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The Official Publication of the Alberta Educational Facilities Administrators' Association

SPRING 2024

Long-awaited North Trail High School opens in Calgary



AEFAA announces Spring Conference & Trade Show schedule

Friends of Morrin Council fundraiser for Morrin School replacement project



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Message from the AEFAA president

Rod Swartzenberger

As I reflect on the last nine months of being AEFAA president and thinking of what message I should be writing, I have been considering both the history and future of AEFAA. Back in 1973-1974, SPOSA (School Plant Officials of Alberta) was brought into existence. In 2010, it was renamed AEFAA. I wonder if the executive team and president Roy Hetherinton ever thought it would be continuing strong in 2024.

The membership then were working together to create a safe learning environment for staff and students, and that same level of commitment is still apparent today with our executive team and the AEFAA membership.

Our mission statement reflects the objective of our society, namely “to work in partnership with Alberta school divisions in providing safe and caring learning environments.” What a great feeling this is to be president in the 50th year, and the goal is still to create the best learning environments for staff and students.

This accomplishment was not easy, and I’m sure over the years the executive teams of the past had struggles, but they continued and worked hard to give the membership the chance to learn and network to be successful. There are guys like Al Kloeppe, who has 35 years in AEFAA, including president from 1999 to 2000 and executive director for the last 11 years. David Michalko, Russ Mckay, and Dan Dyck are a few past executive members that I have had the pleasure of getting to know. I look at Tammy Parry and Kevin Henderson, who

had to lead us through COVID and worked hard to still give members something during a time when none of us knew what the next day would bring. However, we continued to support each other with Zoom meetings before we could go back to in-person conferences. We have been working hard to build AEFAA and this has been happening due to the work of the executive team building great conferences and PD sessions, trade shows, roundtable discussions, and networking times with vendors and other members, which allows us all to succeed in our jobs. I have had the privilege to listen to guys like Kevin Erickson and the Al Olsens of our organization pass on their knowledge to the new members in these roundtable discussions and networking. This knowledge is invaluable and so important to pass on and learn from. For all members out there, if you have any thoughts of joining the executive team, it is such a privilege to work on building AEFAA and continuing to grow and support it. It is another part of the networking and learning that you get from AEFAA.

In closing, I would like to thank the past executive team, members, and vendors who have supported SPOSA and AEFAA to get us to 50 years, as well as the current executive team, members, vendors, and EFMA that I have had the privilege to work with and get to know. You are the support that we all need to succeed in our jobs and to be part of making AEFAA great for another 50 years.

Thank you, everyone, for this opportunity. ■

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AEFAA *member profile*



Alan Kloepper has been a member of the Alberta Education Facilities Administrators Association (AEFAA) since 1988 and has been the executive director since 2013. His story of how he came to be involved in what he considers the most important organization in school facilities started when he became the Supervisor of Maintenance with a small school division in Brooks, Alt. How he got there and where he is now started in Grade 9 when his dad told him he should think about being an electrician.

Alan graduated from Brooks Composite High School in 1977. Two days after that, he started apprenticing as an electrician.


As a second-year apprentice, he was approached by an oilfield electrical contractor to work for their firm instead of the one he started apprenticing with out of high school. Very quickly Alan was given responsibility and went from crew foreman as a fourth-year apprentice to a journeyman that oversaw projects, eventually becoming an area manager for the same company. Shortly after that, Alan decided to start his own oilfield electrical company that was very successful. Then, in 1988, the Saudi Arabians flooded the oil market, prices dropped, and work slowed down drastically. Alan was not going to go through another slump in the oilfield and decided to change career paths. He saw an advertisement from a school division based out of Brooks for a Supervisor of Maintenance. He applied, was interviewed, and was selected from a field of 70 applicants.

Alan started his career in educational facility maintenance on September 1, 1988. He was told by senior administration he should join the School Plant Officials Society of Alberta (SPOSA) and that it was a good organization for people like him who were new to the field and eager to learn how things worked within Alberta Education and taking care of school buildings. Alan attended his first conference in Edmonton at the Delta South and was asked to stand up as a new member and come forward

to receive his SPOSA pin. He remembers how good it made him feel to be recognized in this group as a member. He also immediately knew this organization was unique. The personal touch the SPOSA executive exhibited made him feel comfortable to be there. That comfort allows people to be open about their questions and comments regarding facility operation and maintenance.

Alan continued with his work and faithful attendance to every SPOSA event he could take part in. He also worked hard by taking university courses on weekends and evenings and, after five years, received two professional designations. One was certification to be a city or county manager (LGM) and the other was the credentials necessary to be a secretary treasurer (CSBO). Through all of this, the province underwent an amalgamation in 1994 where the 148 existing school boards were combined into about 60 different boards. This meant managerial positions like superintendents, secretary treasurers, and facility managers were in jeopardy of losing their job. Alan prevailed and became the Manager of Facilities and Maintenance for Grasslands Public Schools when the Brooks School District and the County of Newell Board of Education joined forces. During that time, Alan was asked to let his name stand for an open position on the

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executive committee of SPOSA. Four years later, he was vice president and, from 1999 to 2000, he proudly became the SPOSA president and celebrated the 25th anniversary with the membership. During this time, Alan was asked to participate in the development in the Standards for Maintaining Educational Facilities. This committee consisted of several stakeholders, including trustees, principals, secretary treasurers, and Alberta Infrastructure staff. Also, during this time, Alan reviewed and help create the funding model – not the dollars – responsible for the Plant Operation and Maintenance funding envelope.

