

## RECOGNITION

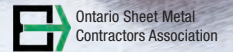
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# CROSSFLOW

SUMMER 2021

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF THE ONTARIO SHEET METAL CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION



Darlington Regenerative Waste Processing Building (RWPB).

## New Chapter Unfolds as Giffin Moves Forward Under Smith and Long Umbrella

**G**iffin is a name that is synonymous with the sheet metal industry. Backed by 72 years of expertise, the family owned and operated business has established a rich history and a solid reputation in multiple sectors. Through constant diversification and specialisation, the Giffin name is emblazoned on multiple companies under the family umbrella in Canada, including Giffin Sheet Metal Limited, Giffin Contractors, and Giffin Combustion Services.

“Being able to diversify has always

been our saviour,” said Bill Giffin, president of Giffin Canada. “We never had to borrow money. It keeps you awake at night and it keeps you hungry when you’re playing out of your own wallet.”

At the foundation of the Giffin brand is Donald P. Giffin, a hard-working young man determined to succeed in the trade. In 1935, during the depression, he travelled from Brockville to Toronto to start an apprenticeship at Universal, a sheet metal and mechanical firm. Moving through the ranks at Universal, and then

working in a munitions factory in Sarnia during World War II, Donald returned to Toronto with a renewed vision for his future. With encouragement from industry peers, Giffin Sheet Metal Limited was born in 1949.

Making a start from a small shop on Golden Avenue in Toronto, the company specialized in HVAC and building flashing. As Toronto began to grow, so did Giffin, heralding an entrance to the industry for the second generation of

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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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Contractors Association

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# Giffin Canada: New Chapter Unfolds



(Above) Honda Alliston Automotive Spray Booth.  
(Right) FCA/Stellantis Spot Cooling Project.

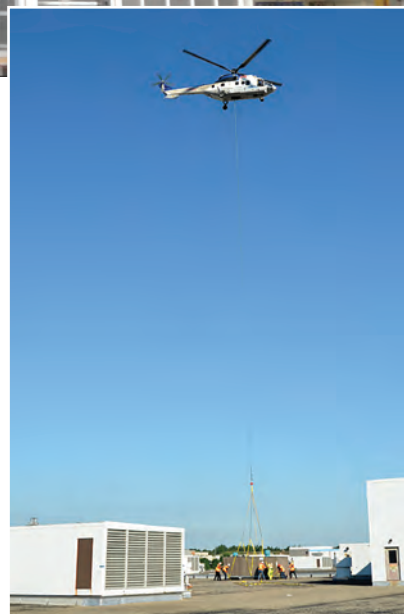
Giffins – Donald Jr., Phillip, Grant, Tom and Bill.

“There was quite a bit of growth in Toronto at the time,” Giffin said. “We were working in hospitals and office towers on University Avenue, and saw a big upswing in business.”

In need of additional space to accommodate the flourishing business, Giffin made a move to a 50,000 sq. foot facility on Bridgeland Avenue in 1967. The company still resides at this location today.

Establishing a firm foot-hold in the industrial sector, Giffin Sheet Metal’s reach includes installations in hydro/electric power and mining facilities, and pulp and paper, food, water/wastewater treatment and automotive plants.

“The work we do is different yet simi-



lar in that it’s all industrial process ventilation,” Giffin said. “Whether you’re making paper, baking bread in a food

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Honda Alliston Paint Shop.

facility, or painting a car, it's all industrial process ventilation. Working in these multiple sectors enabled us to diversify. As one sector dried up, we continued to flourish in another."

Through this diversification, the company soon saw opportunity within the automotive sector in the early 70s. In fact, Giffin's older brother, Don Jr., regularly "camped out" in the purchasing office at the General Motors plant in Oshawa until he was finally granted a meeting with key staff.

"Initially we went into this sector with visions of doing HVAC for these large automotive facilities, but my brother Don saw other opportunities in the paint finishing area," Giffin said. "In 1979, we received our first major contract for a paint shop with General Motors Oshawa, as well as a vendor code which, in this business, is a golden ticket."

