

Navigating the New Normal

By ReNew Canada - January 28, 2019

More than 250 people joined the Ontario Public Works Association in Mississauga for the 2019 annual conference and awards luncheon.

This year's conference, Navigating the New Normal: A Nation Managing Change, focused on the impacts of policy, innovation, governance, technology, and politics are changing the way the public works industry goes about its business in building, operating, and maintaining infrastructure across the province.

Andrew Pariser, vice president of the Residential Construction Council of Ontario, explored the impact of new cannabis regulations on the public works industry. He emphasized the need to focus the conversation on impairment, treating employee health and safety much in the same way that the influence of alcohol is treated, in order to develop proper policies for cannabis use.

Eric Peissel, national business line executive for transportation at WSP in Canada, discussed how the model for project delivery is evolving in Ontario. He explored why the evolution has occurred and discussed how new ideas for project procurement continue to emerge, pointing at the recently announced first-ever Canadian use of the Integrated Project Delivery model, which is being used in the construction of the Third Crossing Bridge in Kingston.

ReNew Canada's editorial director led a discussion on the federal infrastructure landscape, and how it could change in the countdown to the 2019 election and beyond. Both panellists, Enterprise vice president of marketing and communications Dennis Matthews and Tactix co-president Alan Young, suggested that the level of spending by the current Liberal government has been strong even though funds have had a tough time flowing to some communities due to difficult negotiations and delayed agreements. Matthews speculated that, should the Conservative government come to power in October, infrastructure spending levels should remain strong even as that government would likely push to find ways to find savings in order to quickly return to balanced budgets.