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SUMMER BOARD MEETING 6

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ConAtlantic meeting in Newfoundland success

By Andy Walker

During one of the worst winter storms in recent history, Bruce Casey, the president of the Atlantic Concrete Association deemed the organization's return to Newfoundland and Labrador for the first time in a decade a big success.

The February 18-21 meeting marked the 60th anniversary of the organization and it's commitment to being a truly Atlantic Canadian association. The 2021 meeting had been scheduled for the Newfoundland and Labrador capital but had to be cancelled due to the COVID-19 pandemic, making the last time the ACA held a AGM in Newfoundland, the 50th anniversary in 2016.

The meetings featured technical and networking sessions, as well as the annual general meetings for both the concrete association and American Concrete Institute – Atlantic Chapter.

While the weather played havoc with airline schedules, forcing some members and suppliers to cancel their plans, Casey was particularly happy the meeting had a strong turnout of producer and associate members, reinforcing the long-standing decision to rotate the meetings among the four provinces

"When the meeting is closer to home, it is easier to attend in terms of costs for members, which allows more members to stay connected to the association anf take advantage of the networking and technical presentations," said Casey.

He noted holding a winter meeting in Atlantic Canada always carries "an element of risk that is beyond our control." Casey added, "the feedback we received was overwhelmingly positive and the famous Newfoundland hospitality was on abundant display."

The association president said planning is already under way for the 2027 meeting, to be held in Halifax. Casey said meetings in the Nova Scotia capital usually have the largest turnout in the rotation, especially for associate members such as suppliers and those in related industries, since it is home to the region's largest airport and offers more flight options.

"We are looking forward to another great meeting in Halifax next winter," he concluded.





Above: Participants at the ACA meeting took a turn learning to use the unique "Ugly Stick", an instrument often used in Newfoundland musical events. Right: Members are "screeched in" as honourary Newfoundlanders by downing a shot of Screech rum and kissing a codfish.

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Gold River Trail Bridge major project for Chester



By Andy Walker

For Larry Hood, being involved in the restoration Gold River Trail Bridge has definitely been a career highlight.

"It is not every day you get to build a heritage bridge like that," said the manager of infrastructure systems for the Municipality of the District of Chester.

The project has been several years in the making, and Hood estimates the $7-million-plus project is nearing the halfway mark. As of mid-June, he said the timber decking is being replaced with concrete and steel and crews are doing some steel repairs and sandblasting.

The bridge began its long history in the community as a railway bridge in 1905 and later found a second life as a connector bridge between sections of the community's trail system. However, it was deemed unsafe for use in the fall of 2021 and was originally slated for demolition to make way for a new structure.

However, after discussions with the provincial government (which owns the former railway), and Wasoqopa'q First Nation, a decision was made to restore the historical structure. While that has presented its share of challenges, Hood is confident the finished product will both honour the importance of the bridge to the community and provide a safe trail connection for residents and visitors alike.

Work began on the bridge in the summer of 2025, with Julmac Contracting Ltd. awarded the $6,658,410 contract to lead the rehabilitation project for Gold River Trail Bridge.

By last November, demolition of the west side trestle span was under way and this spring the repointing work was taking place on the west side masonry pier, with a suspended scaffold put in place to access and repoint the center masonry pier.

Hood said all three granite piers have been repointed, and the new west concrete abutment that will support the new pre-engineered bridge span had been poured by early June.

The concrete specified for this project and supplied by South Shore Ready Mix Limited is 50 MPa, exposure class CXL. This higher compressive strength concrete with very durable properties will withstand the test of time, providing at least another 120 years of use and utility as a trail system bridge for many to enjoy.

All of the bridge deck and railing system has been removed and will be replaced with new material. A social media posting from the municipality notes the timber ties that support the deck are being systematically numbered and removed to access the steel girder flanges for sandblasting, inspection, and recoating. Once complete the ties will be replaced in the same order as removed unless they require permanent replacement.