Establishing itself as a leader in the automotive sector, Giffin is the only general contractor in Ontario to service this industry.

"There is nobody else in Ontario that is a contractor in the automotive paint finishing sector. We're the only one," Giffin said. "There are other contractors that work in the sector as sub-contractors, but there are no other Canadian companies that are a general contractor in automotive paint finishing. We're trained in this sector and we know how to react, whereas other contractors aren't as well-versed."

Experiencing success within the automotive sector, the Giffins spread their

wings in 1980 and started Giffin Inc. in Michigan, USA, to accommodate increasing work within the sector.

"Automotive really took over for us in the early 80s, and it became our primary source of business," Giffin said. "Probably 70 per cent of our business became automotive to the point where it almost became 100 per cent."

Similar to other sectors, however, the automotive industry also began to slow-down and Giffin once again had to re-diversify and get back to its roots in water/wastewater treatment and, in recent years, the nuclear sector. In fact, Giffin recently completed a large project at the Darlington Plant in Clarington where it was responsible for the Regenerative Waste Processing Building (RWPB), which houses the stripped reactor tubes from the nuclear plant, and prepares them for destruction and packaging.

"We not only completed the process ventilation, but the building ventilation and all the filtration systems because all the air that goes into the atmosphere can't have any contaminate in it from the destroyed tubes," Giffin explained. "It was quite an elaborate system."

Although the Oshawa General Motors plant closed on December 18, 2019, GM recently reversed its plan and spent \$1.3 billion to re-tool and re-open the facility. Giffin was immediately tapped to help get the plant back-up and running.

With a push towards electric vehicles combined with support from both the provincial and federal governments,

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## Creation of New Skilled Trades & Apprenticeship System Closer to Existence

**B**ill 288, *Building Opportunities in the Skilled Trades Act* (BOSTA) passed third reading in the Ontario Legislature on June 2. It enables the creation of a new skilled trades and apprenticeship system that is not dissimilar to the one that currently exists. In the new system, compliance and enforcement will fall under the purview of the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, and training and certification will fall in the aegis of a new agency to be called Skilled Trades Ontario.

Passage of Bill 288 has the immediate effect of doing away with the previously legislated wind-down of the Ontario College of Trades (OCoT). All other provisions in Bill 288 will not come into force until they are subsequently proclaimed by the government. The timing of the future proclamation of the BOSTA is at the discretion of government – it has publicly announced targeting the end of the year for BOSTA to come into force, and for Skilled Trades Ontario to come into existence. Until that time the Ontario College of Trades Apprenticeship Act (OCTAA) is in full force and remains the primary statute regulating skilled trades in Ontario. All OCoT core services must continue to be delivered in support of the transitional system, until such time OCTAA is ultimately replaced by BOSTA.

OCoT management has been in discussion with the Ministry regarding steps to eventually transition College activities to Skilled Trades Ontario and the Ministry of Labour, Training and Skills Development, respectively – as envisioned by BOSTA.

OCoT programs and services are expected to remain 'as is' in the immediate future.

## Message from the Executive Director

I now interrupt your summer enjoyment with my report.

It's exciting to finally see a glimpse of a return to some normalcy in terms of social gatherings. We still have a way to go internationally, but it's great to see so many Canadians being vaccinated and the likelihood for kids to return to in-class schooling, sports, and other social activities.

Your OSM staff are now fully vaccinated and soon all Board members will be as well. We are anticipating a return to in-person meetings for the Board and Labour Relations Council as early as September. It will be great to see everyone in-person again instead of their faces aligned on the screen of my laptop like a grouping of hockey cards. Don't even get me started on video buffering as it conjures up memories of Max Headroom from back in the 80s.

The Labour Relations Council (LRC) welcomed Brian Storr, of Ainsworth Technical, as the newly-appointed representative for the Sheet Metal Contractors Association of Sarnia. Larry McIntosh has stepped back from this role. I want to acknowledge and thank Larry for his many years of service on the LRC. Larry always made a positive contribution.

