

A WELCOME RELIEF

Ontario chapter beats stiff competition to nab President's Award

In the months leading up to the 2016 CHES National Conference, the Ontario chapter executive was on tenterhooks waiting to find out if it had nabbed the much-coveted President's Award. Finally, just weeks out from the annual event, the chapter's chair, Roger Holliss, received the phone call he'd anxiously been anticipating.

"It was such a relief to hear we won," says Holliss, who accepted the award on behalf of the Ontario chapter at the conference gala banquet Sept. 12. "The chapter executive knew its submission was strong but wasn't sure if it was good enough to win, so it was great to receive the news honouring the team's hard work and unwavering commitment over the past year."

The President's Award 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 winner is awarded two CHES National conference registrations and expenses to a maximum of \$2,500 each, as well as a trophy engraved with the executive team's names.

Since the crowning of last year's award winner, the chapter executive has made a concerted effort to foster engagement and encourage participation in committee work. The Ontario chapter now has a representative on each CHES National committee and subcommittee, which Holliss acknowledges is a difficult feat for chapters with less members.

"The Newfoundland & Labrador chapter, for instance, has substantially fewer members than the Ontario chapter, which means a higher percentage of its membership must volunteer its time," he explains. "Our chapter has more than 200 members, so it has more volunteers to draw upon."

On the education front, the executive team pulled off one of the most successful chapter conventions to date despite having to scramble to sort out logistical issues associated with the hotel and conference centre not being in walking distance from each other. Held in Kitchener, Ont., it was attended by



138 delegates and boasted 70 exhibitors, one-third of which were first-timers to the annual spring conference and trade show. The chapter also hosted a CSA standard training session on Z8002, Operation and Maintenance of Health Care Facilities, in late winter. The education day was so well-attended and received that the chapter executive is considering making it a regular session.

With existing CSA standards being updated at least every five years, the executive team has launched a pilot project whereby a hired consultant will provide a synopsis of proposed changes to Z317.13, Infection Control during Construction, Renovation and Maintenance of Health Care Facilities. A simple-to-read spreadsheet will soon be posted to the Ontario chapter website, saving members the time and effort required to read two substantial documents — the existing standard and the one in the public review stage — and glean the differences.

"Depending on the reception, the chapter executive might make this a regular practice for all CSA healthcare-related standards going forward," notes Holliss.

Furthering its commitment to professional development, the chapter executive has created a new bursary program that awards \$1,000 scholarships to sons, daughters and grandchildren of Ontario chapter members (regular and associate). The bursaries are currently limited to five per year. Members'

kin must be enrolled in a full-time post-secondary technology program in the province to be eligible.

The Ontario chapter has continued to extend financial support beyond its membership to the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care (CCGHC) and Health Energy Leaders Ontario (HELO). The organizations have received \$30,000 collectively in the past two years to assist with programs that will help healthcare facilities across the province participate in energy-saving initiatives.

The chapter executive has also pursued a new relationship (Firestop Contractors International Association) while fostering another (Infection Prevention and Control Canada) for the benefit of its membership. Earlier this year, Holliss along with two CHES members presented at IPAC Canada's national education conference. The Ontario chapter has since extended an invitation to IPAC to take part in the 2017 CHES National Conference in Niagara Falls, Ont., which it has accepted.

"Hospital facility managers, engineers and infection prevention and control practitioners share the same space and deal with the same issues so it makes sense for us to come together outside the work environment and learn from one another," explains Holliss. "The next CHES National conference provides the perfect venue to do just that." ■