



Alberta Construction Association

Greater market opportunities and less risk for Alberta's construction industry

ACA Newsletter September 30, 2025

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Red Deer Construction Association

Premier Smith's September Mandate Letters and What They Mean for Construction

Premier Danielle Smith's [mandate letters](#), released in September 2025, set out a comprehensive agenda for government ministries. For Alberta's construction industry, these commitments are more than policy—they are signals of where opportunities will emerge, how procurement and planning will change, and where ACA must continue to advocate for our members.

Stability and Predictability in Capital Spending

[Infrastructure](#) remains at the heart of the province's agenda. The government has committed to finalizing a capital funding formula to bring long-term predictability to project planning. This has been a consistent ACA priority, as sudden swings in capital budgets create uncertainty for companies and their workforce. A stable, transparent funding approach will help firms retain skilled trades, build capacity, and plan effectively for future projects. ACA welcomes this development and will continue to work with government to ensure the formula reflects both regional needs and industry realities.

Procurement Reform and Contract Modernization

Across ministries, the government has emphasized efficiency and accountability in procurement. The infrastructure mandate includes full adoption of the One Government Experience (1GX) system, category management, and the development of a hybrid centralized procurement model.

For ACA members, who have often raised concerns about complexity and inefficiency in procurement processes, this commitment is encouraging. However, we will remain



Updates from ACA

- ACA and our partner associations are supporting the Infrastructure Partners Conference, find out more [here](#).
- ACA published our Wildfire infographic please find more information [here](#).
- Alberta Trade Definitions for 2025 are now available find out what is new for this year [here](#).
- You can sign up for our ACA Digital Tradesperson program [here](#).
- ACA published our latest construction industry statistics [here](#).
- We have started three new committees to learn more or to join a committee, contact us at policy@albertaconstruction.net

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active in ensuring reforms reduce red tape, maintain fairness, and balance risk appropriately between owners and contractors.

Workforce Development and Skilled Trades

The mandate letters for [Advanced Education](#) and [Education and Childcare](#) highlight the government's determination to elevate the skilled trades as a respected and desirable career path. Commitments include new apprenticeship opportunities at the high school level, parity of esteem for trades and professions, and streamlined teacher certification pathways for those with trade backgrounds.

For ACA, this alignment is critical. Our industry faces ongoing labour shortages, and early exposure to trades in schools, coupled with clear post-secondary pathways, will help build the workforce of tomorrow. ACA will continue to partner with government on initiatives that encourage young people to pursue careers in construction and related sectors.

Jobs, Immigration, and Economic Growth

The [Jobs, Economy, Trade and Immigration](#) mandate reinforces Alberta's focus on talent attraction and workforce readiness. The "Alberta is Calling" program will continue to draw skilled workers, while the province also moves to streamline credential recognition for both national and international workers. These measures are vital to address immediate shortages while also supporting long-term labour force development.

The mandate also commits to stronger industry engagement in workforce planning, short-term training programs tied to labour market needs, and the implementation of the new Canada-Alberta Productivity Grant. For ACA, these initiatives are directly relevant, as productivity gains and workforce stability are essential to ensuring our industry remains globally competitive.

Building Capacity Through Collaboration

A common theme across all letters is collaboration, with municipalities, industry, and other ministries. Whether it is infrastructure procurement, trades education, or labour attraction, government is signalling that industry feedback will be essential to success. ACA welcomes this call for engagement. Our association and our partners will continue to bring forward practical solutions from members on challenges such as cost escalation, supply chain pressure, and regulatory barriers.

The mandate letters show a government determined to deliver results across infrastructure, education, workforce development, and economic growth. For ACA and our members, the commitments to predictable capital funding, procurement reform, skilled trades promotion, and labour attraction are encouraging steps. Our focus now is to ensure that these commitments are implemented in ways that strengthen Alberta's construction industry, create sustainable opportunities for contractors, and deliver lasting value for communities.



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ACA looks forward to working with Premier Smith, Cabinet, and the public service to turn these mandates into action and to continue building Alberta's future.

Prompt Payment Guidelines

Alberta's construction industry continues to adapt to important changes in how payment is managed on projects. [The Prompt Payment and Construction Lien Act](#) (PPCLA) and the [Public Works Act](#) (PWA) were both amended in 2024, with many of the changes taking effect on April 1, 2025. These updates are designed to improve cash flow, provide more certainty for contractors and subcontractors, and extend prompt payment and adjudication rules more broadly across both private and public projects.

What Has Changed

Under the PPCLA, prompt payment rules have been clarified and extended. Consulting professionals such as architects and engineers now have the option to opt out of lien and holdback provisions if their contracts specifically allow it. However, in doing so, they lose lien and holdback rights.

Adjudication has also been strengthened. Parties can now pursue adjudication even after a contract is completed, provided it is started within thirty days after the final payment date. At the same time, adjudication can proceed even when a lawsuit or arbitration has already been filed, unless a court orders otherwise. This change prevents disputes from being delayed indefinitely in the court system.

