

# Leading surface protection and coatings contractor handles challenging projects with specialized skills and equipment

## Harrison Muir celebrates 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary at new home



**HEATHER SEFTEL-KIRK**  
– The Ontario Construction Report Special Feature

Harrison Muir, the company behind the highly recognizable deep orange equipment seen throughout the GTA and Ontario, marks its 50th anniversary in 2012 and celebrates the milestone with a new, permanent home and a commitment to the future.

The Stouffville-based industrial service contractor co-ordinates surface preparation and protective coatings, and specializes in challenging and diverse projects including power plants, bridges, and industrial equipment in manufacturing plants.

President Dan Orrett says his company has become known as the go-to source for complex projects because of its staff, experience and qualifications. “Two of our partners, Jack Mills and I, are civil engineers so we can easily manage the complexities of these jobs and the third partner, Bill Mogavero, has prestigious certificates from both the Society of Protective Coatings and the National Association of Corrosion Engineers.”





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## Harrison Muir

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Harrison Muir has built a reputation for bridge work, challenging because of the environment and high level of visibility and need for specialized safety and environmental protection practices. "We've done many of the bridges along the Don Valley Parkway and 401 Highway over the past 40 years," he said.

The most recent of these, the Dundas Street Viaduct bridge, completed in the fall of 2011, had special challenges. Harrison Muir painters needed to work over the multi-lane Don Valley Parkway and the Don River. As well, the painters worked over rail tracks owned by two different rail authorities over Bayview Ave. and a city park pathway, each with unique access and safety considerations.

While the company traces its roots to conventional commercial painting, it now focuses on challenges few contractors have the resources, training or equipment to handle.

Orrett says most of Harrison Muir's work is so specialized that quotes can only be prepared by visiting the site to see the work to be done and the conditions impacting the site. Professional engineering skills are needed along with a deep understanding of the painting trade, coatings, and technologies.

"We can't offer a quote based on square footage approximations because we normally have to look at issues such as the existing coating condition, scaffold access, engineering

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### Proud Advisors to Harrison Muir Inc.

**TICKNER'S** team of expert safety professionals offer our congratulations to Jack, Dan & Bill and their team on their continuing success. Their vision and leadership in health and safety compliance and customer service continues to set precedent for the industry.

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Owners: Jack Mills, Bill Mogavero and Dan Orrett



## Harrison Muir

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controls for dust collection, atmospheric conditions, adjacent property impacts and active traffic,” he said. “This may be difficult for some to understand when painting is often thought of as an easily calculated service by everyone who has picked up a brush or roller and painted before.”

Harrison Muir also co-ordinates the specialized “metalizing” corrosion protection process, perhaps the most effective one for steel. Work involves preparation of the surface through abrasive blasting followed by a thermal arc spray of zinc or other alloys, using a unique welding process. “Unlike with paint, the connection of the zinc to the base metal is a mechanical bond that can last 40 years or longer,” says Orrett. “Back in the early 70’s we metalized the top mast for the CN Tower before it was installed and to my knowledge it has never required any maintenance.”

In January 2011, the Society for Protective Coatings presented the company with the George Campbell Award, granted in recognition of outstanding achievement in the completion of a difficult or complex industrial or commercial coatings project. The project involved removal of existing coatings, steel repairs and application of new protective coating to 60,000 sq. ft. of steel in the middle of winter to maintain the almost century-old La Salle Causeway Bridge over the Rideau Canal in Kingston.

Orrett says his company also provided



painting and coating services for various aspects of the new co-generation Clean Energy plants in and around the GTA including the Portlands Energy Centre, Goreway Station, Halton Hills Generating Station and York Energy Centre.

“We have the capacity to handle these large scale and complex projects because of our investments in equipment and staff training over the years,” he said. “We are self-reliant in terms of equipment and have committed substantial funds to this over the

years because of the specialized nature of the work we do.”

Orrett says the company’s capital and staff resources enable Harrison Muir to react quickly to job requests that might otherwise slow down a project, because everything needed is in-house and there is no requirement to out-source specialized equipment.

