



ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK
MANUFACTURERS ASSOCIATION
OF CANADA

ASSOCIATION DES MANUFACTURIERS
DE MENUISERIE ARCHITECTURALE
DU CANADA

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FALL
2022

AWMAC'S INDUSTRY MAGAZINE

AWMAC

ARCHITECTURAL WOODWORK LEADERSHIP + INNOVATION



DIRTT TOUR SHOWS LEAN AND INDUSTRY 4.0

18

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For the first time in three years,
AWMAC members and friends
gathered in person last June.

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For the first time in three years, AWMAC members gathered in person last June to celebrate our industry, re-connect with each other, make new connections and talk about moving forward in these challenging times.



Keynote Speaker and Olympic medalist, Jeremiah Brown, kicks off the education portion of the 2022 AWMAC National Convention.

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◀ Rudy Bardeck



Jeff Clermont ▶

MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENTS

Normally, AWMAC presidents serve a two-year term, but the last three years have been anything but normal. When the global pandemic hit, Rudy Bardeck was half-way through his term. He generously extended his presidency, providing stability to our association and its members as we navigated through turbulent times. Here, Bardeck reflects on his three years as president, while current president, Jeff Clermont, looks forward to the road ahead.

Rudy Bardeck

Over the last three years, we've accomplished a great deal together, and I'm so proud of the work we've done. The development and release of the North American Architectural Woodwork Standards (NAAWS) 4.0 is a crowning achievement. It brought AWMAC together with our colleagues at the Woodworking Institute in a collaborative effort that has resulted in a thorough, user-friendly, and exceptional woodwork standards manual. It really is an outstanding achievement.

I'm also very proud of the work we've done internally as an association. Efforts to standardize our membership criteria across the country, new national policies and procedures are coming together, along with improvements to our Guarantee and Inspection Service program.

Key to all of this has been communication – between chapters, between the chapters and the national association and among us all as individuals. Those lines of communication and dialogue are getting stronger every day. As I leave the role of president, I am proud of and happy with the work we've done to make AWMAC even better for all.

Jeff Clermont

I have to start by thanking Rudy Bardeck for his leadership over the last three years. Serving as vice president alongside him, I have learned much and am looking forward to carrying on where he left off.

I say that because AWMAC is no different from other industry associations in that it can take a lot of time for ideas and plans to come to fruition. Part of my goal as president is to continue with important initiatives started under Rudy's leadership and get them accomplished for the betterment of AWMAC. We are so close on chapter standardization, the adoption of new governance policies and much more, and I want to keep the momentum going.

Like Rudy, I agree that communication is key to our success and the success of our members. I am committed to open lines of communication within our association so that everyone feels heard and understands what's happening and why. It's essential for AWMAC's future that we remain a welcoming association and industry, that we look forward and find fresh ways to bring new generations in and find new ways to support our members.

I am looking forward to the next two years and having this opportunity to give back to the industry that has given so much to me. 🍷

A NEW LOOK FOR A NEW DIRECTION

BY MICHELLE MORRELL

INTRODUCING AWMAC'S INDUSTRY MAGAZINE: AIM.


With our **NEW** magazine, *AIM*, we hope to inspire not only our AWMAC members but all those connected to the architectural woodwork industry across Canada to read and share stories about our industry and the people who work in it.

You will still find articles and columns familiar to you from our previous magazine, *The Sounding Board*, such as Chapter News, a message from the President and feature

stories about incredible woodwork projects completed by our members (see page 30 for the story about Microsoft's Esterra Park).

But you will also find new content, such as columns about our Guarantee and Inspection Service (GIS). You will also find feature articles about business issues related to our industry, such as "Hiring in a tight market" on page 10 in this issue, stories about smaller projects and student work, such as "A handcrafted kitchen for a great cause" on page 22, and much more.




The goal of *AIM* is to create an additional form of communication directly from AWMAC to you, something that speaks to all of our members, to recognize the breadth of this industry, inspire ideas, make connections and help people get more from their business and their life.

The door is open, and we want to hear from you! If you have ideas for a story, topics that you want to learn about, or would like to suggest a project to be featured in an article, send them to us at aim@awmac.com. 



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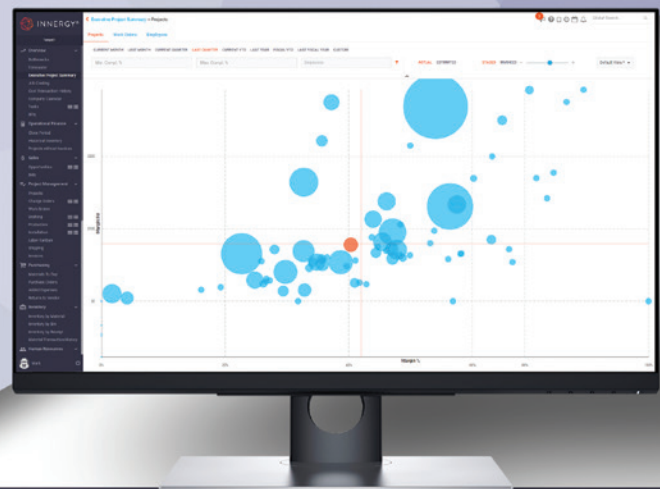
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CHAPTER NEWS

AWMAC CHAPTERS CHECK IN WITH AIM
GOT NEWS? EMAIL IT TO AIM@AWMAC.COM

ONTARIO CHAPTER

PETER GALLAGHER
AWMAC DIRECTOR | ONTARIO CHAPTER

The AWMAC Ontario Chapter held its annual Al Sparling Memorial Golf Tournament on May 26, 2022, and what a fantastic event it was! The weather was perfect, the food was tasty, and everyone had an amazing time!

RYAN LANE
MEN'S CLOSEST TO THE PIN

SHANNON GALLAGHER
WOMEN'S LONGEST DRIVE

KYLE CAMARRO
MEN'S LONGEST DRIVE



THANKS TO EVERYONE AT GLEN ABBEY

Glen Abbey is such a prestigious golf course, and the staff is amazing, friendly and polite. Thanks to everyone at Glen Abbey for putting such a great day together for us.

And congratulations to the winning team from Pro-Ply – John Vaglia, Mike Vigneux, Marcello Ripole and Vaughn Lavigne – for a game well played!

A huge thank you to all of our generous sponsors – we are always grateful for their continued support:

- Breakfast: [Magnum Millwork and Forte Fixtures](#)
- Concession stand: [Hardwoods](#)
- Carts: [Alexandria Moulding/Royal Woodworking and pro-Ply](#)
- Lunch: [Upper Canada Forest Products](#), [G&P Millwork](#), [Akhurst and Magnum Millwork](#)
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Thanks to everyone who participated in our annual golf tournament – it was such a success because of your participation!

We look forward to next year's tournament, which will be held at Glen Abbey on June 8, 2023 during the 2023 AWMAC National Convention. See you there!

SASKATCHEWAN CHAPTER

KASIA ROBINSON
AWMAC DIRECTOR
SASKATCHEWAN CHAPTER

The AWMAC Saskatchewan Chapter is planning a couple of events this fall – mark your calendars now so you don't miss out!