In 2001, Alan invented, designed, and developed the first ever Career Technologies Studies (CTS) mobile classroom. This mobile classroom can expand to almost 900 square feet. It can move between schools and sites to provide classes to students who can't access those types of programs at their locations. This idea was

nominated for the Premier's Award of Excellence – and it won. In 2004, Alan was presented this award at the Jubilee Auditorium by Premier Ralph Klein on a televised broadcast. CTS trailers are now manufactured and distributed worldwide, and they're all based on the original design created by Alan. It's his most treasured professional accomplishment. And, through all of this, he managed to write a book (unrelated to any of his work). As it is with all books written in Canada, two copies of it reside in the National Public Library in Ottawa.

*Currently Alan is the only facility manager in the province of Alberta that has received the Premier's Award of Excellence.

Alan Kloepper started to become a recognized name amongst school jurisdictions and government departments and remains to this day. As a result, he started providing consultant services to school divisions across the province on how to bring PO&M services in line with the funds

granted to them with an enhanced level of service.

SPOSA continued to move on, providing its members with different sources of professional development and opportunities for the membership to network. In 2010, SPOA – SPOSA's sister organization in British Columbia – changed their name to the School Plant Officials Association to Educational Facility Managers Association (EFMA). Following suit, SPOSA changed their name to the Alberta Educational Facilities Administrators Association. The then executive director of AEFAA was Ken Fate. Ken was the second executive director for AEFAA and was preceded by Pat Cook. Ken Fate announced his retirement in 2012 and the executive of AEFAA knew Alan was a dedicated member and was interested in helping AEFAA. Alan was offered the position of executive director in 2013 and accepted it.

Since Alan became the executive director, he has been responsible – with the support of the many executive members – for several initiatives. In Alan's first year, he started the exhibitor sponsored fall workshop. Although the fall workshop was an event held before his appointment as executive director, the yearly cost of it was subsidized from the AEFAA general coffers. Alan recognized this and has turned it into a very popular and profitable event, seen as somewhat of a retreat. The event is now completely funded by exhibitors and sponsorships while mostly focusing on professional development for its members, which is provided in partnership by SAIT.



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The annual spring conference and tradeshow continues to be a success; however, it is now somewhat more profitable. Alan continues to seek corporate donations to provide more to the AEFAA members at the conference. Corporate donations and sponsorships are higher than they have ever been. The post pandemic economic drive is very prevalent in the education industry and numerous service providers want in. As mentioned in the fall workshop, the partnership AEFAA has with SAIT continues during the spring conference. One day prior or after the conference is dedicated to professional development for their members. Alan established this PD program with SAIT mainly because of the stigma associated with maintenance supervisors and facility managers. It was widely thought, through conventional wisdom, that people who were in leadership roles, whether they were custodial supervisors or maintenance supervisors, were merely tradesmen or custodians who worked themselves up through the ranks to get their position. And, as a result, were paid accordingly because their level of knowledge as managers or supervisors was subpar. His drive was to make sure AEFAA members were exposed to a professional development program that would enhance their education enough to prove to employers they were more than tradesman and custodians - they were professionals in their field and that educational facility maintenance and operation is an industry unto itself dedicated to providing quality educational environments and should be taken seriously.

Alan continues to take his favorite organization very seriously, as well. In his words, "failure is not an option. AEFAA and its members don't deserve that. They are special, hardworking people that often get lost in the shuffle in the world of education even though their responsibilities are paramount in providing quality learning environments."

Having said that, he looks forward to seeing all the AEFAA members at the next event, eager to listen, eager to work, and eager to laugh.

Alan is happily married to Sherry and they live in Brooks, Alta. He continues to work for Grasslands Public Schools and hopes to continue working for AEFAA in the years to come. ■

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AEFAA member benefits



Membership advantages:

- AEFAA memberships can attend all AEFAA functions. Currently, AEFAA conducts a spring conference and trade show that hosts professional development sessions pertinent to the field of educational facilities and their safe operation and maintenance. The tradeshow component of this event showcases all the prominent vendors that provide our industry with the necessary and new goods and services required to properly operate and maintain these educational facilities.
- AEFAA also conducts an annual fall workshop. The primary function of this event is to provide continuing education for its membership.

The sessions are hosted by SAIT and provide the attendees with the latest in educational requirements for managers and supervisors pertinent to our industry.

- Members also receive copies of *Facility Focus* magazine, which focuses on all things related to the educational facility operational and maintenance. There are two editions: spring and fall.
- AEFAA members also gain access to the members area of our website. The members area of the website has a platform designed to promote networking with other colleagues from similar educational jurisdictions.
- AEFAA also hosts spring workshops. These events range from facility tours to further education on current challenges.
- Members are also made aware of current and new insurance facility requirements, as well as updates from Alberta Education that are presented at both major spring and fall sessions.



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Associate membership advantages (exhibitors and vendors):

- This membership enables all vendors and exhibitors to be invited to participate in the annual spring trade show.
- It also enables those who hold this membership to possibly be invited to the fall workshop.
- Members will receive two copies, spring and fall, of *Facility Focus* magazine.
- Associate members are also able to advertise in *Facility Focus* magazine.
- Members will also receive the full AEFAA delegate membership contact list, complete with names, school jurisdiction, position, phone numbers, and email addresses. ■

AEFAA 50th Annual Spring Conference & Trade Show

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MAY 20-23, 2024

Monday May 20

5:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Conference Registration		Front Lobby
5:30 pm - 10:00 pm	Presidents Reception	75	Silver Birch Lobby

