

WE ARE ON YOUR SIDE!!

MERIT OPENSHOP CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION is the voice of the Ontario Open Shop Construction sector. Recent initiatives of the Ontario government are promoting unionized construction activity at the expense of the Open Shop sector. We wonder whether these government officials are aware that over 65% of Ontario construction employees do not belong to a construction union and that promoting just unionized activity is not only unfair, it openly discriminates against employees who have not chosen to join a union.

Here are some of the issues that we are working on in 2009:

Provincial Issues

Apprenticeship Trade Ratios - Ontario is one of the last provinces to require 3 journeymen for each apprentice being trained for a mandatory trade, such as electrical, mechanical or plumbing. Most provinces allow 1 journeyman to supervise each apprentice. Ontario's approach reduces opportunities for young employees to learn a trade and for contractors to hire them. There is a looming shortage of qualified construction employees coming in the next 10 years as the baby boomers retire. Construction Trade unions oppose the move so as to maintain an artificial shortage of skilled workers in their hiring halls. We are fighting to have the 3:1 ratio reduced to 1:1.

College of Trades- The Provincial Government is looking into expanding trade certification to all construction trades. **MERIT OPENSHOP CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION** and our members participated in province-wide meetings in 2008 on this issue. The background report by Tim Armstrong justifying the change is published at <http://www.edu.gov.on.ca/eng/ccr/report.pdf>. We oppose the recommendations fearing it will create more red tape and bureaucracy that will not help the construction industry.

WSIB Changes -The WSIB is proposing a new Accreditation program to replace the existing Safety Groups. We believe the new proposal is flawed as it does not provide sufficient incentives for participating companies. This view is shared by other construction associations, including COCA. We are all recommending that companies do not participate in the pilot program, unless WSIB revises the program.

The provincial government announced changes in late 2008, to eligibility for the construction sector to be effective 2011. All employees and owners will be required to have WSIB coverage. One executive who does not work on-site will be allowed to opt-out. We are working with other Associations to have this changed.