"The entire center span will be jacked in the air to place the new bridge bearings that will support the structure and allow to expand and contract as temperatures dictate," the post said. "This was the original cause of failure that resulted in the closure."



Building multi-unit buildings with concrete minimizes fire risk

By Andy Walker

There is a building boom across the region when it comes to multi-unit residential housing, thanks in large measure to federal and provincial programs designed to combat the housing crisis.

While many buildings involve wood construction, the concept of building with concrete is still the premier method of construction. The pros and cons of each building method can be debated, but there is no arguing building with concrete is the clear winner when it comes to the risk of fire.

Although building codes mandate fire retardant materials for wooden structures, the president of the Fire Service Association of Nova Scotia said the fact of the matter is that "wood burns and concrete doesn't." From a fire safety perspective, Rod Nielsen noted non-combustible material, whether it be concrete or steel, is preferable from the fire risk perspective.

Due to significant lobby efforts by the Canadian Wood Council, changes to the federal building code have been adopted by several provinces to increase height limit for mass timber buildings from 12 to 18 storeys. Nielsen explained that in apartments and commercial structures, sprinkler systems are required to be installed after the height reaches three floors, but the new regulations allow more floors without sprinklers, providing certain regulations are met.

He observed that even a small fire in an 18-storey building that houses hundreds of people can affect all of the structures around it. The Canadian Association of Fire Chiefs has raised their concern on a number of occasions in submissions made when the new regulations were under study. The association stated fires in multi-family homes not only put residents in immediate danger but also pose a risk to adjacent buildings and entire neighbourhoods and first responders.

While building with wood does tend to be both cheaper and faster, the association president said that in the short term, addition to being little fire risk, concrete structures are better equipped to stand up to the impacts of climate change like floods.

"There really isn't much question about that," he said.

The Ready Mix News caught up with Nielsen on vacation in The Netherlands and he said that country has adapted building with non-combustible materials in a big way. He explained there are a large number of buildings using steel and concrete to improve resilience and long-term durability.

Association revamps technical tips and resources to industry

By Andy Walker

The Atlantic Concrete Association has done a complete update on its library of technical tips and resources, which are available on the association's website.

Group President Bruce Casey explained the association has had Tech Tips available for many years, but some were outdated, so it was time to make sure the documents reflected the latest technology and industry best practices. He notes the information is often cited by members to their customers to explain some of the technical aspects of working with concrete.

Casey said the association has the resources to work with outside expertise to review the tech tips, something individual companies might not be able to do on their own. It also assures a uniform approach across the industry. Casey added, "this is not something that is used by one or two companies. All members of our association need to have the most up-to-date information in a digestible format that can be shared to customers and other companies."

The tips can be used by an individual company to make customers better understand a variety of issues and aspects of working with concrete that may not be well understood. A commonly used example is tips to "preventing cracking," where the tips provide practical information for both companies and customers to follow.

Casey said the review removed references to some outdated technology, saying, "just like any other industry, technology is constantly changing and we want to ensure the information is as up to date as possible." Local engineering experts were used to create the new tech tips, then they were reviewed and approved by the association's technical committee.

The tips updated for this year are available on the association website and include; Site Addition of Water; Chemical Admixtures; Air Content Loss in Pumping; Concrete Yield; Slump and Workability; Aggregate Moisture; Mixing Time and Uniformity; Low Cylinder Breaks; Flexural Strength; Strength of Concrete in the Field; Overdesign in Mixtures; Early Strength vs. Long Term Strength; Curing Concrete; Hot Weather Concreting; Cold Weather Concreting; Finishing Concrete Flatwork; Joints in Concrete Slabs; Dusting in Concrete Slabs; Scaling Concrete Surfaces; Crazing; Blisters on Concrete Slabs; Pop-out; Delamination; Curling of Slabs; Self-Consolidated Concrete; Concrete Durability; Low Carbon Concrete and Portland-Limestone Cement.



