volunteers and are still looking for help filling some key positions in the Chapter.

We now have registration open for the upcoming 2026 Equipment Rodeo, happening September 3-4, 2026, in Olds Alberta. This is an event that we are very happy to be putting on again. Thanks to Olds College for allowing us to hold the Rodeo at their amazing venue. Check out our website to learn more and watch out for emails.

Also, don't forget National Public Works Week (NPWW) is just around the corner on May 17-23, 2026. It is a time to celebrate the work we do, so don't forget to proclaim NPWW. If you have something you would like to share, such as a training idea or a job posting, we can help by putting it on our website, www.alberta.apwa.org.

Peter McDowell

President

American Public Works Association, Alberta Chapter



A Message from the Saskatchewan Public Works Association

To support our communities, the Saskatchewan Public Works Association (SPWA) has been working to help build resilience in the face of these challenges and, to this end, we have been proactively identifying ways to assist through targeted training initiatives.

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Hello from the ‘Land of the Living Skies.’

The first few months of 2026 have been interesting as our organization and members – along with communities across Canada – have faced challenges that most of us did not anticipate. From unexpected tariffs and increased costs to equipment and supply shortages to changing weather patterns, we have been forced to adapt to new challenges.

To support our communities, the Saskatchewan Public Works Association (SPWA) has been working to help build resilience in the face of these challenges and, to this end, we have been proactively identifying ways to assist through targeted training initiatives.

In the past year, the SPWA Board has been working behind the scenes to revise and implement the Public Works Supervisory (PWS) training courses to better meet Saskatchewan’s needs. During late 2025 and into early 2026, Board members met with representatives from public works Chapters in Alberta and Manitoba to begin updating these PWS training courses. This collaboration has resulted in the hiring of a consultant to review and revise the courses, and they will ensure they are relevant to western Canada and are aligned with applicable codes and regulations. The Board hopes to roll out the new courses to all communities by the end of 2026.

The Board is also committed to the delivery and promotion of training opportunities – both directly and in partnership with other organizations – in order to help member communities navigate the evolving regulations and improve operational efficiency. As an example, last November,

an Introduction to Water and Wastewater Permit Regulations session was held in North Battleford. The session explained the intent behind the regulations with a representative from the Water Security Agency (WSA) in attendance to address participant questions.

The SPWA is also continuing to offer free ‘Lunch and Learn’ webinars, providing valuable information to communities. Communities from across Saskatchewan and western Canada participate in these webinars.

In mid-February 2026, two Board members attended the Chapter IX regional meeting to discuss American Public Works Association (APWA) proposals and services provided to it members, as well as suggestions that the Chapter IX members have with the Association.

Also in February, SPWA hosted another successful PWX Conference in Saskatoon that was attended by more than 140 delegates from communities throughout the province. The conference featured supplier presentations on their products, discussions on new codes and guidelines, CEUs, and networking opportunities that encouraged knowledge sharing and professional connections.

For the remainder of this year, we will be providing training and new opportunities to our members while promoting Public Works in Saskatchewan. As always, you can visit our website at <http://saskatchewan.apwa.org>, or contact our Chapter Administrator, for more information and details about our upcoming SPWA events or how to become an SPWA member.

Stewart Schafer
 President
 Saskatchewan Public Works Association

The Saskatchewan Chapter strives to promote professionalism in the public works field and provide a network through which members can share and receive useful information.



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Did you know that Manitoba is the longest serving of the Canadian Chapters and has been providing a forum for practitioners since 1955? We actively support our membership, the public, and policy makers to collaborate and maintain healthy communities throughout the province.

A Message from the Canadian Public Works Association, Manitoba Chapter

Greetings from the Friendly Manitoba Chapter!

As I write this, spring is on its way to the province and – aside from some accidents and a small vehicle pileup – no serious issues were reported this winter.

It's easy to say that public works employees are everywhere when you see them working on the side of the road, but how often do you consider all the workers over the years who have stood where we do now? Do you think of the knowledge they've passed down to you, or about the knowledge we have the responsibility to pass down to the next generation of public workers?

So much information has been lost over the years because it wasn't recorded, it was misplaced, or it was destroyed. I saw this happening early in my career and, sadly, we are seeing today that some parts of the world are suffering public works knowledge loss almost overnight.

No substitute for experience

Many years ago, I was working in southern Manitoba, and we had to survey a road reconstruction project where three manholes had been covered by years of aggregate placed on the road surface. Before we could begin, we needed to obtain the general locations of the manholes and still we had trouble finding them – even with a metal detector.

I had asked the municipality for a set of as-builts, and they advised us that the foreman who worked on the project would be out shortly.

Well, a much older man pulled up without any drawings and asked me what I wanted to know. I smiled, explained the situation, and fully expected him to turn around and head back to the office. However, he proceeded to walk along the road and, based on trees and fences, he was able to find the manholes'

location within a few feet – all from memory – close enough that the metal detector could take over.

This event showed me the state of underground knowledge in rural Manitoba. When the project was finished, we provided updated paper and digital copies for them so the older foreman could save his time from coming out again.

Global considerations

I also find myself thinking of the conflicts in Gaza, Ukraine, and other war-torn areas around the world. Imagine the setbacks public works suffer there – not only the destruction of surface infrastructure and the environmental impact of concrete and rubble removal and recycling, but the vast destruction of underground utilities that are damaged by deep bombs and ordinances.

The challenges do not simply end once the conflict ends. There will be years of bomb defusing, and those removals have to occur before full reconstruction and rehabilitation can begin in public right of ways and on private land.

This will prove extremely difficult, as a lot of knowledge and as-builts for public works infrastructure doesn't just sit in desks and electronic files. It exists in the minds and offices of public works employees who know some of these systems, processes, and devices like the back of their hands. But all that knowledge vanishes when they are forced to relocate or – even worse – lost in the conflict.

So, this upcoming National Public Works Week, please take the time to thank your public works departments and consider those communities affected by war. We all hope their conflicts end quickly, and that their public workers can safely get back to work.

Darren Wanless

President
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A Message from the Alberta Municipal Supervisors Association

Our association offers a place to share knowledge and foster communications between public works professionals of all levels from across the province.

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Spring greetings from the Alberta Municipal Supervisors Association (AMSA).

Alberta's spring is largely defined by freeze-thaw cycles, elevated groundwater tables, and increased surface runoff. These harsh conditions accelerate pavement deterioration, expose sub-grade weaknesses, and test the performance of our stormwater networks. As stewards of public infrastructure, our immediate focus turns to comprehensive condition assessments, prioritized pothole remediation, catch basin and culvert inspections, street sweeping, and preparation of capital works programs.

Spring infrastructure maintenance is vital for ensuring the safety and efficiency of public systems as we move into summer's warmer months and 'construction season.' By addressing issues such as potholes, bridge safety, drainage systems, and green spaces, public works departments play a critical role in the resilience of our communities. Effective spring maintenance not only ensures that infrastructure can handle the challenges of warmer weather but also promotes a safer and more sustainable environment for residents. Public works crews work hard to prepare for this seasonal transition, and their efforts set the stage for a successful spring and summer for everyone in the community.

Construction season also brings a heightened emphasis on procurement strategy, contract administration, and project delivery oversight. Inflationary pressures, supply chain variability, and workforce constraints

continue to impact timelines and budgets. Collaboration between municipalities, consultants, contractors, and suppliers is essential to maintain quality standards while meeting community expectations. Our association offers a place to share knowledge and foster communications between public works professionals of all levels from across the province.

If you were unable to join us this year for our spring convention at the Edmonton Convention Centre, consider attending our fall convention, happening November 3-5, 2026. At each of our conventions, we feature an inspiring keynote speaker with an emphasis on practical leadership skills which you can implement in your daily life at home and in the office. Our conventions also deliver a mix of technical presentations as well as a legal presentation which addresses an issue or concern our members are facing in their day-to-day work environments. Be sure to check www.amsapw.ca for more information on events as well as our draft agenda for our upcoming convention.

As we move into this active season, let us remain focused on safety, teamwork, and excellence in service. Thank you for your unwavering commitment to public works and to the communities that depend on us every day.

On behalf of AMSA and its more than 150 members, I wish you a productive and safe spring season.

Travis Wierenga
AMSA President

Get Roadside Ready:

Spring Planning for a Safe Summer

By Ashley Gregerson, WorkSafeBC, and Trace Acres, Road Safety at Work

The snowplows are parked, the salt and sand piles are depleted, and temperatures are rising. With winter in the rearview, public works crews are turning their attention to summer projects, many of which happen on or near roadways. From pothole repairs to solid waste collection, roadside work carries serious risks if not properly planned.

Between 2015 and 2024, nine roadside workers were killed and 267 sustained injuries that caused them to miss work after being struck by a vehicle.

