CONNEXION
ADVOCACY FOR TECHNOLOGY PROFESSIONS IN BC
SUMMER 2026

Dawn McGrath Receives Doug Duncan Leader Award



TPBC recognized Dawn McGrath with the inaugural Doug Duncan Leader Award. Dawn is a well-regarded professional known for her leadership and ability to get things done. She is an AScT and ROWP and has managed to acquire a MBA while at the same time working on a PhD in Civil Engineering at UBCO. She is a well-educated Secwepemc matriarch who is on a mission to help inform and share her experience so that youth may find a less challenging pathway to success. Not too bad when you come from a remote rural isolated community. *TPBC CEO John Leech presented the award to Dawn at a Board meeting of the Skeetchestn Indian Band*

She's turned a 'no' into a 'yes' many times and carries a resilience that is difficult to bottle. Her approach is to support and encourage youth to figure out how to approach STEM related fields and to find a fit that may work.

As a Board Director with TPBC and Co-Chair of TPBC's TEChub Dawn is a visionary… a leader… doer… collaborator,,, and a loved mother… auntie… friend…and more. Dawn is so very deserving of the Doug Duncan Leader Award.

See the full post: https://techprobc.org/dawn-mcgrath-recognized-with-tpbc-doug-duncan-leader-award/



Dawn, John, Dawn's father (second from the right) and son (far right) and the Skeetchestn Indian Band Council, with Chief Eddy Jules (second in from the left, second row)

Minister of Social Development Malcolmson Meets TPBC

Minister of Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Sheila Malcolmson (MLA for Nanaimo-Gabriola Island) met recently with TPBC Board Member Amelia Cooper and CEO John Leech to talk about TPBC's work in engaging with people with disabilities. Discussion focused TPBC's program to support and assist people with disabilities as they consider education and careers in engineering and applied science technology.



Ameila highlighted her career as an engineering tech, providing the Minister with an example of the type of careers possible for someone with a physical disability.

The Minister was interested in learning of TPBC's goals and work within the ***STEM Pathways: empowering abilities*** *program* where TPBC plans to provide general information on engineering and applied science technology education and careers, profile people with disabilities in tech careers, engage employers and partner with other NGOs to provide supports within TPBC's mandate.

"I was pleased with our meeting with the Minister," said Amelia. *"Sheila was open to learning about TPBC and our plans to support and assist people with disabailities."* Minister Malcolmson indicated her appreciation for the work being carried out by TPBC.

John presented Sheila with a TPBC feather carved by Indigenous artist Alex Mountain.

Nanaimo Mayor Krog Welcomes TPBC

The Nanaimo Mayor's door is always open for TPBC. Leonard Krog first came to know of TPBC, notably John Leech, when Leonard was MLA for Nanaimo… and that connection continues. On this day TPBC Board Director Ameila Cooper and CEO John Leech provided the Mayor with current information on TPBC's initiatives to support and assist people with disabilities. Mayor Krog talked about the great work by Nanaimo in making the city as accessible as possible for all.



John presented Leonard with a special piece of glasswork which the Mayor displays in this photo – a legal scale. The gift seemed apt as Leonard started out his career as a lawyer. The glass art was produced by an artist at Studio 73. Check them out. They ship. https://www.studioseventythree.ca/

CAO of Merritt, Rick Green AScT, P.L.(Eng), Meets TPBC CEO

A road trip late spring took TPBC CEO John Leech to the town of Merritt and a meeting with their Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) Rick Green. The two talked about TPBC's mandate and the many programs through which TPBC carries out its role as an advocacy association. Rick talked about his career, focusing on his work with the town.



Merritt appointed Rick as their Chief Administrative Officer in October 2025. Prior to that Rick was the Director of Public Works, Engineering & Development, and the Municipal Approving Officer. Rick contributed extensive expertise in infrastructure development, operations management, and municipal leadership. His career spans nearly four decades and includes accomplishments in project management, financial stewardship, and advancing Indigenous cultural safety within public sector operations.

John presented Rick with a TPBC BBQ fork set.

Okanagan College Delivers on Tech Ed

Okanagan College (OC) Associate Dean Steve Crema, PEng, and TPBC CEO John Leech met up to talk about OC's engineering technology programs and explore ways in which OC and TPBC might collaborate to enhance the profile of engineering technologists and technicians. Information emerging from the discussion:



- OC is fully committed to national accreditation with all tech programs accredited by Technology Accreditation Canada
- OC has the largest number of TAC accredited engineering tech programs in BC
- OC continues to attract a solid base of students, with a high percent graduating
- High school student engagement is a priority and key source of OC tech students
- The Spaghetti Bridge Contest is a big hit with elementary and senior grade students and helps promote STEM education
- OC hosts a careers fair each year; TPBC will participate in the years ahead
- OC and TPBC will look for ways to collaborate in promoting tech ed and careers

Steve and John agreed to touch base again in the Fall of 2026 to move ahead with the ideas generated during their discussion. *John presented Steve with a wood feather carved by Indigenous artist Alex Mountain.*

