

Contractors take lead role Task force set up for healthcare contract rules

BY PATRICIA WILLIAMS
STAFF WRITER

The Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA) is setting up a task force to develop a set of recommended supplementary contract conditions specifically applicable to healthcare facilities.

The move is in response to a request from the province's Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

"We believe this is a unique opportunity and one that is long overdue," said OGCA president Clive Thurston. "We believe the exercise will be successful."

The task force will have representation from key industry players, including the Ontario Association of Architects, Consulting Engineers of Ontario and the legal profession in addition to OGCA.

Thurston said general contractors have had to "qualify" their tenders on hospital projects in response to consultants' making substantial changes to the standard contract through supplementary conditions.

"Every contract is different," he said. "Even sometimes at the same hospital, two jobs will come out and the contract terms are totally different."

From a broader perspective, Thurston said hospital procurement and tendering policies in general have created headaches for contractors.

"There is a real problem in the procurement of hospital projects," he said. "There have been accusations of cost overruns. We now have an opportunity to come up with some good, solid guidelines for the procurement process."

HOT lanes heating up transit world

Continued from Page 1
line on construction and life-cycle costs."

The second major component of the tolling revolution is the growing conversion of underused High Occupancy Vehicle lanes into High Occupancy Toll (HOT) lanes with a variable price system.

"Variable pricing is the most powerful tool we've discovered for keeping traffic flowing when demand greatly exceeds supply."

Started in California, HOT lanes are now either in use or proposed in several cities including Denver, Seattle, Houston, Dallas, and Orlando. They include both converted lanes on existing highways and designated HOT lanes on new or reconstructed highways.

Drivers use transponders similar to those on Ontario's Highway 407, he said.

Toll charges vary from highway to highway and state to state, with some charges in California reaching 70 cents (US) a mile. But experience has shown that drivers only use them as last resort when traffic congestion is severe, said Poole.

A major factor in the toll revolution is the steep decline in federal and state highway funding in the past few years.

"We know that funding is not keeping pace with even maintaining the existing system, let alone expanding it," Poole explained.

Other reasons include growing knowledge and publicity on how HOT lanes function, the flexible rate pricing, the convenience of the transponder technology, and public weariness with traffic gridlock, he said.

"There's growing public demand for congestion relief. Everywhere it is bad and it's getting worse. Highway user groups are starting to warm up to the idea (of tolls) realizing it's toll lanes or no lanes."

Increased public transit funding and initiatives won't solve the highway congestion, said Poole.

"Car pooling and public transit use is at a 20-year low."

The cumulative effect of all these factors has been a wave of state Public Private Laws, the recent creation of toll authorities in both Colorado and North Carolina and a pending law in California that would allow that state's Department of Transportation to sign agreements with investor or local governments to build toll roads, he said.

Such partnerships can be profitable for government. An example is Chicago's recently approved 99-year lease of its Skyway toll road to consortium of CINTRA and Macquarie. "It was a real wake up," said Poole, referring to the \$1.9 billion in upfront cash that the city received.



QUEEN STREET TOWER - Work continues at 180 Queen Street West for the Canada Life Tower office building in Toronto. Construction manager EllisDon Corp. began the 15-storey office in December 2003 and completion is scheduled for this December. There will also be four levels of underground parking. The project was designed by Kuwabara Payne McKenna Blumberg Architects. Consultants are: Yolles Partnership Inc. (structural); The Mitchell Partnership Inc. (mechanical); and Mulvey & Banani International Inc. (electrical). Subcontractors include: Active Excavating; Deep Foundations Contractors Inc. (shoring/caissons); Res 2000 Structures Inc. (formwork/concrete supply); Res Precast Inc. (precast); Harris Rebar (rebar supply); Limen Masonry; Urban Mechanical Contracting; RE Wilson Electrical Contractors (2000) Inc.; Sota Glazing Inc. (windows); Bothwell-Accurate Co. Ltd. (roofing); Tedesco Waterproofing Inc.; and ThyssenKrupp Elevator Ltd.

Photo by WILLIAM CONWAY/PROGRESS PHOTOGRAPHY

Legal documents required

Continued from Page 1

He did not disclose the amount.

To date, the OGCA has agreed to provide support to Merit Contractors Niagara, which is appealing a controversial Ontario court decision.

The Canadian Construction Association board has agreed to contribute up to \$4,000 to fund that appeal.

The case involves a Nov. 2004 judgment that challenges the widespread industry view that bids submitted by subcontractors to

prime contractors whose bids must remain irrevocable for a specified period also are automatically subject to that same irrevocability.

Thurston said an appeal is expected to be heard this fall.

Under the OGCA guidelines, endorsed at a board meeting last Friday, firms seeking financial assistance will be required to provide "sufficient legal documentation" on the merits of the case and what is involved, Thurston said.

In Brief

\$28 million courthouse

MONCTON, N.B.

A new \$28-million courthouse will be built in Moncton, Premier Bernard Lord announced Monday.

The stand-alone courthouse will be built on the old Beaver Lumber property in the heart of the city's downtown.

The building will feature 13 courtrooms, two hearing rooms, holding cells, and chambers for the judiciary. It will also have offices for administration, public prosecutions, the barristers' society, sheriff personnel, police, and Legal Aid New Brunswick.

Construction is expected to begin next June and be completed by May 2008.

The Canadian Press

Vicwest Corp converted

OAKVILLE, Ont.

Vicwest Corp. shareholders have approved converting the firm into an income trust, the building products manufacturer said Tuesday.

Oakville-based Vicwest, which makes metal roofing, siding and other metal building products, said it will become Vicwest Income Fund around July 1, once it receives final approval from Ontario Superior Court.

The company has a Winnipeg-based subsidiary, Westeel Ltd., which makes steel products for the storage of grain, fertilizer and petroleum products. Vicwest has 11 plants and 800 employees in Canada.

City side

From Page 1:
The project was designed by Young + Wright Architects. Consultants are: Jablonsky Ast & Partners (structural); MV Shore Associates (1993) Ltd. (mechanical/electrical); and Ferris + Associates Inc. (landscape). Subtrades include: Aro Excavating Ltd.; Faga Group (underground drains); Shor-Cais Foundation Contractors (shoring); Salit Steel Ltd. (rebar supply); Verdi Group (formwork); Innocon Inc. (concrete supply); Global Plumbing & Heating Ltd. (mechanical); Jay Electric Ltd.; Major Glass (windows); and Otis Canada Inc. (elevators).