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Message from the AEFAA president, **Russell McKay**



Greetings, everyone – happy 2017! I'm sure you'll all agree we had to deal with such a mixed bag of weather and road conditions this winter, so it's good to see the end in sight.

Our fall workshop was once again held in beautiful Kananaskis. It was well-attended by delegates and the trade show was very successful. There was an excellent presentation from SAIT regarding our partnership with them in designing courses for all support staff of facilities. This should be very beneficial for all our AEFAA members. If you've never attended this workshop, I encourage you to join us. You won't be disappointed.

Our annual spring conference and trade show is in Red Deer and coming soon. The theme this year

is "Building Professionals". Our executive director, Alan Kloepper, has been busy putting together a program to suit everyone's needs and interests. Our keynote speaker is Dr. Alec Couros; he will discuss the importance of leaving a digital footprint.

We will be enjoying a Hawaiian theme at the trade show this year. As always, there will be a lot of prizes and giveaways, including the grand prize of airfare for an island getaway. Have some fun. Come in your best island dress and enjoy the Hawaiian fare.

As always, our annual general meeting will be held as part of the conference. During this meeting, we will be calling for any nominations for the positions of vice-president and possible directors-at-large. Please consider getting involved as an executive with AEFAA – it is a very rewarding

and challenging experience. For more information and registration for the conference, go to www.aefaa.com.

We've experienced some changes this past year – from newly elected executives with innovative ideas, to a completely new and updated website, and, most recently, the decision to change dress code for executive from the dated blue blazer and ties to a more casual look of golf shirts displaying our new logo.

I hope you all are able to attend this year's conference. If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to contact me at rmckay@cleaview.ab.ca. ■

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Aerial view.

PHOTOS
BY ANGUS
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PHOTOGRAPHY.



School exterior.

New Christine Meikle School features sensory room, therapy pool

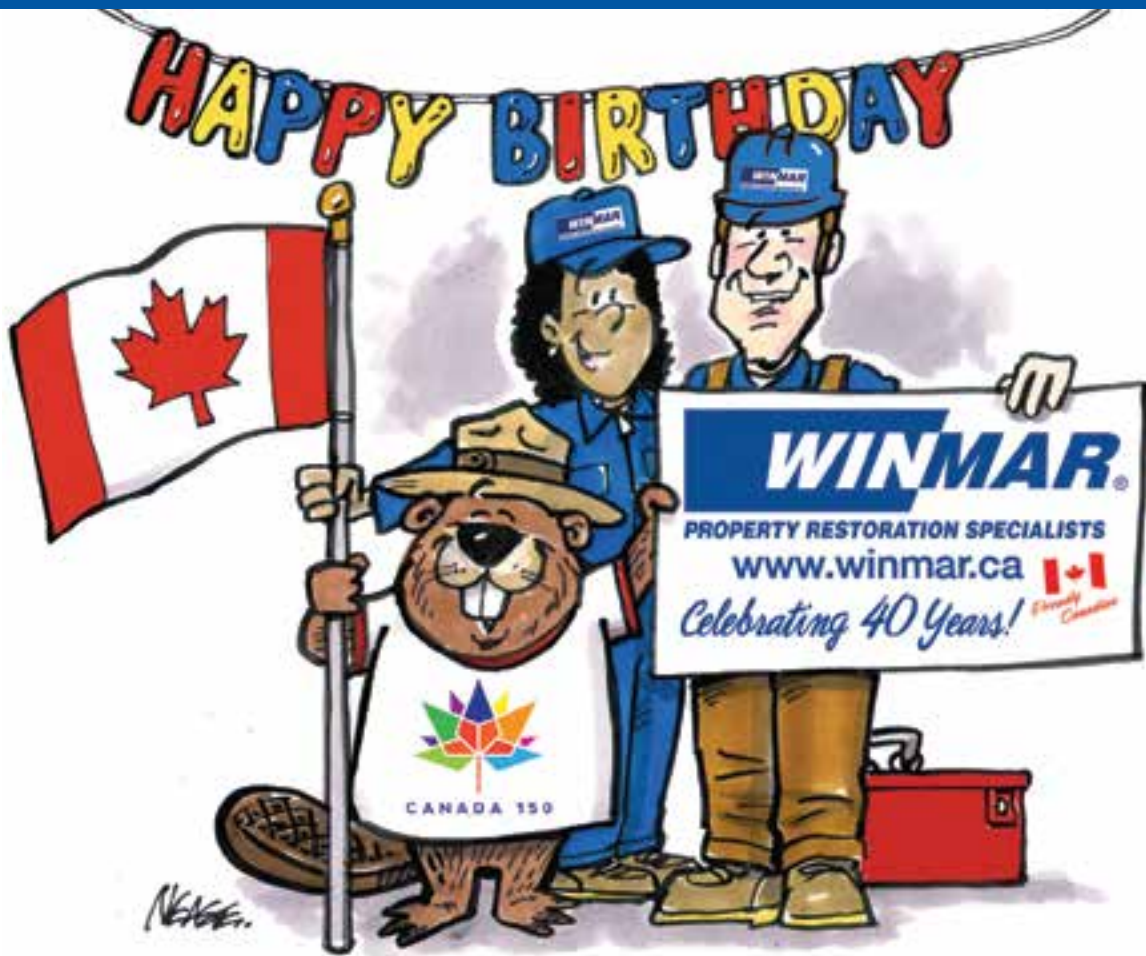
BY CINDY CHAN



school for students with complex special needs officially opened its doors in January 2017.



