

NEWS AND KNOWLEDGE FROM



# BUILDING UP

ISSUE 20 2023 | VOLUME 2




University of Manitoba  
Drake Centre  
Lecture Rooms 105 & 107

University of Manitoba  
Isbister Building  
Room 201

University of Manitoba  
Education Building  
SW Stairs & Landing





# SCHOOL ZONE

## PROJECT PROFILE:

### Westland Construction Makes the Grade on Education-Related Construction



For Westland Construction, class is always in session. Whether it's as an industry leader in professional development or choosing to embark on important education-related projects that provide the people of Manitoba with quality training spaces, learning is lifelong for the contractor.

"For us, it's intentional," says Peter Grose, Westland Construction President and CEO, about bidding and working on primary and post-secondary institutions. Grose appreciates the continuity involved in education-related construction. "When we get to know a facility, it just makes it easier to know what to expect the next time around," explains Grose. "So, we have a lot of facilities that we work with, and we stick to our lane. There are advantages for us in that regard, and I think those are the same reciprocal advantages for the owner because they don't have to go through that learning curve with a new GC."



University of Manitoba (U of M) is one of the clients that welcomes Westland as a repeat contractor, especially because they have four campuses, more than 100 buildings and a full docket of construction projects.

"At any given time, we have more than 350 active projects with an estimated construction value of about \$300 million," says Mark Ager, Project Manager, Architectural & Engineering Services for the U of M, adding that Westland has worked on 15 various projects with the institution over the last 10 years.

"Lots of contractors do work on our campuses," Ager explains. "I think that being transparent and responsive to the university's needs is at the core of developing a long-term working relationship. It takes a long time to figure us out. We're unique clients with unique needs. Not everybody is willing or wants to figure out how to work with us and I think that when you do, it's really rewarding."

Westland has studied the university's infrastructure intricacies and adheres to their particular requirements. "We go in with our eyes open and try to make sure we maintain good open lines of communication, and understand what that expectation is," says Grose. "It's really integral in the delivery."

From basic classroom upgrades and greenhouse demolition to random projects like a large concrete pad on piers above the floodplain that houses a large telescope, Westland continues to pass the test.

"I have one project that was delivered on time, and it was by Westland," Ager says, referring to a small complex renovation in the biosciences building.

Westland is also active on various projects with Pembina Trails School Division, an owner that oversees 36 schools, three administration buildings and roughly two million square feet of buildings and grounds. On any given day Keri Joss, Director, Facilities & Operations for Pembina Trails School Division, and her team are working with approximately 400 committed work orders, two to six internal mid-size divisional projects, two to five large scale, provincially funded projects and a couple outdoor projects.

According to Joss, the working relationship between the school division and Westland, which spans the last 10 years, is based on trust.

"I don't live in Westland's world and Westland doesn't live in my world, so you have to trust and collaborate and work towards the same goal," Joss shares. "Our buildings are filled with students and staffed 10 months of the year. And the daycares occupy over half those buildings all year long. And above that, we have community events that take place in our buildings most evenings so in order for us to perform work or work with a contractor to get things done, a lot of coordination needs to take place. Transparency is key."

Over a small summer window, Westland aced a structural project at Oak Park High School. "That project was probably a four- or five-month project, and it was completed in about seven weeks," she attests.






“We rely on our consulting teams and our contracting teams to ultimately deliver projects that we need completed. The more that we can work at getting along with each other and appreciating each other's skills, the more we can collaborate, the better off we all are. It's important to work in a spirit of collaboration. It doesn't always need to be about profit and money and timelines, but it needs to be about long-term working relationships, about collaboration, about the spirit of the law, not always the letter of the law.”

— Mark Ager, Project Manager,  
University of Manitoba



As much as Joss appreciates Westland's "professional, respectful, trustworthy and committed" attributes, she also acknowledges that they're grade A students when it comes to qualifications and ongoing training – something especially important in her line of work.

"We provide facilities that educate children and children grow up and they participate in vocational programs and engineering studies that ultimately will lead some of them into the construction industry," she says. "I think it's really important that [our students] see companies like Westland being leaders in [continuous improvement] because it can come full circle." 

## WESTLAND PERSONALITY

### KEVIN JAMES



When he was growing up, Kevin James dreamed of being a dairy and grain farmer and following in his uncles' footsteps. So, when his plan to take over the family dairy operation didn't pan out, he turned to another rewarding career that runs in the family: construction.

James jumped at an opportunity to work for a friend's Steinbach-area construction company building hog barns during the mild months and residential homes in the winter. He picked up the role quickly and before long was moving companies and roles, working

as a drywall foreman handling layout, steel stud framing, and material orders. In 2010, James heard that Westland Construction was hiring.

