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# CROSSFLOW

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION



Since the start of the pandemic a year ago, many companies have had to take a pause and re-think their business structure. This couldn't be truer for Lorandus, who saw its successful meeting and incentive planning business quickly come to a grinding halt.

"When the pandemic became a reality, we had programs going on all around the world, with all different governments and all different rules," said Lorandus Founder, Stephen Cook. "I quickly realized the pandemic wasn't going to go away very quickly, so we had to take im-

mediate steps to transform the business."

A veteran of the meeting planning and travel business, Cook established Lorandus in 2007. With a desire to develop his own brand, Cook created the company name by combining his wife's name "Lori" with "and us," and set out to write a new chapter in his business career. Since then, not only has the Lorandus brand flourished, but the official meeting planner of the Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association is now making huge strides in the virtual space.

Having postponed or cancelled all its

in-person events slated for 2020, Lorandus was quick to take measures to re-position the brand, and developed a new website to demonstrate that shift.

"The website gave us the opportunity to start the narrative of virtual meetings," Cook explained. "We launched the website in August 2020, and by September we were hosting our first virtual programs."

This transformation, however, did not occur overnight. In fact, according to Cook, Lorandus went through its own

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**Crossflow** is the official marketing publication of the Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association. Circulated four times per year, the e-newsletter is designed to provide association news and program updates, government affairs information, educational opportunities, as well as updates on current industry trends.



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# Lorandus: Creating Engaging Events in the Virtual Space

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“discovery process” so it could easily manoeuvre through the virtual space.

“The biggest challenge was getting my team to put their arms around the technology, because it was a big, scary monster,” he said. “We knew we would be producing virtual events for at least a year, so it was crucial for everyone to get onboard.”

To conquer the learning curve, Cook hired a technical director who had the background and expertise when it came to the technological aspects of producing a virtual event. With his team now rounded out, the research began to secure the best technology available, understand the best conferencing platforms, and ensure the stability of the broadcast.

“Our teams had to get very smart, very fast,” Cook said. “It was a foreign object. It was like they only spoke English but had to learn French. I can proudly say, they now speak French fluently.”

With his project teams onboard and prepared to tackle the virtual space, next came the Lorandus client base. According to Cook, in the early days, many cli-

ents decided to simply shift from face-to-face to Zoom meetings in order to save money. But as many now recognize, Zoom fatigue was quick to set-in and engagement a casualty of the times.

According to Cook producing a virtual event is no different than producing a face-to-face meeting. Both require proper lighting, good sound, great technology and, of course, delegate engagement.

“Many people think just because you’re meeting face-to-face, you don’t have to engage your delegates,” he said. “But how many times have you attended a meeting and wondered how long a speaker was going to present because you couldn’t hear, or you see slides that you can’t read. That’s just an abuse of time. You’ve got to get the sizzle in and you’ve got to be authentic in your messaging.”

For Lorandus, the engagement piece is the starting point of creating any successful event. Otherwise, the virtual experience simply becomes a video conference call.

“With so many people working in a

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## RECOGNITION

# Harry Vogt Inducted into GVCA Hall of Fame

Long-time industry supporter, Harry Vogt, was recently inducted into the Grand Valley Construction Association (GVCA) Hall of Fame. The virtual ceremony was held on February 23, 2021.

"It is my pleasure to introduce our newest inductee to the GVCA Hall of Fame, Mr. Harry Vogt," said Rebecca Schoenhardt, CFA-Vice President Commercial Financial Services, RBC, sponsor of the award. "You are a remarkable man, and your contribution to the construction industry and the community is appreciated and admired. Congratulations."

Vogt began his career at Nelco Mechanical in 1977 and became a partner in the business in 1987. Over his 41 year career at Nelco, he held numerous positions including Air Conditioning & Refrigeration Department Manager; Service Manager, HVAC Section Chief, Director of Safety, Project Manager, Vice President of Construction, Vice President and President.