“Roadside work is inherently dangerous and requires planning,” says Road Safety at Work Program Director, Trace Acres. “A roadside work zone is a workplace. This means employers have a legal obligation to identify hazards and implement safety controls prior to starting any work.”

Understanding work duration categories

Under Part 18 of the Occupational Health and Safety Regulation (OHSR), requirements vary depending on the nature and duration of the work.

Key categories include:

- **Emergent work:** Immediate, unplanned work completed in 5 minutes or less.
- **Brief duration work:** Work expected to last 15 minutes or less.
- **Short duration work:** More than 15 minutes but completed within one daylight period.

- **Long duration work:** Lasting more than one daylight period.

Employers must first identify which category applies to determine the appropriate level of risk assessment, documentation, and traffic control required.

Start with a risk assessment

“Whether the work is a multi-day paving project or quick maintenance at several locations, managing risk means identifying what could cause harm to your workers and determining reasonable measures to prevent that harm,” says Michael Paine, Manager of Prevention Programs and Services at WorkSafeBC.

Workers and supervisors must assess site conditions before exiting their vehicles for brief duration or emergent work. Employers must provide training and written safe-work procedures, including required traffic control devices and direction if the work exceeds 15 minutes.

For short- and long-duration work, a written risk assessment is required, and planning may begin weeks or even months in advance.

Consider the following when conducting a risk assessment:

- Specific tasks, such as ditch maintenance, pruning hedges along shoulders, or equipment operation, and the time of day the work will occur.
- Worker proximity to hazardous traffic and how that risk will be eliminated or reduced.

- Traffic speed, volume, peak travel times, and seasonal surges.
- Sightlines, curves, hills, intersections, and access points.
- Coordination of overlapping work activities
- Pedestrians, cyclists, transit stops, or nearby businesses.
- Movement of workers, mobile equipment, and vehicles within the work zone
- Safe entry and exit points.
- Environmental factors, such as heat, wild-fire smoke, fatigue, and reduced visibility.

Risk assessments should involve all employers on the project, as well as workers and joint health and safety committees.

Risk assessments must adapt to changing conditions

Every roadside work zone is different, and conditions can shift due to traffic patterns, weather, visibility, or nearby activity. For that reason, a site-specific risk assessment is required at each worksite before work begins and should be revisited as conditions change.

From risk assessment to traffic control planning

Traffic control measures should reflect the findings of the risk assessment. Like risk assessments, the level of planning required largely depends on how long the job will take.

A traffic control plan is a documented, site-specific plan that explains how traffic

control measures will be applied to protect both workers and road users.

Brief and emergent work requires employers to prepare written safe-work procedures under section 18.3.1(2) of the OHSR. Short- and long-duration work requires a written traffic control plan under section 18.3.2.

Effective traffic control plans address:

- The selected controls, such as road closures, detours, Automated Flagger Assistance Devices, lane shifts, barriers, signs, and cones.
- Work zone layout, speed limits, and the location of traffic control devices.
- Emergency procedures.
- How workers, vehicles, and equipment will interact safely, including on-site communication methods.
- Emergency access requirements and nearby hospitals or transit routes.
- Communication strategy to inform the public in advance about road work and traffic diversions.
- Schedule, roles, and responsibilities to implement and review the plan.

Traffic control planning should follow the hierarchy of controls

When considering how to eliminate or reduce the risk, employers should follow the hierarchy of controls.

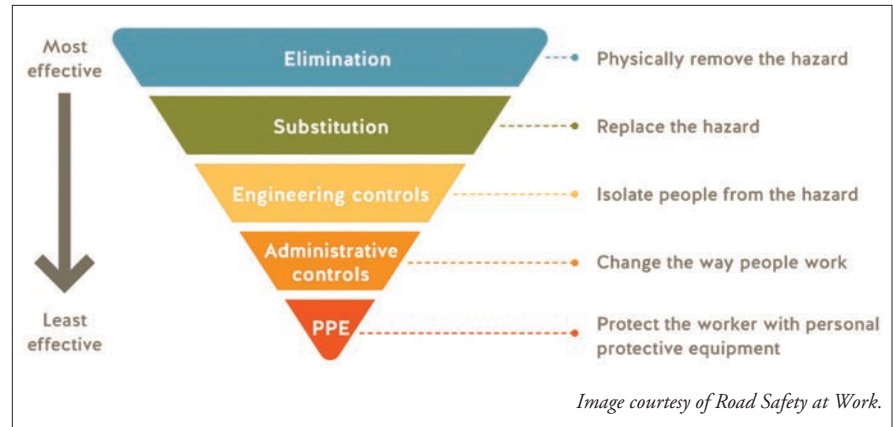
While the controls are listed in order of effectiveness, all five types should be considered, and often work best in combination. For example, in roadside work where you cannot eliminate risks by closing the road or detouring traffic, use a combination of engineering and administrative controls, as well as PPE.

Engineering controls could include barriers or traffic control devices. Administrative controls might include limiting the number of workers exposed to traffic or the scheduling of work in off-peak hours. Only use traffic control persons as a last resort when other control measures cannot adequately manage the risks or will not work for the site – and even then, they must be used alongside other controls.

Orientation, supervision and ongoing communication

WorkSafeBC officers frequently encounter situations where workers are unaware of, or insufficiently trained on, the traffic

“A roadside work zone is a workplace. This means employers have a legal obligation to identify hazards and implement safety controls prior to starting any work.” – Trace Acres, Road Safety at Work



control plan. To address this, workers need a thorough orientation that explains their role in maintaining safety and ensures they understand:

- The work zone layout.
- Hazards of the work zone and the controls in place to mitigate those risks.
- Communication procedures.
- Safe-work procedures, including working around mobile equipment and vehicles.
- Emergency procedures.
- How to report near misses and other safety incidents.

Supervisors should verify that controls remain effective, signage is visible, and workers are positioned safely. Daily safety huddles can reinforce roles, remind workers of safe-work procedures for brief or emergent tasks, and review current conditions.

What to expect when WorkSafeBC inspects

WorkSafeBC Inspections are focused on preventing serious incidents and helping employers correct issues before someone is hurt.

During roadside inspections, WorkSafeBC prevention officers look for evidence that hazards have been identified and controlled, including site-specific risk assessments, appropriate traffic control plans, and workers who understand their roles and procedures. Officers may

speak directly with workers and supervisors, observe the work zone in real time, and check that controls are in place and adjusted as conditions change.

Build readiness into everyday operations

Whether the job lasts five minutes or five months, roadside safety requires knowledgeable supervisors, trained crews and clear procedures that can be applied as conditions change.

Now is the time to ask key questions: Are our risk assessments capturing seasonal realities? Do our traffic control plans reflect how work happens on the ground? Have we developed written procedures for quick or unplanned roadside work?

By addressing these questions early and often, public works departments can head into summer with confidence, knowing that roadside safety is not just a requirement, but an integrated part of how the work gets done. ▶

Ashley Gregerson is a Government Media Relations & Issues Management Advisor at WorkSafeBC. Trace Acres is Program Director for Road Safety at Work, a WorkSafeBC-funded Injury Reduction Initiative aimed at reducing injuries and deaths among those who drive for work or work at the roadside.



Safe from the Start: Looking After Young and New Workers

By the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS)

While some young workers are busy thinking about starting new summer jobs, they may not realize that their ‘newness’ to the world of work could potentially be hazardous to their health. According to the Association of Workers’ Compensation Boards of Canada (AWCBC), in 2023, there were 58,076 accepted lost-time claims by young workers (aged 15 to 24) in Canada, and 29 young workers died from work-related injuries or illnesses.

All workers need to know their rights, which include the right to know what hazards are present on the job and how to protect themselves, the right to participate in keeping their workplace healthy and safe, and a right to report unsafe conditions and practices. Every worker also has the right to refuse dangerous or unsafe work, making sure to follow specific procedures when doing so.

It’s important to note that not all new workers are young workers. New workers

could be individuals returning to work after an absence, such as maternity leave or an injury, and it’s possible that conditions and procedures have changed. They could also be transitioning to a new career in a different industry or working for the same company but in a new role or location. As a result, they may be facing new hazards for which they are not adequately trained. These workers should also undergo an orientation program and have an opportunity to review and discuss their return to work, asking questions and receiving appropriate training along the way. Regardless of age, new workers are five to seven times more likely to be injured during their first month on the job.

Workers, family, and employers all have a role to play in keeping young and new workers healthy and safe.