AWARDS WITH A CHANGE

The Saskatchewan Chapter's Awards Ceremony will be held at the Saskatoon Inn on November 18, 2022. This is a new beginning for us as we officially shift to holding our awards ceremony every other year instead of annually. This change gives members more breathing room to enter projects that take more than a year to complete so we can truly celebrate the achievements of all our members.

BOWLING ANYONE?

Our annual chapter board and member meetings were held on Friday, September 16, 2022. After a day of strategic planning and chapter business, we met up at Hunter's Eastview Bowl for some social time and to knock out a few strikes before we sat down to dinner.

SOUTHERN ALBERTA CHAPTER

STEPHANIE ROLL, AWMAC DIRECTOR | SOUTHERN ALBERTA CHAPTER

MEMBER SPOTLIGHT

Randy Bec is truly among the best of us. Founder of Bec Woodcraft in Calgary, this calm, efficient, level-headed leader stepped down from the Southern Alberta Board of Directors in January 2022 after serving seven years as treasurer.

Randy is a big proponent of the idea that AWMAC is your organization, and you get out of it what you put into it. Well, he put in a lot during his time on the board, and we heartily thank him for his outstanding contribution of time and leadership to our chapter and for making us better.

STUDENTS ROCK THEIR SKILLS

The Southern Alberta Chapter had eight apprentices complete projects for our 2022 Woodworking Student Competition. The top three placings are:

First place

Chris C., Bec Woodcraft, Calgary

Second place

Alex B., First Choice Millwork, Calgary

Third place

Michael G., Executive Millwork, Calgary



QUÉBEC CHAPTER

MARTIN BOUTET, AWMAC
DIRECTOR | QUÉBEC CHAPTER

GOLF IS BACK!

After two long years away from each other during the pandemic, the AWMAC Québec Chapter was excited to host its 9th annual golf tournament at the Acton Vale Golf Club on September 14. It was great to socialize on the greens again!

GIS MATTERS

Recognizing the value the Guarantee and Inspection Service (GIS) brings to our industry and the questions many members have about it, we recently launched a new column in our newsletter: *Trucs et astuces pour réussir son projet SIG* (Tips and tricks for a successful GIS project).

Our first article was about temperature and humidity control, where we discussed tips for acclimatizing wood materials before installation, including a watch out for times of the year when humidity fluctuates the most. We hope that this column will help our members better navigate GIS and achieve greater business success.



CHAPTER NEWS

AWMAC CHAPTERS CHECK IN WITH AIM
GOT NEWS? EMAIL IT TO AIM@AWMAC.COM

ATLANTIC CHAPTER

TRACY WRIGHT, AWMAC DIRECTOR |
ATLANTIC CHAPTER

2022 AGM

For the first time since 2019, AWMAC Atlantic held an in-person AGM on June 17, 2022 in Cavendish, PEI. We assembled on Thursday evening (the 16th) for a lobster/chicken BBQ, and the AGM kicked off on Friday morning where our 2022/2023 Atlantic Board of Directors was announced. They are:

- **President:** Matt Cameron, Provincial Woodworkers
- **Vice-President:** JR Perry, Nova Wood Products
- **National Director and Past-President:** Tracy Wright, Mill Supply Ltd.
- **GIS Representative:** Austin Goulding, Coastal Woodworkers
- **Treasurer:** Adrien LeBlanc, Wildwood Cabinets
- **Secretary:** Joann Rofihe, Robert Bury Ltd.
- **Member-at-Large:** Sarah Matheson, East Coast Specialty Hardwoods

We were also pleased to honour Pat Theriault with an **AWMAC Atlantic Life Membership**. Pat was a founding member in 2002, served as treasurer for nine years and has been an active voice in the chapter ever since.

Our yearly golf tournament saw manufacturers square off against suppliers, with the former laying claim to the coveted Robert Matheson Trophy (aka The Golden Potato). An evening BBQ was followed by a few speeches and a toast to Robert (Bob) Matheson and Ken Menzies, respected members who are no longer with us.

Along with looking after chapter business, this year's AGM rekindled long standing friendships that are the heart of every successful chapter association.

2022 AWARDS

The AWMAC Atlantic Awards of Excellence in Woodwork and Design showcase the great work produced by our manufacturing members.

Our gala event was held in April 2022 at Pier 21 on the Halifax waterfront, where the attending crowd of woodworkers, architects, designers, general contractors and their guests enjoyed an evening of conversation, award presentations and a delicious buffet dinner by RCR Catering. It was good to get back to seeing our industry friends and family in person and together in one place. All in all, it was a very successful event!

And the winners are:

Category	Project	Millworker	Design Authority
Gold Feature Design	Peace by Chocolate	Rodney Enterprises	Breakhouse Architects
Silver Feature Design	Arsenault Wine Room	Wildwood Cabinets	Wildwood Design
Gold Commercial Design	Elsipogtog First Nation	Ebenisterie Foxwoods	Taylor Architecture
Silver Commercial Design	CBCL Office	Designers Choice Cabinets	Toss Solutions
Gold GIS Specified	Queens Marque	Nova Wood Products	FBM Architecture
Silver GIS Specified	Queens Marque Suites	Wildwood Cabinets	FBM Architecture
Gold Residential Design	Reidpath Residence	Wildwood Cabinets	Wildwood Design
Silver Residential Design	Sime Residence	Coastal Woodworkers	Case Design Remodeling

ARCHITECTURAL FIRM OF THE YEAR: FBM ARCHITECTS

INTERIOR DESIGNER OF THE YEAR: BREAKHOUSE

SUPPLIERS OF THE YEAR: ROBERT BURY; MCFADDEN'S; HANSTONE QUARTZ; EAST COST SPECIALTY HARDWOODS

PEOPLE'S CHOICE AWARD: IRVING OIL HOME OFFICE, NOVA WOOD PRODUCTS, B+H ARCHITECTS CORP.



Peace by Chocolate



Arsenault Wine Room



Elsipogtog First Nation



CBCL Office



Queens Marque



Queens Marque Suites



Reidpath Residence



Sime Residence



People's Choice Award



Awards Presentation

LET'S TALK GIS

BY KASIA ROBINSON, AWMAC GIS COMMITTEE CHAIR



I am pleased to introduce this all-new standing GIS column in AWMAC's redesigned magazine – *AIM*.

This space is meant for you. It's designed to generate and encourage discussion and education regarding AWMAC's Guarantee and Inspection Service (GIS) – maybe take some mystery out of the service for some people, allow others to talk about why they choose GIS, and everything in between.

But first things first. There has been a lot of change within our GIS family lately, not the least of which is the retirement this spring of Moira Rowan after 20+ years as the AWMAC GIS Committee secretary. Moira's commitment to and many efforts within the GIS program will remain appreciated for years to come.

I am very grateful for Nick Anastas and his commitment as GIS Committee chair over the last five years. His leadership and dedication helped build the foundation

for a strong and reputable program. All past and present GIS Committee members and employees believe in the ability of this program to bolster our industry as a whole, and the vision they share is evident in every successful GIS project.

As the new GIS Committee chair, I am looking forward to working with an incredible committee of volunteers representing each of AWMAC's regional chapters. They are:

Kevin Tierney – BC Chapter

Wayne Head – Southern Alberta Chapter

Mark Whitman – Northern Alberta Chapter

Simon Nunn – Saskatchewan Chapter

Norm Falk – Manitoba Chapter

Karyna Cheng – Ontario Chapter

Robert Fortier – Québec Chapter

Austin Goulding – Atlantic Chapter

As well, there are many hardworking Chapter GIS administrators whose diligence and attention keep the wheels of this program rolling every single day – and that is no small feat!