Safety has always been important to Vogt, and this is evident by his involvement in the Construction Safety Association of Ontario, now IHSA. He also served on the Central Ontario Labour Management Health and Safety Committee for 16 years, four of which he served as chair.

In 1997, Vogt became a member of the Board of Directors at the Waterloo-Wellington Sheet Metal Contractors Association and, in 2003, he was elected by his contractor peers to represent the association at the provincial level.

In 2007, Vogt was bestowed the honor of serving as President of the Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association. He faithfully served on the provincial board for 17 years and, today, still sits on the Waterloo-Wellington Sheet Metal Contractors Association Board as an honorary member.

Wes Quickfall, President at Conestogo Mechanical, and Darryl Stewart, Executive Director at OSM, both provided video congratulation messages for Vogt.

Quickfall first met Vogt 15 years ago



when they were introduced in the business as competitors. They started to work together more frequently at the Waterloo-Wellington Sheet Metal Contractors Association.

"Harry welcomed me to that board with the common goal of serving our industry," Quickfall said in his video message. "For years I worked on the board with Harry, watching and listening carefully as I learned how the association operated. But I also noticed all the other commitments Harry had, and continues to be involved with. Harry's a real volunteer pioneer and a huge volunteer in our community."

As their business relationship developed, Quickfall learned a lot from Harry as they shared experience in the mechanical contracting world.

"From chats over the phone, coffee at Kypreos, a float down the Rhine River, a night out at Lot 42 or in his stomping grounds in Germany, Harry was always open to helping, sharing perspectives and providing advice, and he continues to provide mentorship, advice and sometimes even a good chat about our personal lives," he said.

"The pandemic has provided its challenges in recognizing a lot of Harry's

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## Wally McIntosh Scholarship Applications Now Available

The Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association is currently accepting applications for the 2021 Wally McIntosh Scholarship Award. Applications are available at the [OSM web site](https://www.osmca.org).

OSM is now offering two, \$2500 scholarships to children of OSM member firm employees who are graduating from high school, and entering college or university studies. Additionally, a \$1000 award is presented to the sheet metal apprentice who obtains the highest average mark for basic, intermediate and advanced day school while attending the Ontario Sheet Metal Workers Training Centre.

For more information, contact the association office at (905) 886-9627 or email: [dramirez@osmca.org](mailto:dramirez@osmca.org).

## New Labour Relations Council Introduced

The Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association is pleased to introduce its new Labour Relations Council. The group is comprised of the following representatives:

- **Jim DiNovo** – Brantford-Hamilton-Niagara
- **Rob King** – Kingston
- **George Gallant** – London
- **Cathy Godin** – Ottawa
- **Larry McDonald** – Sarnia
- **Sonja Mullan** – Sudbury-Sault
- **Robert Racco** – Thunder Bay
- **Jim Warner (Chair)** – Toronto
- **Peter Dietrich** – Waterloo-Wellington
- **Steve Koutsonicolas** – Windsor/Chatham
- **Aimee Eden** – Sheeting & Decking

## Message from the Executive Director

In the last edition of *Crossflow*, I reported on new appointments to the Union International and the retirement of the Ontario Conference Business Manager. Since then, Mike Mahon, Business Manager of Chatham-Sarnia-Windsor LU235 and Ontario Conference President, was elected Business Manager of the Conference, and Art White, Business Manager of Toronto LU30 was elected Conference President. At the local union level, Ryan Thompson was elected Business Manager of LU235 to replace Mahon, and Paul Minutillo was elected Business Manager of Brantford-Hamilton-Niagara LU537 to replace the vacancy from Scott McQueen, who was appointed to the Union International. Some local unions are holding elections in 2021. Mark Hall, Business Manager of London LU473 was acclaimed in early 2021. Kingston LU269 elected Paul Reynolds as Business Manager, as Duncan Ashley chose not to stand re-election.