What employers can do

Employers have a responsibility to provide a safe workplace, which includes considering the specific needs of young and new workers. This includes:

- Making sure there is a comprehensive health and safety program in place to identify and control hazards. The program should be developed with input from the health and safety representative or committee.
- Assigning appropriate work to young and new workers. Until they’re properly trained and feeling comfortable, avoid assigning jobs that require in-depth training, a great deal of responsibility, performing critical or risky tasks, or working alone.
- Having a qualified or competent supervisor who can help ensure the safety of young and new workers. The supervisor should know the potential and actual hazards of the workplace, as well as the laws and regulations that apply to the job.
- Providing detailed training on everything from equipment, safety features, and control systems, to what to do in an emergency.
- Communicating clearly and frequently with workers about their job tasks,

checking in and reinforcing their training during the first few weeks of work.

- Encouraging workers to think in a safety-minded way about their work. Remind them that if they don't know or are unsure about something to ask someone with more experience first.

What young and new workers need to know

As a new worker, it's natural to have questions about your work. If you are unsure about anything, always ask your manager or supervisor to explain or demonstrate procedures or practices until you feel comfortable proceeding. Ask for feedback from your supervisor or instructor to make sure you are performing the tasks correctly and safely. Also, ask about the hazards that you should know about.

A few more tips to keep in mind for your safety:

- Ask for access to a copy of the health and safety rules, if you don't already have it. Follow all safety procedures.
- Know what to do in an emergency.
- Have you been given personal protective equipment to wear? If so, make sure that you have been properly fitted and shown how to wear it, clean it, and store it properly.
- If you're not okay, it's not okay! If you don't feel safe, it's your right to report it. Talk to your supervisor, a human resources representative, or a member of your health and safety committee.

A shared responsibility

Before they see their new workers off to a job, families should take some time talk to them about their work and some of the precautions that can help ensure they come home healthy and safe.

Employers have a responsibility to create and foster a safe and healthy work environment and to protect the health and safety of all workers. Ensure there is a comprehensive orientation program and upon hiring, and health and safety roles and responsibilities are clearly communicated. Being open and upfront sets the tone for the workplace and ensures that workers are starting on safe footing.

Young and new workers bring energy, curiosity, and fresh perspectives to the workplace, but they also need guidance, training, and support. When safety is built into orientation, reinforced through daily communication, and supported by a culture that encourages questions and speaking up, everyone benefits. Making safety a priority from the very beginning helps protect workers, strengthens safety

culture, and supports a healthier workplace for all. ▶


The Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (CCOHS) promotes the total well-being – physical, psychosocial, and mental health – of workers in Canada by providing information, advice, education, and management systems and solutions that support the prevention of injury and illness. Visit www.ccohs.ca for more safety tips.

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Certified Professionals in British Columbia Municipal Approval Processes:

An Outsourcing Primer

By Sonia Sahota and Aidan Andrews, Civic Legal LLP

In recent years, the watchword of development, especially development of housing, has been speed, and particular attention has been paid to the effect of local government regulation on that speed. This has led to a variety of reforms and initiatives aimed at getting local governments out of the way of development and preventing bottlenecks in approval processes.

In British Columbia, examples are statutes such as the *Housing Statutes (Residential*

Development) Amendment Act, 2023, S.B.C. 2023, c. 45, which among other things requires local governments to update their zoning bylaws to allow small-scale, multi-unit housing, reducing local governments' discretionary control of density from residential uses. Another example, seemingly unique to British Columbia, is the Certified Professional Program.¹ While not exactly new – it originated with the City of Vancouver in 1978 – the Program has recently experienced significant growth.

What is the Certified Professional Program?

The Certified Professional Program is a voluntary opt-in scheme, coordinated between the Architectural Institute of British Columbia (AIBC), Engineers and Geoscientists BC (EGBC), and local governments and First Nations. Under the Program, local governments and First Nations (collectively described as 'Authorities Having Jurisdiction' or 'AHJs') authorize owners who apply for building

and occupancy permits to, instead of submitting building and occupancy permit applications to the AHJ for technical review, privately engage a Certified Professional to oversee a development's design and construction. Rather than AHJ internal staff reviewing an application for compliance with the Building Code, building and zoning bylaws, and any development permit, the AHJ accepts a Certified Professional's assurance that the development's plans meet, and its construction will meet, all mandatory criteria.

Certified Professionals themselves are licensed architects or engineers who have taken special training and been recognized by AIBC or EGBC, respectively, for satisfactory knowledge of the BC (or Vancouver) Building Code. The Certified Professional Program draws on the idea that, as members of self-regulating professions, registered engineers and architects bear a responsibility to protect public welfare. Thus, while a Certified Professional hired by an applicant will undoubtedly have an interest in seeing that permits are obtained, they must also serve the public interest.

Features of the program

Where an application is made under an AHJ's Certified Professional permit stream, the Certified Professional will play a significant role as coordinator of the various disciplines involved in the project. An exhaustive list of the Certified Professional's

While a number of major municipalities (and a couple of First Nations) have opted in to the Certified Professional Program, uptake has been limited, given that there are over 300 such governing entities in the province.

responsibilities is beyond the scope of this article, but it includes:

1. Acting as the owner's representative to the AHJ for issues related to the project and its permits (the Certified Professional will also make the applications on the owner's behalf);
2. Obtaining assurance letters from all professionals overseeing discrete technical aspects of the project (e.g., mechanical or fire suppression systems) and submitting them to the AHJ;
3. Conducting design review of each of those professionals' plans and supporting documents and confirming they meet various content requirements under the Building Code; and
4. Making monthly construction progress reports and promptly advising the AHJ of significant unresolved Building Code or permit contraventions.

The primary benefit touted for the Program is that permit approval timelines are shortened by the outsourcing of an AHJ's technical compliance review to a Certified Professional. Further speed advantages may be realized by the ability to obtain staged building permits. Typically, in British Columbia, a building permit will be issued in respect of an entire project, meaning that all design work must be completed and submitted for an AHJ's assessment before any construction work can begin. However, some AHJs authorize permitting in stages for applications involving a Certified Professional. As such, design work for later stages of construction may proceed while earlier stages of construction, such as excavation and foundation work, are ongoing.

While a number of major municipalities (and a couple of First Nations) have

Continued on page 22



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Upcoming Events

2026 North American Snow Conference
April 26-29, 2026
Grand Rapids, Michigan

National Administrative Professionals Day
April 22, 2026

PWABC Lunch & Learn
May 12, 2026

National Public Works Week
May 17-23, 2026

CPWA Manitoba Chapter Spring Fling & Goldeyes Game
May 20, 2026
Winnipeg, Manitoba

2026 Heavy Equipment Rodeo & Tradeshow
May 22-23, 2026
Selkirk, Manitoba

SPWA NPWW Workshop
'Paving Over Problems: Tools to Handle Conflict on the Job'
May 20, 2026
Regina, SK

Deadline to Submit for PWABC & BCMSA 2025 Public Works Industry Awards
August 14, 2026

PWX 2026
August 30 to September 2, 2026
Houston, Texas

CPWA Alberta Chapter 2026 Equipment Rodeo & Trade Show
September 3-4, 2026
Olds, Alberta

CPWA Manitoba Chapter Golf Tournament
September 17, 2026

8th Annual PWABC & BCMSA Joint Conference
October 5-7, 2026
Penticton, British Columbia

AMSA Fall Convention
November 3-5, 2026
Edmonton, Alberta

Association of Manitoba Municipalities Spring Convention
April 20-22, 2027
Brandon, Manitoba

PWX 2027
August 22-25, 2027
Phoenix, Arizona

Focus on Public Works
The American Public Works Association presents expert-led online education, trending technologies, resources, networking, and learning opportunities each month. Visit their website for the upcoming schedule.

Trio of Jets, Pair of Bombers, and Other Local Celebs Lend Names to Winter Equipment

Winnipeg, Manitoba, asked residents to get creative in the spirit of naming some snowplows. And, boy, did they deliver ... just like hard-working snow clearing crews do across the country every winter.

The City received more than 1,700 individual entries to the inaugural Name that Plow contest and narrowed the list to 51. Winnipeggers then cast their votes to decide the 12 winning names:

- Dancing Blade (submitted by Jennifer Doering)
- Melt Stegall (submitted by Adam Kroeker)
- Emperor Plowpatine (submitted by Justin Willcott)
- Kevin ShovelSnowOff (submitted by Gord Koshelanyk)
- Sled Penner (submitted by Shelley Giesbrecht)
- Grady Oliveira (submitted by Brent Rombough)
- Hellebuycket (submitted by Mat Guerra)
- Slosh Morrisey (submitted by Liam Stoopendaal)
- Greg (submitted by Zoe Vander Aa)
- Mark Shovele (submitted by Todd Zdebiak)
- Winnie the Plow (submitted by Kyle Mitchell)
- Mr. Plow (submitted by Miles Hie)

The names are now displayed on the side of 12 City-owned pieces of snow clearing equipment, where they will remain until the next Name that Plow contest in a future snow-clearing season.



