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# NOVA SCOTIA ROAD BUILDERS ASSOCIATION

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Joseph Robichaud Photography

Road building is a key driver of the Nova Scotia economy. The industry is one of the province's largest employers, representing a wide cross section of professions and trades. The sector employs more than 7,500 people annually, with an estimated payroll of \$375 million.

## Road building key component of N.S. economy

**By Ken Cashin**  
Special Features Writer

FOR MOST PEOPLE, and in many industries, infrastructure improvement is little more than a vague concept — an endeavour that everyone agrees is necessary and important, but one that someone else has to accomplish.

In the road building industry, however, infrastructure renewal is quite literally where the rubber meets the road. In this industry, it's not just a catch phrase; it's a literal reality, a day to day responsibility.

"Every single day in Nova Scotia, in every corner of the province, from small communities to large urban centres, people in road building are hard at work helping to maintain and improve the province's most basic infrastructure, for the betterment of everyone," says Ken Thomas, president of the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association (NSRBA).

The improvements they make to our roads and bridges are sometimes overlooked," says Thomas, "but they're ones we all utilize and benefit from every day. Roads are an integral part of our transportation system; they impact everything we do, from where we go, to how we get food on the table — they're essential."



Bernie Bobryk Photography

The 2009 NSRBA board of directors are (front, left to right): Rylan MacDow, Ron Dunn, Andrew Lake and Pat Gray. Back, left to right: Brad Scott, vice president; Ken Thomas, president; Paul White, past president; Carol Ingraham; John Flemming; Grant Feltmate, executive director; and Donald Chisholm. Missing from photo: Marcel Poitras, Trevor Chisholm, and Troy Naus.

Road building is also a key driver of the Nova Scotia economy. The industry is one of the province's largest employers, representing a wide cross section of professions and trades. The

sector employs more than 7,500 people annually, with an estimated payroll of \$375 million.

Represented by the NSRBA, the road building industry is made up of 140 member compa-

nies engaged in road, bridge, heavy civil, marine, and sewer and water main construction. Founded in 1947, the association and its members play an integral part in building the province, its

roads, and its crucial infrastructure components.

Road building work has a long and storied history in Nova Scotia, going back more than a century and today the industry remains strong and healthy and is one of province's most modern and progressive sectors.

The NSRBA works with government to standardize road building processes and develop environmental and safety regulations. The association also partners with other local industry associations and educational institutions to develop training programs.

The NSRBA recently hired a new executive director and is undertaking a new long-term strategic plan. The process is aimed at making amendments to old bylaws and preparing the industry for the next decade.

The NSRBA's president, Ken Thomas, says road building has an exciting future in Nova Scotia, with a projected increase in employment and more work expected in the public sector resulting from infrastructure renewal programs announced by federal and provincial governments.

The key challenges ahead, says Thomas, will be replacing retiring skilled trades people and training enough people to do the work

See **KEN THOMAS** / E2

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Todd Gilles Photo

Work on the 101 Highway twinning is one of the major road projects currently going on in N.S.

## Getting message out

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

Raising your profile and getting your message out is important for practically every association, as it helps you grow and improve, better serve your members, and achieve your goals.

New executive director of the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association (NSRBA) Grant Feltmate says a key focus will be to promote greater awareness of what the association does and highlight the significant role it plays in driving the Nova Scotia economy. The NSRBA's executive director position was formally created in October, 2008. Similar to other road building associations in Canada, the position provides a consistent point of contact for its members and important industry stakeholders. The executive director's main responsibility is to carry out the mandate provided by the board of directors.

"Our 140 member companies create a huge amount of employment in the province — 7,500 jobs annually with an estimated \$375 million in wages," says Feltmate. "We're also major purchasers of Nova Scotia products and services.

"However, we feel that knowledge of our industry's significance could be much better and we're working hard to change that."

As a result of the new public relations campaign, the association recently revamped its Web site, aiming to enhance its profile and make available better online services to its members. The site boasts a colourful, sharp new look, better functionality, and includes an improved membership directory.

Other new initiatives are also underway. The NSRBA is working with the provincial government to address the industry's long-term labour needs in critical areas such as accurate labour market

information specific to road building.

The industry is also establishing industry-specific training programs with local educational institutions like Nova Scotia Community College.

"We expect lots of employment opportunities in the coming years," says Feltmate. "We're taking a proactive approach to dealing with the anticipated demand."

Another key focus, says Feltmate, has been the development of a new strategic planning process to help direct the association going forward. He adds that the NSRBA has also improved communications with the other provinces to address common issues in the industry.

Helping organizations gain a clear picture of where they want to go and find the best way to get there is something Feltmate has done many times before, having directed a number of significant associations through successful strategic planning.

With over 20 years of consulting experience and a broad range of exposure to private industry, associations and government, Feltmate is a steady hand on the wheel at an important time in the NSRBA's history. He says the industry finds itself in an unusual situation right now, with the economic downturn on the one hand and, on the other hand, a new emphasis on infrastructure spending by all levels of government.

"This has resulted in much larger than usual government spending being earmarked for road building," says Feltmate.

"But, at the same time, our industry is dealing with less demand from the private sector, as those entities make their way through the economic challenges of the day."

He adds, "We're also going through a change of government

in Nova Scotia, so there are many variables. Hopefully, the government stimulus plans will benefit our industry for the next couple years. Ideally, the economy will have rebounded during that period to the point where private demand for our services will be back up again."

Feltmate is quick to point out, though, that even with the increased government budgets, there's still a shortfall — the spending is still lower than what's needed for the job of not only maintaining our infrastructure, but also expanding it.

He adds that road building is directly responsible for creating the fundamental infrastructure upon which a good economy can be built.

"A good highway infrastructure is a crucial support for building a solid provincial economy," says Feltmate. "Nova Scotia's road building industry is very important to our province, both in the economic impact it provides through direct employment as well as the spending on local goods and services."

On an on-going basis, he says, the NSRBA's goal will remain consistent: to secure reasonable levels of stable, long-term government spending necessary to maintain the province's roads and bridges and build new ones for the future.

"Now is the time to invest in our roads and bridges," says Feltmate. "It would give the province tangible, long-term assets that would lead to productivity gains for many years."

with the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) to create the Dexter Institute, a two-year heavy construction program that trains people for careers in road building and construction.

He adds that, together with the N.S. Department of Education, NSCC and the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS), the NSRBA is involved with a program called Building Futures for Youth, which allows Grade 11 students to explore a career in road building through a summer education and work program.

"We're trying to show young people that road building is an excellent career choice, with lots of employment opportunities down the road," says Thomas. "It's also very rewarding work. At the end of the day you can look over your shoulder and see what you've done."

## N.S. Asphalt User Producer Association hosts its second successful spring seminar

By Melanie Furlong  
Special Features Writer

The Nova Scotia Asphalt User Producer Association is continuing to share more information about developments in the asphalt industry with its members across the province, says Mike Deering, the association's chair.

