



What We Heard Report:

An Alberta Society for Safe Rigging, Hoisting, and Lifting Visioning and Strategizing Event

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Event date and location: January 28, 2026 | Edmonton, AB

Host: Tom O'Neill (University of Calgary)

Event Organizers: Samantha Jones and Jessica Wilkins, (University of Calgary)

Guest Speakers: Kevin Nelson (Next of Kin), Charissa Nelson (Next of Kin), Rick Sikora (Cranemasters), Tyrell Schram (Schram Crane & Rigging Ltd), Lisa Pollio (ESC), Joachim Schubert (MHSA), Sean Hlushak (SAIT)

Attendees: Over 110 representing a variety of industries and perspectives.

Event Summary

On Wednesday, January 28, 2026, over 110 attendees gathered in Edmonton, AB to consider the opportunity for a Rigging, Hoisting, and Lifting Society. This event brought together individuals from industry, education, safety associations, trainers, and regulators to discuss current practices, challenges, and future directions for rigging, hoisting, and lifting in Alberta.

The morning consisted of an introduction and Creative Sentence update by the event host, Tom O'Neill, followed by guest speaker lightning talks, outlined below. After a morning coffee break, the breakout sessions began with a visioning exercise at each table. Groups engaged in a dotmocracy by voting on vision statements, three of which were deemed most popular and discussed. Next, groups engaged in a second breakout exercise to establish critical areas of focus for a new society. The day culminated in a governance dialogue facilitated by Tom O'Neill to outline the incorporation requirements for a Society in Alberta. A final check-in of the support for the development of a society indicated that the majority of attendees were in favour of moving forward. A call for expressions of interest was sent on February 12, 2026 along with this event summary.

Lightning Talks

Kevin Nelson and Charissa Nelson (Brandon Nelson's Next of Kin)

Rick Sikora (Cranemasters): State of Rigging and Hoisting in AB

Tyrell Schram (Schram Crane & Rigging Ltd): Rigging Training in AB

Lisa Pollio (ESC): Creative Sentence on Young, New, and Inexperienced Workers

Joachim Schubert (MHSA): Rigging, Hoisting, and Lifting Safety Performance

Sean Hlushak (SAIT): Rigging, Hoisting, and Lifting Training in Polytechnics

Visioning

Of the 14 vision statements generated by the 14 tables, the top three most voted vision statements were the following:

1. Building a community across all industries that bridges the gap between education, standards, and accountability (32 votes)
2. A connected Alberta lifting industry, focused on protecting our community to set the benchmarks for safe and standardized rigging and hoisting practices in Canada (28 votes)
3. Learning from the past to Inspire Functional and accepted Trainning, and Standards that are suitable (27 votes)

Learning

Inspired

Functional

Trainning

Standards

Strategizing

The vision of a Society is advanced by strategic focus areas. The following summarizes themes of the strategies put forward by all 14 groups. A number of activities are included as examples of how to enact each strategic pillar. A much more comprehensive set of initiatives was developed and will be used to inform future areas of focus.

- **Advocacy:** A unified voice of Alberta industry (i.e., to communicate with OHS, AIT, Government of Alberta, ASME, CSA, LEEA, etc.) for safe rigging practices.
- **Promotion:** Awareness-building and marketing campaigns for promoting safe rigging practices.

- **Community and Network:** Events, conferences, tradeshow, membership engagement.
- **A Common Standard** (provincial/national): for training, for verification of competency, for education, and for legislation including understandable translations of that standard.

Cross-cutting theme: Rigging, Hoisting and Lifting as a **RARE** activity (Restricted Activities with Regulated Education)

Board Membership

The group discussed what would be necessary and required of an active board member.

Attributes of a successful board member would include:

- Knowledge across industries, regulators, end-users, and/or manufacturers.
- Knowledge in one area of specialization.
- Skills; financial literacy, business operations, management, people skills, writing and legal interpretation, networking, and communication skills.
- Strong networks of SMEs, industry, management, boards, government, regulators, and other related safety associations.
- Time; as a volunteer position, this position would likely be in addition to a full-time job. Support from employers.
- Commitment; passion for the matter, engaged for the greater good.

Big Room Dialogue about a New Alberta Society

In the last 90 minutes of the day, we began with a straw poll/show of hands “how many are in support of a new society for Alberta?” **The result was about 55% in favour.** This opened the door to have a real big room discussion about what people see as the challenges and opportunities. Roughly:

Opportunities: That what we are doing now isn’t working and isn’t enough, and that there needs to be an organized, unified voice to coherently advocate for, promote, and develop safe rigging practices in Alberta.

Challenges:

1. A society that is under-resourced and relies completely on volunteers
2. The society needs big industry names behind it
3. The society needs strong, vocal support from OHS
4. The society doesn't yet have a small focused achievable goal and therefore may try to take on too much and accomplish too little or nothing at all. It needs a quick win.
5. The society should instead have a national focus, create a national standard, and then Alberta can adopt a version of that standard later.

Near the end of the 90 minutes, as folks worked through the pros and cons in the big room discussion, and shared their unique lens and clearly personal preferences for the society, we took another straw poll. **This time ~98% of the room voted in favour of moving forward with the society.**

To move forward, a board must be created to develop an application for registering a new society in Alberta.

The order of events, our team will:

1. Create the application / nomination form
2. Release a call for expressions of interest
3. Keep open the call for applications for a determined period (likely 5 weeks)
4. Depending on the qualifications of the applicants and those selected for greater involvement, a go/no go decision will be made with respect to pursuing the Society now versus other options (e.g., working groups, committees).

Thank you all for an excellent event and we welcome and encourage open dialogue on the matter. Our team will continue to meet and consult with individuals and teams, **please contact us** to schedule a virtual or in-person meeting with any questions, concerns, or ideas to get involved.

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Thank You!