One thing for sure is labour and management are in the same soup pot. These results can either be delectable or putrid, depending on the chef. But rest assured there will be soup of some kind. I look forward to working with these new appointments. Mike Mahon and I have been in contact several times since he has taken the reins, and he has conveyed his interest in convening regular meetings between the Conference and OSM moving forward.

Since the beginning of the year, OSM has had a successful meeting of the Automotive Committee and another with the Provincial Joint Conference Board. This is refreshing and encouraging as we are just over a year away from the expiry of the Collective Agreement.

With respect to the Labour Relations Council, the Lakehead Sheet Metal Contractors Association appointed Robert Racco of Rugged Air Industries as representative for Thunder Bay. Bob Felbel had been filling this role after Walter Keating stepped down in 2019. We welcome Robert to the Council.

The OSM Labour Relations Council is holding virtual meetings in collaboration with the respective local associations. The first of these meetings was held with members of Chatham-Sarnia-Windsor in February. Jim Warner, LRC Chair, Larry McIntosh, Steve Koutsonicolas, and I appreciate the members that took the time to attend the meeting. It proved insightful and afforded an opportunity for us to connect with the members. I hope other members from across the province will be able to attend these sessions in the coming weeks and months.

OSM has received the reporting of man-hours from all areas from December 2020. It comes as no surprise that the 2020 provincial man-hours fell 5.66 per cent short of budget. What is interesting is the local area man-hours reflect the impact of the pandemic on the various sectors of the industry.

The industrial sector seems to have weathered the storm rather well, and this was highlighted with areas of the province having a high ratio of industrial work exceeding their local man-hours budget. Sarnia, Sudbury-Sault Ste. Marie, and Thunder Bay-Sarnia all exceeded man-hours by 5.22, 45.28 and 10.43 per cent, respectively. This is great news for these areas.

Other regions across the province fell from 2.42 to 21.65 per cent below budget. The hardest hit areas were Brantford-Hamilton-Niagara at 12.52 per cent and Kingston, a painful 21.65 per cent below budget.

Ottawa and Toronto – the two largest centres in the province – came in at 4.3 and 8.16 per cent below budget. For perspective, Ottawa had 14.5 per cent and Toronto 52.1 per cent of the provincial man-hours. Commercial projects are clearly the sector most impacted. Members have been telling me that tenant improvement work has fallen off the rails, as landlords of occupied office towers halted renovation and tenant works. Warehouse space seems to be proceeding, but retail fronts are in a

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## Harry Vogt Inducted into GVCA Hall of Fame

accomplishments over the last year, but they shouldn't go unnoticed. I wish Harry and his family nothing but the best, and I look forward to connecting on the lake when we can."

On behalf of the Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association, Darryl Stewart also provided a video presentation congratulating Vogt for his achievements.

"This (Hall of Fame induction) is an honor so well deserved and fitting," he said. "Your service to OSM was unselfish and always favoured what was in the best interest of our membership."

"You demonstrated your unwavering principles and ethics in all your actions, and your leadership was exemplary in your roles from director to all those executive positions you held, including that of president."

Stewart concluded, "Harry, I've always appreciated the support you've given me, the sound advice you've provided me, and most of all your friendship."

In a heart-felt acceptance video, Vogt said "My motto has always been work hard, play hard and enjoy the occasional dance with the devil."

"I'm truly honored to be recognized with this prestigious award and it means so much to me that my work and community contributions that I am so passionate about, resonates with others."

Vogt thanked the GVCA Board for his selection, as well as the pioneers at Nelco Mechanical who shaped him into the hard working individual he is today. William Knell started Wm. Knell & Co. in 1906. In 1931, Knell's nephews – Fred and Carl – joined the business and, in partnership with their brother-in-law Vern Weller, purchased the business in 1956. Nelco Kitchener Ltd. was launched in 1957 at 77 Edwin St. in Kitchener, where the company still operates to this day. In 1970, the company name was changed to Nelco Mechanical Ltd. to better reflect the services provided by the business.

