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Overall control environment does not foster accountability

Independent audit of WSIB raises red flag

BY GRANT CAMERON
STAFF WRITER

An independent audit of Ontario's Workplace Safety and Insurance Board (WSIB) has raised a red flag over the way the agency tracks expenses of its executives and directors and questions the system used to procure services and source contracts.

The audit, conducted by the firm of Grant Thornton LLP, also found there is no official policy governing the administration of grants for prevention projects.

"The overall control environment does not provide assurance of cost containment and compliance to board policies and processes," the audit says.

"The existing governance structure lacks sufficient accountability to foster a culture of public sector accountability."

The audit also notes that the priority assigned to cost

COCA president calls for new leadership at WSIB

Council of Ontario Construction Association (COCA) president David Frame welcomed the release of the audit of The Workplace Safety and Insurance Board by the Minister of Labour.

He has asked Ontario Labour Minister Chris Bentley to immediately appoint a new chair, president and fill the four vacant positions on the Board of Directors so they can deal with the report's recommendations.

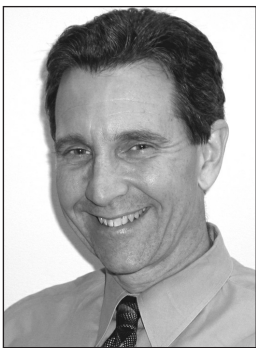
An over-extended governance system was recognized in the audit as leading to ineffective controls over the spending of hundreds of millions of dollars annually. The audit recommends that the Board of Directors be expanded by at least two members to provide better controls.

The province's acting Chief Internal Auditor Paul Wallace noted positive findings in the audit that included significant long-term improvements in service delivery and controls on investment policy.

COCA has asked the labour minister to appoint to the board a person representing the ratepayers of the system. As the construction industry contributes about 30 per cent of the premiums, COCA has asked that a senior construction executive be appointed to provide the perspectives of the ratepayer.

COCA has written the minister requesting that Mike Archambault, director of Labour Relations and Safety with Aecon Group Inc., be appointed.

—COCA



David Frame

reductions appears inconsistent with the mandate to reduce the unfunded liability and respond to pressures to maintain or reduce the cost of doing business.

Ontario Labour Minister Chris Bentley ordered the audit to assess the efficiency and effectiveness of the agency. Controversy over how the board spends its money has been an issue since Glen Wright resigned as chairman over spending concerns.

Bentley released the results of the audit last week, saying it provides a solid foundation for revitalizing the agency so that it better meets the needs of injured workers

and employers.

"The audit raised worrisome issues about governance, controllership and accountability practices at the WSIB and identified areas for improvement. We will be acting on the audit's recommendations.

"That said, the audit noted that WSIB staff are committed to service excellence."

Bentley said the government will ensure the issues raised in the audit are addressed immediately and a follow-up audit will be conducted next year to make sure the

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PARCEL 'C' PROGRESS □ Work continues at College and Elizabeth streets for the Mars Parcel 'C' research and development tower in Toronto. Construction manager EllisDon Corp. expects completion this December for owner Mars Discovery District. The project was designed by Adamson Associates. Consultants are: Halsall Engineering Ltd. (structural); Smith & Andersen Consulting Engineers (mechanical/electrical); and JBM Landscape Architects. Subtrades include: York Excavating & Grading Co. Ltd.; Anchor Shoring & Caissons Ltd.; EllisDon Forming; Harris Rebar; Ontario Redimix Ltd.; Modern Niagara Toronto Inc. (mechanical); Ampere Ltd. (electrical); Vipond Inc. (sprinklers); Sota Glazing Inc. (windows); and Otis Canada Inc. (elevators).

Photo by WILLIAM CONWAY/PROGRESS PHOTOGRAPHY

Mayor expects OMB approval Ottawa's master plan challenged by developers

BY IRWIN RAPOPORT
DCN CORRESPONDENT

The Ontario Municipal Board is yet to hear the case, but Ottawa Mayor Bob Chiarelli says he is confident the city's Smart Growth Plan, will receive approval.

The plan is being challenged by a number of individuals and developers who oppose restrictions that limit growth to areas where existing service infrastructure exists or where there are already plans to expand the infrastructure network.

The law requires the OMB to give its approval for all municipal master plans.

"The province has signed-off on our official plan (and) we expect that the basic thrust of our official plan

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Inside

Rebate wish list

Ontario mayors weigh in on what they plan to do with the promised gas tax rebate. See page 5.

NDP responds to CCA

A federal NDP government would ensure long-term investment for municipal infrastructure. See page 5.

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