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Newfoundland gold mine great news for Newcrete

By Jodi DeLong

Exciting news came out of Newfoundland in recent months with the development of the Valentine Lake gold mine in southeastern NL. This is Equinox's first project in NL, and thus the first opportunity for Capital Ready Mix, a division of Newcrete, the largest Ready Mix, Precast and Masonry concrete producer in Newfoundland, to work with the company at their gold mine. The mine started processing ore in late August of 2025 and poured its first gold ahead of schedule in mid September. The company anticipated producing 15,000 to 30,000 ounces of gold in the last quarter of 2025.

Once fully operational, Valentine will be Equinox Gold's second-largest mine and the largest gold mine in Atlantic Canada. A company news release notes Valentine is a conventional crush-grind carbon-in-leach operation expected to produce between 150,000 and 200,000 ounces of gold annually for the first 12 years of its 14-year reserve life, when operating at design capacity of 2.5 million tonnes per year.

The Valentine mining operation consists of three open pits: Marathon, Berry, and Leprechaun, and the project spans a 32-km mineralized trend. Moreover, exploration to date at Valentine has concentrated on only the 8-km corridor between the Leprechaun and Marathon open pits in what is known as the Valentine Lake Shear Zone. In early February of this year, the company announced a new gold discovery, the Minotaur zone, which will further strengthen the operation for years to come.

For Joe Blundon, Project Manager of Capital Ready Mix, based in St. John's, the opportunity to work with Equinox Gold presented some exciting and unique challenges. For starters, the mine is accessible only by a logging road, not nearby any significant communities. Consequently, the decision was made to establish an onsite Ready Mix Batch Plant.

The Valentine mine operation is a three-hour one-way trip from Hunt's Concrete in Grand-Falls Windsor, which supplies sand and stone to the mine site. Blundon says, "We're talking 90 kilometres in a dirt road so that presents quite a few challenges, as you can imagine," adding, "The nearest civilization is a very small town with only one store, and that is about 2 hours away."

Blundon observes, "if you have a breakdown or you need materials, you are looking at a five- or six-hour round trip drive, so you have to plan ahead as much as possible or you are likely looking at a delay of at least a day."

The plant was installed on site in March 2023. The initial setup was roughly 4 weeks with a further winterization of the plant completed in the fall of 2023. The plant was fully operational April 2023. Throughout 2023 and 2024 Newcrete supplied concrete for the processing plant for the mine, footings, foundations, fill concrete due to excessive ground water, slab floors, piers, etc. Blundon says 2025 was mostly for capital works for the mine as the process facility was majorly finished and in operation. He adds, "Heavy Duty truck shop, storage buildings (megadome), new security, all things to do with servicing the site itself compared to production." 2026 is a continuation of last year's work, with further expansion on the heavy duty truck shop and also storage buildings.



Joe Blundon, Project Manager of Capital Ready Mix (white hat) with some of his team on the Valentine Lake project.



Concrete work continues at the Valentine Lake gold mine in southeastern Newfoundland, using the onsite Ready Mix Batch Plant.





2026 Concrete Rodeo great success

By Andy Walker

After a fun and well-attended 2026 Concrete Truck Rodeo, the executive is considering moving to a biennial model event. This will help to control costs, maintain the quality of participation, and build more anticipation around each occurrence.

The 2026 version of what has become a signature event on the association's calendar was held June 6 in the parking lot of the Moncton Coliseum to great fanfare. Association President Bruce Casey explained there is a significant commitment involved for the producer members from across the region who send drivers to the competition.

While the final decision has not yet been made, the association president said he definitely believes a biennial competition could enhance the level of the competition by allowing more time to raise sponsorships and possibly expanding the event.

Casey said the rodeo is a great way for competitors to showcase their skills against other drivers in the region, and show the skill it takes to do their job. At the same time, he added, "we realize it can be expensive for the companies and the sponsors, and we are trying to strike a balance."

The competition was open to anyone who has been employed as a professional truck driver for at least 11 of the 12 months prior to the event and free of preventable accidents and moving traffic violation convictions for the previous year prior to the competition. Contestants do not operate the trucks they normally drive, they are put into a competitor's truck to not give anyone an advantage during the competition.