We also have team of AWMAC certified GIS inspectors from coast to coast who, with their knowledge of the NAAWS manual, play such a critical role ensuring all projects comply with these standards. These hardworking administrators and inspectors are the backbone of the GIS program.

What does GIS mean to you?

As an AWMAC member, you are our biggest marketing tool for the GIS. When you



(L to R) Karyna Cheng, Simon Nunn, Cheryl DePape, Kasia Robinson, Mark Whitman, Norm Falk, Michelle Morrell, Kevin Tierney, Wayne Head, Austin Goulding

encourage your local design community to include the Guarantee and Inspection Service on their projects, you help grow this program and a better architectural woodwork industry for years to come. ☺

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

Send us your top GIS questions, comments and achievements within GIS so we can open the discussion and help each other through this column. These interactive articles will give all members stronger familiarity with the GIS program and a better understanding of its purpose.

Please send comments and questions to: gis@awmac.com.



LEARN MORE:
GIS@AWMAC.COM

HIRING IN A TIGHT MARKET

BY JOY GREGORY, AIM CONTRIBUTOR

HAVING TROUBLE FINDING AND KEEPING GOOD EMPLOYEES? THERE ARE SOLUTIONS.

The Canadian architectural woodwork industry faces some big challenges as employers struggle to find and retain the workers they need to sustain and grow their operations. But take heart. Employment industry insiders say companies can improve their prospects by updating hiring processes, casting a wider net and making the most of networking opportunities.

Kael Campbell is president of Red Seal Recruiting Solutions, an international trades recruitment company based in Victoria B.C. His advice? If what you're doing isn't working, then stop doing it. Change it up and try new ways to tackle the problem. He says a more aggressive and thoughtful approach to hiring is what today's job market demands.

Get aggressive

According to Statistics Canada, as of June 2022 the number of Canadians looking for work dipped to 4.9 per cent, a record low. That means those looking to hire skilled workers have to compete against their own and other industries that value similar skill sets. In southern Ontario, for example, capable project managers can shift from construction to automobile industries with relative ease if "they are good at managing people and a process," says Campbell.

"In today's market, don't put out an ad that says: apply online only," he says. It's a barrier and, to some, a turn off. It basically says: you come to me; I'm not coming to you. "Anybody in this industry can go out and get

a job just by texting five of their friends," says Campbell. They don't always need to send a resume and they won't wait days or weeks for a response.

He says job posts should invite prospects to send a resume or text or call. If a phone chat leaves you with questions, you might ask for a resume with more details. If the initial conversation piques your interest, ask: "When can you come down to the shop?" so you can meet them in person.

Dedicate the time and be clear with your intentions

Campbell suggests that getting serious about hiring means dedicating 20 per cent of a manager's time to the task. "If you don't schedule it, it's not important," he says, adding that when Red Seal is hiring for itself, "we have time in our calendars available every single day for hiring."

Re-examine your hiring processes, look at your retention record and at how you advertise jobs, says Melanie Peacock, associate professor at the Bissett School of Business, Mount Royal University, Calgary. "Are you giving realistic job previews? Are you telling potential candidates what it is they need to be doing for your organization?"

Peacock wants recruiters and managers to push past the clichés. She says to talk to the people who are doing the work now and use that information to re-imagine how you ask new people to join your organization. For example, everyone wants strong teamwork and communications skills, she says, but what does that actually mean in terms of what you're asking people to do, and can you rephrase the job description to better reflect that reality?

Setting well-defined skill sets for a position

helps you find the employees you really need, adds Campbell. Are you good with your hands? Do you get along with other people? Are you good with math? Pointed questions like this can do more to identify a top apprenticeship candidate than reviewing a carefully crafted resume that focuses only on past experience.

What you're really looking for are predictors of success in a role. If you only look at resumes that focus on experience, it can add bias to the process, which is a nice way of saying you'll be hiring the same kind of person you've always hired, even if there's a low chance of retention.

Expanding the candidate pool

DEI. Companies that say they value diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) should cast a wider net when they advertise, says Peacock. Post jobs on websites that target other industries, identify new educational institutions for recruitment and reach out to organizations with a mandate to promote DEI. In Canada, this should include indigenous youth and outreach to newcomers. For example, Red Seal set up a Facebook group to assist Ukrainians looking for work in Canada. It's open to all employers.

And follow-through is key to retention. Employers who say they value DEI but maintain policies and practices that do not deliver on that promise are bound to lose those new hires.

Go international. These days, a portion of your hiring should be international, says Campbell. Companies need a plan to contact international workers who might reach out to them. He recently interviewed two people from the southern U.S. who were interested in relocating to Canada. He

sent their resumes to a B.C.-based client after learning they were well qualified for technical roles within that company. If he'd dismissed the resumes because they were out-of-country, his client would have missed out.

It's also good to be aware that industry-related terminology may be different in other countries. One of Campbell's clients is Irish and wanted to recruit "furniture builders" because, in Ireland, that's what high-end cabinetry installers are called. When Red Seal recruiters aren't sure about a prospect's qualifications because of the terminology used, they phone to ask if that person has worked with certain tools to get a clearer picture of the skills they bring to the table.

Online platforms. Campbell understands why companies pay to post jobs on online platforms – it's all about expanding reach. He suggests they include Job Bank, a national (and free) service, in their online strategy. In mid-July 2022, Job Bank listed more than 17,850 jobs in trades, transport and related occupations, plus another 3,000 in manufacturing and utilities. The site offers a lot of information, including salaries for specific locales.

Campbell advises that job posts should direct prospects to the employer's corporate website rather than other job platforms. Every website hit you get is an opportunity to engage with future employees who can poke around your site and think about why they, or someone they know, might want to work for your company.

Networking. Widening your prospect pool just makes sense, and Campbell says that supporting programs and networking events that put your company in front of future prospects, including high school students, can be very useful.

It's a good idea to have a budget to attend formal networking events to meet prospective hires. As a recruitment agency, it's Red Seal's business to meet people and



collect contact details all the time, sure. But what they've learned is that every person they meet has 10 to 30 more contacts on their phones, so that if the next job Red Seal posts doesn't interest the person they text, it might find its way to someone else who wants more information.

Be open to something different. That outreach is critical in a market where "frictional" job seekers abound. These workers move from one industry to another for a host of reasons, often based on opportunities and life choices. For instance, Campbell knows a real estate agent who used to work as a carpenter, and one of his own managers is leaving Red Seal to pursue an arts career. These days, he's hearing about more job shifts related to mental health and caregiving.

Some of these frictional career changes are part of what HR professionals initially called the Great Resignation, a term used to describe how a global health pandemic shifted people's career and life priorities. Nearly three years into the crisis, Peacock argues the Great Resignation looks more like a great re-shuffling. The bottom line is that more workers are open to dramatic career changes, and savvy employers will look for ways to capitalize on this shift.

Is it all about compensation?

"Money matters, but paying the 'industry standard' in a city with a higher-than-average cost of living won't work," says Campbell.