Tune into Public Works Radio (PWR), a new podcast launched by the American Public Works Association (APWA).

PWR brings community stories to life, spotlighting the people and projects that keep our cities thriving. Episodes will cover a wide range of topics designed to educate and inspire, making public works more visible to everyone – from the public and elected officials to industry peers and the media.

People can tune in to Public Works Radio wherever they listen to their favorite podcasts. Every month, two new episodes will be available for listening and downloading. Topic requests, episode feedback, and all other inquiries related to PWR can be directed to www.podcast@apwa.org.

2026 SPWA Awards (Presented February 26, 2026)



AWARD OF MERIT – SPWA

The intent of the APWA Award of Merit is to recognize the dedicated service of public works or related agency personnel at the operational level who perform their responsibilities in an exceptionally efficient and courteous manner. Nominees must have been employed by a public works related agency or agencies for a period of not less than five years.

Winner: Trevor Gray, City of North Battleford



MERITORIOUS SERVICE AWARD – SPWA

The Meritorious Service Award acknowledges that the private sector and academic institutions play a key role in providing public works facilities and services. The award is based on a pattern of professional activities that have resulted in the enhancement of the quality, efficiency and cost-effectiveness of services provided by public agencies.

Winner: JS Industries



CONTRACTOR OF THE YEAR – SPWA

The Contractor of the Year award was established to promote excellence in public works construction and maintenance by recognizing outstanding service, and the key role the contractor plays in meeting the objectives of public works projects and programs.

Winner: SafeSidewalks Canada



GERRY WHEELER MEMORIAL AWARD – SPWA

This award recognizes an individual who has made a most valuable contribution to the SPWA. The award was established by Neptune Meters Ltd. In memory of Mr. Gerry Wheeler, who was an employee of Neptune Meters, as well as a long-time member of the SPWA.

Winner: Stewart Schafer

PUBLIC WORKS PERSON OF THE YEAR – SPWA

This award recognizes the outstanding service to the profession, the public, and the SPWA by an individual who truly exemplifies the public works official.

Winner: Allen Stevenson, Town of Regina Beach



HARRY S. SWEARINGEN AWARD – APWA

Established in 1958 to perpetuate the memory of Harry Sellar Swearingen (1900-1957) who worked untiringly on behalf of APWA and its purposes. This award recognizes outstanding individual achievement in support of the Association's strategic plan, goals, and objectives, as well as outstanding service to APWA as a public or private sector member at the Chapter level.

Winner: Dale Petrun



PROFESSIONAL MANAGER OF THE YEAR AWARD – ADMINISTRATIVE MANAGEMENT – APWA

This award seeks to recognize outstanding achievement in the area of administration within the public works department, as well as to inspire excellence and dedication in the public sector by recognizing the outstanding career service achievements of administrative professionals.

Winner: Rod Benroth, RM of Edenwold



Canadian Public Works Association Awards

In January 2026, the CPWA Manitoba Chapter presented awards to two RRC Polytechnic Students:

- **CPWA Civil Engineering Tech Entrance Award winner: Paige 'Nameyans' Johnson**
- **CPWA Municipal Engineering Technology Award winner: Komal**

Write for *The ROADRUNNER*

If you have an interesting story to tell that would be of interest to public works professionals in Western Canada, please reach out to ssavory@matrixgroupinc.net.

We are looking for HR Reports, Safety Reports, Investment Reports, Legal Briefs, Community Reports, and Tech Talks for our 2026-2027 editions! *All articles are subject to approval.*

Continued from page 19

opted in to the Certified Professional Program, uptake has been limited, given that there are over 300 such governing entities in the province.² One wonders whether implementing the Program might ever be made mandatory for local governments. Of course, the use made of Certified Professional permit streams would naturally depend on the number of Certified Professionals able to provide services and owners' demand for more rapid approvals.

Somewhat similar proposals have been made, also undergirded by the idea that technical professionals, bound by obligations to public safety, ought to be trusted to do their work without unnecessary local government oversight. For instance, in October 2025, a bill was introduced into the British Columbia Legislature that, if passed, would enact the *Professional Reliance Act*.³ Under the *Act*, where a local government has required an applicant to provide development approval information related to impacts like local transportation and the

natural environment,⁴ the local government would be prohibited from requiring 'peer review' of that information by other qualified professionals. By relying on the opinion of the applicant's professional, presumptive speed and cost benefits would accrue, although the proposal is controversial.

British Columbia's Certified Professional Program is worthy of consideration, especially for out-of-province parties. ▶

This article is intended for the general information of organizations in British Columbia. If your organization has specific issues or concerns relating to the matters discussed in this article, please consult a legal advisor.

Sonia Sabota is a Senior Solicitor and founding partner at Civic Legal LLP, a British Columbia law firm with expertise in municipal law, land development, construction, procurement, and complicated contract matters. Aidan Andrews is an associate lawyer with Civic Legal and has a general municipal practice. Visit www.civiclegal.ca for contact and additional information.

References:

1. The Program is not established by law, although it is enabled by s. 10 (permitting an Authority Having Jurisdiction to allow a person "to decide on [its] behalf... whether a matter conforms to a building regulation... [if] the person is an exempt building professional") of the *Building Act*, S.B.C. 2015, c. 2 and Part 3, Division 1 of the *Building Act General Regulation*, B.C. Reg. 131/2016.
2. At time of writing, the authors understand the Certified Professional Program to have been implemented by 11 AHJs (8 municipalities, 2 First Nations, as well as the unincorporated University Endowment Lands administered by the provincial government).
3. Bill M-216.
4. Pursuant to Part 14, Division 6 of the *Local Government Act*, R.S.B.C. 2015, c. 1.

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Working on the Rails in Winnipeg

By Ralph Sjodin, Streets Maintenance Division, City of Winnipeg



***Above:** The project involved cutting and removing the old track, followed by excavating the existing ballast to a depth of eight inches. Photos courtesy of Ralph Sjodin.*

***Left:** The rail crossing at St. Matthews Avenue and Empress Street required replacement for many issues that created an uneven track structure.*

***Below:** The work done has improved safety and performance for rail freight, motorists, cyclists, and pedestrians for many years to come.*



Winnipeg, Manitoba, has approximately 240 level railway crossings in conjunction with five separate rail carriers throughout its entire infrastructure network. However, the number of crossings has been in decline over the last few years. This is due to the City's identification and removal of abandoned rail lines no longer in service and transport hubs shifting operations to the outskirts of the city, as well as the tendency of new developments typically avoiding rail corridors altogether.

The construction and maintenance standards for each crossing within a

municipality, as well as the responsibility for associated costs, are defined by Board Agreements. These agreements are issued to both the road authority and the railway and overseen by Transport Canada and can sometimes date back more than a century. The specific standards and cost responsibilities typically depend on whose infrastructure was established first, or on who seeks expansion through widening projects.

Several conditions can justify repairing or replacing a crossing to protect public safety, particularly to reduce derailment risk. Key factors include rail defects detected through ultrasonic testing, indicating

compromised rail integrity; poor subbase or drainage, which can cause the track structure to ‘pump,’ loosening the rails and reducing their anchorage to the ties; gauge problems resulting from lateral rail movement when rails are not properly secured to the ties within the crossing; or deteriorated vehicular riding surfaces, which, when not routinely maintained, can worsen the structural issues above and further destabilize the track.

Evolution of rail maintenance

Crossing surface designs have evolved significantly over the years. Early installations relied on simple wooden planks or asphalt paired with improvised flangeways, created by placing a second rail on its side. Modern crossings now use engineered solutions such as reinforced concrete panel systems or asphalt paired with advanced rubberseal flangeways. New technologies also continue to emerge, improving installation

efficiency and extending the service life of crossings, which can now last up to forty years with proper maintenance.

The City of Winnipeg’s Public Works Department has completed as many as ten full crossing reconstructions and up to fifteen surface repairs per season in recent years, depending on available budget. These repairs range from asphalt patching and full asphalt removal and replacement, using excavation or milling followed by paving, to resealing or replacing loose concrete panels or wooden planks. Work can also include the complete removal and paving over of abandoned track infrastructure.

A notable project

An example of a full crossing reconstruction in 2025 occurred at the St. Matthews Avenue and Empress Street crossing. Located in the heart of the city, the crossing required replacement due to several compounding issues: ballast was being pumped into the sub-base under train loads, traffic volumes were high, and drainage was poor. These conditions created an uneven track structure and led to the deterioration of ties, rails, and spikes. The driving surface for vehicles had also been steadily declining.

The first step was to schedule the work and secure a full four-day road closure through Traffic Management, including sidewalks and bike lanes. This required public notification of detours through local media and the installation of advance message boards. The railway also adjusted its freight schedules to accommodate the construction window.