On April 15, more than 300 participants attended their second successful Spring Seminar held at the Holiday Inn Harbourview, which was supported by more than 20 industry sponsors.

"The seminar covered topics from asphalt plants to placing asphalt on the road," says Deering. "Our speakers were both local and from the U.S. covering a broad spectrum of the industry to try and have a little bit of something for everyone."

The Nova Scotia Asphalt User Producer Association is made up of contractors, government employees, suppliers, consultants and educators. There are currently 19 members of the Nova Scotia Road Builders participating in the group. Producer members include: Aberdeen Paving, Basin Contracting, Costin Paving, Dexter Construction, Highland Asphalt, Ocean Contractors, Ocean Paving, S.W. Weeks Construction, Will-Kare Paving, Industrial Cold Milling, Roto Mill Services. Supplier members include Atlantic Tractors & Equipment, Aggregate Equipment, McAsphalt Industries, Imperial Oil, Santon Equipment, Strongco, Wallace Equipment and Wilson Equipment.

"Technology in the asphalt industry is changing as rapidly as we're willing to let it," says Deering. "The specifications are getting stricter so we have to keep up with the demand of government agencies and we need the technology to do that. We try to make everybody aware of the advancement of technology out there. Two of those technologies are hot mix recycled asphalt and warm-mix

asphalt and we had speakers on both of those subjects this April."

Hot mix asphalt recycling is technology that involves processing the old asphalt off the road and mixing it in with the new before putting it back down on the road. A few trial projects were done in Nova Scotia last year and Deering says there will be more asphalt recycling projects this summer.

Another technology involving recycling asphalt pavement happens at the road itself. Both CIR (cold in place) and FDR (full depth reclamation) are both technologies to reuse and rehabilitate the existing asphalt pavement in place on site. Recycled asphalt reduces 10 to 25 per cent of the virgin material used by introducing the recycled asphalt into the conventional hot mix asphalt at the asphalt plant. Currently, asphalt is the most recycled product in the world.

"We're on the edge of that technology right now and hopefully a few contractors will try it this year," he says.

Warm-mix asphalt is the new "green technology," made by lowering the temperature during manufacturing but using a very similar process to conventional hot mix asphalt.

"This reduces emissions," says Deering, "but there haven't been a lot of long-term studies regarding warm mix asphalt and how it performs long term. It's the newest asphalt technology and we brought people in to speak about it to make sure we were informed as much as we can be about it."

Deering says the association's goal is to help everyone make better asphalt.

"If something is working," he says, "we should all be doing it. Better asphalt improves everything from safety on the roads to road quality itself. That's our goal. We're just at the starting point of getting everyone together to work towards a common goal."

### Nova Scotia Road Builders Association facts

#### Who we are...

- Founded in 1947, NSRBA represents contractors working in Nova Scotia who are engaged in road, bridge, heavy-civil, marine, sewer and water main construction. The interests of suppliers to the industry are met through associate membership.
- NSRBA is the only organization representing the road building sector in N.S.
- Our 140 member companies directly and indirectly employ approximately 7,500 individuals annually.
- Our work impacts significantly on the service and supply industry.
- We are distinct from the construction industry; we have unique working conditions and needs.

#### Industry realities...

- Our sector is highly competitive.
- The industry is seasonal. Early tender calls are critical to timely tender completion.
- Safety is a top priority for the industry.

- Employees are highly valued.
- They expect, wish and are often required to work long hours.

- They are often away from home for extended periods.
- They originate from both rural and urban communities; from every county, town and village in the province.
- Their payroll and benefits substantially exceed minimum standards.

#### Spin-offs of road building...

- Approximately 7,500 persons, directly and indirectly earning an estimated \$375 million in wages, are employed annually by the sector; and these numbers will grow as funding increases.
- Economic benefits accrue to communities and families across N.S.
- Goods and services required by contractors are purchased locally wherever possible, assisting small businesses province wide.
- Improves sustainability of Nova Scotia's rural communities and businesses.



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## Ken Thomas

continued from / E1

coming down the pipeline. He says that although road building offers rewarding, good paying jobs and a diverse range of career choices, fewer young people seem to be getting into it.

"The demographic is changing," says Thomas. "Traditionally, our workforce has come from rural areas, but today a lot of young people are moving into the urban centres, looking for office jobs and work in other industries."

Thomas says the NSRBA has undertaken a number of initiatives to meet the labour needs of the future. He points out that Dexter Construction has partnered



Joseph Robichaud Photography

A long-term initiative called Building Futures was launched by the Construction Association of Nova Scotia to commemorate its 150th anniversary in 2012.

# Building futures

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

“Many hands working” together is what the road building industry is all about.

And just as road building requires the co-operation of many people with various skills, the success of the industry itself depends on the ability of the many groups within it to work together for a common purpose.

A great example of industry cooperation is a long-term initiative called Building Futures launched by the Construction Association of Nova Scotia (CANS) to commemorate its 150th anniversary in 2012.

For Building Futures, CANS members are rallying together for a unified goal — to establish a \$2.5-million endowment fund with the NSCC Foundation for student scholarships and bursaries at the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC).

Building Futures has already reached half of its fundraising

goal. As of January 2009, CANS member companies and industry organizations have committed \$1,250,000 to NSCC scholarships. Contributors include many members of the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association (NSRBA). Support has also come from various associations within the industry as well.

CANS president, Carol MacCulloch, says the awards will help attract students to construction-related programs to meet the growing labour needs of the construction industry.

“CANS is committed to helping close the skill shortage here in Nova Scotia and what better way to accomplish this goal than with a strong commitment to the NSCC,” says MacCulloch. “CANS has 700 member organizations and is positioned well to make a bold statement about the industry’s value to Nova Scotia.”

Donors can establish their own named endowment at a minimum amount of \$25,000, which provides



Joseph Robichaud Photography

CANS is committed to helping close the skill shortage here in Nova Scotia.

an annual student award of \$1,000 in perpetuity. Contributors can set the qualifying criteria for the scholarships.

Last year, the program awarded eight scholarships and 20 this year.

With the endowment, CANS will be able to provide approximately one hundred \$1,000 student awards annually for the life-time of the college so that 100 students will be able to financially support their education every year.

CANS is an industry trade association representing contractors, suppliers and service providers comprising the non-residential construction industry. CANS was founded in 1862 as the Halifax Builders’ Society.

Since that time, CANS membership has grown to include firms from all over Atlantic Canada as

well as other regions of the country. The primary role of CANS is to represent the interests of its member companies.

MacCulloch says the 10-year forecast for the local construction industry indicates the sector will offer excellent employment opportunities. In the next decade, she says, many of the most experienced trades people in the industry will be retiring and the sector will likely see an upswing in work if federal and provincial governments honour the commitments they’ve made to infrastructure renewal.

CANS and other industry partners, together with the department of education and NSCC, are also undertaking other initiatives to meet future labour needs. NSCC has invested in construction related programs, which provide more

career options to young people coming into the workforce and allow workers already in the industry to upgrade their skills.

