

HEALTHY COMPETITION

Maritime Chapter nudges out rivals to become second President's Award recipient



▲ Maritime Chapter team: Helen Comeau (vice-chair), Gordon Jackson (treasurer), Robert Barss (chair) and Denis Pellichero (past chair).

There's nothing like a bit of friendly competition to bring out the best in people. And CHES's President's Award does just that.

"It really drives the chapters to work harder," says Maritime Chapter chair, Robert Barss, about the award, which he accepted, along with three members of the Maritime executive, on behalf of the chapter at this year's National Conference in Edmonton.

Created in 2014, the purpose of the President's Award is to foster engagement and encourage chapter participation in executive and committee work. The trophy is presented annually to the CHES chapter that demonstrates its commitment to education, administration and representation in the activities of the chapter and National board. The judging process involves evaluating and scoring each chapter on their accounting practices, conference/education day, membership, chapter executive practices, committee work and additional offerings. Specifically, points are given for activities that benefit members and the work of the organization, such as number of meetings attended in the course of committee work and special education sessions.

"We were elated to be bestowed this honour," says Barss, whose chapter also received two national conference registrations and expenses to a maximum of \$2,500 for its win. "It shows how much work we've put into supporting the organization as well as our membership."

This past year, the Maritime Chapter pulled off two successful conferences that were held just seven months apart — the 2014 National Conference in Saint John, N.B., and its annual spring conference and trade show in April 2015.

Continuing its commitment to the professional development of members and their staff, the chapter is organizing an education day for Nov. 17, which highlights such topics as legionella, infection control, life safety, energy management and preventive

measurement practices. To be held in Truro, N.S., it is free to all Maritime Chapter members as well as hospital front line workers and long-term care maintenance and operations staff.

"It's very important that our members have the opportunity to be educated and become more professional," says Barss, who became chapter chair in September 2014. "We're continually giving back to our membership by utilizing some of our finances for different activities."

These include offering free webinars, a 50 per cent rebate on the Canadian Certified Healthcare Facility Manager (CCHFM) exam cost, and funding a bursary program. Renamed last year in memory of Per Paasche who helped established the Maritime Chapter, a \$1,000 grant is presented annually to a family member of a Maritime Chapter member to assist with their post-secondary education. This year's recipient was Kyle Bouchie, son of chapter member Joe Bouchie, who is studying mechanical engineering at Dalhousie University in Halifax.

As far as the work of the Maritime Chapter goes, it is actively encouraging increased involvement of the francophone sector of New Brunswick's Vitalité Health Network and developing a relationship with the CHES National corporate/associate member advisory council. In September 2014, the chapter established the associate chair position (currently held by Kerry Fraser of CBCL Ltd.) on its board for this purpose. The Maritime Chapter is the only local branch of the Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society that has a corporate/associate member on its executive team.

"This position is important because the support of our corporate/associate members is essential to CHES," explains Barss. "They help create the financial backing that we need to move forward as an organization. Without their commitment, and the commitment of all CHES members, the Society wouldn't be where it is today." ■