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# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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### Water and Sewer

## Cash should flow for water upgrades

\$30B needed over 15 years, panel says

**PATRICIA WILLIAMS**  
STAFF WRITER

An expert panel's call for a massive capital investment in the province's water and wastewater systems has received a thumbs-up from industry associations.

"We are pleased to see that the panel has acknowledged the significant investments that are critical for the sustainability of Ontario's water and sewage systems," said Kathleen Grimes, president of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association.

"Addressing the infrastructure deficit would be a major step forward in enhancing the safety and long-term sustainability of this province's vast underground network of clean water pipelines and sewage systems." Ontario's Water Strategy Expert Panel reported Friday that the province's water systems will

require more than \$30 billion in capital investments over the next 15 years to remedy decades of neglect.

The panel, which conducted a year-long, in-depth examination of Ontario's water infrastructure, called for significant changes in the way the water and wastewater

See **SERIOUS**, Pg.3

### Renovation

## Arena receives a holy transformation

16,000-seat mega-church cost \$75 million to build

**PATRICIA WILLIAMS**  
STAFF WRITER

Houston-based Irvine Team, a firm of architects, engineers, project managers and construction managers, has transformed a former basketball and entertainment arena into a 16,000-seat mega-church.

The \$75 million (US) construction project was completed on-time and on-budget by a small army of 50 contractors and consultants hand-picked by the company, which oversaw the project from design through construction.

"Time was our number one challenge," said Lorrie Foreman, vice-president of operations who stepped onto the project site with 20 years of experience in managing design and construction of technically sophisticated buildings.

"We completed \$75 million of construction in 19 months."

The Lakewood Church's new Houston home opened in mid-July.

The Irvine Team worked with the church from the get-go to get a handle on approximate costs of various redevelopment scenarios for transformation of the Compaq Center into a house of worship.

"We managed the design process and hired all of the project consultants," said Foreman, See **SUBCONTRACTORS**, Pg.3



Two waterfalls flank the stage of the giant Lakewood Church in Houston. The recently opened house of worship is said to be the largest such facility in the United States.

Photo courtesy STUDIO RED ARCHITECTS

## Inside

### Labour lauds WSIB 3 per cent rate hike

Ontario employers will soon have to pay more to compensate injured workers, a move criticized by the province's business community as a "slap in the face" that could harm the economy. Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has hiked worker compensation rates for 2006 by three per cent over this year's rates. The board said the increase is necessary because of a lack of money to pay for the province's compensation claims. See **Pg. 3**

### Dollars put ahead of worker safety: Judge

A provincial court judge has slammed the former owner of a snow-clearing business for placing the dollar ahead of worker safety. The owner was handed a hefty \$30,000 fine and \$4,500 surcharge for Occupational Health and Safety charges related to the death of an 18-year-old employee. Donald Poisson. Poisson was killed when he was pinned by the loader of a poorly maintained New Holland Skid-Steer. See **Pg. 5**

### Caterpillar profits up, wood firm's cash felled

Caterpillar Inc., a maker of bulldozers and other heavy equipment, reported its second-quarter profit rose sharply as improved volume and prices lifted sales. Quarterly income rose to \$760 million US, or \$1.08 per share, from \$566 million, or 80 cents per share, the year before. Wood panel specialist Norbord Inc. says its second-quarter profit dropped to \$67 million US, from \$127 million US a year earlier, as bad weather in Europe reduced demand in the construction industry. Earnings for the quarter amounted to 39 cents a share, diluted. See **Pg. 4**

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# Workers' compensation rates hiked 3 per cent

## Labour lauds the move, business berates board

TORONTO

Ontario employers will soon have to pay more to compensate injured workers, a move criticized by the province's business community as a "slap in the face" that could harm the economy.

Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board has hiked worker compensation rates for 2006 by three per cent over this year's rates. The board said the increase is necessary because of a lack of money to pay for the province's compensation claims.

"We must take action now," board president Jill Hutcheon said in a release. "It would be inappropriate to allow this debt to be passed on to future generations of employers."

The board said the hike comes after exten-

sive interviews with Ontario workers and labour unions.

"Their comments are what led to this decision," said spokesman Devin Munro.

The move was welcomed by Wayne Samuelson, president of the Ontario Federation of Labour.

"I think it's completely reasonable to increase the rates by what is a modest amount of three per cent," he said. "I don't think people should get too excited about the employers complaining. They've been complaining for as long as the system's been around."

But groups representing Ontario businesses described the board's decision as a major blow to the economy, with one group estimating the hike could mean up to a \$2-billion loss over the next seven years.

"This will definitely limit our potential for job creation and our ability to bring new businesses into the province," said Brad Dugard, a spokesman for the Ontario Chamber of

Commerce.

The Canadian Federation of Independent Business said the increase would be particularly detrimental to the province's small businesses, and predicted it could spell the end of many aspiring entrepreneurs.