#### CANS contributors

NSRBA Member Companies who have contributed to the CANS 150th Anniversary Building Futures Industry Investors as of January 2009 are: Black & McDonald, Conrad Brothers Limited, Dexter Construction Company Ltd., Eastern Fence Erectors Ltd., J. R. Essener Contracting Limited, Elmsdale Landscaping Limited, Fraser & Hoyt, Higgins Construction, J.W. Bird & Co. Ltd., Ocean Contractors Limited, OSCO Concrete, The Shaw Group Limited, Stevens Group of Companies, Wade Atlantic, and Wilcraft Concrete Services.

## Placement program gives Grade 11 students chance to test drive construction industry

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

The good news in the heavy construction industry is that the employment picture for the next 10 years looks very promising. Industry experts say the key issue will be to train enough people to do the work.

Despite fluctuations in construction employment due to the current weakening of demand from the private sector, the combination of an aging workforce and an expected uptick in public sector work in the years ahead is increasing the need for training infrastructure in the province, says the Construction Association

of Nova Scotia (CANS).

CANS president, Carol MacCulloch, says the industry is cooperating on a number of initiatives to improve training capacity and address the industry’s requirement for new entrants. She says a new program, called Building Futures for Youth, a co-op education/work program at Nova Scotia

Community College (NSCC), is giving Grade 11 students at various high schools in the province a chance to explore the heavy construction industry.

“Building Futures for Youth gives students a great opportunity to test drive the industry and see what a career in construction is all about,” says MacCulloch.

“They have a chance to meet up with employers in their local area and see for themselves the many benefits of working in this industry.”

CANS developed Building Futures for Youth in partnership with the Department of Educa-

tion. See **PLACEMENT PROGRAM** / E9

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**Bill Estabrooks is the new Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal.**

## Estabrooks is no stranger to road building industry

By **Melanie Furlong**  
Special Features Writer

Nova Scotia's roads are one of the greatest indicators of the economy's good health, says Bill Estabrooks, the new minister of transportation and infrastructure renewal.

"That's why the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association has always been so important to me as an MLA and now as a minister," says Estabrooks. "I certainly appreciate the fact that they are a well organized, skilled group that has always been in close contact with us whether we're in opposition or government and it is so important they are given support from whatever government of the day to make sure that they continue to make roads, maintain them and keep them safe. Our roads are an indicator to visitors and Nova Scotians that we're making good use of their money."

Although Estabrooks is new in his position as minister of transportation and infrastructure renewal, he was once the transportation critic.

"I'm certainly aware of the great work done by the Nova Scotia Road Builders and one of my priorities as minister is to make sure that we continue to work with them closely to build a good working relationship," says Estabrooks. "They have a huge responsibility when it comes to building and maintaining our highways. Whether we're talking about improving infrastructure or connecting communities throughout the province, they are key to the success not just to this government, but to making sure we have good safe roads."

After just one week on the job, Estabrooks says it's too early to confirm specific projects yet, but that they are at the cabinet table now.

"We do know that when it comes to the provincial projects and the stimulus package from the federal government that Road Builders are crucial, especially at this time of the year," says Estabrooks. "We have to make sure they have appropriate funds so that we can continue to make sure this is an important part of the economy in Nova Scotia."

Estabrooks says the construction season is well underway with more projects in the works.

"I understand how important it is that we have these so-called shovel-ready projects for us in Nova Scotia and the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association comes as prepared as anybody when it comes to shovel-ready projects," Estabrooks says.

"That's their claim to fame and we want to make sure as a government that we're there to support them in as many ways as possible."



Joseph Robichaud Photography

Komatsu equipment owners can track how many hours are on the machine, how much fuel is in the tank, how many hours the machine was idling, how many hours it was digging with a bucket or running an attachment, and how many times it moved forward or backward.

## High-tech equipment saves time, money

By **Melanie Furlong**  
Special Features Writer

Heavy equipment owners and operators can track just about everything they do these days thanks to developments in satellite communications.

Morgan Cronin, vice-president of Wilson Equipment Ltd., says all of their Komatsu machines come equipped with satellite communications called the Komtrax system.

"Most machines today are run by computers," says Cronin.

"Computers run the engines, the fuel delivery systems, the hydraulics and the transmission. They send electronic information back and forth between the different components so now the satellites can intercept this and it can be broadcast to the owner. The owner can access that information by going on a secure site on the Internet."

Komatsu equipment owners can track how many hours are on the machine, how much fuel is in the tank, how many hours the machine was idling, how many hours it was digging with a bucket or running an attachment, or how many times it moved forward or backward.

"If there's any fault with the machines, the computer will recognize the fault code and can actually be programmed to send an email to the owner's BlackBerry or to his computer telling him there's a problem and what it is," says Cronin. "The dealership



Joseph Robichaud Photography

All of Wilson Equipment Ltd.'s Komatsu machines come equipped with the Komtrax satellite communications system.

can look up the fault code, diagnose the problem and have the right parts dispatched to it, giving the service technician a much better idea of what the problem is and allowing him to service it more efficiently."

The system can also tell owners how much fuel the machine is burning in its economy mode or full mode and can save users money by showing them which is most efficient.

Boundaries for operating the

machines can also be set that advise the machine where it can operate. If it goes outside the boundaries, it will shut down and can't be started again.

"This is an anti-theft feature you can switch on if you like," says Cronin. "It will also tell you where the machine is located."

The Komtrax system is available for every Komatsu machine including wheel loaders, bulldozers, trucks and other construction equipment.

Komatsu is also using satellite communications to run heavy trucks autonomously in large mining operations in Australia and South Africa.

"These trucks go back and forth with nobody in the cab," says Cronin. "They're guided by GPS satellites and radar on the ground. If the vehicle approaches a person or a pick-up on the road, the truck detects it and stops. It's like a robot in that it's aware of itself and its surroundings."

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# Construction zone safety

By **Melanie Furlong**  
Special Features Writer

Considerable effort has been made to improve construction zone safety by road building contractors since the mid-'90s, says Patrick Gray, director of safety for the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association.

"Safety has become paramount with road building contractors, and statistics will support the safety improvements that have been made," says Gray. "Dealing with traffic still remains the biggest challenge road construction crews face. We have realized that communication and coordination with all parties is key on every project."

That's why the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association, in conjunction with the department of transportation and infrastructure renewal, has made even more efforts to promote road construction safety awareness to the motoring public.

"The public is concerned over the poor condition some of our roads are in, especially after the harsh winter we had. But as the construction season begins, and repairs and upgrades are being made, motorists do not want to

be inconvenienced by construction delays," says Gray.

"In an effort to keep motorists better informed we have put out news releases and radio communications and added message boards ahead of a lot of job sites. We've also made changes to newer cones and barrels that are taller, brighter and more visible to delineate the work zone from the travelling area."

One of the most significant changes impacting construction zone safety is the doubling of speeding fines in construction zones, which was legislated last year.

