

Electric Progress

RON CHAMBERS' EARLY STRUGGLES PROVED THE PERFECT PLATFORM FROM WHICH TO BUILD A THRIVING ELECTRICAL BUSINESS

CHAMBERS ELECTRIC HAS RECENTLY COMPLETED some of its largest and most complex projects to date. With ITC Construction Group, it worked to meet tight deadlines and Platinum LEED requirements on the Millennium Water development, easily finishing the project on time for occupancy. Also with ITC, Chambers' work on the Woodward's redevelopment and its new SFU Performing Arts Center was extremely challenging, as the complex included more than 15 separate types of occupancies, from social and market housing to federal offices and commercial spaces. At \$19 million, this is the largest electrical project Chambers has ever undertaken.

With Degelder Construction Co. Ltd., Chambers has also completed Azure Towers, a unique commercial high-rise residential project. This complex integrates three towers into the New Westminster SkyTrain station and contains 200,000 square feet of commercial/retail space, including a Safeway, banks, restaurants and theatres.

Combined with other projects such as Grand Central Tower for Intergulf Developments, Newgen Tower for Kerkhoff Construction, Nahanni Tower for Polygon Developments and what has been called the ultimate luxury condo tower, The Erickson for Concorde Pacific, Chambers Electric has completed more than \$60 million worth of electrical projects in the past year.

By his own admission, the Port Coquitlam-born and raised Chambers didn't start out planning to be an electrician. Rather, it was a trade he stumbled into after spending a couple of years working for Canadian Pacific Railroad. "I worked with electricity at CPR in the signal department," he says. "One of my colleagues was a real character who on weekends was employed by an electrical



contractor, and after a series of amusing events – which I didn't think were amusing at the time – I ended up leaving CPR and working for PITS Electric."

Chambers pauses before adding, "The name should have been my first clue: within a year the company went under and all of my life savings went with it."

At his next job, toiling 10 hours a day and six days a week, Chambers learned the trade from a German-born contractor who taught him pride in workmanship and how to work quickly.

Moving on, Chambers, who had enrolled in night school to perfect his trade, undertook a project that consisted of wiring a new appliance warehouse. It gave him a keen appreciation for doing a job right. "The contractor was cutting a lot of corners, including calling for inspections," he recalls. "Prior to opening day, the electrical inspector who checked out the facility happened to be my night school instructor. When he asked if everything was up to code I couldn't lie, so I told him what we had been instructed to do. Needless to say, we failed the inspection."

However, the warehouse owner asked Chambers and another electrician working with him if they could perform an 11th hour overhaul of the wiring system. "My partner and I spent 18-hour days re-wiring the place," he says. The owner was so impressed that he urged Chambers to obtain his own license and promised to give him more work – which, in 1976, was how Chambers Electric was launched.

Chambers smiles when recalling his company's early years. "I was a 21-year-old with a '66 Chevy, a ladder and some hand tools," he says. "Most of the time I was in over my head. What really kept me on track were good clients – suppliers such as Van Horne [now Westburne Electrical Supply] – and my wife, who always supports me. And believe me, to survive the early '80s, you needed support."

CHAMBERS ELECTRIC



(Top right) The \$19-million Woodward's redevelopment, the biggest electrical project Chambers Electric has undertaken.

(Above) An artist's rendering of the Azure Towers complex, which is being integrated with New Westminster SkyTrain station.

**Congratulations to the team at Chambers Electric
on this amazing achievement.**



15156 North Bluff Road, White Rock, B.C. V4B 3E5 | Phone 604 538 3511 | Fax 604 538 2009

oceanpacificlighting.com



The Next Generation of Security and Communication Solutions:

- CCTV
- Access Control
- Fibre/TV
- Alarm Monitoring
- Alarms
- Service and Support
- Home Theater and Home Automation
- Intercom
- Voice Data Networks
- Installation

#13 - 62 Fawcett Road, Coquitlam, BC V3K 6V5
Office: 604-517-8324 • Fax: 604-648-8610
Email: info@nexgentech.ca • Web: www.nexgentech.ca



**MAXAM
METAL PRODUCTS LTD.**

www.maxammetal.com

Toll Free Phone: 1-866-446-2926 Toll Free Fax: 1-866-436-2926

Telephone: 604-433-4243 Fax: 604-433-4148

ACCESS DOORS • ROOF HATCHES • FLOOR DOORS

Three Generations of Quality Metal Products

We are proud to be a supplier to Chambers Electric

CHAMBERS ELECTRIC

Today, Chambers Electric is renowned for its high-rise expertise, and Chambers' first such project was the infamous Pennyfarthing Harbour Cove project, where the clash between Kerkhoff Construction and the building trade unions made headline news. "At the same time we also won a contract for the Royal Jubilee Hospital, which was a huge undertaking for an open shop trade at that time," he says. "It was a very complex project that entailed a new wing for ICU, CCU and burn units, as well as a complete renovation of the existing distribution and emergency generator systems."