Tuesday May 21

8:00 am - 9:00 am	Conference Registration		Front Lobby
9:00 am - 12:00 pm	Opening Ceremonies - Keynote Speaker	110	Mayfield Dinner Theatre
10:45 am - 11:00 am	Break		Mayfield Dinner Theatre
11:00 am - 12:00 pm	Ceremonies Cont'd		Mayfield Dinner Theatre
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch	110	Mayfield Dinner Theatre
1:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Trade Show	250	Grand Ballroom/Alpine Lakes Room
6:00 pm - 7:00 pm	Dinner	250	Grand Ballroom/Alpine Lakes Room
7:00 pm - 8:00 pm	Draws	250	Grand Ballroom
8:00 pm - 12:00 am	Tradeshow Social	250	Alpine Lakes Room/Foyer

Wednesday May 22

7:00 am - 8:30 am	Breakfast	100	Rundle/Robson RMS
8:00 pm - 5:00 pm	Session A - Golf - 18 holes		The Ranch
8:30 am - 4:30 pm	Session B - SAIT PD	40	Rundle/Robson Rms
6:00 pm - 12:00 pm	AEFAA 50th Birthday Bash	120	Rundle/Robson Rms

Thursday May 23

7:30 am - 9:00 am	Breakfast	90	Rundle/Robson Rooms
9:00 am - 10:15 pm	Panel Discussion	90	Rundle/Robson Rooms
10:15 am - 10:30 am	Break		Foyer
10:30 am - 12:00 am	LAPP	90	Rundle/Robson Rooms
12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Lunch	90	Rundle/Robson Rooms
1:00 pm - 2:30 pm	Annual General Meeting	90	Rundle/Robson Rooms
2:30 pm - 2:45 pm	Zone Meetings	90	Rundle/Robson Rooms
3:00 pm - 4:00 pm	Certification Update	90	Rundle/Robson Rooms
4:00 pm - 6:00 pm	Free Time		
6:00 pm - 10:00 pm	Banquet & Entertainment	110	Mayfield Dinner Theater



Message from the president of the Educational Facilities Managers Association of B.C.

The longstanding collaboration between the Educational Facilities Managers Association of B.C. (EFMA) and the Alberta Educational Facilities Administrators' Association (AEFAA) has been a source of immense value for both organizations. Alberta's consistent attendance at EFMA conferences over the years has not only been a pleasure but has also contributed to the building of a powerful synergy between the two sister associations.

This collaboration is not just about attending conferences, but extends to a genuine exchange of ideas, knowledge, and experiences. The annual conferences have become a cherished opportunity to welcome old friends, catch up on AEFAA's developments, and share valuable insights.

The dedication of board members from both associations is commendable, and the collaborative spirit is evident in the shared goal of seeing AEFAA grow while preserving the core values that have shaped its journey. Since 1964, EFMA has provided a platform for educational facility managers from various backgrounds to come together, offering support,

sharing ideas, and maintaining high professional standards.

As EFMA extends its congratulations on AEFAA's 50th anniversary, the sentiment is rooted in the belief that the shared journey of the past has laid a foundation for an even more robust future. EFMA acknowledges the privilege of working with AEFAA and expresses gratitude for the collective commitment to making a lasting impact on educational facilities for generations to come. The partnership between EFMA and AEFAA exemplifies the strength that comes from collaboration and the shared pursuit of excellence in educational facility management. Joining the 50th anniversary of AEFAA is viewed as a significant honour by EFMA. It reflects the commitment and strength of an organization that was established half a century ago and continues to play a pivotal role in ensuring safe learning environments for students of all ages.

Congratulations on your 50th anniversary, from the EFMA.

Archie Stogianos
2022-2024 EFMA president ■

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North Trail High School places an emphasis on the natural sciences, so natural materials were incorporated into the design of the new building.

Calgary high school welcomes students and staff

North Trail High School was funded by Alberta's government with a total project budget of \$70 million

By Kelsey James

As a long-time priority for the Northern Hills Community Association, the North Trail High School in Calgary, Alt. officially opened its doors to students and staff for the 2023/2024 school year.

Alberta's government provided \$70 million to build the new North Trail High School, located at 12500 Harvest Hills Boulevard NE. Construction of the 16,224 square meter, two-storey facility began in December 2020 and was completed on budget and on time in July 2023. The project was led by prime

consultant Oystryk & Team Architecture Ltd. and general contractor Bird Construction Group Ltd.

Sub consultants included SMP Engineering, Remedy Energy Services Inc., People & Places, BEI Engineering Inc., Entuitive, Jubilee Engineering Consultants Ltd., FFA Consultants in Acoustics and Noise Control Ltd., and Building Envelope Engineering Inc. Commissioning was done by RSR Commissioning and the cost consultant was Tech-Cost Consultants Ltd.



The new school boasts 46 classrooms, a learning commons, a gathering area, two gymnasiums, a theatre, yoga and fitness rooms, automotive, career, and technology studies (CTS), pre-engineered space, eight labs, art, band, and construction classrooms, computer labs, and a full administration area.

The new school boasts 46 classrooms, a learning commons, a gathering area, two gymnasiums, a theatre, yoga and fitness rooms, automotive, career, and technology studies (CTS), pre-engineered space, eight labs, art, band, and construction classrooms, computer labs, and a full administration area.

“The building is a steel and masonry structure on a concrete grade beam and pile foundation. It also has concrete and glulam columns/beam elements, SBS roofing, metal cladding, and brick veneer exteriors,” said Mike Tennis, project manager with Bird Construction Group Ltd.

The driving design consideration for the school was to use as much natural materials as possible. North Trail High School places an emphasis on the natural sciences, so architectural elements were purposely selected to mirror this theme.

“In general, the approach was to keep on the outside very horizontal lines that blend in with the significant grade change on the site and help break up the large building,” said Monika Oystryk, principal architect with Oystryk & Team Architecture Ltd.

Naturally, the team encountered several challenges throughout the project, but nothing they couldn’t adapt to.

“The key to a successful project was the collaborative team approach between all stakeholders involved in the construction,” Oystryk said. “We always approached problems in a way of discussion and finding the best viable solution together as a team.”



