



Presentation to the
Independent Review Panel
Regarding New Brunswick's Workplace, Health, Safety and Compensation System

Sunny Corner Enterprises Inc. is a regional leader, providing integrated services in Construction, Fabrication and Industrial Supply. We have been in business for over 40 years. Our company has a long history of working to provide a safe work place for our employees. In fact, part of our Corporate Mission Statement "Provide and environment that will improve the quality of life of our employees", commits us to make Safety a priority.

The complicating factor is Safety is a joint responsibility of several stakeholder groups. In our industry the stakeholders include: Employee, Employer, Owner of work site, Trade union the employee is a member of and WHSCC. This presentation will focus on strategic initiatives that will result in positive results for all stake holder groups.

Establishing a Safety Culture.

Of all the important subject matter taught in our education system, Health & Safety does not have a prominent presence. We fully support the position presented by NB Power in their brief urging Health & Safety being introduced into our curriculum at early stages. While the benefits will not be immediate, the long term shift in our Safety Culture will yield significant improvements.

Starting with Public Grade Schools and on to Vocational and Trade Schools, Colleges and Universities. This basic training could then be complemented by workplace specific training. With an ultimate goal of creating a "Safety Passport Certification" for everyone that would cover all basic Safety training.

Stakeholder Shared Responsibility.

Our current system places much of the responsibility for Health & Safety directly on the employer and employee. In many employment situations this is very appropriate. In the construction industry our stakeholder group is much larger. As a contractor, our employees (tradesmen) are dispatched to work in the owner's premises. The condition of these premises and the Safety Culture that exists are beyond the control of the contractor or the employee. Thankfully many are very good work places and Safety is a high priority. Unfortunately the current system does not allow for proper assessment of responsibility should an incident occur. The employee suffers the physical and financial stress. The Contractor suffers the loss of a good employee and the financial impact of a WHSCC claim. The challenging part is the incident that resulted in this loss may have been beyond the control of the employee or employer, but within the control of the owner. Had the owner shared more information regarding the perils of his premises or been more diligent in Health & Safety the incident could have been avoided. A method to properly assess the shared responsibility and distribute it accordingly will promote a much safer workplace for everyone.

Self Sufficiency.

Our Provincial government's "Charter for Change" has the goal of Self Sufficiency within the next 20 years. Significant investment in New Brunswick must take place for this to be a reality. Much of this investment will be in the energy sector. Our experience shows the major players in this sector have a very high standard for Safety performance. It is imperative our New Brunswick construction companies and tradesmen are capable



of attaining these performance goals or we risk having outside companies performing this work, or worse yet, not seeing the capital investment made at all. It is vital the Independent Review Panel keep the requirements of all stakeholder groups, Employees, Employers and Industry in balance when making recommendations for change. Our WHSCC system can not be structured to serve the interests of one group at the expense of another. If inequities are permitted in the system long term sustainability will suffer and Self Sufficiency will become a victim.

Claims Investigation

One purpose of the Independent Review Panel is to ensure we are using best practices of other WHSCC jurisdictions. We would recommend a review of the number of Investigators in relation to the number of claims that WHSCC NB receives in relation to other provinces. It is felt that an increased number of investigators would assist in reducing the number of fraudulent cases. All stakeholder groups would benefit from the increased monitoring of questionable circumstances.

Thank you for undertaking this process and allowing public input. I will again request, any amendments considered must be balanced for all stakeholder groups. You will note I did not say fair, as fair is only a personal opinion and its interpretation varies depending on the party you ask. Balanced is what we need to equally protect all stakeholders and continue to move Workplace Health & Safety forward in New Brunswick.

Yours truly,

Gordie Lavoie
President & General Manager