We then surveyed the existing roadway and track structure to develop a CAD design that could accommodate a heavier rail profile – upgrading from 100-pound to 115-pound rail for increased load capacity – while ensuring a smooth, consistent transition for vehicles crossing the tracks.

A multi-day project

Day one began with setting up road-closure devices and establishing a safe work zone. The rail authority’s Controls and Switches team then bypassed the active warning systems, and a dedicated

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safety watch coordinated with Transport Canada and dispatch to track train movements. When a train was scheduled, warnings were issued so all workers and equipment could clear the tracks. A second rail authority, which operates a parallel line at this location and uses the same signal system, was also notified and present to assist. Once the site was secured, crews cut the existing pavement to the design limits, then excavated and hauled away the asphalt and concrete.

The second day began with cutting and removing the old track, followed by excavating the existing ballast to a depth of eight inches. Crews then installed geotextile fabric and placed new ballast before setting a prebuilt, 230-foot rail panel into position. This was done using two excavators and two-wheel loaders equipped with high-rail attachments. A rail tamper lifted and leveled the track to the design grades while compacting the ballast, with survey checks performed between lifts; several passes were required to achieve the final rail height. A track broom then cleared excess ballast from the ties to ensure a uniform surface across the crossing. Rubber pads were installed on top of the ties, and concrete panels were secured with lag bolts.

Throughout this process, the Controls and Signals team wired the new track section into the existing signal network, using a hydrovac truck and directional drilling to install conduit and wiring for a future upgraded signal system and cantilever assembly, which will add additional warning lights and support a realigned sidewalk.

The third day had the paving crew placing base material and compacting it to the required density. They then applied a tack coat and paved the approaches in two-inch asphalt lifts, tying the existing pavement cuts into the edge of the new concrete panels. Due to inclement weather, however, the crew was unable to complete the work that day, and a street sweeper was brought in overnight to clean the roadway.

The paving crew returned the next morning to place and compact the final lift of asphalt. While they worked, rail crews completed thermite welds and connected the newly installed track to the existing rails at

both ends, creating a continuous welded rail. Once the welds had cooled, the roadway was ready to reopen to traffic, which occurred just before the afternoon rush.

In total, more than one hundred Public Works and railway personnel contributed to this project, completing the work within one hundred hours over five days. The renewed crossing will support safe and reliable passage for rail freight, motorists,

cyclists, and pedestrians for many years to come. ▶

Ralph Sjodin, C.E.T., is employed by the City of Winnipeg, Public Works Department as a Technologist 1, upon graduation. He was the recipient of the CPWA Municipal Engineering Technology Award 2016 and completed the Civil Engineering Technology program (Municipal) from Red River College in 2017 with an Honours Diploma.

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A Step Up in a Greener Direction for Maple Ridge



Maple Ridge's new electric MT50e commercial-grade walk-in vans are a step forward in the city's Resilient Future 2050 plan. Photos courtesy of City of Maple Ridge.

By Paul Adair, Staff Writer

In September 2025, the City of Maple Ridge was recognized at the Climate & Energy Action Awards at the annual Union of BC Municipalities convention in Victoria for its *Resilient Future 2050* plan. This integrated climate action and resilience plan launched in 2025 after 18 months of research, analysis, and community engagement, and this is the city's first climate action plan that stands out for embedding climate and equity data directly into real-time decision making – a shift from reactive to anticipatory policy.

The goal of Resilient Future 2050 is to build a coordinated and equity-driven pathway to net-zero emissions while preparing the city for increasing climate-related hazards such as heat waves, wildfires, and flooding.

One cornerstone to the *Resilient Future 2050* plan revolves around fleet electrification. To that end, Maple Ridge has been busy installing new electric vehicle (EV) chargers to support the transition of its municipal fleet to cleaner, more cost-efficient vehicles with funding from the federal government. The city has installed 38 Level 2 (240-volt) electric vehicle charging stations, with an additional 20 Level 2 and four Level 3 (480+-volt) chargers planned in 2026, which will enable Maple Ridge to electrify as much of its light- and medium-duty fleet as possible.

"Maple Ridge is proud to be recognized as a provincial leader in climate action, and projects like this are helping us move closer to achieving the goals set out in our Resilient Future 2050 plan," says Mayor Dan Ruimy. "By expanding our EV charging network, we can continue transitioning our fleet to electric vehicles, lowering costs for taxpayers and reducing our community's

carbon footprint. We're grateful for the Government of Canada's support."

Growing a greener fleet

The city's fleet is steadily transitioning to cleaner vehicles, with all cars now electric or hybrid. Each new EV replaces a gas-powered vehicle, reducing fuel use, lowering maintenance costs and cutting GHG emissions. The additional charging capacity will ensure reliable, efficient charging so staff can deliver services while advancing sustainable operations.

"All of our light-duty vehicles and cars are currently either electric or hybrid, so that's a bit of a feather in our cap and you can technically say our light duty fleet is green," says Kirk McLeod, Manager Sewers, Drainage, & Fleet, Operations. "We are transitioning towards full electric, which is a pretty robust goal for the end of the year."

In 2023, Velocity and Freightliner showcased their all-new, all-electric MT50e commercial-grade walk-in van chassis, which merges Freightliner’s performance with advanced EV technology to meet the demands of last-mile delivery by generating power and range, all with zero emissions.

“We were at the event and a few months later, as we were preparing a specification for diesel step vans, we thought, ‘Why not electric? Why shouldn’t Maple Ridge be the first in Canada to get these electric step vans?’” says McLeod. “Our branding is to be ‘bold by nature,’ and – true to form – our city manager endorsed us to be bold in this matter, and we moved towards the electrification of these medium- and heavy-duty electric vehicles.”

Maple Ridge purchased two of the MT50e step van chassis for its water and sewer departments. These utility vans allow crews to travel to utility construction sites in the community and be outfitted with all the tools and parts needed to complete their projects. Going forward, the city plans to invest into additional medium / heavy-duty kinds of equipment as the technologies become more readily available.

“We are cautious about transitioning some of our heavier-duty vehicles, like our snowplow trucks, because we are still waiting for the future technologies, like hydrogen or EV, to provide the kind of 24-hour reliability we need in case of a major snow event,” says McLeod. “In the meantime, however, we are busy electrifying a lot of our smaller-type vans and, this year alone, we plan to replace ten of our current diesel cargo vans with electric models.

The benefits of an EV transition

Even though the purchase of the two MT50e step vans was a bold decision made by Maple Ridge, it was – in no way – an easy decision to make. Grant funding streams, such as the Plug In BC incentive, are critical to move towards fleet electrification due to the higher cost of EV technology. Grants can bring those costs down, more equivalent to a traditional vehicle.

The city also worked directly with its water and sewer department crews to determine what would be required in the custom designed chassis, especially during an emergency. Due diligence was given to ensure

The new step vans are supported by Maple Ridge’s investments in 38 Level 2 (240-volt) electric vehicle charging stations and four Level 3 (480+-volt) chargers.



the EVs could provide the same – or an even better – level of service for the crews using them, as well as meet the Mayor and Council’s strategic priorities around climate leadership and environmental stewardship.

Now with the EV step vans in operation, it appears as though the investment of time and resources has been well worth it. Maple Ridge public works crews report that they are impressed with the power of the new EV step vans, as well as the smoother and quieter ride they provide.

“We hear of about the pride our workers have to be operating clean, highly efficient equipment,” says McLeod. “They have a higher level of ownership and genuinely value operating these types of units, and they appreciate that their leadership is investing in them in this way.”

Fleet Forward and the road ahead

In fall 2025, the Community Energy Association (CEA) hosted a series of four Fleet Forward events across British Columbia. Focusing on zero-emission

large and specialty use vehicles; the events were designed to showcase vehicles that are already operating in the province to help fleet operators explore how to plan and integrate them into their own operations.

It was also an opportunity for Maple Ridge to showcase one of its two new all-electric step vehicles and network with other municipalities involved in this space to learn what works and to make sure everyone is pulling in the same direction in terms of fleet sustainability.

“Electrifying your fleet doesn’t come without its challenges. It involves new technologies and infrastructure, new policies, and new processes – that’s a lot of work to transition through,” says McLeod. “Events like Fleet Forward allows you to better understand the level of commitment required to electrify your fleets and gives you the tools needed to communicate that commitment to your senior leadership. But Fleet Forward also let us share our successes and encourages others to follow in our carbon footprints.”

North Battleford Ensures Reliable Power

and Communication

More than just water storage, the water tower in North Battleford has become a city landmark, as well as a hub for city communications. Photos courtesy of City of North Battleford.