"We're working with law enforcement to try to force people to slow down," says Gray. "On the 100-series highways, you'll see signs asking people to reduce their speed from 100 km per hour to 80 km per hour. Drivers will have demerit points assigned to their driving records, and speeding ticket fines now can range anywhere from \$357 for a first time offence to \$2,407 for a third offence."

All the measures are part of a safety campaign the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association is working on with the department of transportation and infrastructure renewal.

Janice Harland, manager of traffic engineering services for the department, says, "We're pleased to be working with Nova Scotia Road Builders to promote work zone safety. Partnership in this effort reflects our shared interest and responsibility to both highway construction and maintenance workers and motorists."

"We're trying to make motorists understand that they have to be patient, attentive and reduce their speed in work zones," says Gray.

"We're working very close to on-coming traffic and if you've ever had the chance to stand on a job site, and a speeding car comes close, it can definitely be unsettling. For many men and women, that's their workplace and we want to make sure they go home safely to their families at the end of the day."



Dealing with traffic still remains the biggest challenge road construction crews face.



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Joseph Robichaud Photography

While physical labour has not disappeared from the industry altogether, road building today is light years more advanced than it was only a few decades ago.

# Unique careers found in road building industry

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

In the eyes of many people, it used to be that a career in road building — if you could even call it a career — meant a harsh sentence of back-breaking labour digging a ditch or excruciating work in the sweltering summer heat shovelling steamy asphalt. While physical labour has not disappeared from the industry altogether, road building today is light years more advanced than it was only a few decades ago. The industry offers a diverse range of career choices and employs people from a broad spectrum of disciplines and backgrounds. Today, the design of construc-

tion equipment is evolving constantly, and, as such, computer simulators are often used for training, while equipment design is becoming highly specialized and those who operate road building machinery are specialists in their field and make very good money. The industry employs 7,500 people and pays an estimated \$375 million in wages annually. Its payroll and benefits far exceed minimum standards. The top 20 per cent of all individuals working in heavy construction earn over \$45,000 annually, while the average salary for this profession is about \$39,000 per year. Job opportunities run the gamut from heavy equipment opera-

tors to highly technical careers like surveying and new product development. Many unique career paths can be found here, both in the field and in the office, with jobs as diverse as project management and engineering & design. Gary Rudolph, with local contractor Highland Asphalt Lafarge, says the range of career options is staggering, encompassing everything from project estimators to the people who execute the work. Some of the many jobs, he says, include everything from engineers and architects to IT specialists, communications people, surveyors, heavy equipment operators and safety managers, to name just a few.

"The manual shovel work has been replaced by equipment that's been specially designed for the tasks at hand," says Rudolph. "Career opportunities have advanced and kept pace with the new generation of tools and construction methods. Road building is a fantastic career path offering diversity, specialized skills training, and dynamic work environments." Rudolph says that while much of the appeal is that you get to work outside, you can work in many different environments, both indoor and outdoor. The type of work you can do, he says, includes laboratory analysis and testing, environmental analysis,

civil design, inspection of construction projects, as well as technical writing for consultants, construction companies, and other contractors. The day to day activities and experiences on the job are incredibly diverse, challenging, and dynamic, he says, which provides a unique opportunity to develop both people skills and technical abilities. "The work environment changes greatly from day to day," says Rudolph. "You see results quickly and you can take pride in your accomplishments. You often work in a team environment where everyone's role and contribution is important and respected."

## NSRBA building more than just roads

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

Since its founding in 1947 the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association (NSRBA) and its members have played an integral part in building the province, its roads, and its infrastructure. A non profit organization, the NSRBA also helps build good will in the local community by giving back to it through charitable donations. Every year the association shows its support by donating surplus funds to many different charitable groups and causes. On July 10, 2009 the NSRBA

held its seventh annual golf tournament at the Truro Golf Club. Each year the event attracts 140 players and has raised more than \$30,000 over the past seven years for charities like Christmas Daddies and the Turkey Club Society. At the NSRBA's annual general meeting in January 2008, the association put on a formal evening and held a live silent auction with the proceeds going to the Children's Wish Foundation of Canada. The event raised over \$80,000 dollars. The donation is one of the largest that the charity has ever received from a third-party event. In 2009 a smaller version of the

auction was held, with the proceeds going to a charity of the NSRBA president's choice: the Truro STAR program. For this charity the NSRBA raised more than \$8,000. The STAR program is a non-profit organization that relies solely on fundraising and donations. The first session of STAR took place in January 2004 and the organization has continued to grow each year. It provides much needed support to special needs children in our community. The NSRBA's 2009 donation to STAR was the largest the program



Joseph Robichaud Photography

Road work is presently underway on Fenwick Street in Halifax. See CHARITY WORK / E11

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# Route 215 paving begins this summer

By Melanie Furlong  
Special Features Writer

Basin Contracting Limited has just been awarded a paving project worth \$4.8 million along Hants County's Route 215.

Curtis Isenor, chief estimator for Basin Contracting Limited, says the project will be broken into four sections totalling 16.8 kilometres.

The first section begins 500 metres west of William Connolly Road and runs 7.5 kilometres easterly.

The second section starts approximately seven kilometres east of William Connolly Road and continues for 4.9 kilometres easterly.

The third section starts approximately 400 metres east of the Stirling Brook community line and continues easterly toward Selma for 4.4 kilometres.

The fourth section of the job, and one of the first things they'll do, involves replacing a wooden cross culvert with a new concrete structure.

"We'll get the structure in section four done," says Isenor, "and then we'll schedule the other sections based on its completion. We should begin work by July 20, but the work has just been awarded and there are still some meetings and things to be finalized. The job is scheduled to be finished by October 31."

The job will entail cold planning in sections one and three, which means grinding the existing asphalt, removing it at a specified thickness and hauling it to sites determined by the department of transportation and infrastructure renewal.

"After that has happened on section one, we'll put down a layer of gravel and grade it on, then pave with two courses of asphalt," says Isenor. "There's a different job description for all the sections. Section three is also being cold planed and then will have some patching and two courses of asphalt as well. Section two involves just patching isolated areas on that section of road and then repaving over top of the existing asphalt."

Brad Scott, controller for Basin Contracting Limited, says one of the unique characteristics of this job is that they will be putting some recycled material into the asphalt mix.

Of the millings from the cold planning done on sections one and three, the province will keep 80 per cent and Basin Contracting Limited will be entitled to 20 per cent.

"What's unique about this project is that we will have to use 15 per cent recycled asphalt pavement (RAP) in the first course of our asphalt mix," says Scott. "I believe this is the first time they tendered a project this way to allow recycled material to go back into the asphalt mix."

When the tender for this job was called, says Isenor, the company had the option of bidding on it in the standard specification or bidding on it using RAP. They chose to bid using RAP.



Joseph Robichaud Photography

A road worker on the job recently on Kempt Road in Halifax.

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Basin Contracting Ltd.  
Chapman Bros. Construction Ltd.  
Cumberland Paving  
Dexter Construction Co. Ltd.  
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# Road builders using more green technologies

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

While road building in Nova Scotia is a major driver of the local economy, it's also one of the province's most progressive industries.