And while money certainly matters, it's also the low-hanging fruit of employee retention, says Peacock. This is to say that employee satisfaction and their willingness to stay in a job is about a lot more than the paycheck – people want to feel valued, respected and that their contribution matters.

To that end, Peacock recommends companies look at their total rewards packages, from benefits to perks, learning and development opportunities and how people feel connected to their colleagues and their work. A commitment to occupational health and safety protocols, particularly those that go beyond legislated minimums, is another good signal to potential employees. She also suggests looking at how you provide feedback about work and expectations because, as she says, "people will remember this more than their paychecks."

Companies should review how they onboard employees, too. When they arrive at work, be prepared and give them meaningful work right away, she says. If a new hire shows up and colleagues are surprised, you've lost your chance to make a good first impression, and that impacts retention. 📍



AWMAC's Board of Directors and staff were presented with white hats through Calgary's special White Hat Ceremony during the 2022 convention.

BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

COVER STORY For the first time in three years, AWMAC members and supporters gathered in person last June to celebrate our industry, re-connect with each other, make new connections and talk about moving forward in these challenging times.

Held at the historic Fairmont Palliser hotel in downtown Calgary from June 9 to 11, 2022, and expertly hosted by the Architectural Woodwork Manufacturers Association of Canada (AWMAC) and the AWMAC Southern Alberta Chapter, registered delegates and guests enjoyed three days packed full of educational sessions, informative tours and entertaining events.

The convention kicked off on Thursday when delegates chose

between activities designed to show off the best of Southern Alberta. For some that was a round of golf at the prestigious and beautiful 240-acre Mickelson National Golf Club just west of Calgary in Rocky View County. Others got up early to take a tour of the spectacular Canadian Badlands, including the Royal Tyrell Museum in Drumheller.

Thursday evening was the official convention welcome reception and industry showcase where a few AWMAC staff, board members and conference organizers were officially “white hatted” by the City of Calgary.

Friday was a busy day that began with an energizing keynote address from Olympic medalist Jeremiah Brown about how the ability to change and adapt can help us reach our goals. This was followed by educational sessions on digital marketing techniques, developing a social media presence, how to do a Gemba walk, and more.

Highlights of the day included a presentation by Ron Spiteri of TXM Lean Solutions about Industry 4.0 and Automation. He spoke about meeting market demand for higher quality at lower cost with tighter lead times and how automation can help – but only if there is a clear path to ROI for your business. Another terrific session was the Industry Panel Discussion where five industry veterans, including an



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AWMAC CONVENTION 2022



Olympic medalist, Jeremiah Brown



Ron Spiteri of TXM Lean Solutions



Industry Panel Discussion



Welcome Reception & Industry Showcase

economist, the president of the Calgary Construction Association and supplier members spoke about managing costs in this very uncertain time of supply chain disruptions and rapidly rising costs. Attendees asked a LOT of questions, and it was a hugely informative and helpful session for all.

Saturday began with an interesting keynote presentation by CultureSmith CEO Shane Wallace about forging trust and accountability in relationships. This was followed by a workshop where members discussed themes and direction for AWMAC'S 2023-

Highlights of the day included a presentation by Ron Spiteri of TXM Lean Solutions about Industry 4.0 and Automation.



AWMAC's first ever Awards & Recognition Luncheon



Saturday night speakeasy at the Sub Rosa Lounge

After three years absence, it was pure joy to see everyone together again in Calgary. It made us realize how important it is to be in the same space, not just for formal

sessions and tours, but for those all-important hallway chats and informal discussions where we meet colleagues from across the country, share ideas and advice.

2025 strategic plan, which in turn was followed by the AWMAC AGM.

On Saturday afternoon, 39 delegates toured wood and metal shops at DIRT in southeast Calgary. There, they were able to see some of the concepts discussed in educational sessions in action and learn more about DIRT's approach to automation and Lean manufacturing.

There were plenty of terrific outings and activities over the two days for guests to discover and enjoy Calgary, including a visit to the Calgary Zoo, a "Clue Solvers" mystery walk through the downtown, a tour of the National Music Centre and the very popular Bean to Bar chocolate-making class – a delicious hit!

Of course, the convention was capped off on Saturday night with the always anticipated President's Gala.

After three years absence, it was pure joy to see everyone together again in Calgary. It made us realize how important it is to be in the same space, not just for formal sessions and tours, but for those all-important hallway chats and informal discussions where we meet colleagues from across the country, share ideas and advice.

Those connections are so important to the vitality of AWMAC and the success of our members. Thank you to everyone who attended "Building for the Future". We look forward to seeing you again in Toronto from June 8 to 10, 2023. 🍷

**Thank you to everyone who attended
"Building for the Future". We look
forward to seeing you again in Toronto
from June 8 to 10, 2023.**



OUTSTANDING SERVICE AWARD

During the 2022 AWMAC National Convention in June in Calgary, outgoing president, Rudy Bardeck, presented an Outstanding Service Award to Moira Rowan for her 24 years of exemplary service to the association.

Rudy spoke about how Moira first joined the AWMAC BC Chapter as an administrator in 1998 and became their executive director the following year. From that time forward, Moira brought her talents to many aspects of the chapter's

business, including marketing, growing the membership, establishing the chapter's permanent offices, hiring the staff needed to run it efficiently and much more. As Rudy said in his speech: with each new task she was given, Moira excelled and faced them with a positive attitude.

Of course, most AWMAC members know Moira because of her work with the national Guarantee and Inspection Service (GIS) program. She first became involved with the program early in her tenure with the AWMAC BC Chapter and eventually spent 21 years as the AWMAC GIS Committee secretary. As Rudy said to the assembled audience at the June convention, Moira was a staunch advocate for



the program, promoting it throughout Canada and happily sharing her years of experience. She kept meetings on track, kept them relevant and helped the GIS program grow during her time as secretary.

As Moira takes her well-

earned retirement, AWMAC thanks her for 24 years of outstanding service to our association and its members. She has contributed much to the success not only of the GIS program but to our entire association. Thank you, Moira!

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DIRTT TOUR SHOWS LEAN AND INDUSTRY 4.0 IN ACTION

IN THIS CALGARY SHOP, EMPLOYEES DRIVE EFFICIENCY AND PERFORMANCE.

BY CLARE STANFIELD, AIM CONTRIBUTOR

The world changes fast, and two well-attended education seminars at the 2022 AWMAC National Convention themed “Building for the Future” focused on what some of those changes can mean for manufacturers.

But a seminar is one thing. Seeing how concepts discussed in a hotel meeting room play out on an actual shop floor can help solidify ideas and maybe even spark new ones. That’s what happened for 39 convention delegates who opted to attend a tour of DIRTT in Calgary in June.

“The commercial construction industry is ramping up like crazy

now,” says Jared McDonald, manager, MDF Operations with DIRTT, adding that his company is hiring and training people faster than before, designing highly customized spaces in shorter timeframes with as little waste as possible, while using both technology and staff empowerment to get there.

As McDonald guided convention delegates through DIRTT’s wood and casework factories, he explained how the company manages change, keeps productivity high and people engaged in not only adhering to but improving Lean principles and processes.

From “classroom” to shop floor

The education seminars at the AWMAC convention focused on two different aspects of Lean manufacturing: Industry 4.0 and Gemba walks.

