



RMA
RURAL MUNICIPALITIES
of ALBERTA

SPRING 2018

**CONVENTION
HIGHLIGHTS**



AAMDC TRADE SHOW

The AAMDC's annual trade show featured businesses and companies from around Alberta and beyond. This event is a tremendous opportunity for municipal council's and their staff to view the newest and best services that are offered to municipalities. This year's tradeshow sold out and additional booths were added to accommodate the increased demand. In total, 166 exhibitors were booked including those displayed by AAMDC approved suppliers.





LAUNCH OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES OF ALBERTA

As both rural Alberta and the world around us continue to evolve, the Board of Directors reached a decision to rebrand the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties (AAMDC) to become the Rural Municipalities of Alberta (RMA). In the process of introducing the association's new name and logo, President Kemmere walked through the full history of AAMDC's branding, sharing logos and previous association names. Since 1909, we have helped rural municipalities achieve strong and effective local government, and the RMA will continue to serve this role for members. RMA will continue to provide advocacy and business services through RMA Trade, RMA Fuel, RMA Insurance, and RMA External Relations and Advocacy. RMA is committed to leading in a proactive, responsive, and collaborative manner, operating with integrity and honesty, accountability and transparency, maintaining a high level of connection and trust with our members, and serving as stewards of the environment.

As we continue to grow, we recognize the importance of having an identity that resonates with our members and partners, and unifies all divisions of our organization. Our renewed brand makes it easier for people to comprehend who we are and what we represent. It also gives us greater flexibility to market ourselves to a wider audience, to grow our advocacy, and expand our business for the benefit of all members. We will, however, continue to provide the same proactive leadership and collaborative work ethic to address the needs of our members. Our organization continually seeks to be accountable and transparent in our actions, while operating with integrity on behalf of our members and with various levels of government and other stakeholders. Rural municipalities in Alberta are diverse, forward thinking, and support rural Alberta as one of the key economic drivers in the province. Alberta's rural municipalities deserve a unified voice. The RMA is proud to serve in that role.

PRESIDENT'S SPEECH

President Al Kemmere took the stage at the spring convention to deliver his semi-annual address. President Kemmere opened his speech by noting that the RMA, alongside the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association (AUMA), continues to work with Alberta Municipal Affairs to support municipalities in adapting to the requirements in the amended Municipal Government Act (MGA). This collaboration has led to the development of several resources to support the implementation of MGA changes. These resources include an inter-municipal collaboration framework (ICF) toolkit, and two guidance documents: one for developing codes of conduct and one for developing a public participation policy. These tools will be available soon on RMA's website.

President Kemmere also outlined the recent initiative by the Elected Officials Education Program (EOEP) to provide Munis 101 post-election training to approximately 1000 councillors across Alberta. The EOEP is a joint initiative between the RMA and the AUMA. Continuing the theme of collaboration, President Kemmere provided an update on the asset management workshops for elected officials and municipal staff being offered by the RMA, AUMA and Infrastructure Asset Management Alberta (IAMA) through funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM). Asset management has become an important focus for municipalities in recent years and gradually, more and more municipalities are taking advantage of new programs and tools available. These workshops provide the guidance and direction to municipalities that are looking to integrate asset management into their operations.

A new area of focus for municipalities is the legalization of cannabis, and with that the potential requirements for municipalities to make amend-

ments to their land use by-laws. RMA has been actively engaged on this issue and is working with the Government of Alberta and the Government of Canada to clarify the new rules and regulations that will define this industry. This includes engaging the provincial and federal governments on the RMA's position on the sharing of federal excise tax revenues – with a message that the proportion shared with municipalities should cover municipal costs associated with legalization.

On the topic of the forthcoming provincial budget, President Kemmere spoke to the frustrations of RMA members due to the Government of Alberta's decision to freeze assessment year modifiers (AYM). Although the Government of Alberta is planning to review the AYM system, the impact that freezing the AYM at 2016 levels has had significant impacts for many rural municipalities. The RMA is committed to working with the province through the review process.