“We’ve always preferred to invest in equipment instead of land, understanding there was more upside to owning your

equipment and that property was always readily available,” he said. “Now though it makes sense for us to make the investment in physical real estate and so we’ve found a place we can call our own.”

Harrison Muir’s new 10,000 sq. ft. building in Stouffville puts the company within 10 minutes of Highways 404 and 407, a convenient distance to its GTA and southern Ontario markets. The shop, yard and of-

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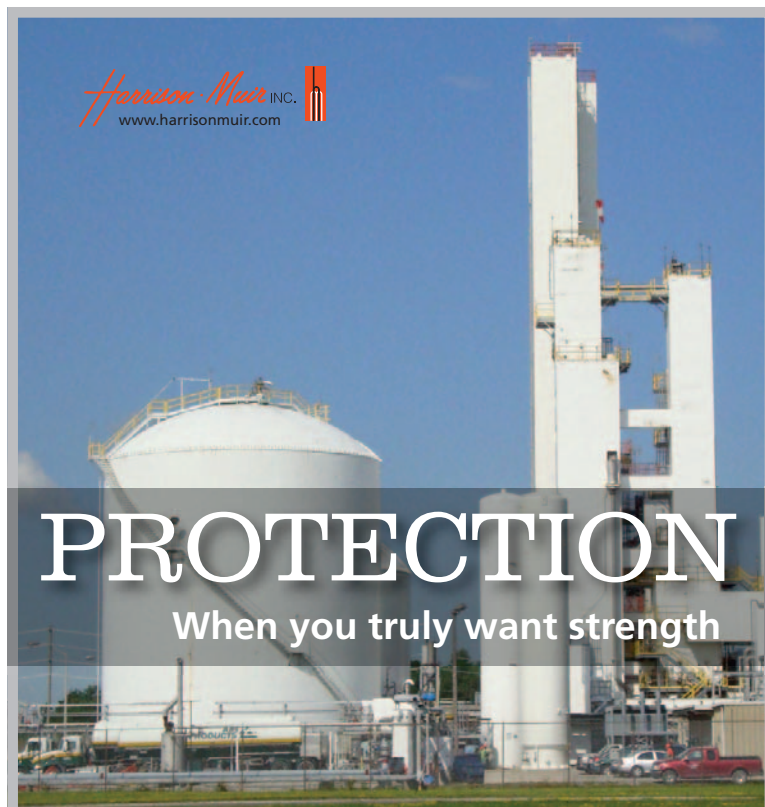


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## Harrison Muir

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fices have been consolidated to improve logistics and operational efficiencies.

“In business we tend to spend 95 per cent of our time getting projects done and five per cent looking at how things are done when it really should be more like an 80/20 split. With the move we have the opportunity to clean house, to look at the way things are done, and to change our approach to how we operate.”

Orrett expects many of these changes may be as simple as sourcing frequently used project items such as safety equipment and painting sundries closer to order loading and receiving stations. “This logistical analysis of prioritizing procurement items used for our work on a frequency-of-use basis for projects will definitely improve our operations and benefit our clients.”

“We’re improving the way we do a lot of things,” he said. “Our bright orange equipment has always made us a recognizable brand. However, where a significant portion of our business is now based on relationship-driven leads, we’re looking ahead to more non-traditional marketing methods, such as the internet, to ensure Harrison Muir remains a name in the minds of the new decision makers and buyers. If we

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## Harrison Muir

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are successful in attaining a project with a new client, our goal is to make it a long term relationship."

The company has always considered safety to be a vital priority, putting in place training and a safety incentive program. Every member of the team is responsible, not only for his or her own safety, but of every member of the crew. "There is a real sense of a collective effort in every aspect of what we do," Orrett says.

The company philosophy of working towards long-term relationships with clients,

is also evident in its partnership with key corporate consulting services such as Roger Tickner & Associates, ITFusion Inc. and others. "Expert third party services for Safety and IT are critical to the operational success of our firm and having worked closely long-term with these professionals is like having additional management and partners as part of our team."