Ron Spiteri of TXM Lean Solutions in Australia spoke about the potential of Industry 4.0 and automation to address rapid change and the pressures on architectural woodwork manufacturers to do more and do it faster.

Brian McEachern, national Lean manager with PCL Construction in Calgary, followed with a presentation on Gemba walks, a key component of Lean manufacturing that allow focused observation of work processes and, critically, involve input from everyone – employees to managers – for continuous improvement.

Both of these concepts were on full display at DIRTT, a company that, McDonald says, has fully embraced Lean thinking and techniques. “We started our Lean journey three years ago,” he says. “Every single employee from the CEO to the factory floor had to go through Lean 101 training. It’s not just about the factory; it’s about understanding that when you educate people about the process, you get more buy-in, and it’s easier to explain why you want to change things.”

Technology at the forefront

“The foundation of DIRTT is building on ICE®,” says McDonald, referring to the software platform that is integral to everything the company builds. Designs are translated from the page into the 3-D platform, where the space is built virtually and where every component of the build is priced. Clients can take a virtual reality walk through the space, try it out, move or change individual components and get real-time pricing updates as they do so.



Jared McDonald walks AWMAC delegates through DIRTT's manufacturing facilities.





It's not just about the factory; it's about understanding that when you educate people about the process, you get more buy-in. - Jared McDonald



Plant manager, Mausoo Hussain (centre), leads delegates through DIRT's metal shop.



Ideas for improvement are welcomed from every employee, no matter where they work. McDonald says that many ideas to make the company leaner and more efficient come from the floor and are implemented.



Jared McDonald explains SQUIDIP whiteboard



“A client can say, ‘I want glass walls here, cabinets here,’ and so on,” says McDonald. The result is a building design and plan that includes pricing to the cent, all manufacturing information and virtually no waste once construction starts because it’s all been worked out in ICE beforehand. It is, says McDonald, about doing it right the first time with as little waste of time and materials as possible.

Empowering employees to drive change

When a design leaves the virtual reality of ICE, it hits the shop floor. To ensure that systems and processes meet the exacting standards of DIRT, the company uses a layered approach to Lean principles that provides clear communication and actionable plans at all levels.

McDonald walked convention delegates through SQUIDIP – whiteboards on the shop floor where anyone can note their observations under the different headings. He explains that the acronym stands for Safety, Quality, Delivery, Inventory and Productivity and that, together, these five items address shop efficiency issues.

McDonald says the objective is not to fill the boards with notes every day – if there was no safety issue in the shop that day, then nothing goes on the board. But if employees do notice something, it’s

recorded. Unexpected downtime, for example, would be noted on the Productivity board for further analysis and discussion. This is level one.

“Level two is reviewing the boards and creating action items that go up on the board to address the issue,” says McDonald. “It’s about accountability.”

“Level three is at the organizational level,” he says. “It’s a weekly review of our efficiency report. We can ask what happened, why, and what have we done about it.”

Ideas for improvement are welcomed from every employee, no matter where they work. McDonald says that many ideas to make the company leaner and more efficient come from the floor and are implemented. Incentive programs and Lean competitions encourage all employees to think outside the box and make a real contribution to DIRT’s efficiency and performance.

It was all food for thought for AWMAC convention delegates who toured DIRT. How Lean principles are implemented and what Lean looks like differs from company to company, depending on their setup and needs. But one thing is true for all businesses wanting to adopt Lean practices. As McDonald says, “how do I define Lean manufacturing? It’s definitely a culture.” 🎯



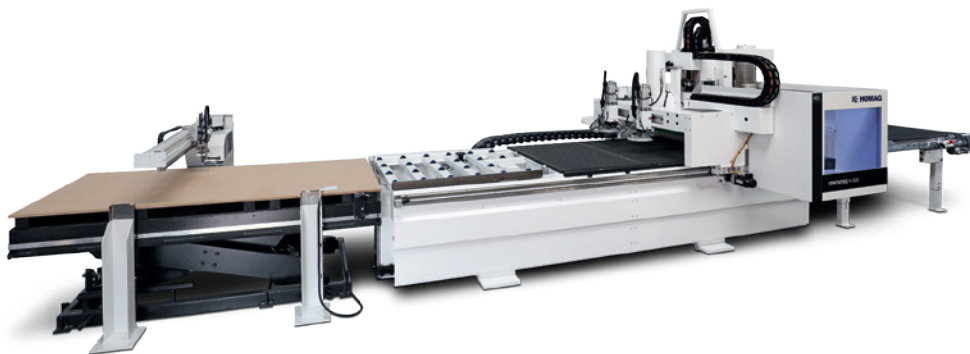
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HOW A TALENTED CABINET-MAKING STUDENT RECENTLY ELEVATED A 'HABITAT FOR HUMANITY' HOME IN NOVA SCOTIA WITH CRAFTSMANSHIP AND CARE.

BY TREENA HEIN, AIM CONTRIBUTOR

When Steve Jarvis, cabinetmaking instructor at the Pictou Campus of Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC), had to choose a student to build the kitchen cabinets in a new Habitat for Humanity project, one person immediately came to mind. The cabinet labour, shop equipment and a few supplies were a donation from NSCC to the project, the charity's first build in Pictou County, and a way to infuse this new home for a family in need with beautiful woodwork craftsmanship while showcasing the abilities of NSCC's students.

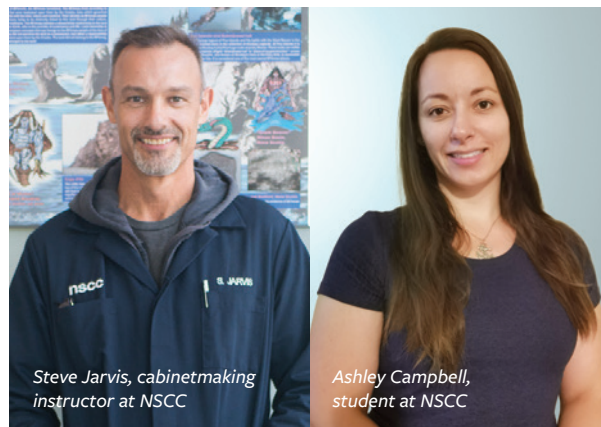
"I wanted Ashley Campbell to be involved in this project as she has a great attention for detail," says Jarvis, who's been at NSCC since 2017. "I also felt that with some additional practical experience, she would be better prepared to enter the workforce knowing that she is capable of anything she puts her mind to. Ashley cares very much that she is creating the most well-constructed cabinetry. I always stress the importance of having a sense of pride in one's craftsmanship, and she really embodies this philosophy."

For Campbell, the journey into woodworking started with a bit of necessity.

"I was living in a tiny apartment and struggling with a lack of storage space, so I decided I was going to build a cabinet, even though I had zero woodworking knowledge or even a plan to work from," she recalls. "I had a lot of fun using the different wood characteristics to make a unique piece that suited me perfectly. I definitely made a lot of mistakes, but I learned from them. It wasn't long after that, I was presented with the opportunity to go back to school. I saw the cabinetmaking program, and I knew it was what I wanted."

Ed Kennedy, chair of Habitat for Humanity's Pictou County chapter, explains that youth volunteers, specifically those interested in trades, have been an incredible way for his organization to increase its volunteer base while providing opportunities to gain experience.

