

From the Daily Commercial News

August 22, 2006

Associations

Gold Seal designation launched

Certification calls for annual skills upgrading

PATRICIA WILLIAMS

staff writer

TORONTO

The Canadian Construction Association's (CCA) Gold Seal committee is upgrading the national management certification program with the launch of a Professional, Gold Seal Certified (P.GSC) designation and development of an integrated quality framework.

Program manager Andrew Shepherd said the new designation will provide "an enhanced level of prestige" for certificate-holders who are committed to staying at the top of the construction management profession.

Candidates must be employed in the construction sector and achieve a minimum of 20 credits of ongoing education per calendar year.

This program, to be launched next month, "completes" the certification ladder, Shepherd said.

"This (designation) has been called for from industry almost since the program began 15 years ago," he told Daily Commercial News.

"Recognizing that engineers and architects require annual re-licensing with proof of professional development, Gold Seal stakeholders have urged us to build in a similar certificate recognizing annual updating for construction managers."

The program is aimed at project managers, superintendents and estimators. Certification is based on the candidate's education, experience and ability to satisfy program standards.

More than 5,600 certificates have been issued.

Shepherd said the other upgrade “of signal importance” is development of an integrated quality framework, which ensures a regular review and updating of all aspects of the Gold Seal program.

“This framework will keep the program abreast of technological and business advances and will guarantee the confidence of governments, employers and program participants,” he said.

Drawing on educational consultants with a background in construction management as well as industry leaders across Canada, the committee will update each program element at regular intervals.

Shepherd said:

- Occupational profiles will be updated every five years using focus groups of industry practitioners.
- Trade-specific exams will be reviewed every 2.5 years.
- The Gold Seal national curriculum will be assessed every five years for currency and completeness.
- Gold Seal will work with educational institutions across the country to accredit the latest academic offerings.

Shepherd said a new website is to be launched in mid-September. It will provide “a much clearer roadmap” to certification as well as regularly updated news, offerings for applicants, local construction association staff and employers and a job-posting section.

“The new website is part of an effort to establish and maintain connections to Gold Seal certificate-holders and associations,” he said.

Clive Thurston, president of the Ontario General Contractors Association, who recently joined the national Gold Seal committee ranks, applauded the new initiatives. He said his organization is “very pleased to see things moving in this direction.

“There is certainly a fresh wind blowing from CCA that we are all very excited about,” he said. “Here in Ontario, within the next two years, we expect to see Gold Seal become the recognized standard for accreditation of management and field personnel in a number of sectors, not just construction.”

"This [designation] has been called for from the industry."

Andrew Shepherd

Program Manager