The sector is implementing a number of green technologies and ways to use resources more efficiently to help reduce the environmental impact of construction.

It's also winning awards for doing so. Ocean Contractors recently won the 2009 Resource Recovery Fund Board Nova Scotia's Mobius Environmental Award for innovation in waste reduction.

Ocean was recognized for its innovation in the support and development of an asphalt shingle recycling system through a partnership with Halifax C&D Recycling.

Ocean is the only hot-mix asphalt producer in Canada to use recycled asphalt shingle grit. With this green technology solution, Ocean has diverted from landfill roughly 3,558 metric tonnes of recycled asphalt shingle grit product over the last three years.

In 2008, almost all of Ocean's private hot-mix asphalt paving jobs used a percentage of recycled hot-mix asphalt shingle grit product for a total of more than 1,395 metric tonnes.

With the Mobius Award, Ocean was also recognized for partnering with Halifax C&D in lobbying the Department of Transportation to agree to use Ocean's recycled shingle grit pavement product in a provincial road, which was the first time this was done anywhere in the world.

"Green construction is the wave of the future, it's the way the industry is heading," says Ocean president, John Flemming.

"We want to be part of this push toward a greener industry."

Flemming says clients today are not only interested in getting a good price and top quality; they also want to know what the company's position is on the environment. He says it's a feather in your cap if you can offer green initiatives as part of your package.

In addition to recycling tear-off shingles and using the material in their hot mix asphalt, Ocean has also begun putting reclaimed asphalt pavement (RAP) materials into their mix.

Using RAP materials saves on new asphalt cement and also reduces the cost of trucking materials to the road building site, as there is less need for virgin aggregate.

To implement the RAP technology, Ocean uses a vertical impact crusher and screens, which effectively recycle an existing road to make a new one. The equipment crushes the roadways' existing asphalt pavement into smaller aggregate sizes which is then added to the new asphalt mix.

Ocean's ready mix concrete division is also investing in green technologies. The company operates a concrete re-



Ocean Contractors recently won the 2009 Resource Recovery Fund Board of Nova Scotia's Mobius Environmental Award for innovation in waste reduction.



In 2008, almost all of Ocean Contractor's private hot-mix asphalt paving jobs used a percentage of recycled hot-mix asphalt shingle grit product for a total of more than 1,395 metric tonnes.

claimer at its Dartmouth plant, where surplus or 'waste' concrete can be separated into its base components and re-introduced into new production.

Most recently, Ocean installed a process water management system at its Halifax location.

The innovative Enviro-Port technology cuts water consumption and virtually eliminates surface run-off.

Flemming says even the water used to wash the trucks gets re-circulated and re-used.

"Companies have to be willing to make fundamental changes if they want to go green," says Flemming. "You've got to be willing to put up capital costs and project your rate of return over time. It's not difficult if you're willing to look at new

ideas and new ways of doing things. If you're environmentally conscious at all, you can make a big difference."

Flemming says the key is getting governments and regulatory bodies on board. He says the process can be slow, but well worth it in the end. He points out that both the provincial department of transportation and HRM have now developed specifications that regulate the use of RAP materials for road construction.

"This is very positive for our industry," says Flemming. "It will help push companies to take the next step and implement green technologies. It will be good for the environment and good for the industry overall."



In addition to recycling tear-off shingles and using the material in their hot mix asphalt, Ocean has also begun putting reclaimed asphalt pavement materials into their mix.

## NSRBA members always in search of new ways to reduce environmental footprint

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

Although it's true that the environment is top of mind with practically every industry these days, it's not altogether new in Nova Scotia's road building industry.

For decades, NSRBA members have been factoring the environment into their decision making and finding new ways to reduce their environmental footprint.

### Elmsdale Landscaping Ltd.

Elmsdale Landscaping Ltd. has been in business for 55 years and is one of the largest landscaping contractors in Atlantic

Canada. Known for its superior nursery sod production, today the company maintains over 1,000 acres in production and has the facilities to harvest more than

one million square yards annually. With its many years of experience in turf management, Elmsdale is the sod supplier trusted by governments, landscape contractors, city parks, grounds superintendents and homeowners.

One of the key environmentally friendly methods Elmsdale uses is a planting process called hydro-seeding. An alternative to the traditional process of broadcast seeding or sowing dry seed, with hydroseeding a mixture of water, seed, fertilizer, mulch and lime is sprayed over prepared ground in a uniform layer. Hydroseeding promotes quick germination and inhibits soil erosion.

In addition to lessening the environmental impact, hydro-seeding is a highly effective planting method, as the mulch in the hydroseed mixture helps maintain the moisture level of the seed

and seedlings. For many years Elmsdale has spread reused bales of hay purchased from local farmers. The company also uses silt fences on work sites to protect water quality in nearby streams, rivers, lakes and bays.

Elmsdale president George Coupar says the public has come to expect that great care will be taken to lessen the environmental impact of construction.

"People today want to see a new highway looking like it has dropped out of the sky," says Coupar. "In our industry we have to be as environmentally friendly as possible, with everything we do. With today's methods, you can build almost anything in an environmentally friendly way."

### Roto-Mill Services Ltd.

Another of the many NSRBA

members committed to the environment is Roto-Mill Services Ltd., an innovator in road building recycling.

First established in 1979, a small company was formed to address the needs of recycling asphalt pavement for road reconstruction.

From those early days of only one milling machine, Roto-Mill has flourished as an industry leader within the Ontario and Atlantic markets. Roto-Mill recently opened an Atlantic Office in Cooks Brook, Nova Scotia.

Roto-Mill's Chris Thompson says the company is constantly looking for and developing new technologies to help in the advancement of road building recycling processes.

"The environment is very important to us," says Thompson. "Our company was founded on

asphalt recycling 30 years ago. We've grown continually, adding various methods over the years, with a focus on In-Place Asphalt recycling."

The In-Place process utilizes existing aggregate and residual asphalt cement with a small addition of new asphalt cement to form a stabilized base material.

The process reduces the need for non-renewable resources and requires much less energy than conventional road reconstruction or rehabilitation.

Roto-Mill also produces large amounts of reclaimed asphalt pavement which can be utilized in the hot mix asphalt.

"We're committed to sustainable road construction," says Thompson. "We're reducing the need for non-renewable resources and providing a cost effective, quality product."

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# Road building career smart idea

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

Pursuing a career in road building is a smart idea. Firstly, there's lots of work. In Canada since 1993 construction employment has outpaced all other occupations, growing by almost 13 per cent. The top 20 per cent of all individuals working in heavy construction earn over \$45,000 annually, while the average salary for this profession is about \$39,000 per year. The employment forecast is also encouraging. Experts say four to five per cent of the local industry's 30,000 construction workers are retiring every year, creating huge employment opportunities for today's youth. Also, federal and provincial governments are expected to invest significantly in infrastructure renewal over the next few years, which will give the industry a serious boost in public sector work.

