



Canadian Corrugated and
Containerboard Association

Association canadienne du
cartonnage ondulé et du
carton-caisse



2019 Chairman's Report

On May 12, 2020 the Canadian Corrugated & Containerboard Association (CCCA) held the Annual General Meeting by telephone conference call. John Pepper, Director of Mill Sales for Atlantic Packaging presided over the meeting in his role as Chairman of the Association. He offered the following comments on the prior year's activity.

Never in the career of anyone on this Board has there been such a dramatic change in the world around us as there has in the recent two months. Our government, citizens and industry were confronted with the reality of a COVID 19 pandemic that rapidly swept the globe following detection in Asia and Europe. The Canadian government called a lockdown of all “non-essential” activity as of March 17, 2020.

As the government definition of what would be “Essential” was forming, the CCCA and its members went into torpedo lobby mode on provincial and federal fronts. How could our customers ship anything without our corrugated boxes? Were we going to be permitted to function freely? How would our world function under social-distancing and stay home orders from our cities and governments? How do parents cope with schools closed indefinitely? Can our employees come to work at all?

By early April the sector of packaging was identified as “Essential” to the economy and allowed to function freely. Immediate plans were formed to provide a safe production workplace to serve our customers. A March 31 conference call was set up for input from Health & Safety leaders at plants across our membership. The sharing of management best practices was offered by WestRock and created wholesome sharing of the how to operate our plants safely, create confidence with employees, manage for potential illness and keep production flowing.

With March 2020 shipment volumes surging past the previous year the focus of everyone in our industry was exemplary. An exceptional response from our plants that responded without hesitation to the requirements swirling each day.

Our world is forever defined as being “Essential” to the “Essential”. And all this while the country experiences the worst economic decline in decades and the workplace for hundreds of thousands of employees across Canada was shutdown.

As of today's meeting, these conditions have improved significantly, but the world remains haunted by an invisible virus that transmits exponentially and feasts on the most vulnerable. May our global medical experts deliver us safely into a productive future.

The affairs of the industry and the Association were fast paced prior to the abrupt pandemic arrival. In terms of governance, Amendment #2 was passed to our by-laws to specify a two-year term for our Executive. I recognize the support of Marco Studer as Secretary-Treasurer, Jean Parent as 1st Vice-President, Mike McGugan as 2nd Vice-President and Mike Lafave as Past-Chairman. We look forward to the second year of our term.

Montcorr Packaging was accepted as a member at the November Board meeting. Danny Lecompte will serve as their Director.

Durabox SXP Packaging submitted their intent to resign from the Association at the end of 2019.

Gary Johnson resigned from the Board and his role as Secretary-Treasurer at the August meeting. His retirement from Maritime Paper was in place for the end of the year. Sheldon Gouthro was nominated by Maritime Paper to be their Director on the Board.

The Association received Dart Communications research on Canadian millennials attitudes and perceptions on "Packaging and the Environment". Dart professionals prepared a survey of questions based on discussion with Association personnel to drill directly into our topics, prepared in a millennial-friendly fashion to generate honest replies. The results were enlightening beyond expectation. A thorough document was presented to the Board and further presented at the Conference in Trade Show. Of the many points of understanding revealed, two of the most relevant factors were: A) People that know us, like us. But not enough people know us. B). People trust post-secondary institutions (like Ryerson and Conestoga) and government ahead of brand-owners and retailers. These themes will become part of the Association marketing plans for the immediate and near future.

Another successful Conference and Trade Show as held April 24 &25, 2019 as a joint event with the AICC and planned under the leadership of Kate Menard and Jana Marmeï as Event Managers. A total of 52 booths were registered by a wide range of industry suppliers and connections, up sharply from the prior event. There was a special presence from Conestoga College and Ryerson University that allowed students to understand in real-time about how our industry works.

Smithcom continue to provide professional marketing plans for the Association. In continuing on the theme of reaching to increase awareness to those that do not know us a focus on using social media was implemented. Instagram was selected as the initial channel for messaging and an agreement was put in place for Ryan Bartlett to be a part-time Social Media Leader. These steps shift away from traditional print media advertising.

These marketing and messaging plans are prepared as Europe has implemented a ban on single use plastics and the Canadian government has announced plans of a similar nature. COVID-19 has deflected these plans in Canada for now.

Our Association connections remain strong.

- Angelika Christ, Director of FEFCO accepted an invitation to present a “View from Europe” at our Trade Show.
- Allen Kirkpatrick attended the ICCA/FBA meeting in May 2019
- AICC joint golf tournament was held in June
- Allen also attended the FEFCO Technical Seminar in October
- Forest Products Association of Canada provided input on single use plastic strategies
- PPEC remains a strong, focused and much needed voice for industry concerns
- Paper & Packaging Board continues to provide media and marketing support in print and social media format

Many unknowns face the national and global economy in these pandemic times. Massive unemployment and astronomical government spending are two of the most obvious calamitous issues facing us.

We continue to be prepared to adapt quickly for our continued success.