Drivers were put through a number of challenging exercises, including; a pre-trip inspection, six driving challenges and finally a delivery ticket challenge. After the official challenges, drivers competed in fun zone activities where the driver could pick up extra bonus points. The pre trip inspection was worth 50 points. The six challenges on the driving course were each worth 50 points for a total of 300 possible points, and another 50 available on the delivery challenge ticket. Up to 30 bonus points could also be made at the fun zone.



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FIRST PLACE – **Tracy Dickie** of City Concrete in Fredericton NB
SECOND PLACE – **Jody Allen** of Quality Concrete in Moncton NB

The winners were selected based on a cumulative score derived from the competition challenges and the driver with the most points took home the top prize. The top three overall finishers, as well as the winners of each of the official and fun zone challenges were recognized at the awards banquet.

The challenges presented on the driving course included backing up in an alley, navigating through barricades, parallel parking, target stopping, stopping at train tracks, a diminished clearing challenge and a mailbox challenge.



Competition was fierce and the weather cooperative for the 2026 Concrete Truck Rodeo challenges.

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Board meeting celebrates 60th anniversary with special activities

By Andy Walker

In celebration of the 60th anniversary of the Atlantic Concrete Association, members are being invited to a number of social events held in conjunction with the summer meeting of the association's board of directors.

Although details of the event are still being finalized, Executive Director Pam Woodman said the main event will be a cruise of Halifax Harbour on the Harbour Queen. Pre-registration for the event will be required, and she urged interested members to watch emails and the website for registration information.

The meeting itself has been slated for August 24 in Halifax. Board President Bruce Casey says the board meetings throughout the year rotate between Moncton and Halifax and focus on business. He says the summer session usually includes a dinner for board members and a social event for all members and, this year, the board members wanted to open the social part, the harbour cruise, to the general membership.

He is expecting the event to be well attended, saying the one-day event will be on a Monday, which will allow people attending from outside the area to come early for the weekend if they choose.

Casey added, "it is a great way to wrap up the summer, celebrate our 60th anniversary as an organization, and continue the work of the board of directors."

The association is also planning a golf tournament for September 17 at the Moncton Golf and Country Club.



Coming Events

2026 Golf Tournament—Sept 17 at Moncton Golf and Country Club

2026 Decement Fest—Early December 2026. Details to come soon.

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White Rose project nominated for international concrete award

by Andy Walker

The West White Rose offshore oil development project is in the running for a prestigious international award.

The multi-faceted project has been nominated for the international American Concrete Institute (ACI) Excellence in Concrete Construction Awards.

This nomination also serves as a prelude to the regional chapter reinstating a local version of the awards program, something that hasn't happened in more than 20 years.

Husky Energy, on behalf of the West White Rose Project (WWRP) proponents, Husky, Suncor Energy Inc. and Nalcor Energy, is leading the development of the project. The White Rose field and satellite extensions are located in the Jeanne d'Arc Basin, 350 km east of Newfoundland and Labrador in approximately 120 m of water on the Grand Banks.

The West White Rose Project is being developed through a fixed drilling platform consisting of a concrete gravity structure (CGS), built by the SNC-Lavalin- Dragados-Pennecon General Partnership (SDP), and an integrated topsides facility. SDP has constructed the CGS in the Argentia Graving Dock, located on the ice-free Placentia Bay, approximately 130 kilometres from St John's.

The original White Rose oil field has been producing oil for two decades, and this expanded project is expected to increase the oil production time for as much as 14 years.

