

# The DCN and construction leave lifelong impact

By Kelly LaPointe Aug 29, 2014

Working at the Daily Commercial News (DCN) has been a life changing experience and now that I'm leaving, I will be losing a part of my identity.



When I first began in August 2011, I think I had said the word "infrastructure" once in my life and had certainly never uttered such terms as integrated project delivery, public-private partnership, labour shortages, or my staple, the Ontario College of Trades (OCOT). Now I talk about these things over drinks with my friends. They didn't know about these things either and now they humour me and try not to look too bored.

I certainly never thought one of my favourite topics of conversation would be excess construction soils and the soil matching service from SOiL.

As I am frequently one of the only women in the room, and often one of a very small number of millennials, there may have been some doubts if I would be able to make the necessary relationships to cover the industry properly. In the end, I've had the privilege of being entrusted to cover everyone's side in this extremely complex, multi-faceted industry. I'm very appreciative for that opportunity.

Covering OCOT has certainly been a challenge which has helped me become a better journalist. No matter where you fall in terms of ideology, no one can say that the construction industry does not care about the future of the trades in this province.

My time here has also taught me that I wish I had more exposure to the trades growing up. I had no idea that the Ontario Technological Skills Competition or the Skills Work! camps even existed when I was in high school. I'm not leaving the DCN to pursue an apprenticeship, though that idea does hold a lot of appeal.

In my time here, I've had the opportunity to cover provincial and federal budgets, hear amazing stories and have had experiences I never even dreamed of — let alone thought possible.

One of those experiences was my trip through the bottom of the Panama Canal expansion project during the Canadian Construction Association's annual conference this year. To be able to look up at the mass of cranes, concrete and steel, from what will eventually be the water-covered canal bottom, was a truly awe-inspiring moment.

Other moments have not been as pleasant, like covering construction worker deaths. One of the first I covered was when a drill rig collapsed killing a 24-year-old worker at the subway expansion site at York University. From my seat I have felt the frustration of industry leaders as they grapple with putting an end to construction site deaths.

As of late I have seen the industry trying to attract more women to construction careers. I have learned to love this industry and I know many others do too, but it's a matter of allowing the women the same opportunity as men and getting into schools early, before teachers tell young girls they shouldn't go into the trades or "dirty" jobs.

I know this industry will be successful in this regard. You've built an entire country; getting women to put on hard hats should be the easy part.

I'm never going to look at a road, bridge or building the same way again. Working for the DCN for the last three years has truly changed my life and I'm so grateful for the opportunity that I have had to learn about this wonderful industry.

Thank you for all your trust and support.

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