OSM LRC has continued holding virtual meetings in collaboration with the respective local associations. It has been very worthwhile for the LRC to directly hear from our members and local associations. I want to thank those that have participated. Upcoming meetings include Sudbury-Sault Ste. Marie, Kingston, Toronto and sector consultations with test and balance, and sheeting and decking members.

I also want to thank those members who attended the virtual AGM on June 2. The Board decided to have this event professionally produced as an effort to make the meeting more engaging. Let's face it, an AGM is what it is. Dry.

I received several compliments on the meeting and that included texts while the meeting was actually occurring. This feedback is greatly appreciated. I must say the cudos goes to those who contributed behind the scenes and on camera.

During the meeting members approved numerous by-law revisions. Everyone stuck with me the entire time as I read out the amendments and called the voting. God bless them. Notable of the by-law amendments was the addition of Honorary Membership to recognize members that have made a significant contribution to OSM. The Board granted honorary memberships to Mike Dietrich in recognition for his many years of service in Labour Relations, and to Kim Crossman and Harry Vogt for their contributions to the Board and PITF. Kim continues to act as co-Chair of the PITF, which is a huge time commitment. His efforts are very much appreciated.

Another highlight of the meeting was Bob Felbel passing the gavel to Cathy Godin as our new President. Bob was exceptional in leading the association during his term as president and I now look forward to working with Cathy.

For quite some time, I have been working on sourcing a provider for health, welfare, and retirement benefits that our company owners can option to participate in for themselves and for their non-union employees. Ideally a program we can also welcome local association staff to participate in. I have been searching for a provider that meets several criteria, including:

1. A provider that has a large group program in place and that has a proven track record.
2. A provider that has access to numerous insurers and consistently negotiates the best pricing from his pool of insurers.
3. A group program that is sizably pooled so that an individual employer's claims experience is not impactful to their ongoing coverage and premiums.
4. That the provider does not initially lowball premiums and then incremen-

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Ashbridges Bay Wastewater Treatment Plant.

## Giffin Canada: New Chapter Unfolds

Giffin has once again seen a resurgence within the automotive sector.

"We are now seeing growth in Oshawa, as well as the Toyota in Cambridge, Cami in Ingersoll, Chrysler in Windsor and Ford Oakville as all of these plants expand to accommodate the production of electric vehicles," Giffin said. "We see quite a bit of opportunity in the next two to five years."

In 2010, Giffin acquired a combustion services company which it had great synergy with. Sharing the same and similar customers, it was an easy transition to make the company multi-trade. Managing gas fired equipment in the automotive, food and other sectors, Giffin Combustion Services Ltd. has been a lucrative acquisition which has only flourished over the years.

Although Giffin has faced economic challenges, industries that dried up, and most recently the COVID pandemic, the company was also faced with the challenge of succession.

"We don't have the back-fill or the family coming up to take the business over," Giffin said. "Even if the family was there, how could they afford to take it over and buy-out the partners? That was a significant challenge."

A decision on the path forward had to be made by the brothers still involved in the company. Although Don Jr. decided to maintain the Giffin name in the United States, Bill, Grant and Tom decided to pursue a buyer through the acquisition process for the Canadian business assets.

Following the release of a blind teaser describing the parameters of the company, the sectors it services, dollar value, etc., without actually naming the company, Giffin received immediate interest

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## Eric Wootton

### Recognized as 2021 Wally McIntosh Apprentice Award Winner

**E**ric Wootton turned a love of working with his hands into a blossoming career. And the 36-year-old was recently recognized with the 2021 Wally McIntosh Apprentice Award for his outstanding effort.

Having finished high school and knowing he wanted to continue his education, Wootton found himself at Durham College where he completed a business diploma followed by bachelor of commerce degree from the University of Ontario Institute of Technology (UOIT).

"I have always enjoyed education and learning," Wootton said. "But I decided I wanted to do something hands-on. I always thought construction was interesting and I really enjoy seeing the results of my work."

Having learned woodworking from his grandfather at a young age, Wootton knew early on that he had a love for construction and building. As a teenager, he worked the summers for a landscaping



company, installing patios and driveways, and later installing pools.