One thing about Harrison Muir that will not and has not changed over time is the relationship of the company and its employees. "About 25 percent of our field staff has 20 plus years with us and all of our supervisors are home-grown," he said.



Guiding this culture are the members of the management team, who are also majority shareholders. "We act as a corporation but have multiple active partners each with their own responsibilities. We are all committed to the success of our firm and the satisfaction of our clients."

"Our employees share in a performance bonus structure and have a vested interest in our culture of satisfying each client now and for future projects."

For more information,  
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## Safety a vital priority at Harrison Muir

### STAFF WRITER

— The Ontario Construction Report Special Feature

Tickner and Associates Inc. provides occupational health and safety services and has been a partner with Harrison Muir for 15 years.

"We work under a contract with Harrison Muir to provide safety expertise to them on a variety of issues related to their work," says president Roger Tickner. "We conduct site safety inspections, safety training, WSIB costs and claims oversight."

Tickner says Harrison Muir's commitment to safety sets them apart in the industry. "HM are unique in that safety is a major factor of every job and is more than a word at Harrison Muir – it's part of how they do business every day," he says. "Few companies are truly committed to accident prevention. They will talk a good story and they will have all the paper one could ever hope for. The difference here is that Jack, Dan and Bill take safety personally. They have been out there. It shows in how they manage. It's why they are a client. They get it."



### *Congratulations to Harrison Muir on their first 50 Years!*

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## Harrison Muir's suppliers commend company's innovation and integrity

Here are some observations of business people who have worked with Harrison Muir through the decades.

### Amercoat Canada: Protective coatings

Amercoat Canada, a protective coatings manufacturer and supplier of high performance coatings in Canada, has been a partner of Harrison Muir for more than 30 years.

Ontario technical sales manager Dennis O'Reilly says it has always been a pleasure for Amercoat to work with such a professional and organized client. "Their relationship with their suppliers has always been professional and reflective of a true partnership."

That partnership includes working closely with suppliers seeking out recommendations and options to address the many project challenges they face.

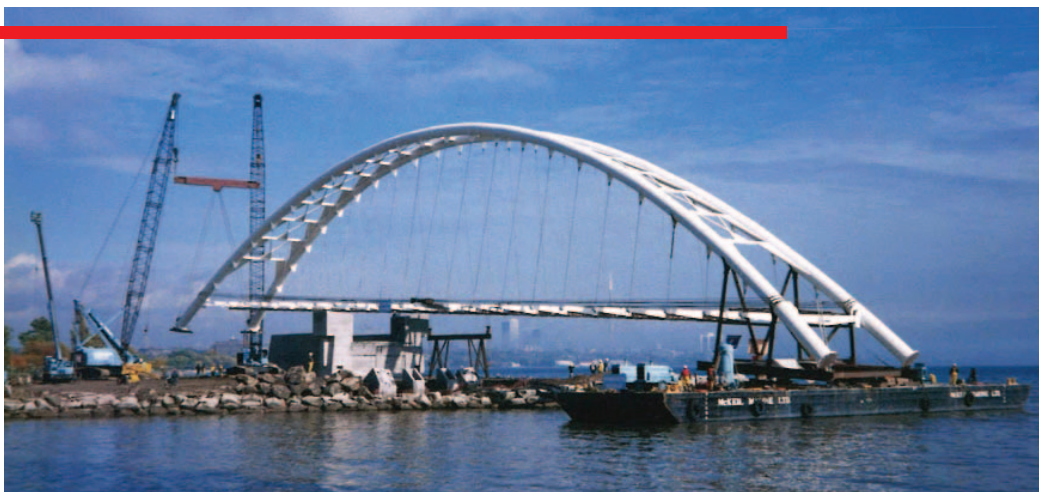
With clients like Ontario Power and the Ministry of Transportation and projects like municipal water towers and marine projects including ships in the Great Lakes, O'Reilly says nothing about the company is run-of-the-mill. "Harrison Muir is well organized and professional and is able to take on projects that are often in a severe service environment. That they succeed in achieving what they set out to do and often exceed client expectations is a testament to that."