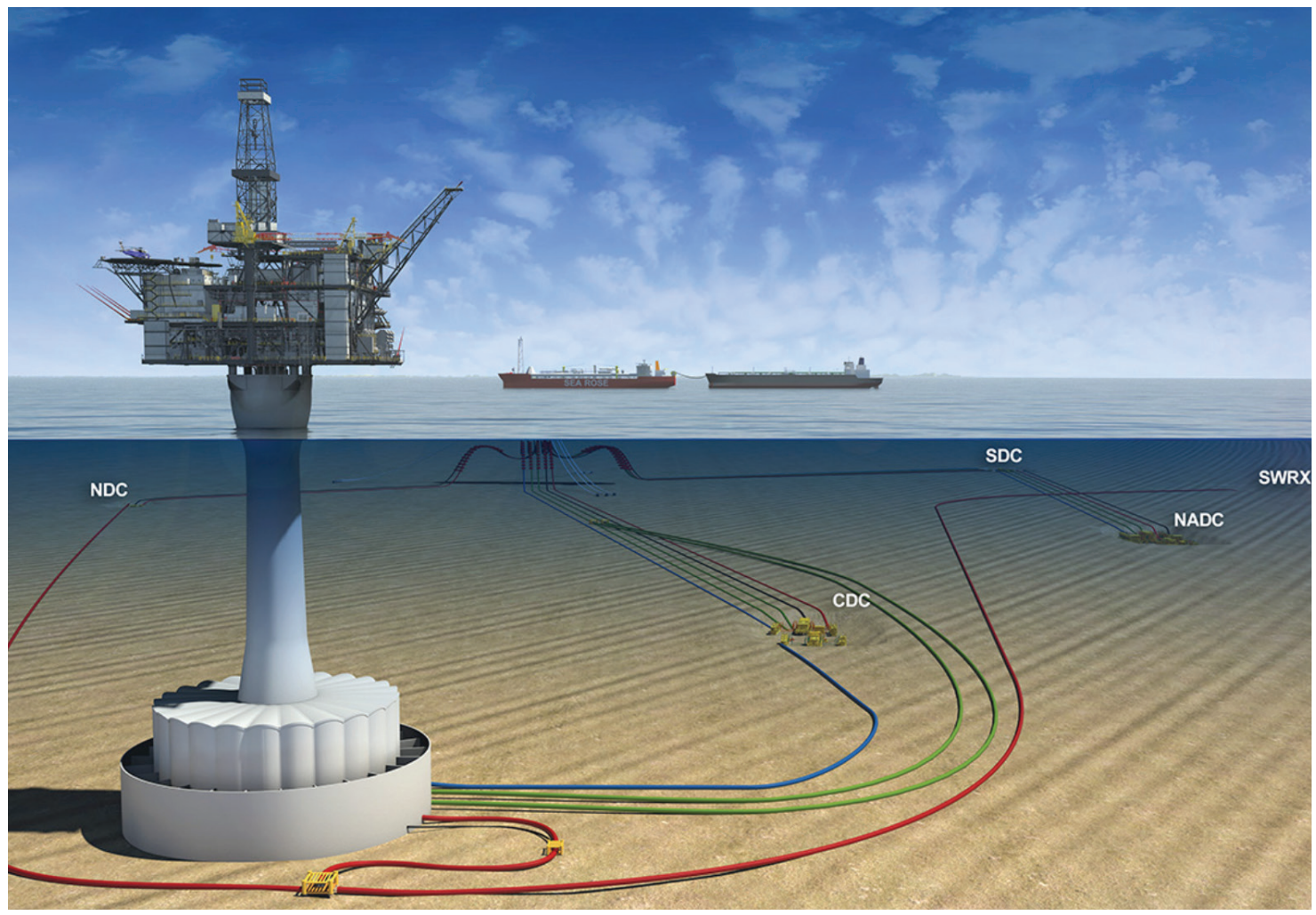
Tanya Owns, the president of ACI-Atlantic, says the awards program is designed to provide a platform to recognize concrete projects at the forefront of innovation and technology. The White Rose project will be facing competitors from around the world in the competition, with the winners being announced at a gala celebration in Atlanta, Georgia on October 12.