President Kemmere also commented on the future of the Municipal Sustainability Initiative (MSI), the Strategic Transportation Infrastructure Program (STIP), the Species at Risk Act, agricultural society funding, and broadband. President Kemmere concluded by emphasizing that since 1909, RMA has represented rural municipalities on a wide range of issues. With 69 members, the RMA has a unique perspective to offer to other levels of government and is proud to be the voice for rural Alberta.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS

Keynote speaker Kelly Lendsay shared his history, experiences, and learnings as an Indigenous leader and social entrepreneur. Kelly's explanation of the important role of Indigenous Canadians in growing our country's economy supported a new way to look at the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's call to action. Kelly provided valuable insights on the link between trust, relationship-building, and success. He showed that there are several avenues available to municipalities when engaging with their Indigenous neighbours, and increased collaboration will lead to mutual benefits.



FEDERATION OF CANADIAN MUNICIPALITIES UPDATE

Garth Frizzell, Second Vice President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) and Councillor with the City of Prince George, brought greetings to delegates on behalf of the FCM. Vice President Frizzell's highlighted the FCM's Municipal Asset Management Program, and the fact that the RMA, in conjunction with the AUMA and IAMA, received a large grant to deliver free asset management workshops to municipal elected officials and staff across Alberta.

Vice President Frizzell also spoke to key aspects of the recently released federal budget that will support municipalities, including \$100 million in funding for further research and development of rural broadband technologies. He also expressed FCM's concern with the lack of federal action on affordable housing in Budget 2018.

The Investing in Canada plan has the potential to improve the condition of public infrastructure

across Canada. Vice President Frizzell shared that many of the FCM's advocacy priorities appear to have been considered by the federal government based on completed bilateral negotiations in some provinces and territories. Agreements to streamline applications for small municipalities, a balance between provincial and municipal green infrastructure projects, and the application of a rural lens to eligibility and application processes are examples of considerations in some completed agreements that support the FCM's priorities for the Investing in Canada plan.



ADDRESS FROM THE PROVINCE: HONOURABLE SHAYE ANDERSON

The Honourable Shaye Anderson, Minister of Municipal Affairs provided delegates with an update of key issues and development impacting municipalities in the province, including the MSI and the need for long-term municipal funding, rural crime, provincial support of municipalities struggling with unpaid taxes on linear properties, and agricultural society funding.

Minister Anderson emphasized how important it is for the Government of Alberta to work with the RMA and other partners to develop long-term, sustainable municipal funding upon the completion of the MSI. In fact, Minister Anderson identified this as his number one priority for 2018. On the topic of rural crime, the Minister spoke to the frustration of rural Albertans across the province, and his optimism at the potential positive impacts of the Government of Alberta's recent announcement of \$10 million in funding, along with an action plan to fight rural crime. Minister Anderson also provided an update on the Provincial Education Requisition Credit (PERC), which was launched in late 2017 in response to RMA members concerns about unpaid linear property taxes. To this point, 37 applications have been processed under the PERC program, and approximately \$3 million in credits have been issued. The Minister completed his address by delivering some good news: agricultural society funding has been confirmed for 2018, as well as for at least the next three years. As agricultural societies play a tremendous role in supporting rural communities, this is great news for RMA members.



THE HONOURABLE SANDRA JANSEN, MINISTER OF INFRASTRUCTURE

The Honourable Sandra Jansen, Minister of Infrastructure, provided delegates with an update on the Government of Alberta's progress in negotiating an agreement with the Government of Canada to determine how funding from the federal Investing in Canada plan would be administered and distributed in Alberta. Minister Jansen emphasized the important role that Alberta's \$3.4 billion share of the federal funding would play in strengthening Alberta's provincial and municipal infrastructure, and explained that the Government of Alberta was working with their federal counterparts to ensure the funding would be as accessible as possible for all types of municipalities in the province.



BOARD GOVERNANCE REVIEW COMMITTEE

To operate accountably, every four years the RMA appoints a member-comprised Board Governance Review Committee to research the RMA board's current governance process and recommend areas for improvement. At the spring 2017 convention, the BGRC presented nine recommendations to members, all of which were endorsed. Over the past year, the RMA Board of Directors has worked on implementing the recommendations. The Board of Directors provided a twenty-minute update of implementation progress to date, highlighting six recommendations that have been implemented successfully, and three more on the path towards implementation.