The amendments to the PWA are equally significant. Public works contracts entered after April 1, 2025, are now subject to the same prompt payment and adjudication rules that apply in the private sector. Proper invoices must be issued every thirty-one days, and undisputed amounts must be paid promptly down the chain.

The Crown is required to pay contractors within twenty-eight days, contractors must pay subcontractors within thirty-five days, and subcontractors must pay their own subcontractors within forty-two days. Adjudication has also been extended to cover public works disputes, although certain matters such as termination or force majeure are excluded. Some contracts, including facility maintenance agreements and special scope projects, such as certain P3s, remain exempt.

Looking Ahead

The direction is clear: Alberta expects prompt payment to become standard practice on all projects, public and private alike. By extending adjudication and harmonizing payment rules, the province is signalling that fairness and accountability in payment practices are not optional. For industry leaders, now is the time to update contracts, educate staff, and prepare internal systems to comply with the new framework.

The Alberta Construction Association will continue to work with government and industry partners to monitor how these changes are implemented and to ensure members have the tools they need to adapt successfully. We will also be releasing an update to the Plain Language Guidelines to better equip members with an understanding of the rules in place and how to manage through them.

Arcana Information Session

As part of their work to help inform industry on the changes, ARCANA (the construction adjudication and nominating authority) is hosting a virtual information session focusing on the PPCLA and how industry stakeholders can use it to resolve contract disputes.

This 2-hour session is scheduled for November 5, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM and will walk participants through the adjudication process, including what types of disputes qualify, how adjudication works, and how decisions are enforced. The session is designed for contractors, trades, suppliers, engineers, consultants, and owners seeking clarity and confidence in managing payment disputes.

Speakers include:

- Dave Simpson, Senior Project Manager, J.S. Held ULC
- Adriana Worman, Barrister & Solicitor, Goodfellow Schuettlaw
- Barrie Marshall, President, J. Barrie Marshall Consulting Inc

You can register for the session [here](#).

Building Skills for Alberta's Construction Workforce

The Alberta construction industry continues to face pressure from rising project demands, labour shortages, and the rapid adoption of new technologies. Employers know that training is essential, yet traditional methods can be costly and disruptive to project schedules. ACA is working with IMAGINiT to offer a flexible learning model for our Digital Tradesperson Program that helps companies strengthen their workforce while reducing downtime.

The platform, called ProductivityNOW, is designed to support organizations that rely on Autodesk tools for design, engineering, and project management. The platform delivers on-demand learning resources, role-based training paths, and certification opportunities. This makes it easier for companies to bring new staff up to speed, support continuous development, and ensure employees remain confident in using the latest software.

For Alberta contractors, one of the most valuable benefits is faster onboarding. New hires can access courses and searchable content the moment they join a project team, helping them become productive more quickly. Companies can also use the built-in progress tracking and knowledge assessments to confirm that skills are being applied in practice. Over time, this reduces rework, improves collaboration, and strengthens project delivery.

Another important advantage is the ability to upskill current employees. As projects grow more complex, the demand for advanced design and project management skills increases. Staff can pursue learning at their own pace, filling knowledge gaps without waiting for scheduled courses. This flexibility not only builds capability but also improves retention, as employees see a clear investment in their professional growth.

The ACA's Digital Tradesperson program is part of a broader shift in how Alberta's construction workforce is adapting to the digital age. By combining technical training with accessible digital platforms, the program equips tradespeople with skills in tools such as Virtual Design and Construction (VDC) and Building Information Modeling (BIM). This ensures workers are not only

job-ready today but also able to thrive in an industry where digital collaboration and data-driven decision-making are becoming the norm.

More broadly, the modern construction workforce faces the dual challenge of replacing retiring tradespeople and attracting younger, tech-savvy talent. Programs like the Digital Tradesperson provide a bridge by offering flexible, on-demand upskilling that appeals to new entrants while also giving experienced workers a way to adapt without leaving the jobsite. In this way, Alberta contractors are investing not just in immediate project needs, but in building a resilient, future-ready workforce that can deliver complex projects with greater efficiency, safety, and confidence.

For Alberta's construction sector, where labour shortages and productivity pressures are never far from the headlines, these tools and training programs may prove to help play a key role. By strengthening the skills of the workforce, companies can position themselves to deliver value on today's projects and prepare for the demands of tomorrow.

For more information on the platform [click here](#).

To get involved in our Digital Tradesperson program [click here](#).

Upcoming Events

[Foundations for Growth Candidates Mixer](#) – October 1

[RDCA Scholarship Award Ceremony](#) – October 15

[BUILDEX Alberta](#) – October 22

[Infrastructure Partners Conference](#) – November 5

[Calgary Construction Association Black Tie Industry Gala](#) – November 7

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