Construction of the 16,224 square meter, two-storey facility began in December 2020 and was completed on budget and on time in July 2023.



Alberta’s government provided \$70 million to build the new North Trail High School, located at 12500 Harvest Hills Boulevard NE.

North Trail High School is currently pursuing LEED Silver Certification and has solar panels installed on the roof. The school opened to 1,300 Grade 10 and 11 students and expanded to 1,800 total students (including Grade 12) for the 2024/25 school year. ■



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Morrin School replacement project welcomes students and staff

The Morrin School received Alberta government funding for a new school as the structure of the old facility, which was built in 1950, was in poor condition.

Students and community members benefit from shared spaces

By Kelsey James

The municipality of Morrin, Alt. has welcomed students and staff to its new \$17.1 million replacement school.

The Morrin School received Alberta government funding for a new school as the structure of the old facility, which was built in 1950, was in poor condition. The new single story, 2,531 square metre facility broke ground on May 9, 2022 and was completed by December 20, 2023. Group2 Architecture Interior Design Ltd. was contracted by the government as Prime Consultant on the project and worked alongside general contractor Shunda Consulting & Construction Management Ltd.

“The Village of Morrin is a small community where Morrin School plays an integral role. The school

serves not just Morrin, but also the surrounding communities of Rowley, Rumsey, and Munson,” said Steven Nielsen, Chief Deputy Superintendent of the Prairie Land Public School Division. “Having a new school guarantees a sound and safe place for all of these communities to bring their children and access after school hours for sports and activities like 4H.”

Morrin School was designed with input based on the needs of staff, students, and the community. Committees were created for design of the library, gymnasium, and other areas, including flex spaces, breakout rooms, a foods lab, community library, and sensory room to support students with unique requirements. The design of the new facility aims

to support a diverse range of learning needs, including project-based learning, online classes, and specialized student supports.

A bigger gymnasium with a larger roof and appropriate viewing area was important to all involved. A large Skyfold vertical retractable wall was installed along one wall of the new gymnasium. The new presentation stairs outside the gym provides a multi-purpose use space for students to access during school hours while also acting as bleachers for parents to have a viewing area for events.

Engagement meetings during the pre-design phase also determined the school community was interested in having vibrant, bold colours in the classrooms and breakout spaces.



The new single story, 2,531 square metre facility broke ground on May 9, 2022 and was completed by December 20, 2023.

The Friends of Morrin Council raised \$728,859.30 through several fundraising initiatives to increase the footprint of the school.

The replacement project includes the addition of the Village of Morrin public library, which has been combined with the school library.

“This partnership opens access for students to greater library resources and allows the Morrin Public Library to have a new

space to serve the community, as their old facility was in dire need of repair or replacement,” said Nielsen.

The Friends of Morrin Council was instrumental in bringing the project to completion after introducing their fundraising campaign, called

“Building it Better Together,” with the goal of increasing the footprint of the school. To date, the group has raised \$728,859.30 through several initiatives, including a naming and legacy campaign where sponsors were able to purchase a space within the building to have their name

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A bigger gymnasium with a larger roof and appropriate viewing area was important to students, staff, and the community.



The new presentation stairs outside the gym provides a multi-purpose use space for students to access during school hours while also acting as bleachers for parents to have a viewing area for events.

Additionally, low flow plumbing features were installed, resulting in a 35 per cent reduction in water use compared to a typical building.

displayed. They also ran a grad challenge encouraging alumni and current students to raise money, did a meat draw, and secured grants, said Friends of Morrin Council chair Julie Robison.

More than \$600,000 of these funds were used to increase the size of the gym by 100 square metres, the library by 40 square metres, and one of the classrooms by 13.1 square metres.

“We did some community engagement right off the get go to see what the priorities for the community were,” Robison said. “We’ve never really been able to host much because of the small size of the gym, but now we can actually host events, see the kids, and welcome other communities in. It’s quite an exciting time.”

Students and staff moved into the school in January, and the community is enjoying the upgrades.

“There’s a lot of different community partners that are engaged... different things from seniors playing pickleball in the new gym to our 4H members coming in and using the space,” Robison said. “The club volleyball team from the community is going to be running their first tournament there. I think it’s really been well received.”

Morrin School is currently pursuing a LEED Silver Certification, with sustainable features having been considered throughout its design and construction process. To support water conservation, drought-tolerant plants suited for Alberta means that landscaping does not require any irrigation after its establishment period.

Additionally, low flow plumbing features were installed, resulting in a 35 per cent reduction in water use compared to a typical building. The design also included energy-efficient appliances,

lighting, and mechanical systems to help optimize the building’s energy performance. During construction, best practices for cleaning and maintenance around the construction site and low-VOC products were implemented to help maintain good air quality within the building, with indoor air quality testing being completed ahead of the building occupancy. Finally, waste was sorted on-site and sent to recycling facilities resulting in a 75 per cent construction waste diversion rate.

Robison calls the new school a “once in a lifetime opportunity” that has allowed the community to make sure it is meeting the town’s needs while also building something that will be a long-term legacy for Morrin.

“It really has taken an entire community to come together,” Robison said. “That’s a huge highlight. The community really had to rally together to come up with ways to raise the funds and they were successful in meeting all their goals. It’s remarkable to see how people banded together and made it happen.” ■

Higher efficiency standards will change the landscape of service

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Due to population growth, Canada's housing authority, the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation estimates that we need to build around 5.8 million new households by 2030 to avoid a housing affordability crisis. That's about 3.45 million more than are already planned. If the construction industry seems busy to you today, then consider the fact that if we more than double the pace we're planning to build at, it still won't result in enough housing.