By Kevin Kristian, Water and Wastewater Superintendent, North Battleford

The City of North Battleford's water tower is a critical piece of infrastructure that supports far more than just water storage. Although its primary role is for the water distribution system, the tower also houses numerous antennas that support North Battleford's internal communications (two-way radios), water and wastewater communication (i.e. reservoirs and pumping stations to plants), emergency services, and the remote water meter network. The tower site also includes a five-horsepower circulation pump in the building at the base of the water tower, used to prevent the water in the tower from stagnating and freezing. In addition to the above, a 24V, 30-amp direct current electrical cathodic protect system had been installed in 2017 to protect the tower structure.

In North Battleford, the water tower structure is also an iconic landmark. In the past, the tower was lit with numerous lights, and the lighting system was upgraded in 2024 with variable coloured LED accent lighting that is used to celebrate special events occurring within the Battlefords, something that was featured in Winter 2023-2024 issue of *The Roadrunner*.

To improve resilience and reliability during power outages, the City of North Battleford

has initiated a project to install a permanent standby generator at the water tower site.

Power for the people

In the event of a major storm or emergency, maintaining communication between City departments, infrastructure, and emergency responders is essential. As such, the purpose of the generator installation will help ensure uninterrupted operation of communications equipment, cathodic protection, and LED lighting during power outages.

Yet, while the scope of the project appeared straightforward at the outset, several unforeseen challenges emerged once the work began.

One of the first issues encountered was the lack of detailed site plans. Documentation for the 115-year-old site was incomplete, and – during excavation work – crews discovered an old concrete foundation from a previous water tower built in 1909. This unexpected obstacle directly affected the original design as the project plans called for electrical and communication cables to be buried underground, but the existing foundation made trenching impractical.

To address this challenge without significantly increasing costs, the project team developed an alternative solution. Instead of burying

the cables, the project team would purpose-build a cable tray system to safely house and protect the wiring. This approach ensured code compliance, maintained accessibility for future maintenance, and avoided costly demolition of the old foundation. Although it required design changes and additional coordination, the cable tray solution proved to be a practical and budget-conscious alternative.

Another significant challenge involved hazardous materials. The building at the base of the tower, which housed a circulation pump as well as the electrical and control equipment, was found to contain asbestos wallboard.

Before any construction work proceeded, the asbestos was removed by a professional remediation company in accordance with OHS Regulations. This step was necessary to protect workers and ensure regulatory compliance, but it also introduced additional delays early in the project schedule and revealed wood wall and roof sections that had rotted. Construction crews replaced these sections of the building and then re-insulated them with spray foam and finished with painted oriented strandboard (OSB).

Supply chain issues further complicated progress with the generator delivery being delayed due to tariffs that were in effect earlier in the year. These delays were beyond

In the event of a major storm or emergency, maintaining communication between City departments, infrastructure, and emergency responders is essential. As such, the purpose of the generator installation will help ensure uninterrupted operation of communications equipment, cathodic protection, and LED lighting during power outages.



Instead of burying the cables, the project team is using a cable tray system to safely house and protect the wiring above ground.



The recent generator installation will help ensure uninterrupted operation of communications equipment and LED lighting during power outages.

the City's control and had a cascading impact on the overall project timeline. As a result, the project is currently approximately two months behind the original schedule and is still not fully completed.

Despite these challenges, a key decision was made to keep the project within financial constraints, while still meeting operational needs, was a guiding principle throughout the process. The generator is expected to play a vital role during summer storm events, when power outages are more likely to occur and the demand for reliable communication is at its highest.

A successful conclusion

The project began in late summer of 2025 and was originally scheduled for completion in early January 2026. Due to the combination of site conditions, hazardous material remediation, and supply delays, the revised completion date is now the end of March 2026.

While delays are never ideal, they did provide an opportunity to improve the site beyond the original intended scope of work. During the extended timeline, crews were able to remove and clean up old, unused power and telephone cables that had accumulated over time. In addition, a new concrete sidewalk was poured, improving both access and the overall appearance of the site. These improvements have made the area safer, cleaner, and more visually appealing, adding long-term value to the facility.

Although the water tower generator installation may appear to be a straightforward project, it presented numerous technical, environmental, and logistical challenges. By taking a measured and thoughtful approach, the project team was able to identify practical solutions without exceeding the project budget. The result will be a more resilient water tower facility that keeps the lights on, communications running, and essential services supported when they are needed most. ▶

Kevin Kristian is a seasoned municipal water and wastewater professional with 22 years of experience in the industry. He currently serves as Water / Wastewater Treatment Superintendent at the City of North Battleford, where he focuses on delivering reliable operations through strong leadership, project execution, and continuous efficiency improvements.

Chandos Construction Brings Durable Recreation to Bella Coola

Chandos Construction has completed the Bella Coola Centennial Pool, delivering a durable recreation facility for the remote coastal community. Photos courtesy of Chandos Construction.

By Paul Adair, Staff Writer

Chandos Construction has completed the new Bella Coola Centennial Pool, replacing an aging 1967-era facility with a modern and resilient recreation asset for one of the most remote communities along British Columbia's central coast.

The renewed pool will serve the Bella Coola Valley's tight knit population of more than 2,100 residents and become the beating heart of the unincorporated community during the hot summer months.

Essential infrastructure for a uniquely remote location

Set deep within a coastal fjord and reachable only by long winding roads, ferry connections, or small aircraft, Bella Coola presents construction challenges far beyond typical project conditions.

Before construction could even begin, the project required the demolition of the existing – and aging – Centennial Pool, which had deteriorated significantly after a heavy rainfall event several years earlier.

"The old pool was in very poor condition," says Graham Pirie, Senior Superintendent at Chandos Construction. "The community and the regional district, along with Central Coast Regional District (CCRD), came together and raised the money to replace it."



Durable stainless steel and easy maintenance let the community manage unpredictable spring openings, without the challenges that delay typical outdoor pool operations.

To overcome the region's limited supply chains and long transportation timelines, Chandos worked with Carscadden Architecture to shift from traditional cast-in-place concrete construction to a prefabricated stainless-steel pool system manufactured by Berndorf Baderbau in Czechia. This approach allowed the basin to be fabricated overseas while site preparation was underway in Bella Coola, significantly reducing schedule and logistical risks.

"Because of the remoteness, getting materials on site was extremely challenging,"

says Dominic Ries, Director of Technical Solutions, Pre-Construction at Chandos. "While we were digging the foundations, the pool was being manufactured in Europe and shipped across the Atlantic. It saved a considerable amount of time."

Engineering for climate resiliency and long-term durability

Beyond its logistical benefits, the stainless-steel system was selected for its performance in Bella Coola's unique environmental conditions. Located within a 200-year

floodplain, the region experiences periodic groundwater surges that create challenges for traditional concrete construction.

“Pools are designed to hold water, but here, we also had to manage water pushing in from the backside,” says Ries. “Stainless steel eliminated permeability concerns and offered far better long-term resilience against groundwater saturation versus traditional damp-proofing on concrete swimming pool tanks.”

This alternative construction method also delivered significant sustainability improvements. Compared with a conventional concrete pool, the installation was measured in weeks rather than the months required with a conventional concrete swimming pool pour schedule. The added benefit is that the stainless-steel basin achieved a 68 per cent reduction in embodied carbon dioxide equivalent (CO₂e) and prevented the consumption of more than 20,000 litres of diesel that would otherwise have been required for winter heating and hoarding.

Strengthening local economic participation

Maximizing local involvement was central to the project’s delivery. The only concrete supplier in the region is operated by the Nuxalk Nation, and transitioning to stainless steel ensured the project aligned with the community’s available production capacity. Local concrete placers, framers, and general labourers were engaged throughout construction.

“There is only one concrete plant here, and it is owned by the local Indigenous nation,” says Mathew Chrystian, Project Director, SSG. “By switching to stainless

steel, we aligned the pool’s concrete needs with what local supply could deliver. That local participation, and the mentorship and training that happened on site, was one of the most rewarding parts of this project.”

Rigorous planning and coordination for smooth delivery

With mobilization windows of 14 to 21 days required for any equipment or materials, extensive planning and collaboration were essential. Flat packing the stainless-steel pool into sea containers and trucking it along the steep and winding road into the Bella Coola Valley required careful orchestration between Chandos, trade partners, and the logistics teams.

“We knew logistics were going to be a challenge,” says Pirie. “We had to look weeks ahead for every piece of equipment and every delivery to keep production going.”

Chrystian adds, “Shipping a flat-packed pool across the world and up a remote coastal route takes a level of coordination that only works with strong, trusting collaboration. Chandos excels in remote work, and you can see that experience reflected in the final product.”

