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## Kichton Contracting Ltd.

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# KICHTON CONTRACTING LTD.

Supported by its earthworks and underground divisions, Kichton's piling and shoring division has the capacity "to execute any size caisson, anchor, soil nail and shoring design"



The Edmonton Mechanized River Valley Experience project; photo shows the construction of a “funicular” from Hotel MacDonald to the River Valley.

Right: Placing large cages in Peace River to stabilize a slide



By Barb Feldman

**K**ichton Contracting Ltd. was founded in 1963 by Michael Kichton Sr., when he began doing small civil construction jobs for general contractors and residential developers in the Edmonton area. Fred Kichton, who after his uncle’s death continued the company along with his cousin Michael Jr., became the company’s sole owner in 2000. In 2007, Fred sold minority shares to his brother Richard and to key employees Laurie Conrad, Russ Giselbrecht and Chris Dirks, who, along with Richard, is now a company vice-president.

“Fred, Richard and I worked together through the early years to build and grow Kichton as an earthworks company, with about 12 pieces of earthworks equipment and 20 people,” said Dirks. Since that time, the company has grown 10 to 20 per cent annually, gaining extensive experience in oilfield construction, underground utilities and foundations, piling, shoring and anchors as well as civil industrial and commercial earthworks. Kichton Contracting works from the Montana border all the way up through Alberta, and from Saskatoon and Regina to northern British Columbia. Fred, although no longer a shareholder, remains Kichton Contracting’s president and its mentor, “sharing his guidance and a wealth of knowledge,” said Dirks.

**Edmonton’s 28-storey Epcor Tower**

Now with its head office in Acheson, Alta., a second location in Lloydminster, Sask., 450 employees and a fleet of more than 500 pieces of equipment, Kichton Contracting is still growing.

“One major project got us rolling [in 2008],” said Dirks.

This project was Edmonton’s 28-storey Epcor Tower, which, when it was finished in 2011, was the city’s first office tower to be built in 17 years.

“We were awarded that project by Ledcor Construction due to some innovative ideas, and when competitors were

PHOTOS COURTESY OF KICHTON CONTRACTING LTD.

## COVER STORY

Kichton Contracting's main office and yard in Acheson, Alta., just west of Edmonton on the Yellowhead Highway



struggling, going bankrupt or laying off staff, we were able to acquire high-quality people and get the work done efficiently," said Dirks.

That year, Kichton almost doubled in size.

"Now, the company aims for annual growth of no more than 10 per cent," he said, observing that businesses can go bankrupt even in good times if they grow so fast they lose control or get too much work and can't finish jobs sufficiently to collect the last money. "The last bit [of money] – that's your profit."

The opportunity arose to start a piling and shoring division in 2015, according to Dirks.

Brad DePagie, Rob Walker and Daisy Potvin, who had all been managers at other drilling companies, became minority shareholders. Then Bernie Coderre, who for 35 years had been with a major Western Canadian foundation engineering and construction company, joined the team.

"[Bernie] came into our office one day and told us he wanted to unload his knowledge to our younger group for free," said Dirks. "We pay him now, though."

The piling and shoring division, managed by Daisy Potvin and Kevin King, is also supported by the project managers, superintendents and in-house engineers of Kichton's earthworks and underground divisions.

### Aiming for steady, controlled growth

"The majority of our work has been tangent walls and containment walls – holding something in place," said Dirks, noting that these projects are often in northern Alberta.

The company recently installed a tangent wall and 150-foot-deep anchors along the banks of the Peace River to stabilize the main highway into the town of Peace River.



The Edmonton Mechanized River Valley Experience project on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River

**"The majority of our work has been tangent walls and containment walls – holding something in place."**

**- Chris Dirks, Kichton Contracting Ltd.**

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24



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## DFI announces keynote speakers for 42nd Annual Conference on Deep Foundations

The Deep Foundations Institute (DFI) announces four keynote speakers for the 42nd Annual Conference on Deep Foundations, being held in New Orleans, La., October 24 to 27, 2017.

David B. Paul, P.E., special assistant for dam safety with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, is providing an update on the "USACE Oversight of Remediation of the World's Highest Risk Dam." This keynote is a continuation of a lecture that was delivered at the 2016 DFI Annual Conference in New York. Paul is responsible for managing the USACE's portfolio of 709 dams. He is a national specialist on critical infrastructure design, dam design, levee design, construction engineering, engineering risk assessments, interim risk reduction measures (IRRM) and dam and levee safety modifications performed as part of USACE dam safety management activities.

Eric C. Halpin, P.E., special assistant for dam and levee safety for the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers, references Hurricane Katrina and the recent situations at Oroville Dam and Mosul Dam in the keynote lecture, "Being Approximately Right or Precisely Wrong: Risk Informed Lessons in a Standards-Based Industry." Halpin leads safety programs for the USACE and is the senior advisor to leadership on all dam and levee safety issues and decisions. He is the primary agency safety representative on interagency, congressional and international safety organizations. His primary emphasis

has been on incorporating concepts of engineering risk into all facets of safety programs.

Deborah D. Keller, P.E., CEO of D.D. Keller & Partners, is sharing insight on "Fostering Multi-Generational Work Teams." Keller is a professional civil engineer who served as chief engineer at the Port of New Orleans for 27 years. During her 40-year career, she has directed the design and construction of nearly \$1 billion in public works projects.

Ralph W. Junius, Jr., P.E., president of Linfield, Hunter & Junius, is delivering a lecture on legal issues in the industry, entitled, "The Intersection of Engineering, Construction, Litigation and Ethics." Junius has professional experience with a wide range of infrastructure projects, including transportation, water, port and flood protection systems, as well as foundations. As a lawyer, he has served as an engineering expert in appropriate cases.

Visit [www.deepfoundations2017.org](http://www.deepfoundations2017.org) for more information.

## Soilmec Open House 2017

From the United States to Nigeria, from England to the United Arab Emirates, from Canada to Australia, from China to Algeria – over 1,000 people attended the Soilmec Open House 2017. Another 5,000 customers were involved through live streaming.

These are significant numbers for a three-day international event devoted mainly to the presentation of the latest, innovative technologies and services for deep foundations or soil consolidation. Latest generation machines, technologies



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Make sure the industry knows who you are. To inquire about being featured in a company profile or highlight your company's performance in a project spotlight, contact Jill Harris, editor of *Piling Canada*. The process is easy – let's get started.

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and services with sophisticated control systems, even remotely controlled, to improve the customer's performance.

“New products and services,” as Simone Trevisani, CEO of Soilmec, said, “That well depict the basic principles of the Industry 4.0 that Soilmec has been integrating, for some years now, into its processes to consolidate a sector leadership that dates back to almost 50 years ago.”

The Soilmec Open House opened with a conference organized in various moments in which industry experts (entrepreneurs, customers, journalists and chairmen of associations) were faced with the present and future scenarios of the world of special foundations.

The second day, however, was devoted to the “discovery” of Soilmec 4.0 through guided tours of the various “core divisions” of the company, the presentation of new machines in the test field and, above all, of the DMS 4.0 system which allows global and secure access through your Internet browser (PC, notebook, tablet or smartphone) with regard to the state, performance and location of the equipment anytime and anywhere.

The event was attended by the international network of the Soilmec Group, which includes direct branches and distributors, and covers almost 70 countries.



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