

Simulated crane activities coming to annual gathering

2017 Crane Rental Association of Canada conference happens this June at New Brunswick resort

Attendees at the Crane Rental Association of Canada's annual conference this June will be able to take a virtual busman's holiday of sorts.

The conference, taking place June 7-10 in St. Andrews, N.B., will offer two opportunities for delegates to test their skills on crane simulators, notes Claire Bélanger-Parker, CRAC's executive administrator.

Montreal-based CM Labs Simulations will bring one of its Vortex simulators to the conference, which happens at the "luxurious and legendary" Algonquin Resort. Meanwhile, Industrial Training International, which has a training facility near Edmonton, will bring its virtual reality crane simulator to the conference.

Both systems were on display at the 2017 ConExpo-Con/Agg heavy equipment trade show in Las Vegas this March.

"I think with Algonquin being a small community we really wanted to have more interaction and more activities," Bélanger-Parker said. "So the simulators are a great addition."

The ITI system employs a sophisticated Oculus Rift headset and uses software from Edmonton-based Serious Labs Inc., explained Caleb Steinborn, product manager for ITI's virtual reality crane simulator, during a demonstration of the equipment at ConExpo. The company officially released the system on March 6, the day before ConExpo opened.

Representatives from CM Labs and ITI will also be among the presenters at the conference. Drew Carruthers of CM Labs is scheduled speak at 10:15 a.m. on Saturday, June 10, while ITI's Zack Parnell will make his presentation later that morning at 11:30.

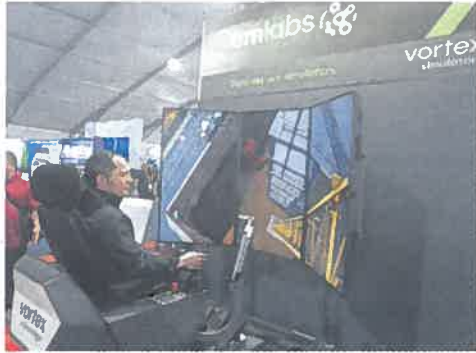
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— Claire Bélanger-Parker, executive administrator, CRAC

New speaker added

A late addition to the program is a presentation by Patrick Lacroix, who is the New Brunswick manager of stakeholder relations for TransCanada Corp.'s proposed Energy East oil pipeline project. In that role, he is responsible for engaging and consulting with municipalities, non-government and environmental organizations, Indigenous communities, and landowners, says his TransCanada bio.

Lacroix's 20 years of public affairs service also includes working in provincial and federal public service, with non-profits, and



David Clark, product marketing manager with Montreal-based CM Labs Simulations, demonstrates a tower crane module on one of the company's Vortex simulators at ConExpo 2017. Photo by Keith Norbury

as a director of government relations for J.D. Irving Ltd.

Other speakers on the program include the following:

- Jim Quinn, president and CEO of the Saint John Port Authority, which welcomed two huge gantry cranes to the port last fall and recently announced a \$205 upgrade to its western terminals;
- Dan Demers, occupational health operations manager with CannAmm Occupational Testing Services, who will speak about managing medical marijuana in the workplace;
- Jose Perez, export sales manager with Broderon Manufacturing Corp., which is headquartered in Lenexa, Kansas; and
- Aaron Casey, a crane insurance specialist with D.G. Dunbar Insurance Broker Ltd., based in London, Ont.

Early registrations pouring in

With two months to go before the conference, 111 delegates had already registered for the event.

"We're quite excited because at this time last year our numbers were not as high as they are this year," Bélanger-Parker said. "So it gives us great hope to have a great turnout in St. Andrews."

She attributes those high numbers in part to having opened registration earlier this year than in the past. Still, despite that, several current and former directors of the association still hadn't signed up by the end of March.

They and other latecomers won't want to wait too long. Those registering by April 30 receive a discount on the conference registration fee. The early bird fee is \$850 for members compared with \$995 after April 30, and \$475 for spouses compared with \$500 after April 30.

The conference opens Wednesday, June 7, with a board of directors agenda that includes a directors' breakfast and lunch, a board meeting, and a meeting of CRAC's boom dolly committee. Pre-registration for the conference is also open that day from 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. And the Spreader Bar — in



Caleb Steinborn, of Industrial Training International, which has a training facility near Edmonton, tries out a virtual reality crane simulation at ITI's booth at ConExpo-Con/Agg 2017 in Las Vegas. Photo by Keith Norbury

the resort's Van Horne Ballroom, in a separate building of the main resort — convenes for the first of four evenings, starting at 8 p.m.

Conference charity enriches lives

Thursday's program includes the annual golf event, a guided Marine Experience tour of the Bay of Fundy, a visit to Kingsbrae Gardens, and a "Kitchen Party" get-together that evening in the Van Horne Ballroom.

The ballroom is also where attendees will be able to pick up a copy of this issue


of *Crane & Hoist Canada* for some late-evening reading.


The conference's charity of choice this year is the Dragonfly Centre for Autism in St. Andrews. Among the centre's initiatives are "highly specialized music and art therapy summer camp programs, delivered by trained autism specialists, have enriched the lives of many students and families since their incorporation in 2005," notes a posting on the conference website.

For more information, visit www.crac-canada.com.



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