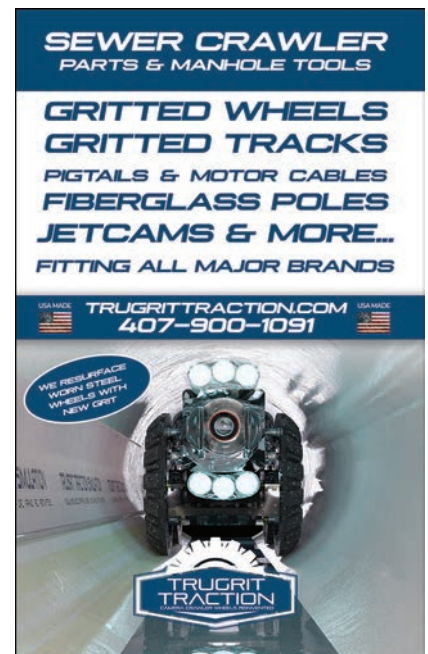
The durability of the stainless-steel material and the ease of basin maintenance were also important requirements for the community. The sometimes-unpredictable short schedule of the spring start-up and fall shut down for the community was another major consideration for the stainless-steel swimming pool selection, as the community needed to be able to get the pool open quickly without typical spring pool coating

touch-ups or any tile work that is sometimes needed with outdoor swimming pools and shut it down quickly if an early freeze hits in the fall.

“This pool is designed to freeze over without causing damage to the basin or piping,” says Ries.

Completed one month ahead of schedule, the new Bella Coola Centennial Pool now provides a long-lasting, low-maintenance recreation facility built to support water safety, community well-being, and seasonal programs for decades to come.

“It has been a privilege to be part of this project,” said Pirie. “At Chandos, when we say we are going to deliver something at a certain time and cost, we stand by that. We are proud of what we have built, and proud that the community is too.”



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The Unseen Hazard of Asbestos Cement Water Pipes

By Julian Branch, Journalist

Lurking beneath the surface of hundreds of Canadian municipalities are tens of thousands of kilometres of old asbestos cement (AC) water pipes. These pipes have reached – or are quickly reaching – the end of their lives and need to be replaced.

Unlike the United States, however, Canada does not regulate asbestos in water and Health Canada continues to maintain, as it has since 1989, there is ‘no consistent, convincing evidence’ to show that swallowing asbestos is harmful.

National Research Council (NRC) studies show that the new pipes are made up of approximately 20 per cent asbestos and 80 per cent cement. Those same studies explain that over their lifetime, the asbestos tends to remain in the pipes, as other materials gradually wash away.

A WorkSafeBC FAQ sheet on asbestos cement pipes says, “Aged, failing pipes, from which the binding materials have leached, can be up to 80 per cent asbestos.” This means that when an old asbestos cement water pipe breaks, and is being repaired, it would consist of almost pure asbestos.

Both WorkSafeBC and NRC documents caution against abandoning old asbestos cement water pipes-in-place when being replaced. The WorkSafeBC FAQ states: “Reburying asbestos-containing pipes in soil does not effectively encapsulate or enclose the asbestos, so unless you are otherwise encapsulating the pipes, you must ensure that degrading pipes are removed from the work area and disposed of appropriately.” The document also states that friable – or disturbed asbestos fibres – pose a risk of exposure to workers.

Another study from NRC looking into asbestos cement water pipes is more blunt. “Abandonment-in-place may cause health risks related to future construction activities at these sites. However, this practice is still one of the



Asbestos cement water pipes were widely used in the 1940s and are used today because of their light weight and supposed durability.



An asbestos cement water main failed in Weyburn, Saskatchewan. The city has approximately 59 kilometres of asbestos cement water mains throughout the city. Photo courtesy of City of Weyburn.

Asbestos cement water pipes became popular in Canada in the 1940s due to their attractive pricing, light weight, and supposed durability.

preferred methods for many utilities”, reads a 2010 NRC study entitled *Safety and Waste Management of Asbestos Cement Pipes*.

Statistics Canada

Asbestos cement water pipes became popular in Canada in the 1940s due to their attractive pricing, light weight, and supposed durability. The pipes, whose predicted lifespan has grown from 50 to 70 years, has now jumped to 100 years in some municipalities. Statistics Canada released data last June shows there are close to 14,000 kilometres of asbestos cement water pipes in Canada. British Columbia leads the pack with 4,261 kilometres, Alberta comes in second with 3,286 kilometres, Saskatchewan has 2,757 kilometres, Ontario has 1,259 kilometres, and Manitoba rounds up the top provinces with 1,006 kilometres.

Regina, Saskatchewan, which has between 530 to 600 kilometres of asbestos cement water pipes running under the streets, was home to the NRC studies. Regina’s pipes are impacted by the movement of clay soil. It expands and contracts due to soil moisture,

breaking the pipes. In other jurisdictions, soft water flowing through the pipes, hastens the deterioration.

Documents obtained under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA), show there were 2,477 asbestos cement water main breaks in the city between 2010 and 2022. Yet the City of Regina maintains that it has not detected any asbestos in water, since testing started 10 years ago.

A global issue

In New Zealand, earthquakes in recent decades have added to the problem. A University of Otago thesis paper titled, *Asbestos in New Zealand’s Urban Water Mains: The Impacts of Aging Infrastructure* reads, “In 2017 some residents in Temuka (NZ) found their water filters were clogging with a fibrous white paste.”

Other jurisdictions have prioritized the replacement of old asbestos cement water pipes. In Malaysia, where there are almost 40,000 kilometres of the pipes, the government is planning to replace them all by 2040.

Canada currently has no such plan. However, Health Canada is currently reviewing its almost four-decade old decision to not regulate asbestos in water. So far, it maintains there is no need to develop a Maximum Acceptable Concentration (MAC) for asbestos in water because there is insufficient evidence showing that it is harmful when swallowed.

This information is contained in *Draft Guidance on Asbestos in Drinking Water*, which points out that the pipes are at or near the end of their useful lives. “Since asbestos can be released from AC pipes present in drinking water distribution systems, monitoring should be conducted in the distribution system in areas where AC pipes are known to be present,” reads the paper. ▸

Julian Branch is an award-winning journalist, who spent 25 years writing on politics, environmental issues, and crime. Following that he has served as the Director of Communications for three provincial premiers and a Canadian-based college in Doha, Qatar.

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Spraying Between the Lines:

How Winkler's Kubota Found a New Lane

By Paul Adair, Staff Writer

As a southern Manitoba city has turned a ubiquitous Kubota machine into an unlikely municipal workhorse that has given new purpose to a piece of equipment many departments might overlook.

In 2009, line painting in Winkler, Manitoba, tended to be a very manual and labour-intensive operation. At the time, the city's public works crews used a hand-push gasoline line painter equipped with a pump and gun activated from the handle. The challenge of this setup was significant, in that the unit required at least two people to load and unload the unit from the back of a pickup, along with all the painting supplies, such as pails of paint and acetone, which needed to also ride in back. In addition, pushing the machine along roadways made production slow and physically demanding and moving between locations was inefficient, requiring constant manual handling.



Public Works in Winkler, Manitoba, has used in-house ingenuity to convert a Kubota RTV900, making paint road markings safer and more efficient than it used to. Photo courtesy of City of Winkler.

“The Kubota RTV900 checked all the right boxes, such as smooth low-speed control, diesel reliability, excellent operator visibility and cargo capacity, and a compact size for maneuvering in tight urban streets, as well as hydraulics already built into the unit.” – Cliff Wall, City of Winkler

The city’s Public Works Department knew there had to be a safer and more efficient way to paint road markings.

“After the Supervisor at the time – Peter Froese – learned that a nearby community, Steinbach, had a Graco ride-on system, we went to see it and, although it was a capable unit, it still required a pickup truck and trailer to move it from site to site,” says City of Winkler Public Works and Facilities Manager, Cliff Wall. “However, this experience showed that a ride-on concept worked and that we were looking for a single, self-contained vehicle that could move around town without towing, loading, or unloading.”

This realization pushed Winkler into exploring the potential of repurposing equipment the city already owned. Before he went all in on this idea, however, Wall borrowed a John Deere Gator from the Recreation Department and mocked up a temporary boom, a basic gun activation system, and mounted the line-painter unit in the cargo box.

After testing the Gator on a street with a centre seam to follow, Wall and Froese found that it worked surprisingly well, which confirmed the concept and gave him, as well as the City of Winkler, more confidence to invest in a proper platform: the Kubota RTV900.

The right machine

The Kubota RTV900 is a durable, diesel-powered utility vehicle (UTV) designed for heavy-duty work and off-road terrain, and it was chosen over the Gator because of its three-speed transmission combined with a variable-speed hydrostatic accelerator that allows extremely smooth, even ground speed – something that is critical for clean, uniform paint application.

“The Kubota RTV900 checked all the right boxes, such as smooth low-speed

control, diesel reliability, excellent operator visibility and cargo capacity, and a compact size for maneuvering in tight urban streets, as well as hydraulics already built into the unit,” says Wall.

