

April 29, 2019

Update on FCM Activities from a Rural Alberta Perspective

Rural Alberta is represented on the FCM Board of Directors by RMA President Al Kemmere and Parkland County Councilor, AnnLisa Jensen

The **Federation of Canadian Municipalities** (FCM) currently represents over 2000 municipalities, which equates to 91% of the Canadian population. Approximately 80% of those member municipalities are classified as rural. Although the definition and understanding of “rural” naturally varies across the country, this large segment of population ensures that rural municipalities have a strong focus of attention for FCM and that our issues are being communicated to – and heard by – the federal level of government now more than ever.

Alberta Involvement on the FCM Board of Directors and Standing Committees

The **FCM Board of Directors** meets quarterly and sets policy priorities that reflect the concerns of municipal governments and affiliate members. The FCM Board is comprised of 77 representatives covering all provinces and territories in Canada, big and small. As per **FCM bylaws**, Alberta holds seven of those seats, currently represented by the following individuals:

- Al Kemmere, RMA President
- Barry Morishita, AUMA President
- Bev Esslinger, City of Edmonton
- Don Iveson, City of Edmonton
- AnnLisa Jensen, Parkland County
- Lawrence Lee, City of Red Deer
- Joe Magliocca, City of Calgary

Taneen Rudyk, Councillor from the Town of Vegreville, was also elected to the FCM Board of Directors as the Vice-President at Large as a result of a FCM board vacancy left by the Past President not running in their local election last fall.

AnnLisa Jensen, Councillor from Parkland County, is one of two rural Alberta representatives on the FCM Board of Directors. Councillor Jensen bring the rural municipal voice to various Standing Committee tables, the Rural Forum, the Prairies and Territories Regional Caucus, and the Board itself. Diversity is a priority for FCM, and Councillor Jensen has been appointed by President Vicki May Hamm to serve as Chairperson of the Standing Committee of Environmental Issues and Sustainable Development and as the representative for the Prairies

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and Territories on the Governance Review Task Force. Additional appointments include the Standing Committees for Conference Planning, Increasing Women's Participation in Municipal Government, and Social Economic Development with a sub-committee role on the Urban Indigenous Working Group.

RMA President Al Kemmere is the second rural Alberta representative on the FCM Board of Directors. President Kemmere is a strong advocate for rural municipalities at the FCM, representing member interests on the Executive Committee, Rural Forum, Standing Committee on Community Safety and Crime Prevention, the Standing Committee on Municipal Infrastructure and Transportation Policy, the Northern and Remote Forum, and the Conference Planning Committee. President Kemmere is also the co-chair of the Provincial and Territorial Associations Affiliates Committee and the Executive Directors Caucus.

Alberta is also additionally represented on several [Standing Committees and Forums, the Prairies and Territories Regional Caucus](#) by the following individuals:

- Jibs Abitoye, City of Fort Saskatchewan
- Wayne Bokenfohr, Sturgeon County
- Jeff Coffman, City of Lethbridge
- Ben Henderson, City of Edmonton
- Steve Upham, County of St. Paul

During 2018-19, rural Alberta has a voice at various key tables so that our issues and concerns can be understood.

FCM Advocacy Successes

The 2019 Federal Budget reflected funding on a few areas of priority which have been communicated by FCM on behalf of our members. The need for sustainable and reliable rural broadband will finally be addressed with a commitment of \$5.6 billion dollars over the next 10 years with the promise that 90% of Canadians will have reliable access to internet speeds of 50/10 mbps by 2021. FCM advocacy resulted in the Federal Gas Tax Fund several years ago and this budget includes a one-time additional transfer of \$2.2 billion to municipalities in 2019, effectively doubling the transfer for the year. FCM continues to be a conduit of funding directly to communities through the Green Municipal Fund and the Asset Management Fund which will have an infusion of \$950 million and \$60 million dollars respectively.

The recent appointment of the Minister of Rural Economic Development is also a direct result of FCM advocacy. At the 2018 FCM annual conference, a resolution was sponsored by RMA in response to the FCM's report, *Rural challenges, national opportunities*, which identified how rural municipalities are on the front lines of the demographic changes that have accompanied an increasingly urbanized and knowledge-based economy. This resolution was carried with 94% support, calling for the federal government to develop a practical, accountable policy framework for rural Canada through the application of a "rural lens" for new federal programs and

policies. The appointment of Minister Jordan in this capacity was a welcomed course of action, and she immediately reached out to FCM to discuss how to best work with rural municipalities. FCM looks forward to a productive relationship moving forward, especially with regard to broadband coverage and improved economic development capacity for our communities - which are priorities for this new portfolio.

FCM's Support for Energy Infrastructure Projects

However, ensuring the federal government's rural commitments are turned into outcomes requires ongoing engagement with local governments and communication about provincial issues. At the recent FCM board meeting in Penticton, the leadership of RMA President Al Kemmere and the representative voices of Alberta and Saskatchewan ensured that a **resolution was passed** on the critical importance of Alberta's energy sector to all of Canada. The upcoming FCM Annual Conference and Trade Show offers an opportunity for us to strongly - and effectively - communicate the importance of this sector. A campaign is being facilitated by the *Resource Communities Coalition of Canada* which will include a coordinated effort at the conference in which our members can participate to ensure the value of Alberta's energy sector is heard loud and clear. Rural content will continue to be a focus during the conference with a rural plenary and various workshops and sessions planned.

FCM's Strategic Plan and the Federal Election

2019 is an important year as we enter into a Federal Election Campaign. This is an opportunity to continue to communicate Alberta's priorities to all federal parties. Key messages identified by FCM on behalf of member municipalities, include the core goals of evolving the municipal-federal partnership, securing new municipal fiscal tools, an enhanced recognition and focus on the importance of rural municipalities, and the contribution of Alberta to Canada's economic growth and prosperity. The development of a cohesive 2019 Election Strategy is positioning FCM to continue to be of value to its membership, however it is important to hear from members in order to succeed. The voice of rural Alberta is important and there is always more work to be done.

The recent update of FCM's Strategic Plan, the Governance Review - which is a deep dive into revising how the organization is structured and will be at its most effective into the future - will ensure that the Federation of Canadian Municipalities remains a strong and effective national voice for local governments.

Upcoming FCM Events and Meetings

The **FCM's Annual Conference and Trade Show** will be taking place May 30 – June 2, 2019 in Quebec City. The Annual Conference provides a great opportunity to learn about important municipal initiatives and issues and network with elected officials from municipalities across Canada. The FCM Board of Directors will be meeting next in Waterloo and Kitchener, Ontario September 10-13, 2019.



BULLETIN

Bringing the rural municipal perspective to the FCM is an important role and Councillor Jensen and President Kemmere encourage members to connect with them regarding FCM activities, and RMA's involvement on various Standing Committees.

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