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Multisensory room.



Typical classroom.

According to Sandra Mann, principal of Christine Meikle School, located in Calgary, Alta., the aforementioned facility is a whole new school. It replaced the original Christine Meikle School, which was 60 years old.

“Christine Meikle herself started a school for kids; I think it was built mostly for kids who had Down syndrome or other developmental disabilities. At the time, there were no educational facilities for students with cognitive disabilities,” Mann says. “She taught in her basement and kitchen, and then the Calgary Board of Education took it over.”

The current Christine Meikle School caters to 80 students – with a capacity of 125 – from Grade 7 to 12 who have complex special needs, says Tom Tittermore, principal with Marshall Tittermore Architects (MTA) – which includes children with cognitive, medical, social, emotional and behavioural challenges/disabilities. More than one third of the student population is wheelchair-bound, which was a huge consideration when designing and building the replacement school. For example, Christine Meikle School is a one-level building with wide hallways to accommodate all of the wheelchairs zipping down the hallways from class to class. Mann says there is parking available for standing frames and other equipment as well.

The exterior of the building is a combination of brick and metal cladding accents with aluminum windows. Classrooms are equipped with acoustic ceilings. While the school has been in operation since January, Tittermore says finishing touches still have yet to be completed.



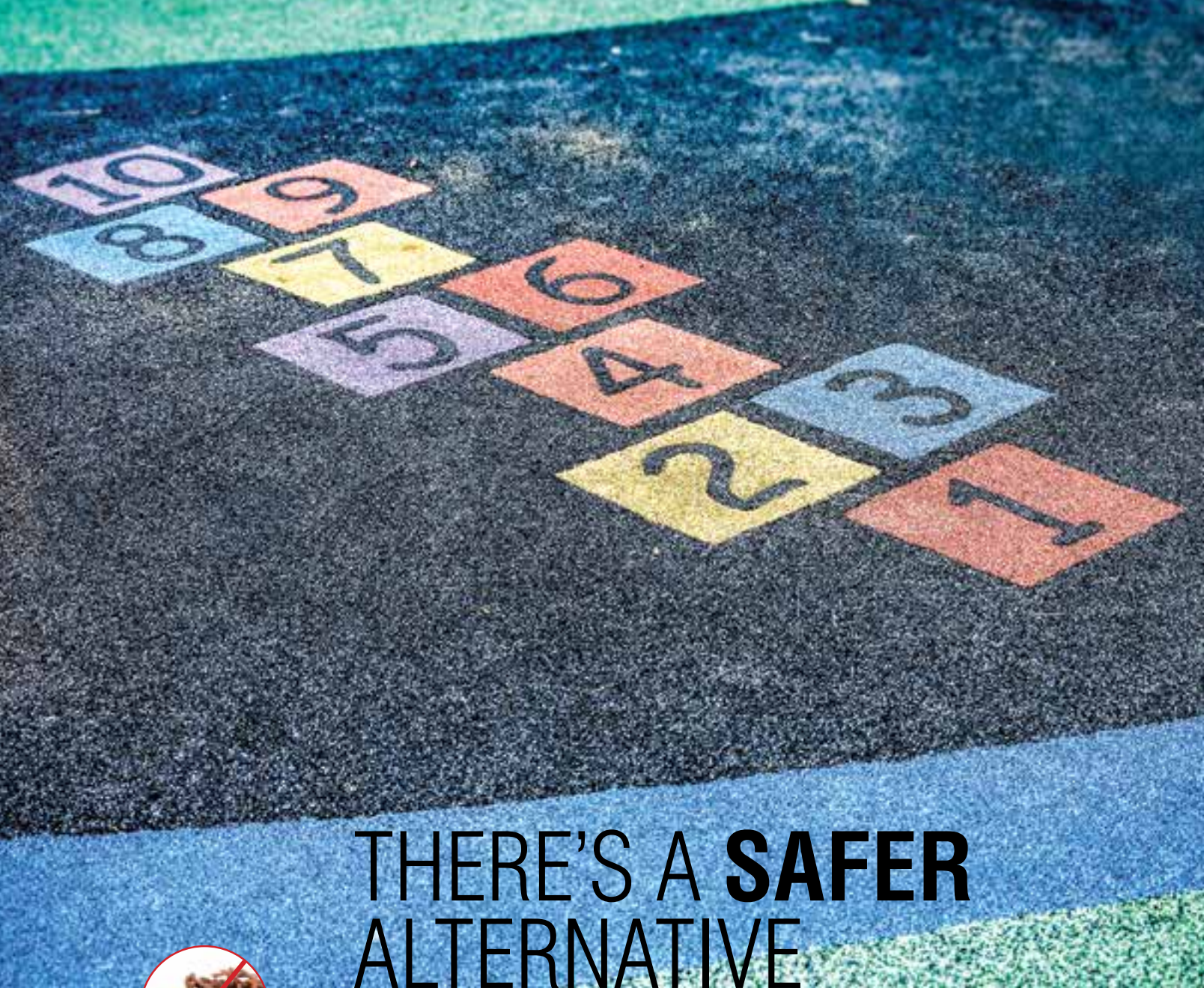
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Main hallway/public area.