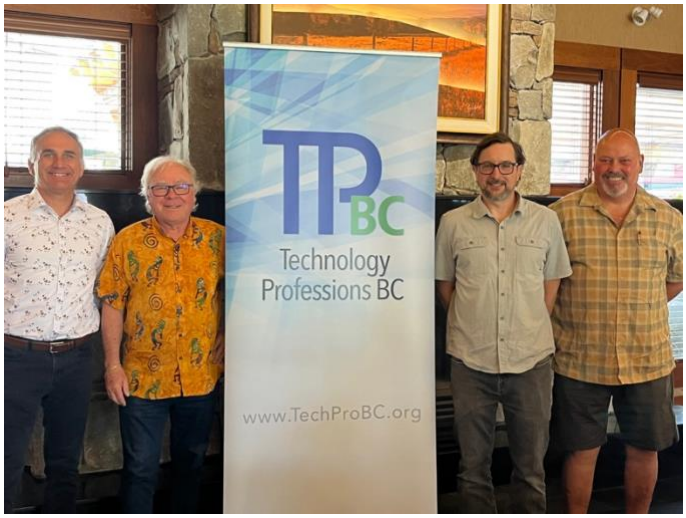


Community Reps Meet with TPBC CEO

TPBC succeeds when we all pull together… and pulling is what is happening with Community Representatives in Kamloops and Kelowna.



Tracy Smith, CR for Kamloops, took time out of her busy schedule running her house inspection and energy advisor business (*Detailed Inspections*) to share breakfast with TPBC CEO John Leech. The two talked about TPBC initiatives, how to build connections in Kamloops and area, the status of, and issues with, house inspection in BC, and depreciation and electrical reports required for multiple housing buildings. The need for a greater level of awareness of the critical role of technology professions was stressed.



Doug Nott, CR for Kelowna (*DLN Enterprise Solutions*) (far right), together with **Jeff Collins** (*TPBC's TechMentor Coordinator*) (right near banner) and **Joe Mocilac** (*J.Mocilac Consulting*) (far left) connected with John to talk about TPBC connections with Okanagan College, developing TPBC programming on mentoring, linkage with Indigenous Peoples, and organizations in and around Kelowna that would have a direct connection with TPBC and how we might align for our mutual benefit. The role of technologists and technicians needs greater attention according to the members from Kelowna.

Tracy, Doug, Joe and Jeff agreed that there is an urgent need to enhance the profile of engineering technologists and technicians. Unlike trades and university education the 'middle ground' careers are not well known and as a result youth in BC and their parents, school counsellors and other influencers may not talk about a career as an engineering tech. The four urged TPBC to take bold action to improve the situation.

THANKS to Tracy, Doug, Jeff and Joe for pulling together and offering your support and assistance as TPBC extends its reach.

Spin with TPBC and WIN!

Take a 300 second spin of TPBC website >> https://techprobc.org. We are working to ensure a positive response when someone visits our web site. We hope we are effectively capturing and presenting the many programs being carried out by TPBC.

We are interested in YOUR feedback. Email a comment about your general impression and your name will go in to a draw for a highly prized TPBC BBQ for set. Email info@techprobc.org. In submitting you agree that TPBC may publish your comment.

Tony Luck, MLA Talks Tech Education with TPBC CEO

During a spring road trip TPBC CEO John Leech met up in Merritt with MLA Tony Luck (Fraser-Nicola) to talk about TPBC's work, including the state of technologist and technician education and careers in BC. John updated Tony on TPBC's advocacy initiatives in relation to engineering and applied science technology education and careers, Indigenous Peoples relations, people with disabilities, women in technology, and climate change. **John highlighted TPBC's concern that graduation numbers from Diploma of Technology programs has flat-lined over the last 15 years. There is a real need to address this issue as techs offer critical skills to the teams that conceive, design, construct, inspect & test and maintain the world around us.** "*Under PM Mark Carney Canada is heading in a new direction and fast, requiring engineering and applied science technologists and technicians. BC… Canada… must get a handle on tech programming to be sure we have the technology skills needed for projects of all size and scope*," said Leech.



Tony expressed appreciation for the visit and to learn about TPBC and its role as a professional organization advocating for technology professions.

John gifted Tony a wood feather carved by indigenous artist Alex Mountain.

