

Prosper Together, Falter Alone

I recently attended the CSEG AGM held at the Petroleum Club in Calgary which included a review of association activities over the year and a report on the financial standing of the association. Amazingly the auditor reported that a projected revenue loss in excess of \$200,000 was brought down to just \$3,000 largely due to the success of the Geo Convention and other events organized by the association.

The CSEG has undertaken many cost saving measures and the fact that it continues to offer worthy educational and social services in the face of dwindling membership numbers is truly remarkable. Much of the credit has to be attributed to the staff and the volunteers of the CSEG who remain the life blood of the association.

The CAGC has endured similar struggles with the downturn and slow recovery and attributes its survival to a few committed member companies who see value in having the association represent their interests with the many issues that affect our industry.

These issues include regulatory and rule changes that, could very well lead to additional costs to a member company's bottom line, or even worse, create conditions making operations impossible.

An example of this is in Alberta is Bill 30, an "*Act to Protect the Health & Well-Being of Working Albertans*" which is due to come into effect on June 1st 2018. It introduces wide-ranging changes to the Occupational Health Safety requirements expected of employers, supervisors, workers, contractors, prime contractors, suppliers, service providers, self-employed and temporary staffing agencies.

Companies will have a legal obligation to provide a healthy & safe workplace and environment for all workers and the public, free of violence and harassment. They will have to control all hazards and must provide awareness training for all workers and competent supervision. Supervisors will have a defined legal obligation to be competent and protect the health & safety of workers under their supervision. They have particular responsibilities to implement all programs as part of their company's health & safety policies which is also a minimum requirement under the act.

In the Oil & Gas industry, larger companies already have impressive health & safety systems in place, however they rely on smaller companies to provide specialized services. These companies are likely to experience greater impacts from Bill 30 and will need to invest in safety training and developing safety systems to comply.

The act focuses on "*Working Albertans*", and looks for ways to include workers in the process of managing workplace safety, for example with the requirement for Joint Health & Safety committees or a dedicated safety representative. My concern is that the increased costs to small companies could very well be the "hair on the camel's back" that forces them out of business, which does little to keep Albertans working.

Another example is the Federal Bill C-45, an act to implement a new legal framework for cannabis production and distribution in Canada. Expected to become Canadian law this summer, this act is set to legalize recreational cannabis with conditions. There is a lot of uncertainty as to how companies will deal with this new legislation. Most Oil & Gas field occupations are of a safety sensitive nature and much has been accomplished over the last 20 years, mostly due to robust best practices and testing to enforce a zero tolerance policy for alcohol & drugs as a workplace hazard.

There has been very little guidance from the Government so far on how companies can adapt to this new legislation and there is sure to be expensive challenges before there is enough case law in place to accurately inform industry.

A good example of associations working together to produce meaningful benefit for all of their members is the “Canadian Model for Providing a Safe Workplace”, an Alcohol & Drug Guideline and Work Rule.

This best practice guide was developed jointly by the Construction Owners Association and Energy Safety Canada with representation from CAGC, CAODC, CAPP, EPAC, PSAC, CEPA and the former OSSA (Oil Sands Safety Association). It provides guidance and tools that will enable companies to implement policies that will keep their workplace safe and comply with the legislation.

The CAGC has also been engaged in several stakeholder meetings with respect to the implementation of a Woodland Caribou recovery plan as part of the Federal SARA (Species At Risk Act). These meetings have been of particular interest to our members as the ranges of several herds are in areas of high resource potential to both the Oil & Gas industry and Forestry. Other stakeholders include indigenous groups, environmentalists, municipalities, other associations and the Provincial government.

The hope is to make available suitable habitat for the species through managing industrial activity, reforestation and recovering disturbed areas (including seismic lines), discouraging known predators (e.g. wolves) and reducing competition from other species (e.g. Moose, Deer).

Representation is important at such forums to voice our concerns and ensure that we remain viable as an industry sector.

Support for the resource industry as a whole is important to the CAGC and our members, whether it be for the construction of pipelines and other infrastructure or for sponsoring industry events. We recognize that other associations play an equally integral role in keeping our industry safe, active and vital for maintaining the great lifestyle enjoyed by all Canadians.

As incoming CSEG President Ron Newman mentioned in his address at the AGM, he is hoping to attract more corporate memberships to the CSEG. The service sector has always provided great support for CSEG events and it is time for corporations to show the same level of support for our industry.

We have received great support for Seismic-in-Motion (SIM) over the years from the CSEG Outreach committee and hope to keep offering this excellent event that presents live demonstrations of all of the seismic services and latest equipment in a typical field setting for those who would not normally be able to visit a seismic field project.

We definitely wouldn't be able to hold such an event without support and without the many volunteers required, so I will use this message to thank all the companies and individuals who have so graciously given time, resources and financial support over the years.

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