On the one floor, the school is divided – and colour-coded – into three major wings. With eight classrooms, the orange wing is where most of the students in wheelchairs are, says Mann. Tittlemore adds this area is for the medically fragile. In this wing, the hallways are extra wide, and each classroom has an X-Y track and a lift system to lift the children from their chairs into other equipment or to be changed.

“It’s quite lovely and it supports the physical health of our staff who don’t have to lift the kids,” Mann says. “We normally have three to five home care nurses with us, and they are just on call.”

Also in the orange wing are the nurses’ office and a Snoezelen room, which is a controlled multisensory environment (CME) for students who have autism or other developmental disabilities. The room boasts an X-Y track, fibre optic curtains, bubble tubes and various types of lighting and projectors.

“The room is trying to hit everyone’s sensory needs, delivering stimuli to various senses using lighting effects, music, colours,” Mann explains.

The blue wing consists of a staff room with windows looking out on to the playground. According to Tittlemore, this wing, with four classrooms, is also known as the wing for secure students, meaning the space is for students who are at risk of simply taking off or who have run before in the past and for students who have difficulty with emotional control.

“There are time-release doors and big, bright beautiful rooms that are light and airy,” Mann says.

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“There is a small playground area that is enclosed. If the students need to go out or need space, they can go out in that area, which is secure. There are swings and other equipment.”

Mann adds that the playground area is connected to another playground through a gate. “If the kids are in a chill, calm mood, they can join the other kids,” she says.

The last wing is the green wing, which Tittlemore explains is the area for the cognitively impaired. The wing, with seven classrooms, goes around in a loop, according to Mann.

“If you go to the green wing, the first thing you’ll see is an Interactive Living and Learning Room which is a kitchen that students access for food studies,” she says.

This school kitchen, equipped with wheelchair-accessible stainless steel tables – is a huge part of the green wing. All of the students at Christine Meikle School do a lot of cooking. The children with limited mobility will operate the mixers and blenders either by using switches or their hands/elbows. Mann says there is also a machine that connects to a measuring cup that pours out flour.

The green wing also consists of classrooms, a laundry facility with two industrial washing machines and dryers and a quiet student office.

“All three wings are connected to a main area of the building which we call the learning commons, and it’s a great area for kids to meet and learn and interact together,” Mann says.

In the learning commons, students are able to socialize, be read to and

try augmentative communication devices and wheelchairs. It’s a large, open and bright space with chairs, tables, bookshelves and couches that looks out into an enclosed courtyard. One side of the learning commons leads to a garage door that opens up to the gym. The school also has an art room that is currently being used as a storage room/exercise room.

However, Mann says the most

exciting part of the school is the warm saltwater therapy pool that opened up in February. A pool therapist works alongside the students when in the water. Kids are able to use waterproof wheelchairs to get in the pool via a ramp. The pool is three feet and nine inches deep in the deepest part of the pool.

“It’s a great school. We love it,” Mann says. ■

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Keeping indigenous cultures alive and thriving

BY CINDY CHAN



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Located in Calgary, Alta., the Aboriginal Learning Centre started out in a temporary location in September 2016. Michelle Ranger, principal of the school, says this program focuses on early intervention for students from preschool to Grade 1.

What differentiates the Aboriginal Learning Centre from other schools is all of the programming stems from a holistic, strength-based indigenous perspective. The school features an early development centre, a full-day kindergarten class and a Grade 1 class. Next year, the plan is to add a Grade 2 class, as well as a Grade 3 class the year after that. In addition to teachers, Ranger says there are also multidisciplinary teams on site that include a speech and language pathologist, occupational therapist and a physical therapist.

"We moved into our new facility on Jan. 3, 2017, so it's been a really exciting time for us," Ranger says. "It's a complete renovation and modernization of the former Harold W. Riley School."

Wanda Dalla Costa, Visiting Eminent Scholar from the Arizona State University, was the indigenous consultant for the project. She worked in close association with Beck Vale Architects & Planners Inc., the architects of record. Dalla Costa's involvement included bringing together indigenous perspectives from the community, including elders, community leaders and cultural advisors to discuss how the school could foster



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indigenous teaching methods and honour cultural diversity in Calgary, which includes Metis, First Nations and Inuit students.

“There’s a number of First Nations groups that live within Calgary – but it is also important to honour our Blackfoot territory,” Dalla Costa says.

With the community guiding the overall vision, Dalla Costa prepared the preliminary sketch for the renovation of the school with Beck Vale.

“There’s a number of meanings embedded within the Aboriginal Learning Centre that could only have been achieved by talking to our community,” Dalla Costa says.

The overall design of the school is inspired by the concept of Turtle Island, which Ranger says is an inclusive term for all First Nations groups across North America. From above, Ranger explains that the building resembles a turtle’s back.

“It’s circular, and the circular design also represents life’s journey,” Ranger says, adding that the youngest students’ classroom is located close to the entrance. One would then keep walking in a clockwise direction – what Ranger calls the natural order – to see the older students’ classroom.

