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## REPORT FROM MANITOBA

# THE HEARTLAND

It's been a VERY busy time at Fenestration Manitoba! The fall of 2017 has been a journey as we updated some organizational fundamentals such as the Corporate By-laws and board composition. Fenestration Manitoba is extremely grateful for the contribution of long-time board member Dan Friesen of Berdick Windows who left the board in December. We also welcomed new board member Hardy Rahn of Alliance Door Products. The organization has continued to develop and evolve over a course of some 6 years, gaining considerable operational effectiveness with the arrival of Executive Director, Nancy Zubriski.

Fall and early 2018 was an incredibly busy time putting the pieces in place for another window and door manufacturing conference – FenCon18. Fortunately, the majority of the sponsors/speakers as well as attendees confirmed that 2017 had delivered some excellent value and renewed their commitment to participate. On that basis, the program was further developed to focus on several very important topics – Automation Technology, both software and hardware as well as Continuous Improvement. FeneTech and WTS Paradigm contributed some important insights into ERP implementation while JRC Machinery, Joseph Machinery and GED USA provided some insights on how to take advantage

of manufacturing automation. It is our view that this unique event can make some key contributions to the North American industry, especially in its

**“... 2018 will see further educational programming during the year ...”**

geographic position at the center of Fenestration Valley in Winnipeg! (please read the special article on FenCon18).

On a special note of significance to cold market regions, Jon Eakes presented some new and interestingly detailed concepts as it relates to window and door installation. Jon has spent some 40 years in the renovation business in particular and developed keen interest and knowledge on the topic. Furthermore, Jon has devoted significant time researching the topic with NRCan to refine the details. The results are some excellent ideas on how to deal more effectively with today's building envelopes while ensure a durable, high performance installation. There are important regional differences in how fenestration is affected. Consequently, it is that much more important to ensure that our industry works with available resources and develops higher standards that ensure high quality windows are installed with high quality techniques!

The Prairie marketplace continues to work its way out of some significant setbacks from the impact of declining commodity values and other developments which have resulted in a considerable decline in economic activity. Some segments of the economy, including window replacement, did not seem to be particularly busy late last year/early this year. It is quite likely that there will be other impacts as further rationalization occurs in the industry. Fenestration Manitoba continues to work at developing interaction and other opportunities to increase the vitality of this important segment of our economy. 2018 will see further educational programming during the year on a variety of topics of interest to specifiers as well as manufacturers. It is our on-going commitment to ensure the value proposition of this young and growing regional industry organization.

On a sad note, we would like to draw your attention to the early and untimely passing of a relatively young Martin Seier, long time senior manager at Willmar Windows in Winnipeg. Ted Paetkau, president of FCI, drew attention to Martin's many contributions and very special characteristics at the beginning of FenCon18. Martin had special management gifts but also had a very big heart to offer to people who needed some support and inspiration.

# FenCon 18: In The Books

**F**enCon18 has come and gone with some excellent activity, interaction and education. In many ways, it not only exceeded the results of year one, but even exceeded the expectations from the organizers. Jim Harris, keynote speaker and facilitator for the lead off panel, was probably one of the most memorable elements, as he used some unique ways to bring home the topic of the Disruption of Innovation. Perhaps a few specific quotes will emphatically make those points!

For example, Matt Batcha, Fenetech says “Overall, another great conference. I think you’ve built upon the success from last year’s conference. Topics were pertinent to the industry and filled with a great line up of experts.” Ian Marshall, trainer for Continuous Improvement Programs, comments “Great to see so many Manitoba and out-of-province Window & Door manufacturers and service providers at Fencon18. Both Continuous Improvement workshops attracted a large group of energized and engaged participants”.

It was truly rewarding to see that the satisfaction of FenCon17 translated into outstanding support from the industry to create another amazing manufacturing conference – [www.FenCon18.com](http://www.FenCon18.com), with ZERO public dollars and 100% self/industry paid efforts. In that regard, we are especially grateful to sponsors, exhibitors, suppliers and speakers for stepping up and demonstrating their trust and commitment in our young



*Keynote presentation by Jim Harris.*

organization. This key group of stakeholders was critical to the overall success of this endeavor – delivering ideas, people, resources and energy to the development of a world class conference.

We chose to put manufacturing automation technology crisply into focus in 2018 to hopefully provide manufacturers with some ideas and tools to adapt in time for these rapidly changing times. We believe we brought some outstanding expertise in both manufacturing equipment and software to strengthen understanding and operations. However, we also broadened that “footprint” with a range of topics and issues that are extremely topical to 2018 – ranging



*Group working together during Continuous Improvement Seminar.*

from National performance requirements (NAFS), to cold climate installation considerations, to cutting edge elements in software design and management considerations. Finally, an added feature on day two provided three half day seminars that offered much more intensive exposure to critical topics of Continuous Improvement – “So you want to start your program” and “Lean for Managers/Owners” as well

as an extended seminar on actual tips on ERP Implementation.

Special elements included two sessions providing deeper understanding of NAFS including the 450 provision in particular, discussion of “missing equations” as well as some specific input on how to implement a good program. Very important expert AND experienced presenters on this topic were Joe Reed, Intertek, as well as Dave Goldsmith, Plygem. Terry Adamson, Westeck Windows, provided some invaluable insights into a “live” development and implementation of a new ERP system within their operation.

While we knew FenCon18 was competing to some extent with the massive Fensterbau show, we felt it was so important to build the momentum in the second year. It is ultimately our concept to create this conference every second year, alternating in odd numbered years.

We would like to especially thank the wide range of window and door manufacturing people who trusted our judgement in creating this event.