To adapt the machine, the Public Works Department engineered several custom systems completely in-house. Wall himself designed and fabricated a small integrated trailer platform that attaches to the Kubota, allowing the operator to load and unload the line painter alone, all without needing to manually lift it, solving the major safety risks associated with the old equipment. The department then redirected the Kubota’s existing hydraulic dump circuit to operate a front-mounted paint boom that lowers for centre-line painting and raises for transport. This modification provides stable, consistent gun position and allows height control from the operator’s seat.

“We also built a side-boom for curb and edge-line work that is fully operable from the Kubota’s cab,” says Wall. “Additionally, we installed an electrical solenoid switch that lets the operator activate or deactivate the paint gun, as well as control both the centre-line and curb guns without leaving the seat.”

A small gas-powered sweeper mount was then installed so the operator can quickly clean a stretch of roadway before painting, especially spot-cleaning in places sweeping crews might have missed.

The benefits of modification

Turning the Kubota into a line-painting unit has made it possible to rely on a one- or two-person crew, which has made the work faster and safer, and there is no longer any waiting for a contractor to fit the job into their schedule. The controlled ground speed and stable boom have resulted in cleaner, more consistent lines, even during night

work in busy areas, and the built-in lighting, beacons, and arrow board add a level of safety the old setup simply could not match.

On the cost side, the Kubota conversion has allowed Winkler to skip the purchase of a dedicated ride-on Graco unit or a specialized truck and trailer combo, all while gaining the freedom to paint whenever conditions are right rather than whenever a contractor is available.

The City of Winkler first purchased the machine in 2010, which means that the Kubota is now entering its 16th year of service! Performance over the years has been remarkably steady and, outside of routine maintenance and the occasional pump rebuild, there have been almost no mechanical issues whatsoever, and the paint quality has stayed consistently sharp season after season.

Operators say it’s easy to control, the boom behaves predictably, and the lighting package makes night work feel far safer than the old setup ever did. That ease of use shows up in the community response as well: council is happy with on-time completion, residents appreciate the clean and visible lines, especially at night with the added reflectivity from glass beads, and delays have become increasingly rare.

Painting the road ahead

By refurbishing and adapting the unit for community line painting, Winkler has shown how a modest investment, paired with in-house ingenuity, can deliver professional-grade results on local streets. The city’s experience offers a practical blueprint for other municipalities looking to stretch tight budgets, modernize their fleet, and get more value out of the tools they may already own.

“For any community looking to do what we did here in Winkler, I would say to keep your design modular so it can be removed when the equipment is needed elsewhere for other duties,” says Wall. “Make sure to prioritize operator ergonomics – being able to run every function from the cab is key – and ensure there is proper lighting and traffic control for night operations. Also, don’t overlook installing a sweeper since prep makes a big difference in paint longevity. Ultimately – build what you need first because you can always refine later.”

Ergo Eco Solutions Helps Reduce Dust Ups

Ergo's solution was applied to an unpaved road at Malahat Nation and then compared with both water-only treatment and an untreated control section.

By Paul Adair, Staff Writer

With more than 90 per cent of British Columbia's provincial road network unpaved, dust has long been an unavoidable byproduct of industry, transportation, and rural infrastructure, and many communities face ongoing air-quality issues from excessive dust creation, road safety, and maintenance issues. To address this issue, Vancouver Island-based cleantech company Ergo Eco Solutions (Ergo) has completed a real-world pilot of its biobased dust suppressant and road stabilization solution, bringing a new generation of dust control technology to the province's roads.

Ergo is a very multifaceted company, both a recycling company and a manufacturer of bio-based products. The company can be described as a clean tech version of an integrated oil company model where, instead of drilling for oil from underground, Ergo's upstream operations collect waste cooking oil from local restaurants using vacuum trucks, which is then brought to a central manufacturing centre to be produced into an alternative product.



Ergo Eco Solutions innovative Oil-ternative® products helps reduce waste while contributing to a healthy planet. Photos courtesy of Ergo Eco Solutions.

“It’s been quite the journey that has brought us to this point, following a model where we do research and development of new products and bring them out to pilot them,” says Ergo CEO, Brian Roberts. “That’s the fun part, where we get to be like mad scientists creating the real-world solutions that will replace the harmful petroleum products damaging our environment.”

Led in partnership with the Malahat Nation at its new eco-industrial business park, Ergo’s pilot builds on a long-standing relationship between Ergo and the Malahat Nation, established in 2020 and grounded in shared values of sustainable innovation and land stewardship. As a strategic stakeholder with representation on Ergo Eco’s Board of Directors, the Nation provides governance and oversight, with operational support delivered through the Malahat-Nelson Limited Partnership.

The pilot is also supported in part by advisory services and funding through the BC Fast Pilot program, delivered by Innovate BC and the National Research Council of Canada Industrial Research Assistance Program (NRC IRAP).

Ergo’s proprietary solution is a completely biodegradable product that has been designed as a liquid concentrate for easy mixing with minimal water, as well as for application using standard dust-control equipment. Part of the company’s expanding, eco-friendly Oil-ternative® line is manufactured from recycled organic food waste collected from restaurants and commercial kitchens on Vancouver Island. The solution converts local waste into a practical dust-control product that supports a more sustainable, circular approach to managing unpaved roads.

A bio-based alternative to water-intensive dust control

Unpaved roads in British Columbia can pose significant problem for health and safety. For example, driving on a dusty road behind someone else leads to impaired visibility, and walking along the road means breathing in the dust, which gets in the lungs.

“Traditional maintenance tended to negatively impact the environment,” says Roberts. “The old school way of doing it was to spray used motor oil or creosote on the road and, while it worked really

“It provided highly effective dust suppression that lasted for months after application, significantly improving road conditions and visibility.”

– Lawrence Lampson, Malahat Nelson Limited Partnership

effectively, it was bad for both the environment and human health.”

Other common dust control alternatives also had significant drawbacks. Chloride salts – like calcium and magnesium chloride – can accelerate corrosion of vehicles and equipment and increase chloride levels in nearby soils and vegetation. In addition, because they rely on attracting moisture to the road surface, their effectiveness can decline during very dry conditions when dust problems are often the most severe.

“Even using water to reduce dust meant driving up and down the roads in a truck to apply it, which adds diesel emissions, is costly, and uses water at a time when water conservation can be an issue,” says Roberts. “So, we decided to come up with something better.”

For its pilot, Ergo’s solution was applied to a 750-metre section of unpaved road within the Malahat Nation’s eco-industrial business park and then compared with both water-only treatment and an untreated control section. According to the results, Ergo found that by bonding with dust particles to stabilize road surfaces and reduce airborne particulates, its innovative solution delivered 22 per cent more effective dust suppression, longer-lasting performance, and visibly improved road conditions.

Modeled across the full two-kilometre road section, the numbers also suggest that Ergo’s dust control solution could potentially reduce water use by up to 99.5 per cent, cut GHG emissions by 98.5 per cent, lower operational costs by up to 65 per cent, and reduce overall road maintenance needs.

“The performance of Ergo’s dust control product exceeded our expectations,” says Lawrence Lampson, Operations Manager, Malahat Nelson Limited Partnership. “It provided highly effective dust suppression that lasted for months after application, significantly improving road conditions and visibility. For any operator managing unpaved roads, this product offers a practical and reliable solution for dust control.”

A second test site hosted by PATH Developments in Colwood, British Columbia, is further validating the product under active construction-site conditions. Already a user of Ergo bio-based form-release products, PATH is assessing Oil-ternative® as a way to reduce dust, improve on-site air quality, and better manage unpaved roads on development projects.

“What stood out for us was the combination of performance and sustainability. The product delivered excellent dust control that lasted longer, and it did so with far fewer truck runs and less water,” says Tony McGee, Field Service Manager, PATH Developments. “It’s a practical, sustainable solution we plan to keep using.”

The future of dust suppression

Although last year’s pilot demonstrated the viability and efficacy of Ergo’s product in suppressing dust, the company’s work is not yet done, and Ergo will again partner with the Malahat Nation to run a second pilot over summer 2026.

“In the first pilot, we observed that Ergo’s dust control product delivered additional benefits, most notably by acting as a road sealant that helped stabilize the road surface – but this has raised other questions that we still need answers to,” says Roberts. “Will managers need to grade the roads less when using our product? Can this help managers reduce maintenance costs of both the roads and the equipment using them? How much can we save end users per year when they use our product? We’ve also heard from others across Canada interested in being part of a future pilot in their own municipalities, and we could definitely see expanding to another larger pilot as we roll out to distribution next year.”

If you or your municipality are interested in learning more about Ergo Eco Solutions and its Oil-ternative® line of products, Roberts invites you to reach out at www.ergo.eco. ▶

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