RURAL CRIME PLENARY

The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) Commanding Officer Todd Shean, along with Senior Assistant Deputy Minister (ADM) Bill Sweeney provided an update to all members regarding the current status of Alberta's rural crime and the manners in which they are working to address it. Deputy Commissioner Shean described his past experiences, the current environment, and his detailed plan of action. The plan entails: recruiting officers and analysts, creating a management methodology for handling telecommunications, and the creation of crime reduction teams. These teams are located in districts that know no municipal boundaries to allow the RCMP to travel to address crime. He is also opening dialogue and partnership agreements with Fish and Wildlife Officers, Citizens on Patrol, and Rural Crime Watch. Commanding Officer Shean emphasized that the information gathered tells the RCMP that it is a relatively small number of criminals who continue to commit these acts for a variety of reasons, including mental illness and addiction. He noted that the intelligence teams will be collecting information, advising on necessary supports, to equip the RCMP to respond to calls appropriately. Lastly, Shean encouraged members to share with their municipalities that communication, even what may seem like an insignificant detail can be what solves a crime, so please continue to reach out to the appropriate authorities with any and all information.

Senior ADM Sweeney shared both Provincial and Federal information that shed light on how Government is understanding and tackling rural crime. He spoke about the Federal Government's announcement of 300 million dollars being funded towards guns and gangs over the next five years, as well as Alberta's 10 million dollars to tackle rural crime. Senior ADM Sweeney also



shared the details of Alberta's 7 point plan, which are as follows:

- The formation of crime reduction units, which will see specially-trained officers focus solely on bringing prolific offenders to justice,
- Focusing on specialized police intelligence to make it easier for different ministries, law enforcement bodies, and community groups to co-ordinate,
- The establishment of a police support centre staffed by 23 civilian employees to handle records management and routine data entry, allowing police to focus on crime prevention,
- Hiring eight to 10 new prosecutors and support staff,
- Encouraging more extensive co-ordination and information sharing with peace officers, such as Alberta Sheriffs, fish and wildlife enforcement, commercial vehicles and conservation officers,
- Implementing a public engagement and education strategy; and
- Using technology like GPS trackers to target rural crime.



BREAKOUT SESSIONS

Six breakout sessions were held at the RMA Spring 2018 Convention. They included:

WORKING TOGETHER:

Using the Inter-Municipal Collaboration Framework Workbook

As intermunicipal collaboration frameworks (ICFs) becomes a priority for municipalities across Alberta, the RMA, in collaboration with AUMA and Alberta Municipal Affairs, has developed an ICF Workbook designed to support the ICF development process. This workshop provided an overview of the Workbook, as well as strategies for ensuring the ICF process results in a mutually beneficial final product. Stantec's Truper McBride, one of the lead authors of the Workbook, provided a helpful overview of the document, strategies for maximizing its potential, and answered other ICF-related questions from delegates.

DISCOVERING YOUR SPEAKERS EDGE

Public speaking expert Lauren Sergy led workshop participants through the basics of being a successful public speaker. Lauren's presentation focused on the importance of being prepared to speak: knowing your audience, knowing your speaking goals, and knowing why you were asked to speak should play a major role in the success of your public speaking efforts. Staying true to yourself and leveraging your unique speaking traits and mannerisms to stand out from the crowd is critical for effective and memorable public speaking. Lauren's workshop made public speaking seem manageable with a little preparation and belief in yourself!

INDIGENOUS AWARENESS CIRCLE

Five panelists from across Alberta came to this workshop to share perspectives with participants about Indigenous culture, history, and answer questions from the audience. This circle-like work-



shop offered a safe space for participants to ask any questions about Indigenous communities in Alberta and helped to facilitate members feeling more comfortable to approach Indigenous neighbours to build relationships. The panel answered questions about differences and similarities between municipalities, First Nations, and Métis settlements, how to welcome Indigenous band councils into municipal councils, how to approach relationship building, and how to approach a process for working with Indigenous communities, among others.

GOOD BEHAVIOUR AND GREAT ENGAGEMENT:

Using MGA Tools for Code of Conduct and Public Participation Policies

This workshop provided delegates with an opportunity to learn about two new tools developed by the RMA, AUMA, and Alberta Municipal Affairs to support municipalities in preparing to meet new code of conduct and public participation policy requirements under the amended Municipal Government Act. Brownlee LLP's Michael Solowan, lead developer of both tools, walked participants through how to use each and fielded questions on the tools and the associated requirements.