"Every year, we see hundreds of youth participating in our projects



Steve Jarvis, cabinetmaking instructor at NSCC

Ashley Campbell, student at NSCC

in various ways, honing their skills and gaining confidence while giving back to a family in their local community," Kennedy says. "I was always an admirer of Habitat and have donated to ReStores in every city in which I've lived. I am really enjoying being part of a great group of volunteers on the Chapter Board, with the excellent Habitat NS staff in Dartmouth, and most recently, participating in this first home build in Stellarton."

Construction began in the first week of May 2022 and is expected to finish in mid- to-late fall. Kennedy, who is managing the project at the local level, explains that it typically involves both professional trades and volunteers that have limited or no house-building experience. It is not unusual for tradespeople to donate their services or provide them at a discounted rate; only a small amount of the labour is usually accomplished by tradespeople at normal rates.

Kennedy further explains that Habitat houses are built to high standards and with lasting durability, which supports the affordability of the home over time. "Quality millwork is one of the most important components of the home," he says, "given the extensive use of kitchen cabinets."

The transformative power of mentorship

When Jarvis approached her, Campbell was both surprised and nervous. This would be her first time building all the cabinets in a kitchen.

"I thought he was putting too much faith in me and my skills, but after we talked about it, I agreed to do it, and I'm really



Ed Kennedy, chair of Habitat for Humanity's Pictou County chapter

glad I did,” she says. “Steve is a great teacher. In my experience, he’s always in the students’ corner, encouraging us and pushing us to reach our potential, making sure we have the tools we need to be successful. I think this project was his way of doing that for me.”

Campbell, under Jarvis’ direction, constructed the cabinet boxes and drawers from prefinished maple veneer plywood in a Shaker style. The doors and drawer fronts are on order from a supplier.

Jarvis is very pleased with the cabinets, as is Habitat. “They have exceeded our expectations – a very professional job,” says Kennedy. “Not only that, but Ashley and Steve made several suggestions for modification of the initial cabinet plans that were very helpful.”

And as Jarvis predicted, the project was a turning point for Campbell.

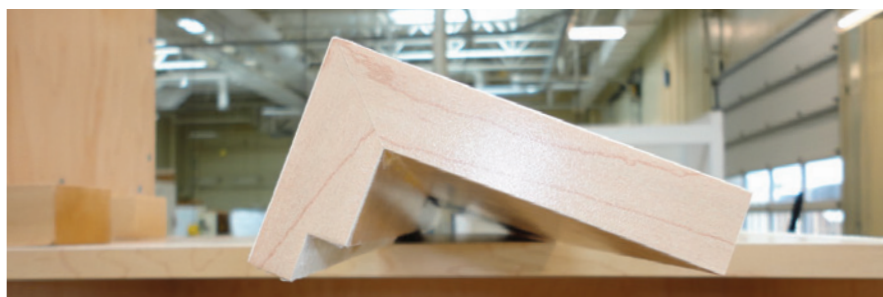
“With almost no experience, it was a tough year for me in some ways,” she says. “I was doing well with the quality of my work in the program, but when I started the Habitat project, I was still lacking confidence in myself and my skills. This project was daunting at first, but it made me realize that I did have the skills and that I can do whatever I set my mind to. It helped me to have confidence in myself, to see my potential and to trust in the faith my teacher and others put in me.

“Cabinetmaking is challenging,” she says. “The details matter, and when you finish a piece, there’s a sense of pride and accomplishment. It’s very rewarding.”

This sentiment is precisely why Jarvis enjoys instruction. For him, it’s about showing students how their inner creativity can be harnessed into financial sustainability – and it’s also personally very rewarding to see students grow in their skills and belief in themselves.

Looking to the future of the industry

Since he’s been at the College, Jarvis says that about a third of the students in his class have been women.



When Jarvis approached her, Campbell was both surprised and nervous. This would be her first time building all the cabinets in a kitchen.

“We’ve always attracted female students, and I believe that mixed gender groups work more effectively together,” he says. “We attract students using the usual online, radio and media advertisement, but we also invite high school students to several open houses each year.”

Jarvis thinks it’s a great time for people to get into the trades in Canada, especially in Nova Scotia. He also praises the Architectural Woodwork Manufacturers Association of Canada (AWMAC) for their strong support of new learners through annual bursaries for exceptional students who have shown great promise.

“I think AWMAC is also concerned with what skills our industry requires and that we are meeting those needs in our curriculum,” he says. “It’s important that we’re teaching the skills that our industry needs, and we need to continue to collaborate to ensure we are meeting those needs.”

No fear

Campbell is on board with that and strongly

encourages others to go into cabinet making.

“Don’t let anyone tell you that you can’t do it, don’t let your fears hold you back,” she says. “Challenge yourself. And on the days you feel like giving up, keep going. It’s empowering. If you’re female, I absolutely encourage you to do it. Don’t be afraid to ask questions, be engaged, and know that the amount of effort you’re willing to put into your work correlates with how successful you will be. I heard a quote once and I have thought about it so many times this year when I was struggling to push myself: ‘A comfort zone is a beautiful place, but nothing ever grows there.’”

What Campbell loves most about cabinetmaking is that there’s no end to the number of things she can learn and do with it. She has just been hired to run the Kitchen Design Centre at the local Kent Building Supplies store. “I am very excited for the future, to expand my skills, gain new experiences, and for all the things I can learn.” ☺



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MAKING A HOUSE A HOME

A 20-YEAR-OLD HOME IN THE ALBERTA FOOTHILLS IS REBORN.

BY CLARE STANFIELD, AIM CONTRIBUTOR



It goes without saying that a home is a very personal space. Designing and building home interiors requires a deep understanding of a client's physical requirements for the space, but also their emotional wants. It's the latter that sets KHD Design & Construction apart, and why one family chose this company for a very personal home renovation project.

An AWMAC Associate member based in Calgary, KHD Design & Construction has built its success upon paying as much attention to what feeds people's souls as to what makes a space functional by applying the Scandinavian concept of *hygge* (pronounced hoo-gah) to

everything it does. "It's a concept that doesn't only apply to residential projects," says founder Krista Hermanson. "It's very much about the way a place feels." It is, she adds, about the power of space to make people happy, productive and contribute to the inhabitants' well-being.

It may sound "soft" to some, but the home renovation project that Hermanson and design director Kirsten Janes completed in late 2021 was anything but. With the client's initial budget woefully shy of their dreams, a pandemic hitting just as construction reached a critical point, and the usual unwelcome surprises that come with renovating an older home, it was a long journey to *hygge*.



While custom millwork occurs throughout the house, the kitchen is a real showpiece of craftsmanship.

A house in the country

The house in question is a 20-year-old, three-storey, 7,000 square foot home located southwest of Calgary in the Alberta foothills. The property was tired and needed updating as well as upgrading, and the client indicated they had a budget of \$250,000 to renovate certain rooms. “It seemed significantly small based on what they wanted to do,” says Janes.

After a lot of discussion, planning and education as to the actual cost of the materials and manpower needed for such a job, the project scope expanded to the whole house and the budget more than quadrupled to include all interior and exterior remediation work, plus window treatments, furnishings, and appliances.