"I had a friend working for WCL and he let me know that Westland had a lot of work, was a great company with good people, and he introduced me to Pete," James details. "I had an interview and that was all confirmed to be true."

Pete (Grose), was equally as pleased, hiring James as a site superintendent. Now, 13 years later, James continues to play a pivotal role on many Westland projects, managing people and trades and ensuring projects stay on schedule.

"A day on the job can be full of surprises and challenges," explains James. "I enjoy problem solving and collaborating with trades. There is something to learn every day."

As a lifelong learner (he obtained his Gold Seal Certification and continues to complete further training and courses), James has found a fulfilling fit working on Westland's education-related jobs.

"I find education-related projects rewarding," he says. "The student's optimism and enthusiasm are inspiring. We did an elevator addition at Dalhousie School, and we had a question-and-answer session with the kids that will be using the facility and benefiting from the improvement. It made me consider the possible potential for future trades, architects, and engineers in the group. We were pleased to make their school more accessible and functional."


James' ability to connect with kids as well as adults is something that has proved beneficial, especially when it comes to construction projects with school divisions or post-secondary institutions, as many are repeat clients.

"Developing good relationships with owners of projects is key to a successful project," explains James. "Communication and trust are a part of everyday on-site work. I always seek out to understand expectations to avoid conflict."

James' strength in leadership, along with his fair and friendly, yet firm and determined personality, is crucial, especially on projects where the safety of staff and students is paramount and meeting deadlines is a must.

"On education-related projects we are often working in a client and user occupied space with time sensitive deadlines. The safety of staff and students must be at the forefront as well as meeting the schedule. Education clients often have the space being developed for new or incoming staff, so we have to stay on target with the completion date."

When he's not watching the clock and working on Westland's unique and challenging projects, James and his fiancé Charlene spend time with their five children and head out into the wilderness.

"I enjoy camping, fishing, and exploring some of the more remote areas of MB when we can, as well as travel throughout Canada and beyond when possible." 



## THE GROSE REPORT

### THOUGHTS FROM WESTLAND'S CEO



As a construction company, we are literally building the future. We're building infrastructure that will serve the community for years to come, we're contributing and participating in important associations and organizations, and at Westland Construction, we're laying the foundation for lifelong learning.

Whether it's maintaining the highest safety distinction in the industry with safety training, or supporting our staff through Gold Seal Certification, we love going back to class. Recently, we sent a crew to a multi-day conference in Arizona, we regularly enroll staff in sessions

at the Winnipeg Construction Association, and we just wrapped our own Westland-led professional development day. The investment we make in continuous learning and improvement, which we carry out both in-house and externally, has always provided us with a great rate of return. Our people are a big part of our success. Prioritizing our employees' personal development not only supports their overall growth but it equips team members with the skills and attributes that benefit both themselves and the company's bottom line.

The working relationship we have with the primary and post-secondary education industry in Manitoba is also a product of the people. Our long-standing affiliation with colleagues in this field has fostered a collaborative environment as we work toward a common goal of building schools and updating facilities. In a demanding and critical industry like education, where classrooms are almost always being used and safety is paramount, it's important to work with people who understand the complexities of construction. Westland intentionally bids and works on projects with the University of Manitoba and Pembina Trails School Division and other educational facilities because of the good people – consultants, project managers, and architects at these institutions.

Over the last number of years, Westland has been continuously engaged in numerous education-related construction projects throughout the city. We've been the students in these settings – understanding the needs of the clients, learning the nuances of the facilities, and handing in buildings, classrooms, laboratories, and upgrades – all crucial elements of learning environments in schools and universities.

It's our passion for learning, attention to the assignment, and spirit of collaboration that makes Westland top of the class when it comes to education-related construction.

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## CELEBRATING OVER 40 YEARS; CELEBRATING THE FUTURE YESTERDAY, TODAY & TOMORROW

### YESTERDAY

Westland Construction was hired by Pembina Trails School Division to build an addition for a new elevator as well as install a lift in the library of Dalhousie School in 2017. The addition seen here was at the main entrance and consisted of the new elevator shaft, elevator lobby and main entrance vestibule.



### TODAY

Westland recently installed several wayfinding signs over two phases for the University of Manitoba. The signs ranged in size with many requiring concrete piles as a foundation. These signs are for all forms of traffic at the University Fort Garry campus including vehicular (seen here), pedestrian and bicycle.



### TOMORROW

The University of Manitoba engaged Cox Construction on a Design Build basis to replace the steam and condensate line for St Andrew's College on their campus. Westland will be acting as a subcontractor to Cox to install the concrete vault for the routing of the steam and condensate lines. This project will be completed in the Spring of 2024.



### ABOUT US

Westland Construction Ltd. is a full-service General Contractor serving the institutional, commercial, and industrial sectors through new construction, civil support, and renovations.

### CONTACT US

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