Dalla Costa says there were three guiding principles for the design of the school – language and traditions, welcoming community and the natural world.

“In regards to welcoming community, some of the nonstandard programming includes a large gymnasium for



A circular logo for Casterland, featuring a stylized figure on a wheel and the text "HOME OF THE CASTERMAN", "ESTD 1975", and "FOR ANYTHING THAT ROLLS". Below the logo is a banner that reads "Service & Selection Since 1975". The background of the advertisement shows various types of tires and wheels. The text "Specialty Tire & Tube" is prominently displayed, followed by "For all your Other tire needs". At the bottom, the Casterland logo and name are shown, along with contact information for four locations: Surrey, BC (604) 543-7744; Edmonton, AB (780) 432-5575; Calgary, AB (403) 243-3553; and Winnipeg, MB (204) 783-5500.

Other important cultural components of the school include a healing room, an outdoor amphitheatre classroom and an outdoor herb garden in which traditional indigenous species are grown, such as Saskatoon berries and sage.

gatherings,” Dalla Costa says. “We pow wow, we feast, we invite the community in – it’s the basis for a lot of our cultures.”

The school also boasts a kitchen that community members can use during events, a cultural instruction room to teach song, dance, drumming and music and a gathering space in the centre of the school.

“In the gathering space, there are windows from which align with the equinox and solstice, sunset and sunrise,” Dalla Costa says. “Those were things identified by the elders that were vital for cultural teaching in an urban setting.”

Other important cultural components of the school include a healing room, an outdoor amphitheatre classroom and an outdoor herb garden in which traditional indigenous species are grown, such as Saskatoon berries and sage. Dalla Costa explains it was important that the indigenous students are aware of their natural surroundings from a young age.

Dalla Costa says the Seven Grandfathers’ teachings, the teaching philosophy of the school, are incorporated in the school – as footprints. She says, “There are seven animals with

values associated with them. We’ve imprinted the footprints of the animals in the interior.”

There is also a greeting wall located within the Aboriginal Learning Centre. Describing the greetings as a time capsule of all of the surviving indigenous languages in Canada, Dalla Costa says are 77 indigenous welcome greetings on the wall.

“It was amazing, I was calling random First Nations groups, and some of them only had two speakers [of that language] left,” Dalla Costa says. “I had to find them and ask them for the correct spelling of the greeting in their language.” ■



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Outstanding principal works to change young women's lives

BY CINDY CHAN



One of Canada's outstanding principals of the year works at one of Canada's most unique schools.

Rita Dickson is the principal at Calgary-based Louise Dean School.

On Jan. 31 this year, the Learning Partnership named 40 outstanding principals as part of their Outstanding Principals program, now celebrating its 13th year. And one of them was Dickson.

However, before she entered the world of education, she spent 13 years out of school travelling and working. Eventually she worked towards a bachelor of arts degree, bachelor of education degree and a master of education degree in educational psychology.

"I started my work with students with developmental

disabilities and the medically fragile," Dickson says.

"Then I moved out of that school into one where most of the students were mobile but had very severe disabilities."

Dickson also later on worked with Alberta Education in southern Alberta, helping school districts design programs to help students with multiple disabilities. However, that job required her to be on the road quite often – and she didn't want to be away from her family for extended periods of time.

"I'm a single mom with two kids," Dickson says.

She worked in a resource role at a high school for two years, but she became more interested in working with students who had complex learning disabilities. She worked in corrections for six years at a young offenders' centre.

"Then I moved into a really unique setting in Calgary called Alternative High School, working with some students that had gender identity issues complex mental health issues," Dickson adds.

From there, Dickson became the assistant principal at Dr. Oakley School, a facility for students with learning disabilities. Eventually, the Calgary Board of Education asked Dickson to move into a principalship, a title she held for four years until the position at Louise Dean School opened up.

Louise Dean School is a high school for pregnant and parenting teens. The school has a partnership with Catholic Family Service, Alberta Health Services and the Calgary Board of Education. The school has a number of resources so that mothers can attend their classes and look after their children – but there are also staff members on site that are trained to and capable of taking care of them as well.

The school has three child-care rooms, each for different age groups, such as infants, crawlers and walkers. Holly Charles, director of operations at Catholic Family Service, says the children range in age from three weeks to 18 months old.



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"They all have play spaces," Charles says. "There are books, toys and all of those elements to promote the development of children." Charles adds that each space has a sink, fridge and changing area.

"Fifty per cent of the second floor is designated to Catholic Family Service and Alberta Health Services – this is where our specialized programming takes place," Charles says. "There are 22 child-care staff on the main floor, as well as 10 to 12 counselling staff on the second floor."

Dickson says there is also a prenatal nurse at the school to teach prenatal classes, as well as a nurse who teaches the students about sexual health and birth control.

"We're really designed to be flexible to bring women in. We encourage breastfeeding. We can take them in and start them in any day of the week," Dickson says.

The school also offers a full hot breakfast program, as well as a dollar lunch program on Mondays. Lunches are free on Fridays. In addition, the mothers are taught how to cook, and they even make their own birthday cakes so they don't spend too much on birthdays.

