

Covering all aspects of educational facilities and operations.

Ops Talk

Fall 2017

The North Saanich Middle School



**Modulars helping to ease reinstated
classroom sizes and compositions**

**School districts open up schools for
those displaced due to the B.C. wildfires**

Wood dust and carcinogens

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ON THE COVER: The North Saanich Middle School, which opened in March of 2012, exceeds the guidelines of the model National Energy Code by 30 per cent through use of building automation, natural day lighting or lighting control systems, energy-efficient T5 lighting technology along with high-efficient geothermal heat pump and solar hot water technology. Glazing heat gain control through the use of sun shades.



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A long and storied career **Frank Geyer**

BY SHAYNA WIWIERSKI



Frank Geyer was born into a construction family. His father and uncle were both carpenters and his dad would often tell him and his younger brother not to go into construction, to use their brains and not their hands.

"I got into construction when I was 13,"

says Geyer, director of facilities and planning at Delta School District #37. "I worked as a labourer for a couple of contractors over a few summers while my dad worked his way up to general superintendent for a major road builder. During that time, I remember him coming home from work cussing out the 'damn engineers'. After hearing this on

a regular basis and eventually experiencing first-hand what he meant when I was 16 and working on a major highway project, I knew that I wanted to be an engineer since I thought I could do a better job at it."

Geyer got his bachelor of applied sciences in civil engineering at the University of British Columbia in 1984 and then went on to work for the same construction company that originally hired him when he was 13 as a project engineer, double-tracking the CP Rail line through the Rockies. He, along with all of the other young engineers in the firm, got laid off in 1986 due to changes in the unionized roadbuilding landscape in B.C., but he wasn't unemployed for long. Geyer ended up landing a project manager position with the Transport Canada - Airports Authority Group (later Public Works Canada - Air Transportation Sector), making him the youngest project manager in the Pacific Region, and a position that launched his career.

As part of the job, Geyer worked on airports all over northern B.C. responsible for the planning, budgeting, and management of a program of capital major and minor construction/renovations and major maintenance projects. Although he loved what he did, since he and his family were living in Surrey at that time, he was tipped off about an opportunity to become a project manager five minutes away as opposed to an

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hour to downtown Vancouver, so he ended up leaving the position after four years. He then became a project manager for the City of Surrey, B.C., facilities management division.

"I spent just over seven years with Surrey, moving from project manager to senior project manager to manager of design and construction, and then decided I was fed up with developing a great building project, only to turn it over to maintenance for them to screw it up," he says, which prompted Geyer to go back to school, earn an accreditation in facilities management administration.

Geyer then moved on to become the first-ever facility manager for a large high-tech company in Burnaby where he was responsible for the planning, management, and operation of four Vancouver-area office/production facilities housing over 1,000 employees, as well as four U.S.-based sales/service centres. He was there for two years when he was contacted by his alma mater, the University of British Columbia, to become its first associate director of project services in UBC plant operations, and for a short period, the acting director of plant operations.

"It was kind of cool to go back to the university where I spent five years and now I'm responsible for all of their buildings. It was a huge, big step," says Geyer, who

adds that he thought this position would be his "be all and end all", that is until Delta School District came knocking. "I was growing tired of the long commute from Cloverdale to Point Grey each day, so when I was approached by a recruiter to look at the Delta School District, I interviewed with them and decided that I wanted to get back to facility management as well."

He accepted the position in October 2002 and officially started in January 2003. As the director of facilities and planning, in short, he is responsible for the leadership, planning, management, and direction related to all aspects of the district's physical assets. He administers a team of seven highly skilled and dedicated managers, and over 140 unionized trades, custodial, clerical, and technical staff tasked with the stewardship of the 40 district sites. He also is the project manager for major capital projects and the position allows him to use both of his accreditations, professional engineer and facilities management. His broad portfolio also includes him undertaking emergency planning for the district, enrolment projections, real estate acquisitions and disposals, and overseeing the district's sustainability program.

"Back when I was reporting to the deputy superintendent of schools, I recall him saying 'you're like the Swiss Army knife of the Delta School District, we throw any-

thing at you and you can fix it."

Since Geyer is so busy at Delta School District, he does mention that if he had more time, he would be interested in being more involved with the EFMA executive (he's been a member since 2003). He says that although he doesn't currently have the official capacity with EFMA, he does think of himself as an ambassador for the association. Geyer hopes that before he retires (right now, he says hopefully in five to six years), he would like to run for an executive position with the association.

In his spare time, he enjoys doing graphic design, as well as website design and management. True to his engineering background, he says his house is always under some kind of renovations. He loves spending time with his wife of 31 years, Christine (who is an education assistant in the Surrey School District), and hopes that once he retires, he will travel more and re-learn how to golf. The couple have three children with the oldest being 25 and the youngest 21.

"Our youngest daughter is going to Simon Fraser University to be a teacher, so I have to stick around long enough in the education business to help get her foot in the door when she graduates." ■

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