**Training**  
Deciding upon a career is one thing, but finding the right school or training institution isn't always easy. Fortunately, several post secondary programs are offered in Nova Scotia that are geared to jobs in heavy construction.

In 2007, Nova Scotia Community College's (NSCC) School of Trades and Technology introduced its civil engineering technology program. The two-year course includes five weeks of on-the-job training and an optional cooperative education. The program trains people for the planning, designing, construction, and maintenance of structures and public works, and altering geography to suit human needs. Civil engineering technologists work on various aspects of built structures, highways, and marine structures and projects. The program is designed to provide an overview of the field in the context of environmental sustainability, so that students can develop projects that are feasible, practical and ecologically sensitive.

**Dexter Institute**  
Seeing the need for more local training, the construction industry and educational facilities in the province are partnering together to help meet the labour needs of the future. A great example of this is the Dexter Institute, which opened in 2001. Emerging from Dexter Construction's parent, Municipal

Group of Companies, the Dexter Institute is a full partnership between Dexter Construction Co. Ltd. and NSCC. Now in its eight year, the institute offers a two-year heavy construction professional program. Some of the many course topics offered include heavy equipment theory and operation, surveying, drafting, geology, and project management. The institute accepts 32 students per year and offers two paid work terms. Those who meet and surpass program requirements receive a post secondary certificate and are guaranteed employment with Dexter Construction. The positions offered range from equipment operators and surveyors to site supervisors and project managers.

The course covers both theory and fieldwork. Students study in areas such as: safety, computer fundamentals, communication, applied mathematics, human relations, geology/topography, surveying basics, site preparation and heavy construction.

The Dexter Institute's Shalini Richards says the program exposes students to a broad range of learning experiences. The institute's key advantage, she says, is that it allows you to try out various possible career choices before committing to one in particular. She adds that it shows young people that heavy civil construction offers much more than a good paying summer job. "The challenge right now in our industry," says Richards, "is to change the perception that it's only seasonal work. We're trying to break from that and get the message out that construction is definitely a career choice — there are definitely opportunities here for growth."

She points out that construction today is much more technologically driven and employs people from a variety of disciplines, from engineers and architects to IT specialists. The industry, she adds, is becoming seen as a legitimate career path for many people, including women. Dexter Construction is expanding and our company offers many opportunities for professional development," says Richards. "Our industry has a very bright future. It's not just a job; it can grow into a career."



Joseph Robichaud Photography

The road building industry today employs people from a wide variety of disciplines.

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## Placement program

continued from / E3

tion's apprenticeship division, local school boards, NSCC, and in consultation with industry representatives. The initiative is designed to increase the number of youth exploring a career in the construction trades.

Students enrolled in the program are pre-screened by CANS and provided with up to 100 hours of work-place orientation and safety training prior to a summer work placement. They have the potential to earn co-operative education high school credits for their participation, as well as time and training credits toward a formal apprenticeship.

The students are also registered as Construction Trades Pre-Apprentices and are required to maintain logbooks. Mentorship training for their supervisors is also an essential element of the program.

So far, 40 students have participated in Building Futures for Youth. Those who want to apply can do so through their schools' co-op education teacher.

MacCulloch says the industry doesn't seem to have a problem attracting people to the trades — the issue is creating adequate resources in the apprenticeship system, seats at the training institutions, and strategies to support trades people in

the full journey through their qualifications.

"What we're trying to do," says MacCulloch, "is identify opportunities for young people coming into our industry. We're trying to provide a better way to connect employers and workers together."

In addition to addressing future training needs, she says, a key challenge in the years ahead will be to hold onto the industry's workforce by providing them with consistent employment. Long-term, stable funding for public sector projects, she says, will go a long way toward ensuring that the industry develops and maintains a skilled workforce.

"The challenge is getting to the point where we have stable public expenditure," says MacCulloch. "Many of our most skilled workers will soon be retiring, so we'll need consistent employment to attract and hold enough qualified trades people here to do this kind of work. If you don't have things to build, you won't have the people who can build them, either."

She adds that while government commitments to infrastructure renewal programs are encouraging, the spending has not rolled out in a timely manner and the industry is still waiting for many of the projects to get the green light.

"We're cautiously optimistic," says MacCulloch. "But, right now we're sort of on the edge of our seat."

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# North Dartmouth trunk sewer: Phase 2

By **Melanie Furlong**  
Special Features Writer

Phase two of the North Dartmouth Trunk Sewer handles wastewater from the new Dartmouth Crossing development and completes a connection thus closing a gap that has existed since the 1960s when the trunk sewer was first built.

The finishing touches on the North Dartmouth Trunk Sewer project were completed this June when 100 trees and approximately 1,600 shrubs were planted along Lake Banook's new waterfront trail. The walking trail winds along 500 metres of lake shore covering the sewer project.

"We had to either build a bigger pumping station or finish this trunk sewer along the shore to handle the increased flows," says Glenn Woodford, project manager for Terrain Group, the project's design engineers.

"The city also wanted to have more walking trails around the lake and it offered us the ability to put the two projects together."

The project was a combined effort by Halifax Water and Halifax Regional Municipality.

Steve Hogan, project manager for Dexter Construction, the project contractor, says pumping Lake Banook to lower the water level by two metres was the most challenging part of the job since it had to be done in the winter.

Dexter Construction had to stop lowering the lake's water level by Christmas Eve so the lake would be at its natural level by this spring. It was completed on schedule.

"We used three 12-inch and two 10-inch diesel pumps to pump the water into Sullivan's Pond where there's a sluiceway that runs from there into the harbour," says Hogan. "We had to lower the water level to install the sewer pipe and we also performed the work at that time for the World Championship canoe course, including building some new anchors for their lane wire system."

Although the original design report recommended high-density polyethylene (HDPE) pipe is used in the project, Woodford says they had concerns about its buoyancy and the amount of curvature the HDPE could handle.

"We could actually get a tighter radius of curvature using concrete pipe," because it's so close to the lake and below the water level, it could float and we'd need to have a complicated tie-down system," says Woodford. "Because the lake is used for boating in the summer, the work had to take place in the fall/winter. We also worried about using HDPE in cold temperatures and the difficulty in bending it to follow the shoreline, as well as installing it in a wide, open trench."

It was decided to use a specially designed concrete pipe, supplied from Shaw Pipe.

"The water tightness of the trunk sewer was a major focus, we could not afford any chance of leaks in the pipeline," says Woodford. "We put three different layers of protection on the pipe to eliminate any chance of leakage."



Contributed

Phase Two of the Dartmouth North Trunk Sewer should have a life-span of about 100 years.

layers of protection on the pipe to eliminate any chance of leakage."

Rylan MacDow, sales manager for Shaw Pipe, says "The trunk sewer will carry sanitary effluent from Highway 111 to Brookdale Crescent for many years, and since this effluent can be corrosive special additives were introduced into the pipe to resist any deterioration over time. A very specialized pipe design was required, including waterproofing, pipeline alignments and section weights."

