

REACHING

# NEW HEIGHTS



Written by Jessica Ferlaino

**M**ills Construction Productions Inc. (MCP) prioritizes safety, performance, and efficiency – which is why, for over 25 years, its scaffold systems, shoring, and formwork are utilized in countless sectors and industry applications for some of the world's most recognized brands.

With customers like Bruce Power, Ontario Power Generation (OPG), Dofasco, Hard Rock Group, Avenue Structures, IMAX, and Up-Right Services, MCP serves mission critical operations, and through these relationships has taken the function and performance of scaffolding to new heights.

As the sole custom aluminum scaffolding and one of two aluminum formwork manufacturers in North America, MCP is a leader in the industry, not only because it can do what other fabricators cannot, but also because of the level of product development it undertakes.

From President Ron Lubinski's standpoint, "It's our ability to innovate better systems and components. We survived because our emphasis was on developing many proprietary scaffolds that are patented. We are leaders of new scaffold products in aluminum."

## A league of its own

MCP has secured over twenty patents in the last twenty-five years. Being first to market is the norm at MCP, which has earned a lot of firsts with its proprietary offerings. An example is its sidewalk hoarding system featured at the renowned Shangri-La, where an eight-foot-tall billboard made its presence known high above the roadway.

Another first for MCP was its work for the Mission Impossible experience at Canada's Wonderland. It was the largest temporary set ever manufactured using scaffolding. When the show came to an end, the bleacher system was sold to Cirque du Soleil despite being purpose built.

These unique systems crop up in unexpected places everywhere, and many people have benefited from their innovation and design. The name IMAX is recognized worldwide and MCP is a prime source supplier for the theatres globally. MCP even developed a unique screen support system which enabled the IMAX experience to upgrade from 45-foot to 100-foot screens.

It's seldom that construction equipment and product suppliers develop a reputation in the theatre, but this was the case for MCP when it designed a specialized system for **Wicked: The Musical** for Universal Studios Japan.

MCP tackled the project using both standard and non-standard components of its Versa steel system scaffold, such as spanning bays up to sixteen feet in length. The system was powder coated black to prevent light refraction and blend into the background. Built using just in time manufacturing, the project was assembled prior to shipment to ensure proper fit and function. ➤

## ► A superior product

When it comes to product innovation, the Versa offering from MCP is second to none. Versa systems feature multi-directional scaffolding and utilize an industry-first reverse wedge – what Lubinski referred to as a “hockey stick” – for its connector, improving safety and performance.

“The hockey stick design allows the wedge to lie horizontally when not connected, unlike the competition’s design. The head retaining the wedge ensures the wedge engages vertically to the rosette of the standard, a must when aluminum rosettes are used,” Lubinski explains.

“The competition [products] engage the rosette on an angle, so eventually wear occurs on the wedge and it does not hold engagement and has to be replaced. Also, the bottom lobe of the connector head on Versa is larger than the top lobe to provide great compression resistance.” This is a significant step up in safety, efficiency, and performance, a boon for these applications.

The wear caused by engaging the rosette on an angle can lead to additional problems, especially when large bending moments are exerted on the rosette. These can cause the bottom lobe to create dents or punches in the vertical standard,

which are a risk to safety and warrant replacement. Companies cannot afford the risk or capital expense resulting from this wear factor of a wedge engaging the rosette on an angle.

Another challenge is water entry. When water gets into the tube, it can freeze, causing damage. According to MCP’s Lubinski, “[In our product] the geometry of the aluminum extrusion for the horizontal members connecting to the heads has more aluminum top and bottom, therefore providing a rectangular opening to receive the solid lobe extension. When welded, everything is sealed for no water entry.”

If that wasn’t enough of an advantage over the competition, MCP horizontals are forty-five percent lighter than steel. For Lubinski, there is a belief that just as aluminum took the place of steel in formwork shoring products, in the same way, aluminum will replace steel scaffold. When that happens MCP will be poised to take advantage of the opportunity.

## Safety first

As a testament to the safety and technical superiority of its scaffolding systems, MCP has had great success in the nuclear industry, where there’s no room for error.

In Ontario, where some of the largest nuclear facilities in the world operate, MCP is a sole source vendor for Bruce Power and a vital supplier for Bruce Power’s refurbishment of six reactors with primary scaffold product, supplying its patented T slot aluminum plank.

MCP was also selected for the \$600 million Darlington Nuclear Reactor Station refurbishment project at OPG in 2012, which was monumental for the company as it brought on development of MCP’s proprietary Versa-Light T-slot plank, a product that offers enhanced safety and efficiency.

A far cry from nuclear, but still an application that tested product performance was a new foundation system for Natural Resources Canada (NRCAN) that MCP developed. Designed to withstand the climate of the Arctic tundra, the system can be used in the rapid deployment of housing. It is currently being used for one of the organization’s buildings in Ottawa.

Lubinski shared some insight into how MCP is able to secure such nationally and internationally recognized clients, “It is our ability to produce superior and innovative products – developing new products and expanding growth achievable through licensing to manufacture all – or provide knockdown units that simplify assembly, not requiring big presses or other industrial machinery.”

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## More to come

With great success often comes great pressure to uphold a superior standard of quality and service. MCP has a reputation for exceptional product delivery and it continues to reinforce the value of the brand and the leadership of the company with every new product it designs and manufactures.

When asked about the secret of MCP's continued success, Lubinski says, "It is longevity through re-engineering ourselves a couple of times, but eventually focusing on multi-directional scaffold with world-first aluminum components." He notes that the "secret" lies in taking advantage of emerging markets and demonstrating MCP's value as the premier option for scaffold, shoring and formwork.

That's why customers have come to depend on MCP for improved productivity, optimal safety, and the continued innovation of its world-class patented products that, simply put, set the standard in the industry.

"Without the support of family – my brother Gerry, in charge of finance and accounting and a partner; my nephew Chris, in charge of the plant; and my son Owen, in charge of purchasing and sales

support – plus our loyal plant staff, our success would not have been possible," says Lubinski, whose own biggest passion is Ynot Farms and Equestrian Centre based in Meaford, Ontario.

They say imitation is the best form of flattery, but in this case no global competitor can match MCP's proprietary systems, so, while they try to catch up, with the next challenge will come the next big thing and Lubinski and his team at MCP are ready to deliver. ■