With five bedrooms, six walk-in closets, seven bathrooms, plus the kitchen, pantry, laundry facilities and more, Hermanson and Janes planned for a lot of custom millwork throughout the house. Physical renovations involved everything from new window treatments to bringing in new gas lines, moving plumbing, updating electrical, and restoring the building envelope, which had been leaking for years.

Trades and supplies

Work was just getting underway when the pandemic arrived. “We kept having to adjust the schedule based on the local authority’s COVID rules,” says Janes.

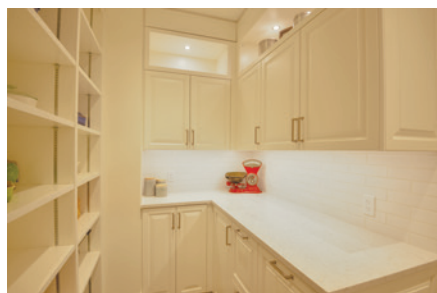
This was a major crimp in KHD Design & Construction’s normal process where they bring all trades in at the same time. “The home was so large we normally could have run it with three or four crews overlapping,” says Hermanson. “But because of COVID, we could have only one trade group in at a time.”

Then supply chain issues began to loom. “I started to anticipate this could be very traumatic for us,” says Hermanson. “So we decided to order all of the materials up front instead of ordering throughout the project. We were writing POs like crazy, and we had to find places to store things.” It was a smart move that meant work could continue throughout 2020, subject only to on-the-ground COVID-related regulations and worker absences.

A tall order for custom millwork

While custom millwork occurs throughout the house, the kitchen is a real showpiece of craftsmanship. “Everything developed based on what clients were looking for,” says Janes. “In the case of the kitchen, it was about the views, so the overhead cabinets went and windows were extended.”

This led to some creative thinking about how to store items that normally go in upper cabinets, such as glass- and dinnerware, in the lower cupboards while maintaining easy, comfortable access. Large drawers with custom made dowels to keep glassware upright, and drawers with moveable custom inserts were the solution.





“The family is quite tall,” says Janes. “So the countertops are two inches higher than standard, which meant things like bar stools had to be customized also.” Custom cabinetry surrounds the wall-mounted steam oven and coffee station, a six-burner, dual oven range and the generous centre island.

The family is also young, with two little boys at the project’s outset and another one born during the build. “Our earliest discussion was about joinery, even before materials,” says Janes, adding that dovetail joints would ensure drawers stood up to whatever the children could dish out. The material decided on was maple, a durable hardwood.

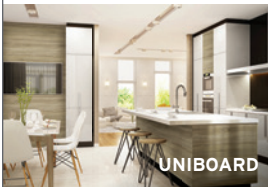
Other custom-built cabinetry highlights in the home include a spectacular pantry with its wall of cabinets, the built-in dining room buffet and full-height, glass-fronted cabinet doors, the mother’s walk-in closet with beautifully crafted drawers, shelves, cupboards and even a window seat.

“It’s very much like a custom-made suit,” says Janes of the millwork throughout the house. “It’s tailored to fit our clients and they love it.”

“Hygge very much guided this family’s decision to engage us,” says Hermanson. “It’s central to what we do. We ask, who is the user and how do they want to use their space? The personality of the family and how they want to live in the house is key to every decision.” 🎯



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NIKOLAI MANUFACTURING CREATES A UNIQUE WORKSPACE AT MICROSOFT'S ESTERRA PARK

USING A COMBINATION OF DESIGN, NATURAL ELEMENTS AND CUSTOM WOODWORK, NIKOLAI CREATES A WELCOMING, MODERN WORKSPACE FOR MICROSOFT.

BY JENNIFER BARBER, AIM CONTRIBUTOR

With its curved walls, suspended ceiling panels, serpentine benches and built-in planters, the new spaces created by Nikolai Manufacturing for Microsoft's Esterra Park helped bring to life the tech giant's modern approach to a collaborative office environment.

"We're fortunate to work with innovative companies like Microsoft," says Nikolai co-owner Bob Roe. "They brought us an interesting and complex job with a tight timeline, and we were able to deliver on time and at our highest levels of quality and craftsmanship. We are extremely proud of the result produced by our team."

Nikolai, an architectural woodwork company and AWMAC Manufacturer Member based in New Westminster, BC, is known for its quality custom creations. Founded in 1985, the company has a diverse portfolio of woodwork projects for corporate, resort, sport, cultural, government and residential clients. The in-house team has been carefully chosen for their attention to detail, and they work with a dependable group of installers to bring their clients' visions to reality.



Bob Roe



Microsoft's Esterra Park in Redmond, Washington, is a collection of buildings that allow employees to live, work, shop and enjoy recreational activities, all within proximity. Nikolai was initially asked to provide the woodwork on one seven-storey office building. The \$3.5 million project was completed between March and December of 2021, amid the global pandemic and historic supply chain challenges.

"This made materials much more difficult to find," says Roe. "In addition, all the wood had to be FSC certified, adding an additional sourcing challenge, as lumber was one of the major supply chain issues that year. We were looking for quality and volumes that can be hard to find under the best of conditions, but we were able to complete everything by our client's deadline."

The design

The project required 600 sheets of 1½-inch white oak panels on veneer core finished with 42,000 linear feet of edging. This was used for the 7,000 curved wall and ceiling slats of varying lengths, which created an optical illusion of a floating ceiling system under the industrial look of an exposed HVAC system.

Roe's team also created 50-foot-long serpentine benches that had built-in stainless steel planter boxes with incorporated lighting. The project was entirely millwork with no cabinetry involved in the design. There were 15 styles of planters worked into the design, creating an additional challenge for the team.

"The serpentine benches were the most technically challenging part of the design," says Roe. "We had to develop processes to incorporate the planters into our millwork and deal with material delays without stopping our project work in order to stay on schedule. We've taken what we've learned into our production processes to streamline things going forward."



Serpentine bench with built-in lighting

Some other interesting woodwork elements include “tree swings,” which are wall elements that incorporate evenly spaced benches into the woodwork and can be used as individual workspaces in common areas. On each floor, there are also two “perches,” 16-foot long, upholstered areas cantilevered off the walls for communal sitting.

Nikolai also created 1,500 routed, painted MDF wall panels on five levels running alongside the floating ceiling. They used 500 gallons of water-based finish on all seven floors of the woodwork project, with each level painted a different colour.

Managing workflow

With the delays caused by supply chain issues, and given the scope of the project, one of the primary challenges was keeping the project going without unnecessary hold-ups. Since this was entirely a woodwork project, machining had to be precise and without unnecessary delays.

Mitchell Pfortmueller is a fourth-year apprentice with Nikolai and was the CNC operator on the Esterra Park Project. It was his role to take the shop drawings and figure out what programs he needed and how to sequence them to get through the volume of work required.

“This involved literally hundreds of



Curved wall and ceiling slats create an illusion of floating.

WHY BEING FOREST STEWARDSHIP COUNCIL CERTIFIED MATTERS



More often, contractors require that the wood products used in their projects have the Forestry Stewardship Council (FSC) label stamped on the wood. This certification is a tracing system for the forestry industry that helps ensure sustainable forestry practices. While an added challenge to the building process, the ultimate goal of FSC certification is to maintain building practices for the long term.