"They're teenagers learning to be good moms, and they need coaching," Dickson says. "They can be very successful. If they make the decision to parent, we need to work to support them. We need to prevent multigenerational challenges and support them in being the caring mothers that they truly want to be."

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2017 AEFAA conference schedule

Monday, May 15	
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Golf at Alberta Springs – transportation and lunch provided
6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	President's reception – Palermo/Savona Room
Tuesday, May 16	
9 a.m. – 9:15 a.m.	Opening ceremonies – Santano Room
9:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Keynote speaker – Alec Couros – Santano Room
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Refreshment break
10:45 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Professional development – Course Rollout – Santano Room
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.	Lunch with partners – Monaco Room
1:15 p.m. – 1:45 p.m.	New member orientation – Board Room 1
2 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Trade show – Hawaiian theme – Special Events Centre
8 p.m. – 12 a.m.	Karaoke and trade show draws – Monaco Room
Wednesday, May 17	
7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Breakfast – Monaco Room
9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Best practices in health and safety – Scott McLarty – Santano Room
10:30 a.m. – 10:45 a.m.	Refreshment break
10:45 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Historical loss perspective – Risk mitigation – Lloyd Sadd
12 p.m. – 1 p.m.	Lunch – Monaco Room
1 p.m. – 4 p.m. (a)	Facility tour – St. Joseph High School – Red Deer
1 p.m. – 2:30 p.m. (b)	Playgrounds – Designing inclusivity and new trends – Santano Room
2:30 p.m. – 2:45 p.m.	Refreshment break
2:45 p.m. – 4 p.m. (b)	Panel discussion – Best practices – Grounds maintenance – Santano Room
6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	Banquet and entertainment – Monaco Room
Thursday, May 18	
7:30 a.m. – 8:45 a.m.	Breakfast – Monaco Room
9 a.m. – 10:15 a.m.	Zone meetings – Monaco Room
10:15 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Coffee break
10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Annual general meeting – Monaco Room
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch and closing ceremonies – Monaco Room



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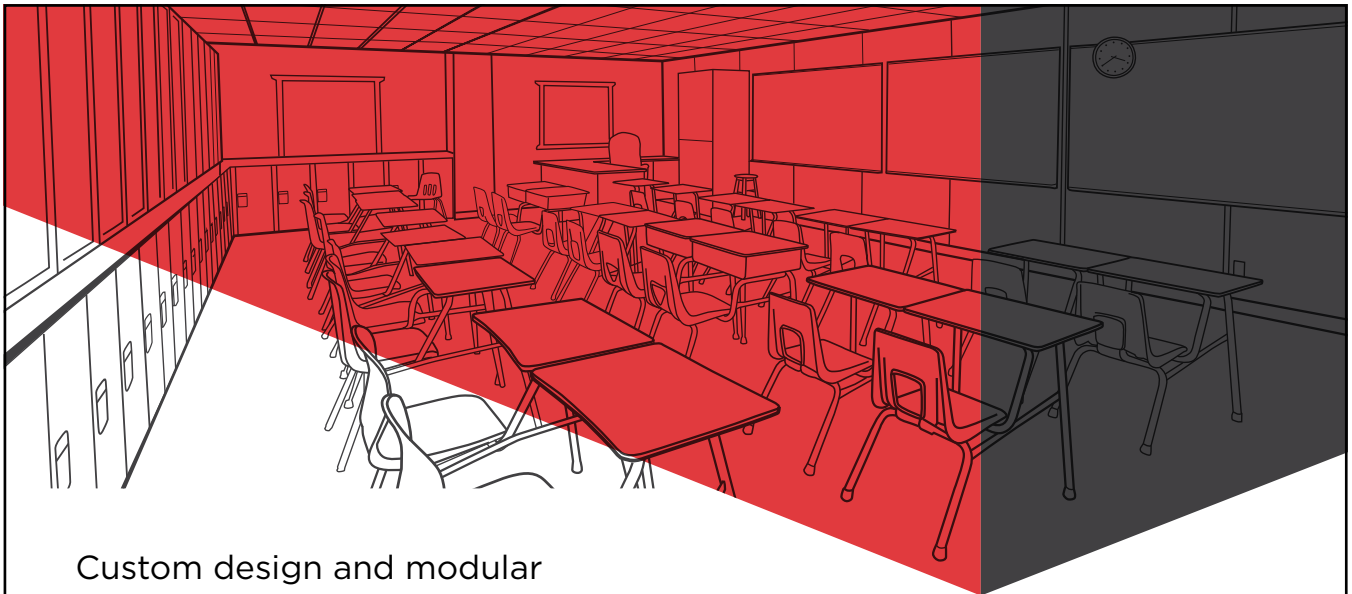
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2017 AEFAA partners' program

