

# DAILY COMMERCIAL NEWS

## AND CONSTRUCTION RECORD

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### Provincial Election

## Strong Liberal mandate bodes well for infrastructure investment, industry leaders say

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The tide of Liberal red which swept across Ontario sets the stage for Premier Dalton McGuinty's government to execute its infrastructure improvement plans, state various construction leaders.

"Ontario has an award-winning growth plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe area," says Andy Manahan, Residential and Civilian Construction Alliance of Ontario executive director. "Now the hard work begins. They (Liberals) can now focus on implementing the investments and plan."

The Liberals cruised to a second consecutive majority government in Wednesday night's provincial election, capturing 71 seats and 42 per cent of the vote. Critics state the recent campaign lacked real debate on issues, such as health care, the environment and infrastructure, once the PC Party's faith-based funding for schools proposal became the campaign's contentious issue.



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Frank Zechner  
OSWCA

Frank Zechner, Ontario Sewer and Watermain Construction Association executive director, also believes the Liberal win gives a mandate to improve Ontario's infrastructure.

"We hope with the whole school funding issue behind us we can now have some focus on

core issues such as core infrastructure," says Zechner. "They now have an opportunity to get on the work they started. They are relatively unconstrained due to not making a lot of election promises."

Clive Thurston, president of the Ontario General Contractors Association (OGCA), says his association has had "a strong working relationship" with the Liberal government over the last four years.

"The recognition by the government of the important role our industry plays in the economy of Ontario has provided the opportunity for consultation and resolution of our issues at the highest levels," he says.

"With the ongoing focus on the infrastructure deficit, we look forward to continuing to assist the government in achieving its goals of a revitalized Ontario with new roads, sewage and water treatment facilities, hospitals and all aspects of a strong infrastructure," adds Thurston.

How the province will help strengthen Ontario municipalities as they attempt to improve their infrastructure is a development the Ontario Road Builders' Association (ORBA) will look at closely.

"Helping cities and municipalities did not seem to be a very strong or well defined issue during the campaign," notes Rob Bradford, ORBA executive director. "We would like to see some real help for municipal infrastructure."



"Long term capital plans gives our industry a planning tool"

Rob Bradford  
ORBA

Bradford says the recent Liberal government invested up to 40 per cent more in road and highway improvement projects than past governments. Also, some of its long term planning currently in place is a positive for Ontario roads and the construction industry.

"Long term capital plans gives our industry a planning tool," says Bradford. "We can see money coming down the road."



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John Gamble

CEO

John Gamble, president of Consulting Engineers of Ontario, says his organization looks forward to continuing to help the government deliver on its commitment to public infrastructure.

"There has been a lot of emphasis on infrastructure over the past few years and we hope that there will be more to come," he says. "Just as importantly, however, there are still some significant issues over the specifics of delivering infrastructure that need attention."

David Craddock, president of the Ontario Association of Architects, says his organization also looks forward to continued work with the provincial government on some key initiatives, such as Ontario Building Code development and delivery of "much-needed" infrastructure including healthcare facilities and other public buildings.

- with files from Patricia Williams