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2021 Women in Construction: Rhona Dias, General Manager, B.C. Tent & Awning

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What was your greatest professional achievement or most notable project in the last 12 months? We provide temporary tent and awning structures across a wide range of industries, sometimes as a

complement to ongoing construction. Last year was totally different than most, and our most notable work was providing tenting for the restaurant industry as they sought to comply with the COVID-19 regulations. Another big area for us was the medical industry, who needed additional space for COVID-19 testing. And in another departure from the norm, a number of institutions actually purchased tents that they will keep and use as part of their ongoing infrastructure.

How have you adapted and changed in the last 12 months? We have actually sold a fair amount of our inventory as opposed to simply renting it for shorter-term use. We are seeing that there are organizations who believe that they will need this supplemental space for the foreseeable future. We have further adapted by tapping into new markets – specifically, the medical and restaurant industries. In 2021 we will look for additional new markets.

What are you most looking forward to post-pandemic? I'm looking forward to more regular socialization and get-togethers. Historically, we've arranged rentals for personal use as well as commercial. On the personal side it could be a party for a spouse, or a graduation ceremony. We've been getting inquiries for these sorts of activities, with dates as early as May. I am hoping that the vaccination program ramps up to the point where these get togethers are regular activities again for people – not just because it's better business, but because it will be great for people to be able to socialize again!

Why should women consider a career in construction? This has always been a male-driven field. However, a female perspective on a job site can bring real value. To oversimplify just a bit, if you place two white chairs side by side, the male will see two white chairs. A female will see everything that's different about them – different manufacturers, different shades of color, and so forth. Women bring a different perspective to a job, and can make significant contributions.

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