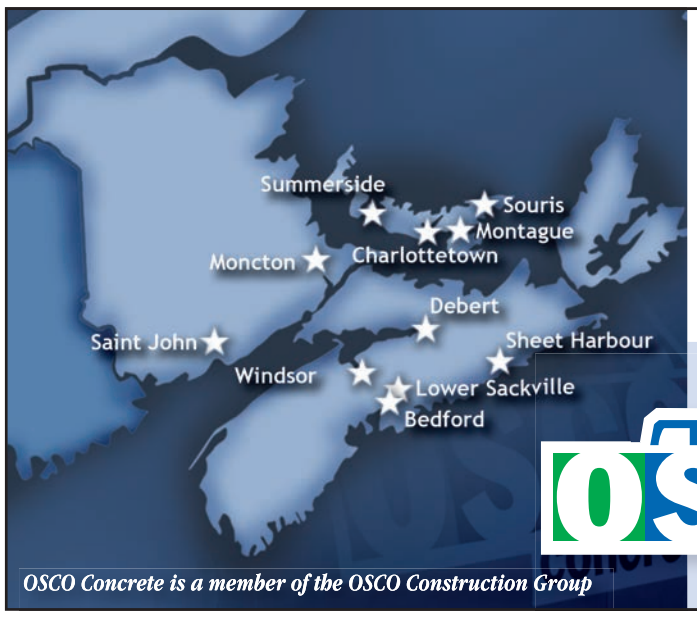
She says the Atlantic chapter is pretty excited about having an entry in the competition and "we certainly wish them the best of luck."

The regional president said the local competition will follow the same criteria as the international event. The categories are Low-Rise Structures (up to three stories); Mid-Rise Structures (4-15 stories); High-Rise Structures (more than 15 stories); Bridges; Decorative Concrete; Flatwork; Infrastructure and Repair and Restoration.

Owens explains the judges will be looking at such factors as structural merit and structural innovation, adding, "they are still working out the details of the contest. "Right now the plan is to the present the inaugural version of the awards at the annual meeting, which is slated for Halifax next February.

"We have some excellent work being done by our members in this region and we see this as a way to showcase local projects," she adds. "We are pretty excited to be reintroducing the awards. It is nice to be able to recognize deserving companies for their work."





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West White Rose project now ready to begin production

By Andy Walker

Using enough concrete to fill three Olympic sized swimming pools, the concrete gravity structure (CGS) that will support the West White Rose Project is now complete.

"This was a really big project for our company," explains Hossam Alalaily, a project manager with AtkinsRealis, which was part of a consortium of companies (along with Dragados and Pennecon) that built the structure. "For 69 days, we were a 24/7 operation."

The structure, which was built in Argentia for Calgary-based Cenovus Energy, required 8,000 m3 of concrete and reached a height of 92.35 metres, and was built in a dry dock designed especially for that purpose.

The structure is designed to support the topsides of the drilling platform. Risers were extended from the topsides, down the centre of the CGS and integrated with the rest of the subsea infrastructure in the White Rose field.

A statement from Cenovus explained the project used the slip forming of pouring concrete that is typically used in large structures. It involves rebar and concrete being placed (by hand) into formworks that constantly move upwards. The continuous movement ensures there are no joints, as new concrete is constantly being poured and adhering to old concrete, leaving no leak paths for water and helping ensure the structure is strong.

The biggest challenge of this method is obviously the continuous nature of the project. While it is possible to slow down to overcome challenges like severe weather, the slip forming can't stop until the process is completed.

"We did have some slowdowns due to weather but that has to be expected in Atlantic Canada," Alalaily said. "Everyone associated with this project should be proud. It is a major feat of engineering that came together right here in Atlantic Canada."

He noted the project involved up to 1,400 people, making it one of the largest projects of its kind in the region.

The White Rose field where the concrete gravity structure is based is located in the Jeanne d'Arc Basin of the Grand Banks, approximately 350 km east of Newfoundland and Labrador in 120 m of water.

A news release issued by Cenovus when it released its first quarter financial results indicates drilling operations are now under way and the first oil is expected in production by this fall.

The company estimates production from the West White Rose is expected to reach net peak production of 45,000 barrels per day in 2028. Cenovus has budgeted $450 million to $500 million for offshore expenditure in 2026.