Researching potential career paths in construction, Wootton came to Local 30, applied and landed in the sheet metal industry. He started his apprenticeship in January 2016, wrote his Certificate of

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## Message from the Executive Director

tally makes increases over time resulting in premiums that are readily available in the open marketplace.

5. A provider that can bespoke offerings to each employer's needs rather than a one-size-fits-all approach.

6. A provider that has in-house financial services, consulting, legal, dedicated client account managers.

There are a few reasons that drove me to source these services for our members. First and foremost, I have been asked by a few members if the association would be willing to find a viable insurance and benefit program. Secondly, employers are competing for talent. Being able to offer such benefits will not only attract this talent, but could afford smaller-sized companies to compete in the deep end of the pool with the larger firms. Lastly, we are an industry that promotes union workers into management ranks. It is not uncommon for employers to continue to make remittances to the union for such employees as though they were employees represented under the collective agreement.

I would be hypocritical not to mention that in my previous employment I was one such employee. Of course, I terminated my union membership prior to being employed by OSM and, in hindsight, I wish I had done so 20 years prior. Truthfully, I only remained a union member to continue contributions to my pension and benefits, and the union knowingly accommodated me. I never participated in any union activity, and I was never pressured to do so.

Unfortunately, that cannot be said for some others in a similar arrangement with other local unions. Add to this mix "owner-members" of the union. These are union

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## Message from the Executive Director

members that go on to owning a company and remain union members of sort. A special accommodation of union membership that requires payment of dues based on a regular work week of hours and affords the business owner to participate in the union pension and benefits, but precludes the right to vote or attend union meetings.

You should see the strange looks I get when I explain that arrangement to people from outside our industry. You should also see the expression I get when I ask an owner-member in a grievance situation if they realize they are not only paying for their own legal counsel to defend the grievance, but also the wages of the union representatives and the legal council bringing the grievance. I thought it too mean to mention what other things they paid for during the strike of 2019.

I don't mean to be disrespectful or offend owner-members, but it's kind of an incestuous relationship. Surely, as an association, we can facilitate a viable option for owners and their managers other than relying on union pensions and benefits.

At this point, many of you are probably thinking, get off your soapbox Stewart and get to the point. Fair enough. I have had difficulty finding a provider that could check the boxes of what I was seeking for our members.

Some brokers were interested, but it was evident they had no such program in place and I wasn't prepared to commit our members to be the guinea pig. Nonetheless such offering would never pass muster with the Board.

I pitched to COCA if there was interest in pooling together as associations for such a program. That concept initially held interest, but many associations have part-

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## Eric Wootton Recognized as 2021 Wally McIntosh Apprentice Award Winner

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Qualification (CofQ) in March of this year and was officially licensed in April.

"I have my journeyman status now, but I just want to develop my knowledge and skills through further training, work experience, and just continue to explore different areas of the trade in order to be a well-rounded worker," he said.

The Wally McIntosh Apprentice Award is a \$1000 prize 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. Wootton achieved an outstanding 95.97 per cent average.

"I really enjoyed the trade school," he said. "Winning this award is humbling. It wasn't my intention to compete with anyone during the training. I just enjoyed it and really wanted to do well. I'm very appreciative of the training centre and all the instructors there, people I have worked with so far (at The Plan Group) who have provided me with an environment to get to where I am today."

According to the OSM Executive Director, Darryl Stewart, "I am impressed by Eric's schooling achievements, but



I think more so by his personality and enthusiasm for the trade. Don't forget his name because I am confident he will build a very successful career in our industry."

Wootton was officially recognized with the award at a special ceremony held at the Ontario Sheet Metal Training Centre in Oakville on June 24. In attendance were Darryl Stewart, OSM executive director, Brandon Patterson of The Plan Group, as well as a group of invited apprentices. Wootton's name plate now joins last year's winner Mike McSwan, on the award plaque prominently displayed in the training centre.





