

# A REMARKABLE FEAT

Maritime chapter pulls off another award win, its fourth in a matter of years



▲ LEFT TO RIGHT: Helen Comeau, Kate Butler, Robert Barss, Guy Bourbonniere of Trane (award sponsor), David Bligh, Gordon Jackson, Jason Turner, Nathaniel Schrader, Ken Morrissey and Steve Smith.

There's nothing quite like a back-to-back award win, something CHES Maritime has now achieved twice since the President's Award was first introduced a decade ago in 2014. But when bestowed the honour on home soil, it means that much more.

"I'm just so proud of the Maritime team and their commitment to CHES and its success," says Robert Barss, who accepted the award on behalf of the chapter executive, which, at the time, included Steve Smith, Ken Morrissey, Kate Butler, Gordon Jackson, David Bligh, Jason Turner and Helen Comeau.

Since last year's win, members of the chapter executive have been diligent in attending and contributing to the work of CHES. Barss cites Morrissey, in particular, who works with the Nova Scotia Department of Seniors and Long-term Care (SLTC) and has been instrumental in developing a relationship between it and CHES. This began with inviting SLTC maintenance and operations staff to Maritime chapter fall education days. Earlier this year, Barss was approached by the department's project executive of infrastructure, who wanted to develop a plan for SLTC facility managers to become CHES Maritime members. Discussions were successful and the chapter now has more than 100 new members from the sector. This

sizeable addition to membership is good news, especially after numbers dwindled to 101 during the pandemic. The chapter is now 170 strong, which is helping with revenue generation, something else that took a pandemic hit.

Much of the last 12 months was spent readying for the 2024 CHES National Conference in Halifax, Sept. 8-10. While the majority of planning was completed in preceding years (as it was originally supposed to be held in 2020, but was disrupted by, again, the pandemic), it's still a monumental feat to pull off an event of this size. Participation was high, with nearly 790 people in attendance. As in years past, the trade show floor was sold-out with 137 booths. Among the highlights — and there were many — was the Women in CHES lounge. This was a first for the Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society. Barss is particularly proud of that fact and his chapter executive colleagues, Butler and Comeau, who are among the driving forces behind the newly formed group.

"With their and others' influence, they will continue to grow and succeed," he says.

Fresh off the conference, there is little downtime for the chapter executive, as their attention must now turn to planning next year's spring conference, May 4-6, in Moncton, N.B.

The Maritime chapter supports professional development in other ways, too, providing free access to CHES webinars and covering the cost of the Canadian Certified Healthcare Facility Manager program, including both the sample exam and certification exam, if passed. The chapter also offers monetary assistance to the next generation of healthcare professionals through the Per Paasche grant. The \$1,000 bursary is awarded annually to a family member of a CHES Maritime member to assist with their post-secondary education. This year's recipient is Katherine Boyle, a graduate of Citadel High School in Halifax. Boyle is the daughter of Laura Steele, a project executive with the Nova Scotia Department of SLTC. Boyle was accepted to Yorkville University in Toronto, where she is studying interior design. She plans to use her skills in the field to aid the healthcare industry by creating comfortable, welcoming healthcare environments.

"The Maritime chapter can stand proud for the work done and what we continue to accomplish," says Barss. "We look forward to competing with the other chapters for this award again next year."

If the chapter executive stays the course, they just might three-peat. ■