“For this project, every piece of wood we used was FSC certified,” says Bob Roe with Nikolai. “That means we could track back all the way to the logging company who cut the trees. This is to help prevent companies from clear-cutting and not replanting, for the long-term protection of the environment.”

Roe says that the FSC certification is becoming more common, especially in projects from big tech companies that have a focus on environmentally friendly builds. FSC specs are generally part of Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) projects. LEED certification is the world’s most widely used green building rating system and provides a framework for healthy, efficient, carbon- and cost-saving green buildings.

“For Esterra Park, we used FSC wood, and we used water-based stains and paints,” says Roe. “While it was more challenging to find due to supply chain issues in 2021, it is becoming the standard for environmentally friendly builds.”

Nikolai continues to work on four more projects for Microsoft, having shown that they can meet the standard of perfection that the tech giant requires.



THE MAKING OF A RED SEAL JOINER

To keep its workforce vibrant, Nikolai is committed to training apprentices at all levels, both at its workshop and on various job sites. The Esterra Project was no different. Of the 20 people working on the project at any given time, between four and six of them were apprentices.

“We want to help train people, so we are able to show them exactly how we like things to be done,” says Roe. “Then, at the end of their apprenticeship, we have the opportunity to have them join our awesome crew. We allow them to actually work on projects, not just watch or do minor tasks, because it’s important that they learn hands-on.”

The ultimate goal for an apprentice is to achieve their Red Seal joiner, or cabinetmaker’s, journeypersons ticket. It’s a four-year program combining on-the-job training and classroom education. Typically, apprentices work for a year with a

company like Nikolai, then attend six weeks of technical training. If they pass each Red Seal level, they continue until they are full journeypersons after four years.

“With the Esterra project, we had two people working in their fourth year, two at their apprenticeship levels, which are typically year three, and two beginners,” says Roe. “The primary change since I started in the business is that today, about a third of our apprentices are women, and when I started, there were no women on the floor at all.

“We’re extremely proud of our journeypeople and our apprenticeship program,” says Roe. “They work together in mini teams throughout the different areas of our workshop to gain knowledge in all the areas of our trade. It’s very technical so that in the end, no matter what level they are at, they can see the finished product and say, ‘hey, I built that.’”

different CNC programs,” he says. “We were constantly loading and unloading the machines, and a lot of what I needed to do was to make sure this was being done efficiently with as little gap between programs. It also had to be precise so that when I took a piece off the machine, each element required as little handling as possible. It was challenging and very satisfying.”

While Pfortmueller has worked on other smaller production projects in the past, the scale of this project taught him the value of sorting pieces ahead of time. “Each slat had dowels on the end, and those pieces were of varying thicknesses,” he says. “Sorting those earlier meant they were grouped for sanding and piecing together.”

He says he also learned much more about the five-axis CNC machine used for the serpentine benches. He had to program for convex and concave corners while also creating the curves required for the design.

“I am a math-oriented person, so I was able to visualize how the pieces looked from the different axis points, and it was kind of



The Esterra Park project represents the type of area that Microsoft envisions for its employees going forward, creating an inviting space where they are able to share ideas, work and live.



fun,” says Pfortmueller. “It’s not necessarily intuitive, but now that I have done it in a repetitive way and the results were so well received, this is a very specific skill that I can take forward.”

A team-based approach

Nikolai prides itself on the strength of its crew, which includes everyone from first-year apprentices to experienced journeypeople. Of the 35 people currently working at Nikolai, 22 are in the New

Westminster plant, and most of them worked on Esterra Park on any given day during the project.

“Our team includes four to six apprentices at different levels on their way to becoming a Red Seal joiner,” says Roe. “It is important

for us that these people have an opportunity to work on different parts of the project because we want them to feel like they have not only learned new things, but they can identify pieces of the project that they were able to play a part in creating.”

Roe knows what it is like to learn by doing. He started with Nikolai in 1987 as a project manager before purchasing ownership in the company four years ago. He knows the value of working his way up through the company and learning different aspects of the work they do.

For Laura Tng, the Esterra build was the first large-scale millwork project she had been involved with. She was hired at Nikolai early in the process as a first-year apprentice. Now in her second year, she says the experience has been invaluable.

“When I started, I was very green, very

new to it all,” she says. “Yes, I did lots of sanding, but they gave me the opportunity to learn everything from detailed sanding to finishing to machinery. I was able to work on the smallest pieces right up to the large serpentine benches. I was able to work with people at all levels – journey people and other apprentices – to learn new things in all different departments.”

She says the project’s final touches were probably her favourite part of the experience, as was testing out her own boundaries in terms of what she was capable of. “I had never done framing before, so I learned a lot about what I could do physically in terms of handling large pieces,” says Tng. “But in the end, I enjoyed putting everything together and getting it ready to ship out for installation, making sure that all the edging materials and finish sanding were perfect, and the joints looked

flawless. Seeing it all come together was very satisfying.”

Nikolai continues to work on four more projects for Microsoft, having shown that they can meet the standard of perfection that the tech giant requires. The Esterra Park project represents the type of area that Microsoft envisions for its employees going forward, creating an inviting space where they are able to share ideas, work and live.

“We continue to be very busy with Microsoft and many other projects, which is great,” says Roe. “We have two estimators who are out all the time bidding on projects, and we are always looking to the future, whether that is with the apprentices we take on or through the types of projects we work on. We focus on quality, craftsmanship and an excellent crew to get the project completed.” 📍

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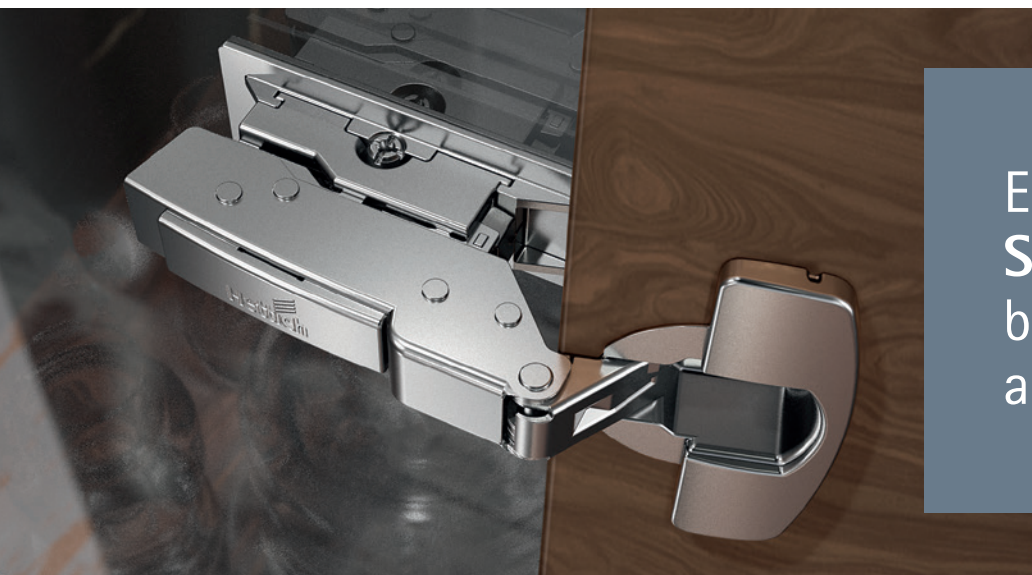
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