Monday, May 15	
9 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Golf at Alberta Springs – Transportation and lunch provided
6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	President's reception – Palermo/Savona Room
Tuesday, May 16	
8 a.m. – 9 a.m.	Partners' meet and greet – Board Room 1
9 a.m. – 10:30 a.m.	Opening ceremonies and keynote speaker – Dr. Alec Couros – Santano Room
12 p.m. – 1:15 p.m.	Lunch with partners – Monaco Room
1:30 p.m. – 4 p.m.	Chalk painting – Joshua Tree
4 p.m. – 8 p.m.	Trade show – Hawaiian theme – Special Events Centre
8 p.m. – 12 p.m.	Trade show – Draws and karaoke – Monaco Room
Wednesday, May 17	
8:30 a.m. – 4 p.m.	Shopping – Cross Iron Mills – Lunch and transportation provided
6 p.m. – 10 p.m.	Banquet and entertainment
Thursday, May 18	
8 a.m. – 12 p.m.	Free time
12 p.m. – 1:30 p.m.	Lunch and closing ceremonies with partners – Monaco Room



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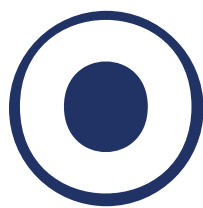
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School HVAC systems and Alberta's new building code

BY ANDRE LEBLANC



In Nov. 1, 2016, the Alberta Building Code 2014 (ABC 2014) came into effect.

This update

to the building code is aligned with the National Energy Code of Canada for Buildings (NECB) 2011. The changes in the code affect all future building permits, developments or additions to Alberta buildings. This code will be enforced for all commercial, industrial, residential buildings, including educational facilities.

The new code includes changes to various industry practices for "...windows, lighting, insulation, heating, service-water heating, ventilation and air-conditioning [HVAC]" (Canadian Manufacturing, 2016). For the first time, the code will also include

mandatory minimum levels for energy efficiency in buildings. These new energy efficiency levels are intended to reduce the costs associated with building operations. This is important, as the HVAC system of a building is traditionally one of the largest costs associated with energy usage. As a result of the ABC 2014, how we design, operate and how much it costs to operate our schools will change.

For school designers, architects and operators, the new code has both positive and negative aspects. The ABC 2014 is designed to reduce overall energy costs and improve the health of occupant spaces. However, it also requires the creation of new strategies for the design and maintenance of buildings, and expands regulations which

may require initial upfront capital investments for schools.

Updates to the code affecting educational facilities' HVAC systems include:

- Maximum allowable particulate matter levels for indoor spaces. If safe/comfortable levels are not met, increased air filtration should be considered. See the ASHRAE guideline 62.2-2016 for information.
- Changes to HVAC system installation. This mainly affects heating contractor practices.
- New mechanical ventilation requirements for storage garages and increased carbon monoxide alarm placement to reduce carbon monoxide hazards.
- New definition of mechanical ventilation.
- Ductwork size changes for return air.
- Direct access requirements for roof-mounted HVAC equipment.
- New policies for retrofits and installation of radon mitigation systems. Visit www.healthcanada.gc.ca/radon for more information on the dangers of radon.



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Recommendations

To best address these new developments, school facility operators should familiarize themselves with both the ABC 2014 and NECB 2011 codes. After that:

- Consider energy efficiency when selecting air filters for HVAC systems. Efficient air filtration systems will help reduce costs associated with running HVAC equipment. Be sure that the air filtration system is also protecting the indoor environment by removing particulate matter to levels safe for human occupancy. Air filters should be independently tested and compliant with ASHRAE standard 62.2-2016. A full filtration survey should be completed by a NAFA certified technician, and followed up with air quality testing to provide evidence of a school's indoor air quality. A filtration survey will reveal any limitations of a current air filtration system and help to diagnose IAQ problems. Air quality testing monitors the presence of any harmful contaminants, pressure deficiencies, and HVAC problem areas.
- Be aware of changes to the building permitting system.
- Consult government and industry sources for additional information and support for complying with the new code.
- Consider LEED Certification to maximize energy efficiency of a facility. This is most applicable to large buildings like post-secondary institutions. ■

Sources

Canadian Home Builder Association. 2016. Code Overview Session - Session 1 - Part 9, 2016.

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National Research Council Canada. 2016. Alberta Building Code 2014.

Sunny Ghataurah. 2016. Implementing Energy Standard NECB 2011 With The ABC 2014. AES Engineering Vancouver. Edmonton Buildex 2016.

The Canadian Press. 2016. Alberta Adopts Building Code Changes To Reduce Greenhouse Gas Emissions. Canadian Manufacturing.



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2016 AEFAA fall workshop recap

BY ALAN KLOEPPER

The Alberta Educational Facilities Administrators' Association (AEFAA) was very proud to once again hold their annual fall workshop at the Delta Lodge at Kananaskis. The event was held from Oct. 19 to 21 with approximately 40 AEFAA members in attendance.

The workshop started off with the traditional trade show on the opening night. The exhibitors in attendance included ServiceMaster

Restore of Edmonton, Spalding Hardware Systems, Buckwold Western, Blue Imp Recreational Products of Canada, Centaur Products Inc., W.E. Greer Ltd., Williams Engineering, Reliable Controls, Talius, CDI Spaces, Canwest Elevators, Breathe Easy Duct Cleaning, DIRT T and Air Filter Sales & Service. The evening was a tremendous success. The hotel again served some delicious snacks and the space provided for

the event was perfect.

On Thursday morning, the workshop officially kicked off with the opening remarks from our president, Russ McKay. Philip Jones then regaled us on how to fit a heart attack into your busy schedule. This advice was very well taken and we very much enjoyed Philip's presentation.