TPBC Reaches Out to Other Advocacy NGOs

TPBC attended the AGMs of the Association of Professional Biology where TPBC President Dave Rutherford was invited to bring greetings from our association. Dave expressed appreciation for the linkage between the two advocacy associations and joint work between the two organizations. Two years ago APB and TPBC signed a Memorandum of Agreement.

apb ASSOCIATION OF PROFESSIONAL BIOLOGY
Serving Biology Professionals since 1980

Dave and CEO John Leech also attended the AGM for BC Society of Engineering and Geoscience. TPBC first reached out to BCSEG about 2 years ago when the association was being formed and has held several virtual meetings and made other connections with the BCSEG leadership. With the appointment of Pria Sandhu as CEO of BCSEG, John has been in contact with Pria to further develop the linkage between the two advocacy organizations. Since the AGM Pria and John signed a Letter of Collaboration. *Read more about this Letter in the next issue of ConneXion.*

BC SOCIETY OF ENGINEERING & GEOSCIENCE

TPBC Board in Action

The TPBC Board meets four times a year for about 90 minutes. Each meeting is well organized with a written report with recommendation(s) for the Board to consider. TPBC President Dave Rutherford as Board Chair keeps the meeting running smoothly, and on time. In June the Board met and handled a number of pieces of business:





- The Nominating Committee recommended an addition of one member to serve on the Board. This recommendation was presented to, and approved at, AGM 2026. Marlon Coy-Veliz was added to the Board
- President Dave Rutherford (pictured at right) presented an update report on his work as Board Chair
- CEO John Leech tabled his report on TPBC operations
- TPBC made a submission on **Bill 2-15, the *Professional Reliance Act,*** a Private Members Bill sponsored by MLA George Anderson. In commenting on the Bill TPBC signalled its general support for the need to ensure the effective application of professional reliance. TPBC also outlined a few areas where the intent of the Bill should be changed in order to better capture all elements involved in the application of professional reliance. The Bill was eventually withdrawn with the BC Government indicating it would review all the feedback and consider how best to manage the proposals in the statute as well as the input from regulatory, advocacy and other organizations.
- The Board received **Andrew Hay's report on graduation numbers** for both engineering degree and diploma of technology programs from 2009 to 2023 during which technologist programs have flat-lined. VIEW THE REPORT: https://techprobc.org/advocacy/techtalentbc/
- **BC Society of Engineering and Geoscience** and TPBC signed a letter of Collaboration. Details in the next issue of ConneXion.
- The Board approved a new **TPBC Leadership Award** and unanimously selected three candidates to receive the award. More on the awards when formal presentations are made.
- TPBC has been in touch with the **Ministries of Post-Secondary Education and Future Skills and Jobs and Economic Development** with respect to TPBC concerns regarding statistics in the Andrew Hay report which indicates that Diploma of Technology programs have flat-lined over the past 15 years.
- TPBC is reaching out to other NGOs to talk about tech education and careers and the need for a collective voice in support of enhancing the profile of engineering technology education.

The Board meets next in September.

Member Patron: Is this YOU?

Looking for an opportunity to make a difference in promoting tech education and careers? We have one opportunity you may wish to consider, becoming a Member Patron. The initiative was launched in the early days of TPBC and to date a total of 10 members have each contributed $1k to help move the needle on this important work. ALL FUNDS are set aside for education and careers promotion.Read more: https://techprobc.org/member-patron



BC Economic Development Association – CEO to CEO



In the early days of TPBC a Memorandum of Understanding was signed with the BC Economic Development Association (BCEDA). TPBC views this linkage important for the work of TPBC in particular as it relates to the availability of a highly skilled work force. Recognizing areas of common interest and the mutual benefit of working together, BCEDA President and CEO Dale Wheeldon and TPBC CEO John Leech are closely connected as both carry out their respective mandates. Dale serves as a member of Technology Education and Careers Hub - TEChub – TPBC's blue chip advisory group.

The two met up at the BCEDA conference and awards dinner in Penticton. This was the final AGM and conference for Dale as he has announced his retirement.

"*Dale has provided superb leadership at BCEDA,"* said Leech. *"Dale has touched and helped local governments across the province. It has been a pleasure working with Dale and I look forward to staying connected as he moves into retirement. Knowing Dale he will stay connected with BCEDA and other organizations focused on growing BC's economy and services to the people of BC*"

Community Reps Needed

TPBC continues to move ahead with the support of many volunteers. While there are many volunteer opportunities at TPBC we are currently looking for Community Representatives (CRs) in a number of towns around BC. Have a look at OUR PEOPLE on the TPBC web site https://techprobc.org/about/people/ and then send us a note indicating your interest in helping out… as a CR or in any other capacity.



We WELCOME your help. Send your email and areas of interest to info@techprobc.org.

Save Water Jingle.
Pass along. Sing Along.

Technology Professions BC (TPBC) in collaboration with the Association of Professional Biology BC (APB) produced a *Save Water* jingle with singer-songwriter Lowry Olafson, a musician based in Gibsons BC Canada. *Lowryolafson.com*

"Our intention in creating and releasing the song is to draw greater attention to the need for each of us to more effectively manage our precious water resource,"* said TPBC CEO John Leech. *"This partnership with APB is a great fit of the engineering and applied science technology profession with the applied biology profession. We hope the simple message will resonate and become an earworm that is sung, silently and yes, even out loud."



To listen to the jingle:

https://techprobc.org/save-water-jingle-pass-along-sing-along/

Pass along. Sing along. We ask that you pass along to your family, friends, business associates.