Chambers' association with long-term clients, such as ITC Construction Group and Degelder Construction Co. Ltd., dates back to the mid-1980s and led to him opening offices in Washington and Calgary. "We opened in Washington, because in 1998 Mike Degelder asked if we would be interested in joining him to build a hotel in Federal Way, just south of Seattle," he says. "I was willing, but only if some of my good people would make the move. When I asked, three of my best people were keen to start



OL' FAITHFUL: Chambers drove to work in a '66 Chevy during his firm's early years.

a new venture. So that was the beginning of our Washington division, which today continues to provide high-quality electrical services to a growing number of clients in the greater Seattle area." A similar process unfolded when ITC became involved in the Calgary market, and today Chambers Electric is presiding over projects such as the design-build University of Calgary Student Residences and the Luna residences in the Beltline district of that city.

Although, in terms of energy, Chambers is not much different from the 21-year-old kid who drove to job sites in his '66 Chevy, the work he handles today covers some of the most significant and challenging projects ever to be located in B.C. "We completely renovated the historic Bayshore Hotel for Aoki Corp with ITC, which at the time was the largest and fastest renovation of its kind," he says.

Chambers has worked with Concorde Pacific ever since it first did business in B.C. in the mid-1980s and completed over 20 high-rise towers for the developer. "We





Division of Sonepar Canada Inc.

Wire and Cable Specialists Since 1978

Proud partner of:
Chambers Electrical Corp.

For info on our products and services,
visit: www.texcan.com

Contact a wire and cable specialist today.
Tel: 1.800.665.1025 or 604.528.3600
Email: texcansales@sonepar.ca



Vancouver Edmonton Calgary Saskatoon Winnipeg



ULTIMATE LUXURY: Chambers Electric worked on the innovative Erickson project.

did the Spectrum/Costco project, which consisted of four 32-storey towers over a 150,000-square-foot Costco store," he says. "It was a difficult job, because all four towers were constructed at the same time on four/five-day pour cycles."

Over the years, Chambers Electric has successfully completed hospitals, colleges, schools, shopping centers, office towers and numerous residential and commercial projects. "There's no project we can't handle, as long as I have the enthusiastic, dedicated group of people I'm privileged to work with," Chambers says.

With a resume of high-rise projects numbering over 150 towers – larger than any other contractor in B.C. and possibly Canada – Chambers Electric will continue to provide quality workmanship and integrated planning in the electrical construction business. The company's philosophy is simple: constant improvement, in addition to identifying good people, developing their skill, and working with great clients. And although he tends to downplay his success, Chambers' tough standards have made his company the contractor of choice for many contractors and developers.

Besides the Azure Towers development at the New Westminster SkyTrain station, Chambers' team is busy on Park Place Towers (formerly the Infinity Tower) and other high-profile jobs. "The recession was tough on everyone, but we expect to be back full-force by 2011," he says, adding that, as hectic as his workload may become, he'll continue to place a priority on people. "I've been a very lucky man to have staff and clients that have built this company. I'm enormously grateful for their support, and I look forward to our future together." ■

This promotional feature was prepared by BCBusiness magazine's Special Advertising Features Dept. Writer: Robin Brunet. For information contact BCBusiness VP of corporate features John Cochran at 604-299-7311. Email: jcochrane@canadawide.com



Design

Lighting

We are privileged and proud to be a key supplier to Chambers Electric.

Congratulations on continued success.

SHOWROOM HOURS

Mon - Sat 9:00 am - 5:30 pm

100 - 5499 192 street

Surrey, BC V3S 8E5

T: 604.576.8733

designlighting.ca

protect

Proud providers of fire protection and security solutions to **Chambers Electric.**

Best wishes for continued success!

www.chubbedwards.com

1-800-691-5677

Chubb EDWARDS

A UTC Fire & Security Company

CHAMBERS ELECTRIC

*Over 34 years of providing quality & service
in the electrical construction industry.*



101 - 204 Cayer Street, Coquitlam, BC V3K 5B1

Ph: 604-526-5688 Fax: 604-526-0657

www.chamberselectric.com