Alyssa Lefavre with DIRT T gave an excellent presentation on the future of construction. This





innovative modular approach to construction had everyone's attention and she had plenty of questions to field after the presentation. Well done, Alyssa!

The afternoon started off with our lunchbox series. In this series, consultants from different fields are brought in to share their knowledge. This year, mechanical engineer and actual rocket scientist Chris Saunders of Hidi Rae Consulting came in to present a session called Mechanical 101. His presentation was informative and enjoyed by all.

Jeff Lecuyer with SAIT took the stage to discuss the composition of a customized AEFAA program that SAIT would develop for our

membership. A lot of discussion took place and we look forward to the actual roll out of this program at the spring conference held in Red Deer in May of 2017.

Williams Engineering held the final session of the day. Their presentation focused on the use of spray foam insulation in construction. This session was found to be incredibly useful and practical for our industry.

The evening wrapped up with a hospitality evening at Woody's, which was so generously sponsored once again by ServiceMaster Restore of Edmonton. Special thanks to Wade and Sarah – your generosity is very much appreciated.

The last day of the workshop focused on a presentation by ServiceMaster Restore of Edmonton on the restoration efforts that took place in Fort McMurray following the devastating fire that took place in May of 2016. The delegates were awestruck listening and watching the presentation. The magnitude of the efforts required following this tragedy was sobering to say the least.

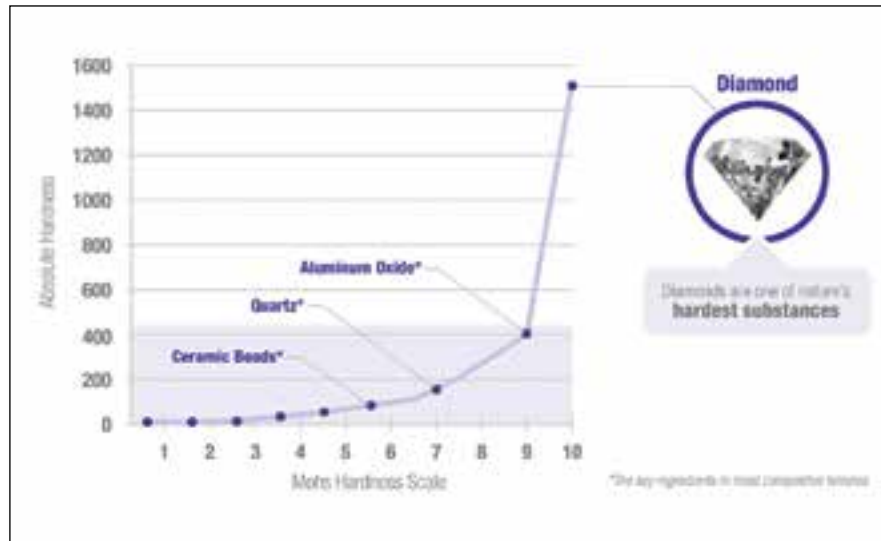
In closing, AEFAA would like to thank their members for attending and hope that there was plenty of good takeaways that would help them in their day-to-day duties.

Looking forward to seeing you all again next year!



Diamonds are a floor's best friend

BY BIANCA JOHNNY



When selecting a floor for heavy traffic in a commercial setting, it is just as important

to select the finish of the floor for maximum performance. Over the years as technology has evolved, so has the urethane finish and its ability to withstand day-to-day wear. This has led to products having a longer life cycle and it has also changed the maintenance required to care for floors.

There are lots of types of urethanes used but the two major ones that have been used on flooring are polyurethanes and aluminum oxide urethanes. Armstrong Flooring has introduced a new proprietary coating system called Diamond 10™ Technology to bring commercial floors to the next level.

Polyurethanes were created as

an alternative to linseed oil as the primary finish, especially for the use of hardwood floors. Polyurethane was designed to achieve a more durable and water-resistant protection to the floor. For commercial applications, you might see a water based polyurethane on a natural linoleum floor. Otherwise they are fairly obsolete.

Aluminum oxide finishes were developed to be a harder more durable finish to be pre-applied to flooring in the manufacturing stage. It's a much harder and longer-lasting finish and has pretty much been the manufacturers standard to date. Although these coatings are much harder, they still scratch and unfortunately the scratches show up white.

Diamond 10™ Technology is a new revolutionary, patent-pending innovation using cultured diamonds, to provide the highest

scratch, stain and scuff resistance in the industry. Diamonds are one of nature's hardest substances. They will outperform other common flooring finishes on the Mohs scale of mineral hardness, which characterizes the scratch resistance of various materials. The whole purpose is to minimize wear and staining to create a longer lasting product that is much easier to care for.

Armstrong has launched two of their commercial categories in this new D10™ finish. The first is to launch the finish is the LVT line, Natural Creations. This leading LVT now has doubled its commercial warranty to 20 years. Along with upgrading the finish they have launched new print films and aesthetics they have also made the base more rigid to reduce floor prep and telegraphing. The second line is the homogenous sheet vinyl, Medintone & Medintech. This homogenous line of flooring can withstand heavy traffic and staining for a true low-maintenance floor, providing the highest scratch, stain and scuff resistance in the industry and elevating the aesthetics of healthcare and educational environments.