The pipeline changes direction more than 10 times over a length of more than 500 metres by using many radius pipe sections and few manholes in a serpentine pipeline installation. The pipe was made heavier to

eliminate any possibility of buoyancy due to the high water table and close proximity to the lake.

The wall thickness of the pipe was increased from a standard thickness of 140 mm to 230 mm in order to achieve the required 6,290 kilograms per pipe section.

Phase Two of the Dartmouth North Trunk Sewer should have a life-span of about 100 years.

## Nova Scotia Road Builders Association completes new website

Contributed

The NSRBA is pleased to advise its members that its new website is officially up and running as of May of this year.

The website has a fresh new look and feel, is much more user friendly, and will be a valuable tool as the association moves progressively forward.

"The association decided some time ago that a new website would be an important tool to increase our public profile, send a clearer message about who the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association is, and to better support our members in the efficient and accurate transfer of information," says Rylan MacDow, associate

director for the Nova Scotia Road Builders Association. "The association is utilizing this crucial tool now to advise its members of upcoming events, allowing them the ability to pay online for events and membership registrations electronically, and the ability to view recent tender postings. The site also

hosts a useful and up to date membership listing with information on all of our 136 member companies."

The site will continue to evolve and develop over time as the association determines what other functions the membership would like to see added or expanded.

Please be sure to check your own member profile to confirm that all the information listed there is up to date and accurate.

NSRBA also encourages you to send your corporate logo to them so that it can be included with your other corporate information. Be sure to check the site out at [www.NSRBA.ca](http://www.NSRBA.ca)

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Joseph Robitcaud Photography

Initiatives like the RCMP construction zone safety campaign and the doubling of work-site speeding fines are having a positive impact on construction zone safety.

# Traffic control essential at construction sites

By Ken Cashin  
Special Features Writer

As the road building industry continues to grow in Nova Scotia, so too is the need for traffic control at construction sites.

Today, temporary workplace traffic control has developed into an important sector of the industry. Companies that specialize in traffic control offer much needed products and services that help improve safety conditions for road workers and the motoring public.

A case in point is a local business and NSRBA member called Sojourn Traffic Control. Celebrating its 20th anniversary this year, Sojourn provides supplies and services for clients of all sizes, from small contractors to some of the region's biggest construction companies, as well as all three levels of government.

Sojourn is the largest producer of traffic control equipment in Atlantic Canada and is called upon for jobs ranging from set ups for small secondary roads to shutdowns on the largest 100-series highways.

The company supplies a large variety of roadway signs and other equipment like flashing light units (FLUs), arrow boards, temporary traffic light systems, variable message boards, traffic cones, traffic barrels, and barricades. Sojourn

is also the region's only 3M certified private sign shop.

Input from Sojourn was called upon recently when the government of Nova Scotia updated the province's Temporary Workplace Traffic Control Manual 2009.

The guideline is approved for use on roads in Nova Scotia by the Minister of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal. It sets minimum standards for construction, maintenance and utility work on or by roads.

Sojourn helped critique the manual and the company's input was used to help draft some of the specs.

"Traffic safety is our business," says owner Stan Slauenwhite. "We have the most expertise in the industry and strive to maintain the highest standards in safety, which makes us the leader in traffic control for Atlantic Canada. We're able to meet our client's safety needs 24 hours a day, seven days a week."

Sojourn has worked on some of the region's largest and most complex heavy civil construction projects. These have included the Angus L. Macdonald Bridge lane expansion, Seal Island Bridge deck replacement, the natural gas pipeline through Nova Scotia, the NS International Air Show, and the NB Power transformer move from Saint John Harbour to Point Lepreau.

The Point Lepreau project, says Slauenwhite, was one of Sojourn's most challenging jobs and showcased its planning process.

"When it comes to safety, you can't cut corners," says Slauenwhite. "Before we do anything we take the traffic control manual and put together a solid plan. We look at every requirement in detail, and then we inform our crews, provide the gear, and make sure everything is done right. We have to do everything by the book or else everyone's in trouble."

The challenges in traffic control, says Slauenwhite, are that sometimes motorists fail to heed the road signs. He says people often become impatient with traffic slowdowns, see detours as a nuisance, and sometimes don't treat traffic control workers with the proper respect.

"Roadwork sites can be very dangerous places," says Slauenwhite, "so you have to realize that the traffic control workers are there for your benefit. From a safety standpoint, if they weren't around it wouldn't be pretty — your chances of staying safe would be a lot slimmer."

He points out that Sojourn staff are certified by the Nova Scotia Construction Safety Association.

"You've got to realize that traffic control workers don't always get the full cooperation of the work crews," says Slauenwhite. "They do the best they

can with what they've got. If people paid more attention to the road signs and gave the workers a little more respect, everyone would be better off for it."

However, Slauenwhite says initiatives like the RCMP construction zone safety campaign and the doubling of work-site speeding fines are having a positive impact.

"It's definitely working," he says. "You can tell that motorists are getting the message and slowing down. They're not coming at you as fast anymore."

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## Charity work

continued from / E6

has received to date. The money is being used to purchase much needed equipment for the unique needs of the program's participants. The NSRBA's support has also helped the charity fund more extensive volunteer training.

Paul White, who was NSRBA president at the time, selected the STAR program as

the charity of choice.

"I had the privilege to select the STAR program," says White. "I was familiar with the program and know a couple of the children who participate. The NSRBA takes great pride in supporting charity initiatives like this one. We're able to make donations because of our golf tournament and other events. For the last two years we've made donations resulting from our AGM silent auction. This practice will continue."

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Nova Scotia Road Builders Association members completed this bridge last year as part of the ongoing Highway 101 twinning project.

Todd Gillis Photo

# Heavy equipment goes high tech with GPS

By Melanie Furlong  
Special Features Writer

Global Positioning System (GPS) technology has been around since the mid-90s, but its use in heavy equipment is fairly recent.

For the last three years, an accugrade system that uses GPS technology to provide more accurate grading has been offered in all Caterpillar machines including on blades of motor graders, bulldozers and excavators.

The technology offers users substantial cost-savings in terms of time, fuel and labour on stakeless job sites, says James Bond, marketing manager for Atlantic Tractors.

Simply put, sensors on the machines' blades pick up GPS signals from satellites and let the machine know where it is in relation to a base receiver over a fixed point.

Bond says, "It can come within one and three centimetres of accuracy without any operator involvement; it does it completely on its own. It's fully automatic and once the grade gets to a certain point, the operator just has to watch the screen and make sure it's going in the right direc-

tion. It's really amazing to watch." Ron Dunn, highway division project manager, for Weeks Construction, says they just purchased their first piece of equipment with GPS this year — a motor grader.

"We're just getting into it as a company ourselves," says Dunn, "but it's the direction we'll be heading in. Our operators had to be trained on how to use the software and equipment, but I consider it another tool in the arsenal of road building. As equipment and technology evolve, it's just another thing that makes their day easier."

Dunn says when working on a surface, they input the design into the motor grader's computer.

"It knows where it's trying to level the material to and it knows the finished surface," he says. "If it's grading a road so that we can pave over it, the finished surface would be the top of the gravel. The computer automatically adjusts the blade so it's putting the material in the right spots."