"(The Nelco) history is something we

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## Construction Associations Support Local Charities

**T**he Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association and some of its partner associations came together this holiday season to raise over \$50,000 for the Feed Ontario campaign.

Spearheaded by OSM Director Jorin Gibson, the campaign was a result of a surplus revenue due to the cancellation of all in-person events due to the pandemic.

Formerly known as the Ontario Association of Food Banks, Feed Ontario unites food banks, industry partners and local communities in an effort to end hunger and poverty.

According to Feed Ontario statistics, approximately 502,000 adults, seniors and children visit food banks in Ontario each year. Feed Ontario distributes approximately five million pounds of fresh and non-perishable food annually to those in need.

Included in the OSM effort were the Waterloo-Wellington Sheet Metal Contractors Association, Sarnia Sheet Metal Contractors Association, Mechanical Contractors Association of Toronto and the Brantford-Hamilton-Niagara (BHN) Sheet Metal Contractors Association. MCA Ottawa also made significant contributions to organizations in need during this difficult time.

According to Susanne Phillips, Executive Director of the BHN Sheet Metal

Contractors Association, her organization made efforts to “donate to organizations where we live and work.” As such, BHN contributed to Hamilton Food Share, the Brantford Food Banks, and the Niagara Construction Association’s annual food drive, which supports local food banks.

MCA Ottawa has a long-standing tradition of philanthropy that dates back to the association’s creation in 1931. According to MCA Ottawa General Manager, Mary Gauthier, the earliest records of community support date back to World War II when the association assisted by purchasing war effort stamps and supporting the “Milk for Britain” fund.

“Over the years, our generosity and philanthropic efforts have been recognized by the City of Ottawa and the Association of Fundraising Professionals,” Gauthier said. “We have supported our two local community colleges, the YMCA/YWCA, the MCA Canada Foundation, the Miracle Field of Dreams, many scholarship winners and even more apprentice bursary winners.”

The crown jewel of its fundraising efforts for the past 20 years is a one-day fundraising golf tournament which to date has raised \$762,000 with all proceeds going to Boys and Girls Club,

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## Harry Vogt Inducted into GVCA Hall of Fame

should truly be proud of,” Vogt said. “One hundred and fifteen years didn’t just happen. Hard times and hard decisions were endured. We must acknowledge that the achievement of 115 years of operation does not come along easily or often in the construction sector.”

Vogt also thanked his mentors at Nelco who guided him in the early days of his career.

“These Nelco legends encouraged me to embrace creative thinking, hold myself accountable, take initiative, motivate and engage, inspire, collaborate, celebrate and reward success, persist and never give in, never,” he said. “Through their coaching, they allowed me to build the legacy and innovativeness of hard working and responsible entrepreneurship as displayed by all those who came before me. We must remember that we who are here now owe a debt to those who went before, and we are stewards for those who will come after.”

In closing, Vogt said, “I encourage each of you to make a difference in our industry and communities. This is a people industry. Building relationships and collaboration are essential, and community volunteerism and engagement is an important ingredient to achieve overall success in any business.

“Make no mistake, the future will continue to be unpredictable, the pace of change will continue to accelerate and the level of competition in our industry will continue to rise,” he continued. “But the opportunities and the future of the construction sector are limitless.”

*Congratulations Harry!*

To watch the entire GVCA Award presentation video, please [click here](#).

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## Message from the Executive Director

holding pattern.

In partnership with our associates at NTCCC and COCA, the message to governments is to get shovel-ready construction underway in order to fast-track recovery of the economy. Construction is a powerful engine of the Ontario economy. Government and, particularly the Federal Government, is focused on trade apprenticeships and promoting such opportunity for under-represented people. The associations are very much supportive of these objectives. However, we advise governments that trade contractors need work in hand and confidence that there is workload for the foreseeable future before they are willing to take on new apprentices. The areas of Kingston and Brampton-Hamilton-Niagara are in dire need of governments getting shovel-ready projects underway. I can only hope our governments will answer the call.

