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### Elite panel to address future safety in Ontario

**Employers, labour academia represented**

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staff writer

A provincial advisory panel tasked with improving Ontario workplace safety is ready to tackle the challenges it will face, says its chair.

"It is important that this work be done, it is a critical piece of work," said Tony Dean, chair of the Workplace Safety System Review. "There is a will on the part of key people in the system and an interest to jump in and help this review and get the work done."

The panel will report back to Ontario's labour ministry by fall of this year with recommendations and options for operational, policy and structural improvements to the province's workplace safety system. Dean said he is extremely confident that they have the right panel and support to tackle the complex workplace safety issues in the time allotted.

"It is a challenge, a 'tough ask' but there is a huge degree of interest and belief that the time is right for this discussion and review," added Dean.

The review was created in response to heavy industry and public demands to improve workplace safety standards after the Christmas Eve swing-stage tragedy in Toronto that claimed four lives. Four construction workers plunged 13 storeys to their deaths at a Kipling Avenue apartment restoration work site on Dec. 24, 2009 when a swing stage they were working on came apart. A fifth worker survived the fall but sustained serious injuries.

The nine safety experts on the panel represent employers, labour groups and academic institutions. The panel will discuss its mandate and define its next steps after its first meeting set to take place within two weeks.

Representing employers are Domenic Mattina, Vice President, Mattina Mechanical Ltd. and Council of Ontario Construction Associations (COCA) 1st Vice Chair, Jattinder Dhillon, Vice President Health, Safety, Wellness and Business Continuity, Corp. HR, Loblaws Canada and John A. Macnamara, Vice President, Health, Safety and Environment, Hydro One.

"We are very happy that Domenic was selected," said David Zurawel, Vice President, Policy and Government Relations, COCA. "He is well known within our industry and represents a very solid well-run family business that is committed to safety."

The labour group panel representatives are Bud Calligan, retired Secretary-Treasurer, Carpenters District Council of Ontario, Carmine Tiano, Director of WSIB Advocacy and Occupational Services, Ontario Building and Construction Trades Council of Ontario and Vernon Edwards, Health and Safety Director, Ontario Federation of Labour.

Pat Dillon, Business Manager, Ontario building trades, is pleased with the makeup of the labour panelist members.

“Hopefully, the entire panel helps move the yardsticks on injury prevention forward in a dramatic way,” said Dillon. “We would like to see not just the appearance of something being done but actually see safety improved.”

The academic institution representatives are Joan Eakin, Professor, Dalla Lana School of Public Health, Carolyn Tuohy, Senior Fellow, School of Public Policy and Governance, University of Toronto and Allan Hunt, Senior Economist, W.E. Upjohn Institute for Employment Research, in Michigan.

“Our academic colleagues will help us to take a hard look at (health and safety) research and data on what it tells us and where we should go,” explained Dean. “They have worked on health safety projects and done research in this area before. The rigour of their thinking will help us.”

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