This means a lot of commercial-scale construction is coming. The popularity of the multi-unit residential building (MURB) will grow, as high-density housing is easier to build quickly and efficiently and with less labour per door. It also means a boom in demand for all the associated facilities, including things like schools, retail centers, hospitals, and offices. But as this surge gets under way, Canada's efficiency regulator is tightening things up.

Last July, the minimum thermal efficiency that Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) will accept for a commercial water heater in a new building changed to 90 per cent. They left an exemption for those tanks being installed as a direct replacement of an existing unit, but all new facilities are shifting to high-efficiency product. Come January 1, 2025, the minimum efficiency for all commercial boilers will change to 90 per cent, regardless of whether the facility is new or existing.

What all this means is that dealing with the service and operating requirements of high-efficiency equipment is going to become the norm. Today, a service company repairing and maintaining a fleet of equipment may only ever work on mid-efficient, atmospherically vented appliances. Their technicians may not know much about combustion tuning on

high-turndown equipment, for example, or never have needed to ask themselves what a condensate neutralizer is for. When that changes, will they be ready?

Take the neutralizer example. Condensate from high-efficiency products is water vapour extracted from the flue gas of a fuel burning appliance. It's highly acidic (about the same as citric acid) so, if it gets routed untreated to a cast iron floor drain in an older facility, it will corrode the drain, very possibly until there is a leak. It needs to be passed through a neutralizing media, like limestone rock, before entering the drain. And the devices that contain that media need to be routinely inspected, otherwise the media may be completely consumed, letting acidic condensate through and into the drains.

To get very high efficiency from an appliance requires a lot more precision and control than was the case with the older units. Therefore, a lot more skill on the part of the installing or servicing technicians is also required. The likelihood of nuisance lockouts on equipment is higher. Controls offer a solution, allowing detailed warnings to be automatically sent out to facility operators when equipment goes down, but this also requires additional training and expertise. Redundancy in design is key as well, dividing service loads across more units rather than fewer, so that each equipment lockout is less threatening to system up-time.

It's going to be harder to manage the facilities of the future and to integrate new high efficiency equipment into existing buildings. As the market goes through significant changes, operating a facility successfully is going to require even more thought and forward thinking, and much longer-term planning of equipment maintenance and obsolescence. ■

Edmonton family-owned cleaning supply business services Alberta and beyond



W.E. Greer Ltd. is the third oldest commercial supply cleaning company in Canada

By Kelsey James

Service comes first for a fourth-generation Edmonton-based cleaning supply company.

W.E. Greer, Ltd., now the third oldest commercial cleaning supply company in Canada, began as a hardware store before developing into a wholesaler. The company was founded in 1923 by Bill Greer, who moved to Edmonton in 1906 and worked for small hardware stores until embarking on his own business venture. He owned Bill Greer Hardware and Market Tire before deciding to move out of the retail business in the mid-1930s.

In 1946, Greer's son joined the family business and, by the next decade, W.E. Greer began manufacturing its own cleaning chemicals. The company is now owned and operated by Bill's grandson, John Greer, who joined in 1984. John's own son, Justin, also entered the business five years ago, making him the fourth generation to be involved.

"Ever since I was a kid, I worked for other people

before I joined my dad," John said. "My brother and sister weren't interested in the family business but I always was. We have a good reputation in the marketplace and it's certainly been good to our family. I think my grandfather always knew he was going to be in business; so did my dad, so did I, and so did my son. An entrepreneurial flare has always been in our family."

W.E. Greer makes 100 different cleaning chemicals out of its plant in Edmonton. The company sells consumables – including paper and plastic bags, mops, brooms, and brushes – as well as canister vacuums all the way to large, industrial sweeper scrubbers and other equipment that would be used in warehouses, schools, hospitals, food stores, and recreation facilities. W.E. Greer is also the Tennant dealer for Alberta and sells and services a lot of equipment throughout the province.

"We focus on chemicals that are safe and effective," John said. "We try to focus on simple programs where

a school can be cleaned daily with five different products. All our training is colour coded, so everything is designed to be easy for the end users.”

What the company is perhaps most well-known for is training. John has been in front of approximately 6000 custodians in his last 40 years with W.E. Greer. The company’s outside sales consultants are also constantly training customers on how to use products, properly use equipment, and make safer and more simplified cleaning solutions.

“Ultimately, if you ask what the most important thing I do is, it’s maintain good relationships with our customers,” John said. “Some of them have been with us for over 100 years. We still have relationships with school divisions that my grandfather called up. It’s our family name, and we’re proud that we’re a family business.”


While the business has changed since its humble beginnings 100 years ago, its values haven’t.

“It’s important to us that we do business in an ethical and honest way,” John said. “The hardware business and the cleaning supply business are two totally different things, but what my grandfather, my father, and I saw was an opportunity. It isn’t glamorous to be in the cleaning supply business, but everybody needs it. It’s integral to the operation of any school, hospital, or recreation facility.”

John has been involved with AEFAA since joining W.E. Greer four decades ago, and his father was involved before that.

“We’ve always had a great relationship with the organization and its members,” John said. “It’s always been an effective communication conduit for our company. Attending the trade show and being allowed to present at different sessions gives us an opportunity to be in front of a lot of people in a very condensed period. You get to know a little bit more about what your customers’ concerns are, what they’re facing in terms of labour, and things like that.”


For more information about W.E. Greer Ltd., visit www.wegreer.com. ■



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Modular classroom flood mitigation

By Robert Krahn, Director of Facilities,
Black Gold School Division

Every winter, we get hit with a cold stretch and all hope we don't have any major wrecks due to frozen pipes. This year was no exception, with continuous days of temperatures reaching -50 degrees and below with the wind chill. We were doing well and hadn't had any major issues until we had one freeze up that flooded out six modular classrooms.