I think it is understated to say we are all sick of this COVID nuisance. However, there is light at the end of the tunnel, and the light is getting closer. Stay positive and stay safe. One day we can regale stories of this pandemic to our grandchildren just as our parents and grandparents did with us about the Great Depression. I just hope we don't have to do it over yet another Zoom call.

## Welcome New Members

The Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association is pleased to welcome the following new members:

- Black Creek Mechanical Ltd.
- Northern Sheet Metal Contracting Ltd.
- O'Dunne Metals Inc.
- Titan Metals Ltd.
- Gripple Canada (*Associate*)

## INNOVATIVE TECHNOLOGY

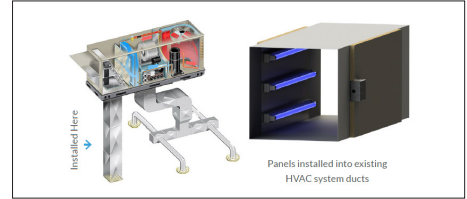
# Safe Air Workspaces Using UV-C Technology

**O**SM member COOLBREEZE, a Canadian leader in custom HVAC solutions in commercial, industrial and institutional spaces, is excited to launch a new UV-C system proven to be 99.9 per cent effective in destroying viruses, bacteria, and more from indoor air.

First discovered in the 1900s, Ultraviolet light (UV-C) has been proven effective in killing airborne microorganisms. In fact, it has been effectively used in hospitals, food processing, and pharmaceutical manufacturing facilities for disinfection and decontamination.

In June 2020, Signify – a world lighting leader – confirmed UV-C technology is effective inactivating airborne COVID-19. Collaborating with the National Emerging Infectious Diseases Laboratories at Boston University, they conducted research that validated the effectiveness of UV-C light sources on the inactivation of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19.

The COOLBREEZE Air Purification system allows for the easy integration of UV-C technology into an existing



HVAC system through the installation of UV-C panels into air ducts. The chamber quickly deactivates microbial threats in the air as it passes through the outfitted ducts.

According to the company, a 30-watt Germicidal UV-C panel can treat from 4000 to 5000 sq. feet per minute, providing confidence in a building's airflow.

"UV-C light technology can be customized and integrated into most existing HVAC systems, and it's efficient and affordable," a spokesperson for COOLBREEZE said. "It is the perfect system for health care institutions, educational facilities, hospitality venues, warehouses, office buildings, shopping malls and tourist attractions."

*For more information, please contact COOLBREEZE at (905) 672-7887 or email [info@coolbreezeair.com](mailto:info@coolbreezeair.com).*

## Construction Associations Support Local Charities

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Roger's House Palliative Care Unit and, for the past 14 years, the Ottawa Food Bank. Unfortunately, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the association made the difficult decision to cancel the 2020 tournament.

Although the golf tournament was cancelled, the MCA Ottawa Board approved a charitable donation to support several deserving organizations. The worthy causes receiving the funds were: Capital City Bikers Church/Vanier Community Church; Compassion Canada; the Dementia Society of Ottawa and Renfrew County; La Maison d'Amitié; Naomi's Family Resource Centre; Orleans-Cumberland Community Resource Centre; and the

Petawawa Military Family Resource Centre. MCA Ottawa also continued the multi-year commitment to assist the trades through a \$10,000 donation to local college, La Cite, which awards scholarships and bursaries to apprentices in the sheet metal and piping trades.

"We anticipate that 2021 will result in similar community needs due to the pandemic and have started discussions with a local charity on the best way to assist them to weather this storm," Gauthier said. "We feel fortunate to be able to assist and encourage all associations to look at their financial situation, and help out those in need."

## NATIONAL REPORT

# SMACNA Discusses New Initiatives at Recent Meeting

**S**MACNA continues to host regular virtual board meetings to keep the industry abreast of all current initiatives. The most recent session was held January 19, 2021.