## NEW STANDARD

# SMACNA Issues First Industry Standard on Food Grade Duct

The Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) has announced that the first edition of its *Food Grade Ductwork and Sheet Metal Guidelines* is now available. The newest standard is one of many resources provided by SMACNA to equip contractors, code officials, designers and engineers with recommendations on adapting to industry best practices.

This first edition standard is a 112-page guide that is intended to provide basic food grade ductwork and sheet metal fabrication/installation guidelines to the industry. The guidelines in this standard cover the following:

- Fabrication and installation of HVAC ductwork in food and beverage production areas.
- Details of the exhaust used in food and beverage processing.
- Product conveying sanitary tubing/pneumatic conveying (spouting and blow line) utilized in food and beverage processing.

"We receive a lot of questions about duct work and systems from both our members and the broader HVAC industry," said Eli Howard, SMACNA's Executive Director of Technical Services and Research. "This publication provides guidelines for the standardization of food grade ductwork and sheet metal fabrication for food and beverage processing plants."

According to Howard, "the four primary purposes for the develop-

ment of the Food Grade Ductwork and Sheet Metal Guidelines were to create reference guidance for the fabrication/installation of food grade ductwork; establish best practices for contractors, designers, food/beverage product plant managers and plant engineers; create a comprehensive specification resource for the food and beverage product industry; and provide contractor guidance for sheet metal in the food grade ductwork industry."

The technical standards and manuals developed by SMACNA have worldwide acceptance by the construction and code community, as well as local and national government agencies. SMACNA standards and manuals address all facets of the sheet metal and HVAC industry – including duct construction, fabrication, and installation, indoor air quality, energy recovery, roofing and architectural sheet metal systems and air duct leakage testing, and HVAC duct design. These publications, including the *Food Grade Ductwork and Sheet Metal Guidelines*, are available to order in both hard copy and book format or as a searchable and downloadable PDF at the [SMACNA Bookstore](#).

For more information on SMACNA's industry-leading standards, please visit the [SMACNA website](#).



## SAFETY AWARDS

# SMACNA Announces Safety Award Winners

The Sheet Metal and Air Conditioning Contractors' National Association (SMACNA) has announced the winners of its Annual Safety Excellence Awards. The recognition program stems from SMACNA's yearly safety survey and celebrates members who report the lowest injury and illness rates, and who continue to adopt a safety culture along with safe practices on the jobsite.

"Nothing is more important to SMACNA than the health and safety of our members and their employees," said Vince Sandusky, SMACNA's Chief Executive Officer. "Congratulations to the winners of this year's Safety Excellence Awards. You should feel proud of what you've accomplished as low injury and illness rates speak volumes to your best-in-class performance within the industry."

Overall, 27 member companies received the 2021 Safety Excellence Award for overall safety performance based on people-hours worked and OSHA incidence rates as reported in the annual safety survey. Award winners in Canada were recognized based on performance measured against Canadian safety programs which are conducted on a provincial basis rather than the national OSHA program in the U.S.

This year's Overall Winner in Canada was **Modern Niagara**, Toronto, ON, who will receive their award during a special ceremony at the 2021 SMACNA Convention in Maui, Hawaii. This year also saw two additional Canadian companies receive honourable mentions. These included **Allied Blower & Sheet Metal Ltd.** of Surrey, BC, and **Crozier Environmental Inc.**, of Orono, ON.

## SMACNA 2021 Annual Convention to be an In-Person Event in Maui, Hawaii

The 2021 SMACNA Annual Convention will be held in person October 24 to 27, 2021 in Maui, Hawaii. This year will be different in many respects, yet SMACNA finds comfort in the high-quality networking and educational experience members have come to expect. Al-

most all differences experienced this year will be a result of a higher focus on safety in accordance with hotel, local and state mandated policies.

Due to capacity restriction mandated by the State of Hawaii and Maui County, SMACNA has restructured its

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## Message from the Executive Director

nering agreements in place with insurance companies so the pitch lost steam.

