

# OPENMIND

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<b>Publisher</b>	Ruth Kelly
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**Contributing Writers**  
Lawrence Beaudry, Cailynn Klingbeil, Geoff Morgan, Steve Penner, Anna Ravlikovska, Gregg M. Schoppman, Bill Stewart, Joel Thompson

**Contributing Illustrators and Photographers**  
3TEN, Jen Hsieh, Isabelle Cardinal, Maxwell Holyoke-Hirsch, Heff O'Reilly, Sonia Roy

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**Venture Publishing Inc.**  
10259-105 Street,  
Edmonton, Alberta T5J 1E3  
Tel.: (780) 990-0839  
Fax: (780) 425-4921  
admin@venturepublishing.ca  
www.venturepublishing.ca

**Merit Contractors Association**  
103-13025 St. Albert Trail,  
Edmonton, Alberta T5L 5G4  
Tel.: (780) 455-5999 or 1-888-816-9991  
Fax: (780) 455-2109  
meritedm@meritalberta.com  
www.meritalberta.com

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On behalf of Merit Contractors Association, welcome to the 2011 edition of *Open Mind* magazine.

**This is a landmark edition for us as Merit Contractors Association celebrates its 25 year anniversary in 2011.** *Open Mind* has been published for the last 19 of these 25 years and has always focused on the unique issues affecting the open shop construction industry, with the aim of promoting the free enterprise principle that construction

work, and the employment and compensation of personnel, should be awarded based on merit regardless of employee labour affiliation.

Since its inception, *Open Mind* has always dealt with a range of topics and this issue continues that tradition. In honour of the 25 year anniversary issue, we have included a fascinating overview of the last 25 years of Merit, from its beginnings to the now thriving organization that advocates on behalf of the open shop sector. In this edition of *Open Mind*, we also examine a number of other topics that will provide contractors with a better understanding of industry trends and developments. A soon to be opened national office in Ottawa will facilitate further growth of Merit Canada and solidify the organization as the national voice of open shop construction. A discussion on the emerging issue of many baby-boomers retiring in the next decade provides insight into pension concerns for both employees and employers. There are helpful suggestions about developing a strategic plan as well as discussions about readying a firm for growth after several years of retrenchment. Not being shy to discuss employment topics, we examine the matter of compulsory union dues and review the manpower challenges ahead as they relate to apprenticeship. We are also very excited to announce the finalists and award winners of the inaugural Contractor of the Year Awards presented by Merit and *Alberta Venture* magazine.

Our goal as publishers of *Open Mind* magazine is to provide you with timely, useful, and relevant information. Please don't hesitate to contact us with any suggestions or thoughts you may have for topics in upcoming editions. We really do want to hear them so we can make the magazine an even more useful resource of information in the future.

We hope you enjoy the 2011 issue of *Open Mind*, Canada's open shop magazine dedicated to insightful construction industry news and topics.

Stephen Kushner  
PRESIDENT  
MERIT CONTRACTORS ASSOCIATION