Although the sheet metal industry remains strong, the association has experienced a decline in manhours over the past year. In fact, it is estimated that the reduction is approximately 10 per cent. With the probable cause due to the pandemic, SMACNA anticipates that the manhours will recuperate and stabilize in this year.

It appears COVID-19 has prompted many individuals to accelerate their retirement plans. Vince Sandusky, SMACNA CEO, announced his intent to retire effective March 31, 2022. SMACNA's leadership is implementing a succession plan that will identify and evaluate suitable candidates with the goal of having Sandusky's successor on board in early 2022, thereby ensuring a smooth and orderly transition.

Thomas Soles also announced his retirement from his current role as Executive Director, Member Services and Market Sectors at SMACNA. Soles will remain with SMACNA in a consulting capacity.

In an effort to address diversity, equity and inclusion within the industry, SMACNA and SMART have engaged in ongoing discussions about recruiting and retaining a diverse and inclusive workforce with the skills to meet the needs now, and in the future.

In an initial step to affirm its joint objectives, the SMACNA Board of Directors and the SMART General Executive Council adopted the following statement:

"SMACNA and SMART recognize that diversity strengthens our workforce, benefits our communities, and makes the unionized sheet metal industry stronger and more competitive by reflecting the communities where we operate and the people we serve. To affirm our commitment to diversity and inclusion, we have agreed to develop, with the help of experts, a coordinated strategic plan with long-term and short-term objectives which will be evaluated and adjusted, as

necessary. Our unified goal is to shift the mindset of management, labour leaders, and our respective memberships to recruit, welcome, and retain the most competent and skilled workforce available while embracing differences in age, ability, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, national origin, language, marital status, political affiliation, race, religion, sexual orientation, and other characteristics that make individuals unique. SMACNA and SMART are strongly committed to take the necessary steps to achieve our goal of a diverse industry with no tolerance of bullying, harassment, or discrimination. We will provide regular updates on our progress on the strategic plan and on our continued work to promote our shared values of diversity, inclusion and equity."

SMACNA and SMART are now in the process of developing a strategic plan to help reach these goals and build a foundation of an industry dedicated to equity and inclusion.

The 2020 Edge Conference, which was held virtually in 2020, ended up being a success with 2200 participants registered. While the Conference platform is no longer available, SMACNA has shifted several of the sessions to the SMACNA website. SMACNA members can continue to enjoy the benefit of these sessions on SMACNA's [webinar page](#). Please note you will have to sign into your SMACNA account to access the recordings.

It is anticipated that in-person meetings may resume in the summer. With this in mind, SMACNA is currently planning for its National Convention scheduled for October 24 to 27, 2021 in Maui, Hawaii. More details will be made available soon.

In closing, just a reminder that SMACNA continues to provide updates and information valuable to members.

The association recently released the SMACNA HVAC COVID-19 Technical Bulletin. Restoring occupancy of existing buildings that were shut down due to the COVID-19 virus, or other reasons, must be performed with strict

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## SAFETY AWARDS

# Get Recognized for Your Safety Achievements

**O**ne of SMACNA's most essential and popular annual initiatives is its Safety Excellence Award Program. This important program allows all member companies to submit their safety data for inclusion in the critical Safety Statistics Profile.

This report encapsulates all the data received into one document that provides a robust database for evaluating sheet metal and HVAC industry safety performance. Member input is critical to the overall impact and accuracy of this report, because higher company participation rates mean the final report is more comprehensive and of greater value to the industry.

All SMACNA members are encouraged to complete the online survey as soon as possible. Most of the information needed to complete the survey can be found in your company's 2020 injury and illness records. Sending in the online survey is quick, easy and completely confidential.

Canadian member companies are encouraged to complete the survey. They will be automatically directed to their survey once a Canadian province is selected. The deadline for submissions is **May 7, 2021**.