CANNABIS IN THE COUNTIES:

Amending Land Use Bylaws for Production and Retail Cannabis Facilities

Participants gathered to hear three panelists speak to the why's and how's of amending land use bylaws (LUB) to accommodate for cannabis legalization in their municipalities. Chelsea Parent, policy analyst from RMA and Craig Thomas outlined key components for municipalities to think about before jumping into amending land use bylaws, and Linnette Capcara from Strathcona County shared her county's interesting experience working with diverse stakeholders in her community. Participants walked away with food for thought and examples of challenges they may face moving forward in their own municipalities.

GET TO KNOW YOUR ASSOCIATION

In this interactive workshop, participants had an opportunity to engage with the RMA President and Executive Director, as well as staff representing RMA Business Services, RMA Fuel, RMA Insurance, and RMA External Relations and Advocacy. No question was off-limits, as this workshop was intended to provide members with information on what happens "behind the scenes" at RMA, and how the RMA Board of Directors and staff work on a day-to-day basis to support the advocacy and business needs of members.



RESOLUTIONS

The RMA resolution session provides an opportunity for members to vote on resolutions brought forward by member municipalities. Each endorsed contributes to the RMA's advocacy efforts for three years. Active and past resolutions can be found on the RMA resolutions database at RMAAlberta.com.

The following resolutions were endorsed at the RMA Spring 2018 Convention.

- 1-18S Request for Implementation of the 2018 Assessment Year Modifier for Well and Pipeline Assessments (*MD of Willow Creek*)
- 2-18S Combatting Rural Crime (*Lacombe County*)
- 3-18S Increase Crown Prosecutor Staffing Levels for Rural Municipalities (*County of St. Paul*)
- 4-18S Support for Continuation of Grant Funding for Agricultural Initiatives Program (*Lac Ste. Anne County*)
- 5-18S Provincial Government Consultation and Communication Protocol with Municipalities (*County of Grande Prairie*)
- 6-18S Wind Energy Regulations Required at Provincial Level (*County of Paintearth*)
- 7-18S Standards for Property Contaminated by Fentanyl and Carfentanil (*Sturgeon County*)
- 8-18S Amendments Required for Provincial Recycling Regulations (*Strathcona County*)
- 9-18S Exemption of Seniors Housing from Requirement to Pay Carbon Levy (*Beaver County*)
- 10-18S Tenure Extension Requirements for Unconventional Development (*MD of Greenview*)
- 11-18S Recycling of Solar Panels (*MD of Foothills*)
- 12-18S Victim Services Units Funding (*Northern Sunrise County*)



MINISTERIAL FORUM

Once again, the RMA hosted members of the Government of Alberta Cabinet on our convention stage. The ministers addressed questions from RMA members on several topics, including:

- Wide load corridors
- Services for children impacted by the opioid crisis
- Northwest traffic corridor development
- Rural ambulance service
- Socio-economic study on impacts of caribou range planning
- Stronger legislation to address high rates of rural crime
- Demand energy meters
- Impacts of carbon levy in rural Alberta
- Licenses for water co-ops
- Funding for rural schools
- Timelines for caribou range planning
- Delivery of early learning in Alberta
- RCMP responsibility for filling vacancies in rural police services
- Control of wildlife through hunting
- Air ambulance service
- Control of genetically-modified alfalfa
- MSI funding
- Reinvestment of carbon levy revenues in rural Alberta
- Environmental approval processes for road construction
- Challenges of working with telecommunications companies in building cellular infrastructure
- Sustainability of Alberta's fisheries
- Assessment year modifier freeze
- Public consumption of cannabis
- Water license transfer approvals
- Provincial funding support of private highway maintenance contractors



COLLABORATIVELY SPEAKING— COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS

Ending the RMA Spring 2018 Convention on a high note, communications expert Lauren Sergy delivered a thoughtful plenary address on the important role that effective communication can play in successful collaboration. For RMA members, all of whom will be collaborating with municipal neighbours to develop intermunicipal collaboration frameworks and intermunicipal development plans over the next two years, Lauren's address was timely. Communicating for collaboration requires a common understanding of the purpose of the collaboration, as well as mutual respect of the goals and outcomes prioritized by all parties. While conflict is a common and natural part of collaboration, strong communication practices can ensure that periodic frustrations do not boil over into a toxic relationship, but rather are resolved constructively and respectfully.

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