### CG&B Group Inc.: Insurance for challenging projects

A full service insurance broker, CG&B Group has worked with Harrison Muir as a full-service insurance broker for more than 20 years and is proud of the two companies' long standing relationship.

Past president Jeff Brandham says not every insurer would be willing to handle what Harrison Muir does because of the specialized nature and challenges involved in many of their projects. Fortunately, "they have superior safety practices and an excellent claims record," Brandham said. "Insurers love a company where safety is key and there is a primary focus on doing things the right way."

Brandham says it is always interesting to see Harrison Muir's projects' complexity coupled with its straightforward business methods. "Very little this company does could be considered run of the mill," he said. "It's great to see a Canadian company with this kind of success and growth and with their continued focus on good service, value for the client and straightforward interaction, I am confident that success and growth will continue."



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*Congratulations to Harrison-Muir Inc.*





#### **Sherwin Williams: Providing paints and coatings for more than two decades**

Sherwin Williams, a premier supplier of paints and coatings since 1866, has worked with Harrison Muir for 20 years.

Protective and marine sales professional Jerry Golschesky describes Harrison Muir as one of the indus-

try's most professional contractors. "They are always fully prepared with background knowledge and an understanding of their needs and come to us to find products to meet the challenges they face."

Golschesky says Harrison Muir is always interested in new technologies and products and in translating these new potentials into client value. "They are always happy to hear about and try new products and to give performance feed-

back so we can improve and perfect these products. Since every client is a partner in what they do, they are open to any ways of bringing more value or better performance to any project they take on."

Golschesky says Harrison Muir is known throughout the industry for integrity and performance and is a valued growth partner. "We value our relationship with Harrison Muir and congratulate them on this milestone anniversary."

#### **Barricade Traffic Services: Signage, barrels and related products**

Barricade Traffic Services, established in 1981, manufactures road signage, traffic barrels and other associated products. Owner Brett Ashton says his company has worked with Harrison Muir for many years and through many different projects. "Sometimes they rent from us; sometimes they will add to their own inventory and buy," he said. "Our dealings with them are always a pleasure and, as a growing company ourselves, we enjoy dealing with other local and growing companies like Harrison Muir."

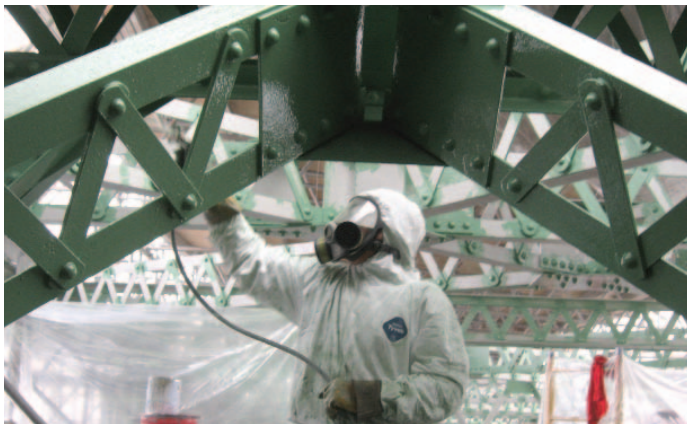
#### **Carboline Company: SSPC protective coatings**

Carboline Company has supplied Harrison Muir with coatings for decades and is proud to be a partner in many complex projects.

SSPC protective coating specialist Pedro Escudero says his company received the George Campbell Award with Harrison Muir for the La Salle Causeway Bridge. "Due to the age of the structure, the winter schedule and tight deadline, we were honoured with this award as a partner of Harrison Muir."

Escudero says the award reflects Harrison Muir's professionalism for all of its projects. "They always strive to do the best job they can to ensure quality and the client's satisfaction," he said. "They use their own initiative to go beyond what is required to ensure they have a client, not for one job but for the long-term."

Escudero describes the culture throughout Harrison Muir as being based on ownership, honest and straightforward dealings, qualities which have allowed the business to thrive in the past and will allow it to grow in the future.



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