By completing the Safety Excellence Award Program Survey, your company can achieve national awareness for its safety achievements and also gain a historical benchmark to use when measuring future growth. Additional survey features include:

- The ability to create an "account" allowing participants to start a survey, save it, and then go back later to edit and complete it.

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## Technical Information Available



The Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association recently contacted SMACNA's Technical department to obtain specific calculations for sheet metal channels used for duct trapeze hangers.

These calculations are commonly used but are not currently available in the SMACNA database. However, they are available to OSM members by contacting the association at [info@osmca.org](mailto:info@osmca.org) or calling (905) 886-9627.

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## SMACNA National Report

safety procedures to mitigate the risk of exposure to infectious diseases, such as COVID-19.

Several guidelines for this procedure are available. This technical resources bulletin includes SMACNA's recommended Guidelines to open existing buildings with more specific emphasis on the building's HVAC system. Guidelines from the CDC to wear a face covering, keep at least six feet social distancing from other people, and wash hands regularly (for at least 20 seconds) throughout the day, are important.

— Blair Hubber, Lancaster Group Inc., and Director on the SMACNA National Board of Directors

## Lorandus: Creating Engaging Events in the Virtual Space

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home environment and communicating via video, if you have a really important message to communicate, cultural bond to create or product to launch, you have to do it in a fashion that engages the audience, keeps eyeballs on the screen, and ensures your constituents remain in the front row," he said.

Cook likens the process of creating a virtual event to building a home. The objective of the meeting is reflected in the region where the house will be located, he said. Then decisions are made as to the architecture of the house. Will it be a one- two- or three-storey; or alternatively, will it be a one-, two- or three-day event. Generally, in the virtual space, a one-day event runs approximately three hours.

"The house you choose reflects how much energy and physical financial resources you're willing to put into building it," he explained. "Is it going to be a palace or a four-wall shack?"

With the location and design in place, then comes the furniture that goes into each room. This is the content or messaging of the meeting. From there, Lorandus does its magic and creates good engagement around the content. This includes such things as gamification, "edu-tainment," and reward/recognition.

Depending on the organization, a virtual meeting can encompass a host of different segments to keep people "in the front row" and engaged.

When people attend a virtual meeting, Cook says the goal is to simulate the feel of a face-to-face event. For example, on the day of the meeting, participants

meet in a virtual waiting room where they are able to see everyone who is connected. If they wish, they can connect and chat with their peers or, alternatively, there are other options such as games or short, two-minute, how-to or inspiring story videos to keep people interested.

"It's not like a video conference call from your basement," Cook said. "Once you're in the show, all the elements of engagement are introduced to keep everyone's eyeballs on the screen. There are a lot of different elements an organization can introduce to ensure they are valuing peoples' time."

As we move closer to the end of the pandemic and see a slow return to normalcy, the meeting landscape will surely change in the not-so-distant future. Although the virtual experience may evolve into a hybrid of face-to-face meetings mixed with a virtual element, one thing is certain, organizations can't forget their audience.

"Don't leave the audience behind," Cook said. "Everybody deserves a front row seat, and it's our obligation as stakeholders to ensure they stay in that seat. This is a great opportunity in the legacy of any organization to make a mark and attract even more interest."

Lorandus may have experienced a slight set-back at the onset of the pandemic, but that didn't discourage Cook and his team. Through innovation, dedication, and an ability to quickly embrace and understand the newest technology, the company has now established a new presence in the virtual space, which can only be a benefit moving forward.

## Get Recognized for Your Safety Achievements

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- Upon survey completion and submission, a PDF copy of a participant's responses are sent to the participant via email.

- Completed survey submissions automatically allow participants to enter to receive the SMACNA Safety Innovation Award, which recognizes innovative

ideas and best practices that advance safety efforts among SMACNA member companies.

If you have questions about the Safety Excellence Award Program Survey or the Safety Innovation Award, please contact Mike McCullion, director, Market Sectors and Safety, at [mmcullion@smacna.org](mailto:mmcullion@smacna.org).