We had a 1.5-inch PVC sprinkler line freeze in one of our modulares and, when the frozen plug let go, it didn't take long, and we had water

covering six classroom floors. We were fortunate that we had a plumber who had just arrived on site to investigate why there was no heat in the classroom and was able to shut off the sprinkler main just minutes after the leak. If this had happened on a weekend, the entire school would have been flooded. Our schools are all monitored with low temperature alarms and have water metering devices on the main water supplies that notify us if there is unusual water consumption. These are all great, but when you're drawing

-40-degree air into a ceiling space that contains a sprinkler line and your furnace goes down, you don't have a lot of time before pipes freeze. Water metering devices and shut offs only help on domestic water lines. If the sprinkler system is activated, manually turning off the valve is the only option to stop the water, and this would only be done after the fire department arrived and cleared the building.

With every wreck, you learn a few things and hopefully better prepare yourself to avoid the next one. Here are a few considerations

when it comes to mitigating the risk of freezing sprinkler lines in your modular classrooms:

- Make sure your maintenance staff know how to turn off the sprinkler system.
- If you've lost heat in a sprinklered modulars at -40-degree temperatures for any amount of time, you have likely frozen your sprinkler line. Install isolation valves on the sprinkler main so you can isolate the modulars while you get the heat back on and check for leaks. You can also turn off the main and notify your monitoring company, so you don't get a visit from the fire department.
- Make sure you have low temperature sensors on your BMS that notify staff of no heat.
- Consider installing a dry system in your modular classrooms. This mitigates all risks of freezing. We investigated this option but did not have sufficient water supply in this rural town and would have had to install a separate sprinkler main supplying the modulars.
- Heat trace and insulate the sprinkler lines in your modulars.
- Modulars have fresh air that gets pulled in off the roof that mixes with your return air that all gets pulled into the furnace through the return air duct. In our case, when the furnace shut down, the fresh air damper did not close – it stayed in its last position, which resulted in the cold air dropping down through the fresh air intake and out of the return air intake into the ceiling space. The sprinkler line also happens to run in front of the return air for

the furnace, so when the furnace went down, we had -40-degree air dumping onto the sprinkler line. Talk to your BMS company to ensure the fresh air damper closes on furnace failure.

- Keeping the consideration of return air characteristics in your ceiling space, adding additional egg crate into the ceiling grid will keep your ceiling space warmer.

The return air space above the ceiling grid was 10 degrees colder than the classroom temperature when we froze up.

The sprinkler lines in our modular classrooms are the one thing I worry about the most when it comes to freeze ups and potential flood damage. With a few minor upgrades, you can mitigate this risk and hopefully avoid a loss. ■



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Celebrating 50 years in the sport contracting industry with Centaur Products

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Above: Centaur Products oversaw the installation of a new 13,000 square foot gymnasium floor at Paul Kane High School

Left: Centaur Products recently installed a 5,600 square foot gymnasium floor at the new École la Découverte.

Last year, Centaur Products proudly celebrated an incredible milestone: 50 years of leading innovation and excellence in the sport contracting industry. It is a good time to reflect on their journey of dedication, innovation, and partnership that has positioned them at the forefront of developing state-of-the-art athletic facilities across Alberta, particularly in educational environments.

Who we are: The Centaur Products legacy

Founded on a passion for sports and an unwavering commitment to quality, Centaur Products has grown from a visionary start-up to the leading name in the supply and installation of athletic facility flooring and equipment. Their mission has always been to enhance

the athletic experience for players and spectators alike, ensuring that every project they undertake promotes safety, performance, and enjoyment. Over the past five decades, their team has worked tirelessly to push the boundaries of what is possible, incorporating the latest technologies and sustainable practices to create facilities that stand the test of time.

What we do: Elevating athletic experiences

Centaur Products specializes in a comprehensive array of services tailored to the unique needs of each of their projects. Their expertise encompasses everything from assisting with the initial design phase to the final installation of high-quality sports flooring, seating, sports equipment, and more. They

pride themselves on their ability to deliver turnkey solutions for a wide range of sports and educational facilities, including gyms, recreation centres, and sports fields.

Recent projects: Safety, performance, and comfort

Centaur's golden anniversary offers a good opportunity to showcase some of their recent projects in the educational space:

- Meadow Ridge School – 1st MVP flooring installation in Alberta:** This 11,000 square foot gymnasium floor features an MVP flooring system from Robbins Sports Surfaces. This is the first MVP flooring system ever installed in Alberta. MVP is the choice for NBA teams' practice facilities and stands out as the world's best sports flooring system. Its innovative design optimizes shock absorption and energy return, significantly reducing injury risk while boosting athlete performance across various sports disciplines.
- Paul Kane High School gym flooring project:** For this project in St. Albert, Centaur's team oversaw the installation of a 13,000 square foot gymnasium floor. The new floor looks fantastic and is a great new home for the Blues athletics.
- École la Découverte gymnasium flooring and equipment installation:** This new school featured a 5,600 square foot gymnasium floor that Centaur installed, as well as basketball equipment and a divider curtain.
- Strathmore High School floor refinishing:** Centaur gave this floor a fresh new look and feel by refinishing the worn floor, adding a new and updated logo to centre court which looks great.

Looking forward: The next 50 years

As they celebrate this significant milestone, Centaur has their sights firmly set on the future. Centaur Products remains dedicated to innovation, sustainability, and the pursuit of excellence in every project they undertake. Their legacy is not just in the facilities they have built, but in the communities and schools they have supported as well as the athletes. Here's to continuing to build the foundations for athletic excellence for many years to come. ■





Photo Credit: GEC Architecture

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The St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School broke ground in March 2022 and is a Grade 6 to 9 school in the northwest area of the city.

