

BUILDEX Calgary 2009

Buildex

Calgary show continues to grow under new name

STEPHEN DAFOE
CORRESPONDENT

Organizers are anticipating that this year's Construct Calgary will build on the strengths of its previous nine year history to be the best yet.

Recently rebranded as Buildex Calgary, the annual conference and exposition is for real estate, property management, interior design, architecture, renovation and construction.

The various components, Buildex, Construct Calgary and Design Trends, are now under the singular Buildex umbrella.

"We're quite excited about the event," said Buildex Calgary director Paul Maryschak, adding that the show continues the tradition of bringing in features to appeal to all aspects of the industry.

In addition to an anticipated 250 exhibits and display booths, Buildex Calgary will host more than 40 seminars and panel discussions featuring 60 industry speakers.

"It's probably our strongest line up to date, as far as the seminars that we have available for registration," Maryschak said.

Legal seminars are often popular with visitors.

To that end, this year's selection includes seminars on building liens, the law of tendering and the legalities of being prime contractor with respect to workplace safety.

But, whatever a visitor's taste in seminars, Maryschak is particularly excited about this year's keynote panel discussion - From Wild West to World Class.

"They're going to focus on architecture and design and generally its role in how it can help define a city and brand a city," he said.

"When you think about a place like New York and you think about its skyline - it had the twin towers; it has the Empire State Building and everything else. How does that help define a city? Of course Calgary's going to have The Bow pretty soon, which is pretty much going to define what it looks like and how does that affect the city moving forward?"

While the panel will look to the future and what Calgary's skyline could look like in years to come, visitors will have the opportunity to look at a variety of interpretations of what it looks like now.

This year's Buildex Calgary will display submissions from its first photography com-

petition, a contest that drew in 150 submissions.

A selection of the shots, which consist of construction, as well as interior and exterior design components, will be on display during the show, including the first place winner, a photograph of the 8 West Skyward development that was used in the marketing of this year's show.

"The whole idea was to try and blend the idea of a construction, property management and design and architectural show into a picture that kind of speaks to everybody involved with the event," Maryschak said.

But not all the eye-catching exhibits at this year's Buildex Calgary will be of a photographic nature or even related to construction.

Maryschak said that an open wheeled race car will also be on display.

"It's just kind of an added feature, something to look at," he said, adding that the car is owned by a member of the industry from Edmonton.

The Calgary show was recently recognized by one of Tradeshow Week's Fastest 50 Growing Tradeshows, something Maryschak attributes to attention to detail and keeping things fresh with new attractions, like the race car.

"I think a lot of it has to do with the constantly looking at the smaller things related to the event," he said.

"The challenge we constantly have is there's no magic button we can push to make the event bigger and better, and to just all of a sudden have it work is kind of an avalanche reaction. Essentially you have to prop up each

bit that little bit more so that every little bit's better."

So far the formula seems to be working. Maryschak said that attendance at the show has increased from 2,000-2,500 in 2005 to about 4,000 last year, and that exhibitors have increased from 150 to 250 over the same time period.

"We're kind of bucking the trend in some ways," he said. "A lot of national and international events are struggling with the recession, both in Canada and in the States, and are experiencing 30 to 50 per cent drops."

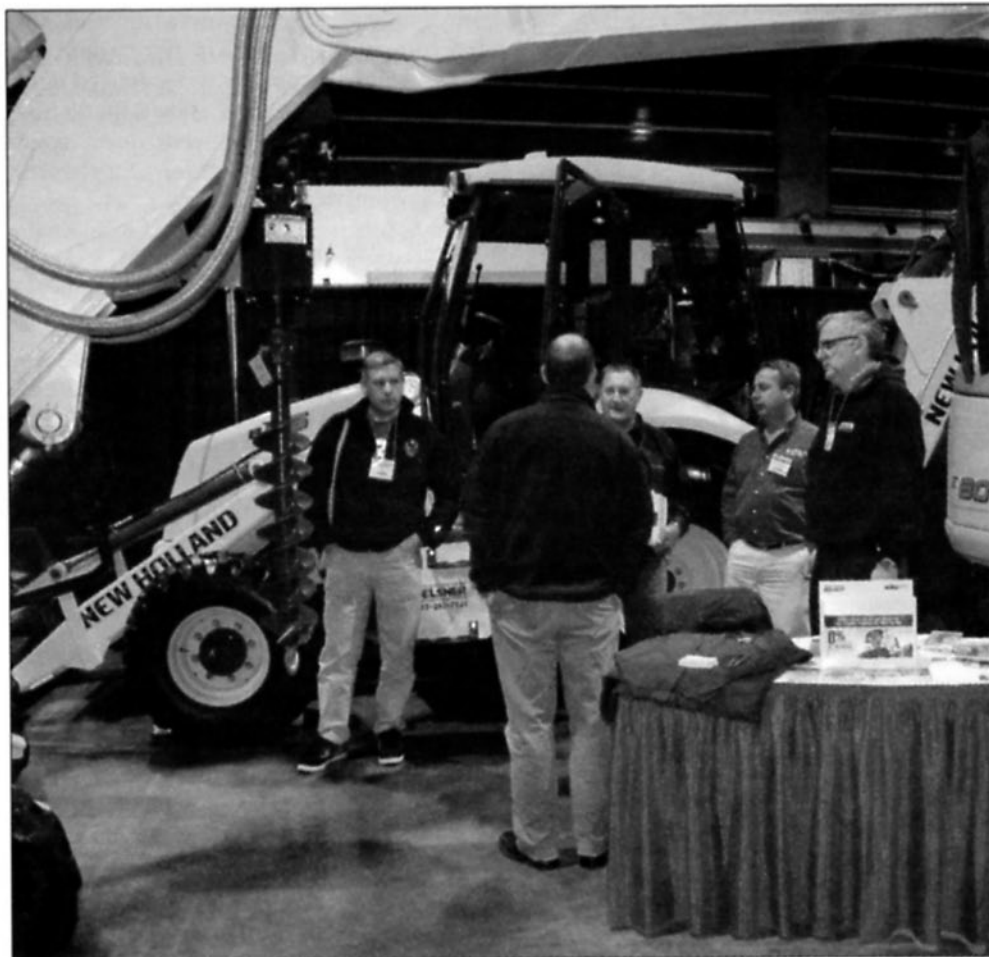
He suggested that Buildex Calgary's success might be due to the show itself, that it's local and easy to get to and from.

"We're anticipating at least seeing the same levels as we saw in 2008," he said.

Buildex Calgary will take place Nov. 3-4 at the BMO Centre.

"The whole idea was to try and blend the idea of a construction, property management and design and architectural show into a picture that kind of speaks to everybody involved with the event."

Paul Maryschak
show director



STEPHEN DAFOE

The Construct Calgary show last year included heavy equipment vendors as well as other suppliers of construction equipment and services. This year's show promises more of the same.