"Fledgling new businesses will find themselves having to pay this tax before they are making a penny of profit," said federation vice-president Judith Andrew.

"It's a shame because our sector is really one that fuels the economy and propels job creation."

Samuelson scoffed at those claims.

"These people that spend their time making up these numbers and trying to create all this fear out there, they should spend more time making sure their workplaces are safe."

The premium hike is especially discouraging to Ontario employers because of their increased efforts to reduce accidents in the workplace during the past few years, Andrew

said.

"It's not only a slap in the face, it's the worst possible time for the WSIB to be thinking about increasing premiums," she said.

Ontario Conservative Leader John Tory blamed the Liberal government of Premier Dalton McGuinty for the hike.

"This is another blow to taxpayers," Tory said in a release. "The McGuinty Liberals don't seem to understand that increases to payroll taxes put a strain on the Ontario economy."

This is the second time rates have gone up in the province in the past 10 years.

Andrew said the board's decision is "pretty much etched in stone," but said her organization plans to protest it until everything is finalized.

"This is just such a wrong-headed move that we are going to have to keep fighting it," she said.

CANADIAN PRESS

## Working to play at McMaster athletic and rec centre



Photo courtesy VANBOTS CONSTRUCTION CORP.

Work moves along for the new Athletic and Recreation Centre at McMaster University in Hamilton, Ont. Vanbots Construction Corp. has completion of the LEED environmental project scheduled for fall next year. The project includes wellness and fitness centres, squash courts, a raised running track, a double gymnasium and a climbing wall. The centre was designed by Garwood-Jones Hanham Architects. Consultants are: Yolles (structural); Smith and Andersen Consulting Engineering (mechanical); and Group Eight Engineering Ltd. (electrical). Subcontractors include: Bell Excavating; McLeod Engineering Inc. (site services); Alliance Forming Ltd.; Gilbert Steel Ltd. (rebar supply); KEW Steel Fabricators Ltd. (structural steel); Hamilton Ready Mix Ltd.; Kappeler Masonry Corp.; Mattina Mechanical; Guild Electric Ltd.; M & I Aluminum Ltd. (windows/curtain walls); Sobotec Ltd. (siding); Bothwell-Accurate Co. Ltd. (roofing); and Otis Canada Inc. (elevators).

## 'Serious catching up to do': panel chair

Continued from Pg. 1

systems are organized, governed and regulated.

It has recommended a comprehensive set of proposals for correcting the situation and ensuring the safety, affordability and long-term financial sustainability of Ontario's water and wastewater systems in the coming decades.

"The fact is that governments, both municipally and provincially, have neglected essential investments in the province's water systems for the past 30 years," said panel chair Harry Swain.

"That, combined with our growing population and economy, means we're going to have some serious catching-up to do over the coming years if we want to maintain the level of safe, accessible, affordable water we all take for granted.

"Larger water systems will provide the scale to make the large capital investments that are necessary and do so at a cost that's much more affordable," said Swain, former chair of the Walkerton Research Advisory Panel.

The board was commissioned by Public Infrastructure Renewal Minister David Caplan in August 2004 to determine the best ways to organize systems and deliver safe, clean affordable water and wastewater services in the province while ensuring continued public ownership of these systems.

The report also was endorsed by the Ontario Water Works Association (OWWA) and the Ontario Municipal Water Association.

Joe Salter, chair of the OWWA, said the report is a "significant milestone" in achieving sustainability of water systems.

## Subcontractors helped with early design

Continued from Pg. 1

who has a civil engineering degree and was one of only a handful of women on the Lakewood job.

Foreman, who earlier in her career was director of construction for the Naval Facilities Engineering Command in Maryland, said her firm solicited feedback from contractors during the design phase on such items as constructability and "real-time" costs.

"We actually hired the mechanical and electrical subcontractors first to assist in the 'as-built' survey of the facility and to participate in the earliest stages of the design," she said.

These subcontractors, in fact, had input in the selection of the general contractor.

During construction, much of the structure of the original arena was retained.

Only one end of seating was demolished. This was done to build a stage for the congregation's



"We have water that can be dialed down to less noisy settings"

Lorrie Foreman

pastor.

The lower service area containing locker rooms, parking space for Zamboni ice-resurfacing machines and a beer distribution system was demolished and "built back."

The roof truss had to be reinforced and a

comprehensive suspension grid built at the lower level to support walls, ceilings and utilities, Foreman said.

She said the most "intriguing" challenge involved incorporation of twin waterfalls on either side of the stage, given that the noise of the water competes with the choir's microphones.

"We have water that can be 'dialed-down' to less noisy settings."

An estimated 1.4 million manhours was expended on the project.

Some 50,000 square-yards of carpet was laid, enough to cover more than nine football fields, while 57 miles of low-voltage cable was put in place. The amount of paint used would fill several Olympic-sized swimming pools.

The facility, which welcomes an estimated 30,000 churchgoers each week, also boasts 7,000 light fixtures, 1,000 doors, and 296 new toilets.