Building dreams, shaping minds

New middle school opens in Red Deer

By Shayna Wiwerski

Previously published in the 2023 issue of Central Alberta Builder magazine, the official publication of the Red Deer Construction Association.

A new middle school has opened in the Kentwood neighbourhood in Red Deer.

The St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School broke ground in March 2022 and is a Grade 6 to 9 school in the northwest area of the city. The project is part of the Red Deer Catholic School Division and was built after being approved for \$29.3 million in capital funding by the Alberta Government.

The division indicated that their middle school student population in Red Deer has been over 100

per cent capacity in each of their two existing middle schools and a partial Kindergarten to Grade 9 school.

“We have been full for the last few years and the Alberta Government decided that we were one of the top projects in the province, so we got funding for that,” said Rod Steeves, secretary-treasurer for the Red Deer Catholic School Division. “Initially the funding was just for design in Budget 2019, and then within a year after we had done all the design, we got final funding from the government in Budget 2021 to actually construct the school.”

The two-storey approximate 71,000-square-foot school can accommodate 750 students and

features 28 learning spaces, 19 of which are classrooms. There is a multicultural area, as well as a number of Career and Technology Studies (CTS) spaces. One of these spaces is for millwork, which is also prominent in the multicultural area, where students are able to create artifacts that represent different cultures that are within the building.

“In front of that millwork, which is embedded within our upstairs rail, we have panels that are put in front of the millwork which can be seen down from the gathering area on the bottom floor,” said Rob Coumont, principal at St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School. “Students can design those panels through our design education classes with the use of our laser



The St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School can accommodate 750 students and features 28 learning spaces, 19 of which are classrooms.



The project was built using the Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) delivery method, which is a method in which all key parties, including owner, architect, and builder, are involved in all stages of the construction process.

cutter and then switch them in and out.”

The school also features a garage door that opens up to an outdoor compound so the shop can be inside or outside. They have a foods lab and an arts classroom where half of the classroom is windows that look down onto the gathering area and across from the multicultural learning space.

St. Lorenzo Ruiz Middle School is great for students looking to learn more about digital arts as it will also have an e-Sports CTS class which features 28 high-end computers on desks so they can be rolled into the learning commons if they have tournaments. The whole front of the learning commons are windows, and the doors slide open to reveal four 75-inch TVs that are a video wall.

Just off the learning common there is a green-screen podcast room that can be used through the learning common or can be used for leadership.

The school also features 836 solar panels on the roof and has a solar TV in the main gathering area

which charts the solar panels so students can look it up and use it in their classrooms if they choose.

Clark Builders were the general contractors on the project with Group2 Architecture and Interior Design doing the design. Other contractors who worked on the project include KTJ Consulting (owners agent), Read Jones Christoffersen Ltd. (structural designer), WSP Canada Inc. (electrical/mechanical designer),

KERR Interior Systems Ltd. (drywall/steel stud builder), AltaPro Electric Ltd. (electrical builder), World Class Contracting (mechanical builder), and Collins Industries Ltd. (structural steel builder).

The project was built using the Integrated Project Delivery (IPD) delivery method, which is a method in which all key parties, including owner, architect, and builder, are involved in all stages



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The school successfully opened to middle school students in September 2023.

of the construction process. Steeves say that they have had a lot of success using IPD in the past having built two schools and an upgrade to a school using the IPD approach. Curtis Kushnerik, superintendent at Clark Builders, mentions that they also utilized Lean principals and the use of the Last Planner System, which is a system that promotes the creation of a predictable workflow among various parties so it achieves a reliable result.

Although the team was able to complete the project in July 2023, they did run into a few challenges along the way. Tyler Gagnon, project coordinator for Clark Builders, says that they were supposed to start the project in the fall of 2021, but it was delayed to spring of 2022, which resulted in them having a pretty aggressive schedule to complete the job on time. He credits the IPD, Lean construction principals, and the Last Planner System for being able to efficiently complete the project. They also ran into some



unforeseen conditions related to the soils which also pushed it back a month.

Another major challenge was in December 2022 when it was indicated that another school was running at maximum capacity in their Foundations program, which is designed to meet the needs of diverse learners, and it was decided that the program would be moved into St. Lorenzo Ruiz. Kushnerik says that they made a quick change to three different classrooms to be able to accommodate the Foundations program, moving it from the other school into this school.

“They had the capacity in the zoning to be able to have that program here. We had to revamp the science room into a special classroom with a small residential kitchen inside of it and alter the bathrooms. With the change in the program, it also meant there would be an increase in staff, roughly 30 extra people,” Kushnerik said. “We needed to alter the staff areas as well to accommodate extra washrooms. It was a major change that the group was able to do and still hit our handover period.”

Although there were a number of hurdles in completing the school, it successfully opened to middle school students this past September.

“It’s more important than just Catholic education in the area. Where it’s situated means that kids won’t have to bus quite as far or walk as far,” said Steeves. “The two schools that are our main middle schools are in the southern part of Red Deer. This will give us a chance to have kids go to a school in the northern part of the city.” ■

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Practical advantages of robotics

- Robotics can offer greater sustainability via recent technological advances and minimize environmental impact by requiring less chemicals or water needed to clean while still providing top notch results.
 - AMR incorporates the latest technological advances to stay on top of moving trends and cleaning solutions.
- By incorporating cameras/sensors/lasers, robotics can make workplace environments safer by reducing accidents and mistakes due to human errors.

