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## Toronto Construction Association negotiating with ADR Institute of Ontario to offer dispute-resolution discount

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The Toronto Construction Association (TCA) is negotiating with the ADR Institute of Ontario to offer members access on a discounted basis to experienced mediators and arbitrators to deal with construction disputes.

"We hope this program, which should be in place this spring, will be of great benefit to members," says TCA chair **Glenn Ackerley of WeirFoulds**. "The savings enjoyed in a single dispute could potentially cover the cost of TCA annual membership itself."

Speaking at the association's recent 143rd annual meeting, Ackerley said TCA is also committed to providing educational opportunities to its members through The Construction Institute of Canada.



Glenn Ackerley

He said development of the TCA's new long-range plan, which gets under way early this year, will provide a prime opportunity to review "where we have come and plan for the future of education."

That exercise of plotting the association's course for the next five years is being spearheaded by the long-range planning committee headed by TCA vice-chair Ian Steer of Aluma Systems Inc.

Reviewing highlights of the past year's activities, Ackerley said one area of "great success" was the electronic plans room. More than 1,500 projects were posted in 2010 and there were 1,300 active users.

The TCA's annual membership drive was a "terrific" success as well, Ackerley said. The association now represents 2,210 firms, an all-time high.

"What's also so exciting about membership in 2010 has been the growth coming from the younger members of the industry."

Ackerley said membership in the young construction executives club continues to grow and now is up to almost 400.

In addition the association has introduced a new class of membership, the student membership. TCA now has more than 100 student members.

Membership in the Mississauga Construction Association continues to grow.

One of the ongoing services provided to TCA members is provision of reference materials. Ackerley said the layman's guide to construction liens is being revised to reflect the latest changes in the Lien Act. This document will be available later this year as well an inaugural guide to green building. Part of the association's job, Ackerley said, is to stay current. That includes methods of communicating and interacting with members. During the past year, TCA began to develop a presence through social media tools such as Facebook.

Members also want to see that the TCA is active in industry and in making its voice heard, Ackerley said. "I can tell you that I have witnessed first-hand the hard work and efforts of members of the board and (president) John Mollenhauer and (executive vice-president) Kim McKinney in being engaged with other associations like the Canadian Construction Association.

"It is through these efforts and working with and supporting groups such as the Council of Ontario Construction Associations that after years of efforts we saw changes made this past fall to the Construction Lien Act."