

DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

April 8, 2011

New Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario chair puts focus on infrastructure plans

VINCE VERSACE

staff writer

An alliance of Ontario construction and design stakeholders has evolved with a newly appointed chair and detailed work plan to strengthen its consultation efforts with the provincial government.

Joe Accardi, executive director of the Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association (OSWCA) was recently appointed chair of the Construction and Design Alliance of Ontario (CDAO). Barry Steinberg, president of the Consulting Engineers of Ontario (CEO) is CDAO's vice-chair.

"We have been formalizing our meetings and structure," said Accardi. "It has become evident as we move forward and meet with the provincial infrastructure ministry and its staff that they are very keen on the alliance providing technical support to them on the 10-year infrastructure plan."

The alliance was created in late 2010 to help present industry issues, across many Ontario ministries, as a primary window to government for the construction industry. The CDAO consists of major associations representing Ontario's construction industry from architects to general contractors.

The CDAO has previously consulted with and made submissions to the provincial infrastructure ministry on its 10-year infrastructure plan estimated to be \$60-billion in funding.

The alliance believes the 10-year plan is critical and requires a heavy focus on core infrastructure such as roads, bridges, public transportation, water treatment and distribution, electrical power and telecommunications infrastructure. Regulatory reform is also among CDAO's recommendations for the 10-year plan because it would help increase its efficiency and that of stakeholders trying to execute its various elements.

"We have put together an action plan list with priorities that deal with issues such as funding, regulatory burdens, like dewatering permits or better site plan control requirements that either increase project costs or delays," noted Accardi.

This week, the CDAO continued its outreach with the provincial infrastructure ministry with another meeting to discuss the infrastructure plan. Issues surrounding broader public sector procurement changes, the Endangered Species Act, requirements for handling excess fill and the possible effects of project bundling are also on the alliance's radar.

"As it concerns project bundling, our industry has many different levels of contractors," said Accardi. "We want to note that although bundling may allow some of the bigger contractors to get involved, it could be hurting some smaller firms, especially boutique design firms."

The CDAO has recommended to the province that the infrastructure plan be co-ordinated with and respond to the province's Renew Ontario strategy which focuses infrastructure development in specified areas of intensification, economic growth and development.

The member groups of the CDAO are the Ontario Road Builders' Association, Association of Registered Interior Designers of Ontario, Mechanical Contractors Association of Ontario, Ontario Association of Architects, Ontario General Contractors Association, **Residential and Civil Construction Alliance of Ontario**, Ontario Society of Professional Engineers, RESCON, OSWCA and CEO.