The impact of robotics on employment

- Automation allows workers to forgo some of their mundane responsibilities and focus more on specialized tasks that require human ability to perform.
- Robotics and automation can help maximize employee potential by creating new opportunities to engage in tasks that have more impact on the company's bottom line.
- Increase levels of engagement and motivation by providing workers with more satisfying or less mundane work. This aids in employee retention by improving job satisfaction, performance, and overall work quality.
 - Having a happier and more engaged workforce leads to lower turnover and reduced costs associated with the hiring/training process.

Improve operations with data and performance tracking

- Data reporting technology gives managers greater insight into cleaning performance, enabling them to optimize their cleaning performance and track KPI's.
- A survey of nearly 400 facilities around the U.S. compared cleaning performance between using non-performance-based standards to those using data-driven standards resulted in the data-driven fleets to achieve nearly 23 per cent greater daytime productivity, in terms of cleanliness and appearance, they scored more than 20 points higher out of 100.

What cleaning robots can do for your business

- Adopting a robotic cleaning program can enhance a company's brand image by positioning it as a forward thinking, innovative leader.
- Create a positive public relations image that helps garner attention, stand out from competition, and boost internal morale.
- Provide a source of pride for employees. Innovation is always something that excites and motivates employees, especially if it is combined with tangible benefits that improve day-to-day procedures.
- Reduce employee turnover by fostering an innovative culture.

Robotics and automation can offer a wide range of applications and improvements to increase efficiency by allowing workers to focus on specialized tasks while Tennant AMR simultaneously covers the simple mundane jobs. Fostering innovation is an excellent way to create a positive impact on employees by creating new opportunities to engage in more complicated or intricate tasks. Robotics can improve operations with data and performance tracking features by gaining greater insight into key performance indicators. Furthermore, Tennant AMR technology is an excellent way to enhance regular business operations. Position your company as a forward-thinking, innovative leader with Tennant AMR. ■

Leaders in sports facilities: Royal Stewart Ltd.'s 60 years in the industry

By Tyler Cudmore, Service Manager, Royal Stewart Ltd.

Royal Stewart Ltd. is a 100 per cent Canadian owned and operated company that has maintained an exceptional history of quality and service throughout the Canadian market for over 60 years. Royal Stewart's CSA and factory certified sales and installation departments have the training and experience to help bring your project from concept to completion and so much more.

In 1963, Royal Stewart Ltd. began operations to meet the growing demand for gymnasium equipment and spectator seating inside scholastic environments, as well as sports facilities across Canada. We ran into a major issue 10 years later when our equipment supplier went out of business, leaving us with multiple orders to fulfill and no one to build them. Ownership at the time had to make a decision: close the doors or take a chance and bring the

manufacturing in house. It was at this time that Kodiak Industries was born. The product was a success, and it did not take long before the team expanded its market by selling to the United States and abroad. Royal Stewart and Kodiak Industries then worked as partners for nearly 40 years, but the best was yet to come.

One of the most significant milestones in our history would have been between 1998 and 1999 when our current owners were brought onto the sales and installation team for Royal Stewart Ltd. Dan Monnin and Paul Stewart's vision and ambition would propel RSL into the new millennium, settling for nothing less than successful projects for our customers and growth for the business. They surrounded themselves with a core group of equal minds, led by example, and none of us have looked back.

Of course, 60 years in any industry comes with its challenges. In 2009, we faced yet another setback with supply chain and manufacturing. With Kodiak Industries struggling and Royal Stewart doing everything we could to feed that machine, it was again decided to bring the manufacturing in house. This time, literally. Kodiak Industries was no more so Royal Stewart

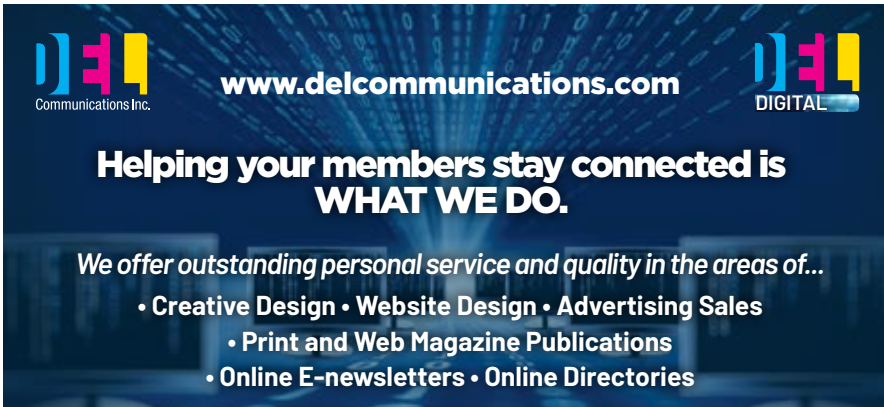




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Ltd. started a new division called RSL Manufacturing to continue to providing services and materials to our valued customers. This was indeed a daunting task all while creating and implementing an internal safety program within the same timeframe. With the ever-growing need for safe work practices and procedures as well as a safe work environment for staff, our internal safety program was put in place and we have now proudly been C.O.R certified for over 12 years, scoring near perfect scores in both external and internal audits.

With challenges also comes rewards. Since our start in 1963, we have had the pleasure and satisfaction to oversee several great projects in Canada, the United States, and as far abroad as Saudi Arabia and Peru. Our product can be found in elementary, middle years, high schools, universities, and colleges, in addition to hockey rinks, football and baseball stadiums, as well as fairgrounds, rodeo arenas, and pools. We are proud to have supplied two Pan American Games (1967 and 1999) and two Olympic games in Montreal and Calgary, to name a few.

It is not so much the projects we complete but who we complete them with. Our administration, project management, and installation teams work tirelessly together, but it is also you – our customers and clients. You and all your staff working on the other end to achieve the same thing. A common goal; that’s the reward. And with us continuing to work together, there’s no doubt we can see another 60 years. ■





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