The largest benefit that comes with this innovative new technology is the ease of maintenance. With the coating being hydrophobic and so

scratch-resistant, there is no longer need for floor polish and buffing which not only saves money on the front end of installation but in the continued life of the product. Simple mopping and vacuuming is all that is necessary. While they have eliminated the need for polish and buffing, it still can be done. The Diamond 10™ Technology coating is a high-performance, hydrophobic, urethane finish that provides outstanding scratch and scuff resistance, improved maintenance characteristics and maintenance options for the end-user, which is truly a win-win.

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The **lowest price** isn't always the **lowest price**



ver the past few years, there has been an increase in the amount of too-good-to-be-true pricing. In an industry that isn't regulated or standardized, how do you know you are picking the right person for your job? Here are some key things to look for when selecting a duct cleaner:

- **How detailed is the quote?** The quote should outline the proposed scope of work so that each side has a clear understanding of what is included and what isn't. Requesting a detailed quote protects you from any change orders and gives you a reference to hold the cleaners to.
- **What type of equipment are they using?** If the company is using a truck-mounted system, does their quote include additional personnel to keep your building secure or are they leaving the open doors unguarded? Truck-mounted systems also generate noise that may upset the neighbours. Do the proposed hours of work fit within the noise bylaws? There are portable vacuum systems that can be taken right inside your facility allowing the premises to be secure and your neighbours undisturbed.
- **How are they cleaning the ducts?** Some companies use only forced air to push/pull the debris down the ventilation lines to the vacuum. We have found this to be moderately effective. A combination of forced air and a brush system removes a greater percentage of the debris.

- **Are larger ducts being manually entered?** With large ducting forced air and a brush system just aren't enough. They don't make brushes big enough to reach all sides of the line at once. The only way to get the larger ducting clean is to have personnel manually enter and vacuum the ducts.
- **Do they give you before and after pictures?** This is your insurance and evidence that the job has been done. It allows you to see the impact duct cleaning has on your overall system. It also gives you something to share with the occupants of your building to prove that you care about their health.
- **Do they guarantee their work?** We all know that maintenance staff members are busy and if you get the wrong duct cleaners they might cut corners. If your staff finds a problem will the company come back and fix it for free? Are they will to have you or someone else inspect their work?

In an industry that has no set standards or regulations, it is easy for just anyone to jump in and start their own duct cleaning business. You deserve to have your ducts cleaned by someone that knows the complexities of your systems and how to properly clean them. When you meet with a salesperson quiz them on the above points and on how they clean the different parts of your system. This will help ensure that you have the proper people cleaning your facility. You might pay more for quality work, but it's worth it. ■



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Solar panel installations lead to bright futures



According to a press release from October 2016 from the Alberta Government, funding is being made available for the installation of solar panels at 36 school projects as part of the Climate Leadership Plan.

Surprisingly, the idea was a recommendation made by Alberta students.

"We have heard directly from students from across Alberta and their message is clear – they want us to be leaders on climate change. A number of school boards had already been asking about the possibility of installing these panels and we are pleased to be able to partner with them to invest in our public infrastructure," David Eggen, Minister of Education, said in the release.

As a result, Alberta Education will be reaching out to school authorities to discuss the projects. Sir John A. Macdonald School, located in Calgary, already has 40 solar panels on the roof.

The total investment in the solar panel installations will be at least \$9 million. Costs would vary by project, depending on the size of the school, number of the solar panel and local site conditions, but the average estimate is \$250,000 to \$750,000 per school.

The Alberta Government is also providing funds to the schools installing solar panels that allows them to add an educational component to the project, such as using an app to follow the power generated by the panels.

"There is no location better than on the roofs of our schools in the centre of our communities for

local solar electricity generation. The energy does not travel far before it meets an energy need, making our electricity system more efficient. More importantly, showcasing this modern approach to managing our energy needs so close to where our children spend much of their day inspires them, develops their interest in science and in the environment and builds the school pride that invigorates their entire learning experience," John Gorman, president and CEO of the Canadian Solar Industries Association, said in the release.

According to Robert Ashley, manager of design services for the Calgary Board of Education (CBE), the following four schools have received authorization for the installation of solar panels: Nelson Mandela High School, Seton High School, Lord Beaverbrook High School and James Fowler High School.

For Seton High School, which is under construction, just a few structural modifications were necessary to support the solar panel on the roof. At Nelson Mandela High School, which is receiving a gym addition, the gym roof design was modified to accommodate solar panels. The other two existing schools, Lord Beaverbrook High School and James Fowler High School, are currently undergoing major modernizations and the addition of solar panels is currently at the evaluation stage, says Ashley.

"Collectively the total number of solar panels can impose substantial loads on an existing roof, so structural reviews are needed to ensure the weight is distributed over the roof surface," Ashley says.

Nelson Mandela and Seton High Schools will each receive 351 and 360 solar panels respectively with a potential output of 90 to 97 kilowatts DC. Electricity generated by the systems will be used by the schools to reduce energy needs. Excess electricity generated (e.g. summer) can be sold back to the energy providers and returned to the grid.

The total investment in the solar panel installations will be at least \$9 million.

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