Dunn says the technology reduces the chance of error between points as the entire surface is essentially documented.

"With the old technology, you'd have a surveyor go out and lay



Joseph Robichaud Photography

For the last three years, an accugrade system that uses GPS technology to provide more accurate grading has been offered in all Caterpillar machines including on blades of motor graders, bulldozers and excavators like the one shown above.

specific points around the site for you to grade to and there was a lot done by the feel and sight of the grader operator," he says.

"In jobs like sports tracks, for example, the standards are very high and the work must be within small tolerances. This technology takes a lot of the thinking out of

the finished grading and assists the operator in better achieving the finished surface."

Topcon's Millimetre GPS Add On is an additional product that goes on graders or pavers.

Mike Barbick, sales manager for On Grade, says it can tighten up the vertical accuracy more

than a GPS system can on its own. "It controls the height of the screen within less than 10 millimetres," says Barbick.

"The system saves time, money and gives millimetre accuracy for your paver, assuring the mat thickness during high-production paving."

# Modern quarries different from what the general public may perceive

By Melanie Furlong  
Special Features Writer

Aggregate, defined as materials such as sand, gravel and rock, or crushed stone, is an important element of road construction, building construction, landscaping and much more.

According to the department of natural resources, Nova Scotia's pits and quarries produced 6,931,074 metric tons of crushed stone and 3,913,303 metric tons of sand and gravel in 2006.

Peter Oram, president of the

Nova Scotia Mining Association, says most materials used in road building are blasted from quarries and then crushed. Sand, gravel, and pea gravel are usually freely dug from pits.

"You want the rocks to be nice and angular so the asphalt or concrete can stick to them and compaction is easier to achieve," says Oram.

"You can picture pea gravel that's nice and rounded from pits, but when you make concrete and asphalt, it's not going to stick as well to that rounded surface."

Oram says that modern quarries are very different from what the public may perceive.

"Historical issues with quarries included noisiness, dust, and damage to domestic wells," says Oram, "but in a properly designed modern quarry you can address all those things."

Oram says it's important to note that the modern approach to quarry development and operation is very different.

New quarries are required to have specific set-back distances from homes as well as environ-

mental monitoring for things such as water levels and water quality that are reported to Nova Scotia Environment.

"Before a quarry is developed there are environmental baseline surveys to complete to make sure no special features are being impacted," says Oram.

Previously, quarries were projects of the department of transportation, not contractors, and reclamation was not required.

People may still see abandoned quarries on the side of the road that weren't reclaimed properly,

which leads to misconceptions about them.

"Afterwards, quarries are required to be reclaimed. You can fill them up as lakes, re-shape them or create recreational opportunities out of them. While they are being developed, the soil can be saved and used for reclamation later."

Today, more than 100 quarries are operating in Nova Scotia under guidelines administered through Nova Scotia Environment.

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File photo

**Summer diversions**

Traffic headed towards Hammonds Plains Road is diverted from Giles Dr., backed up by construction on a stretch of a closed section of the Hammonds Plains Road July 7.

# Alva Construction Limited awarded Beech Hill overpass contract

**By Melanie Furlong**  
Special Features writer

Alva Construction Limited has just been awarded a contract from the department of transportation and infrastructure renewal to build two single span bridges in the Antigonish area, says Greg MacDonald, project manager.

"The \$4-million project is the first step in building the new Antigonish by-pass," says MacDonald, "which will create a twinway highway designed to alleviate traffic congestion and

maximize highway safety. The new highway will run just outside the Town of Antigonish and the bridges are being put in near Beech Hill just east of town."

Construction is set to begin in mid-August or earlier after the department of transportation completes some preliminary work.

MacDonald says the provincial election meant they were several months late in being awarded this contract and they are still not sure of the time frame for completion.

"We hope we can get it done this year before the winter months," says MacDonald.

The overpass structures will be built off the current highway 104 away from the motoring traffic over an access road to the highway.

"There have been plans to re-route traffic on that road around the project," says MacDonald, "so it will be nice to work on this particular structure and not have to worry about any of the issues with the motoring traffic. We aren't anticipating any

particular challenges on the job and it should be pretty straightforward."

MacDonald says he believes this structure is the first of many transportation projects to come in the Antigonish area in the next five or six years.


Alva Construction Limited was established in 1989 and is a family-owned and operated company. The medium-sized general contractor specializes in heavy construction including earth work, structures, marine structures, cast-in-place concrete, gravel

crushing and pile driving.

Alva Construction Limited currently has several projects on the go, including the twinning of Hwy 125 near Sydney; Construction of Spank's Bridge in Guysborough Co.; and on-going aggregate production to provide for various paving contractors in the area.

Alva Construction Limited is the general contractor on the Beech Hill overpass project and will be able to perform 90-95 per cent of the work involved with their own forces.

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## On-site rock crushing by-law amendments

**By Melanie Furlong**  
Special Features Writer

Halifax Regional Municipality made amendments to all 21 land use by-laws this February in order to prescribe controls for portable rock crushers as a development tool accessory to construction and demolition projects.

In the past, a rock crusher being used to crush native rock to be used on a specific construction site was considered incidental to construction and therefore a permitted use.

However, if this rock is being crushed and exported to another site, it is considered an industrial use and is not permitted in a number of zones under the land use by-laws.

While investigating a complaint that crushed rock on a city construction site was being exported a year and a half ago, HRM's legal staff advised that HRM's land use by-laws should be amended to clarify regulations with respect to these temporary construction uses.

David Lane, a senior planner for planning services in HRM, says that the use of a temporary rock crusher for 30 days was acceptable until some contractors abused that privilege, turning their sites into mini-quarries.

"Some were crushing rock for projects on other sites and were even bringing big rocks to the site and making aggregate there," says Lane. "Our shared concern with our counterparts at the Nova Scotia Department of the Environment was the operation of a quarry without having to go through the provincial approval

process and the potential impacts on the environment and surrounding neighbourhood."

After various stake-holder and public meetings, amendments to the land use by-laws were decided upon.

The by-laws enable the use of portable rock crushers as a temporary use through the permitting process, differentiate between site development practices and demolition practices that involve temporary rock crushers; control the duration of the temporary use; provide separation distances from existing residential or institutional buildings for site development purposes; prohibit property boundary setbacks for demolition purposes; prohibit transportation of processed aggregate to other off-site locations; and, prohibit transportation of rock to the site for the purpose of on-site processing into aggregate.

The amendments also provide for the advancement of the goals of the Community Energy Plan, as provided for in the Regional Municipal Planning Strategy, by recognizing and encouraging sustainable practices for demolition and site preparation work.

This balanced approach is intended to provide the necessary and consistent legislation for enforcement of the land use by-law provisions while advancing the efforts of the Municipality's vision for a clean, healthy, sustainable environment and communities.

Peter Oran, president of the Nova Scotia Mining Association, says the new by-laws may become the model for the province's future guidelines.

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