Recently I was approached by a large group of companies that seemed to check all the boxes. A principal of this group happened to be playing golf with one of our members, and the member pointed him in my direction. Thanks Ian! Those of you who know me can attest that I decisively don't golf. Primarily this is because of my gammy knees, but ultimately this is due to my lack of enthusiasm for frustrating myself with uncooperative small objects, weapons of destructions, grass, trees, ponds, sand, and small cylinders buried in the ground. I guess I'm missing out on opportunity and should probably get my knees and head fixed.

At this point, I have recruited six of our members to undergo consultations and receive proposals with this provider. These members will provide their feedback for the Board to evaluate if OSM should endorse proceeding with this program. Fingers crossed.

For now, I return you back to your regularly scheduled summer enjoyment. Cheers!

— Darryl Stewart,  
OSM Executive Director,



The Ontario Sheet Metal Contractors Association (OSM) reminds members that the numerous business and human resource materials offered by TwoGreysuits (TGS) are readily available at their fingertips.

OSM can easily log-on at the OSM website at [osmca.twogreysuits.com](http://osmca.twogreysuits.com).

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## Giffin Canada: New Chapter Unfolds

from two parties – one of which was Rob Riopelle from Smith and Long.

“We went down the road with Rob and Smith and Long, and it was a very long process,” Giffin explained. “Rob had acquired multiple small firms, but we were the largest company he ever acquired outside of his purchase of Smith and Long, so there was a lot more required to ensure all the T's were crossed and I's dotted. We did finally get there and in April of this year, we officially signed the papers and closed the deal.”

Smith and Long is the fastest growing large-scale, multi-trade company in the Canadian market. Uniquely positioned in the traditional fields of electrical, mechanical and engineering, Smith and Long also has divisions focused on HVACR, construction, tunnelling, TBM refurbishments, data communications and 24-hour electrical and mechanical service and maintenance.

According to Riopelle, “the culture at Smith and Long and Giffin are very simi-

lar in the fact that they are both run as family companies.”

“This merger allows Giffin to provide even more services to its customers, expanding the Giffin offering to include electrical, high voltage and much more,” he said. “Giffin will continue all business lines in addition to these expanded offerings.”

According to Giffin, the company would not be where it is today without the strength and loyalty of its staff.

“Our staff has supported us for decades,” he said. “We truly appreciate and respect our team. They have allowed us to achieve the success we've seen over the years.”

Although the Giffin name will shift to the Smith and Long banner in April 2022, what will not change is the diversification and multiple offerings Giffin has provided both in the past and now, moving forward with Smith and Long, to ensure continued success and customer satisfaction.

## SMACNA 2021 Annual Convention to be an In-Person Event in Maui, Hawaii

Annual Convention schedule to accommodate the maximum permissible number of participants under the following mandates:

- Educational sessions will be in a general session format. The traditional final night dinner and show will convert to a reception-style event.

- To maximize capacity within the mandates, SMACNA must assign seats for all indoor seated functions for all registrants to implement required contact tracing protocols.

- Due to capacity restrictions, SMACNA is forced to limit attendance at events. Spouse registrants will only be permitted to attend the following social functions: the College of Fellows Golf Outing, Meet & Greet Reception, PAC Night, Spouse Breakfast, and the Final Night Event. Spouse registrants will not be able to attend educational programming, the contractor lunches on Monday and Wednesday, and the Product Show.

Should the State of Hawaii and/or Maui County relax or lift capacity restrictions, SMACNA will revisit attendance limits. In the meantime, please check the [State of Hawaii COVID-19 Portal](#) as well as the [Canadian Government website](#) for the most up-to-date information regarding travel restrictions and guidelines.

Housing date changes or cancellations must be received in writing to SMACNA Convention Registration no later than September 15, 2021, to avoid forfeiture of room deposits. To contact Convention Registration, please send a message to the [Registration and Hotel Support Centre](#).

Registration cancellation requests must be submitted in writing to SMACNA Convention Registration no later than October 20, 2021, to receive a full refund. No refunds will be issued after October 20, 2021. To contact Convention Registration, please send a message to the [Registration and Hotel Support Centre](#).