

The Express

Quarter 1 - 2009

Local Government Administration Association

welcome...
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It is truly amazing how quickly things can change, and at the same time stay the same.

Compared to this time last year, the economy is certainly weaker, finding quality staff a little bit easier and our municipal dollar seems to be going a bit further when funding capital projects. The environment within which we work has changed, but our focus for the upcoming year will remain the same. The LGAA will continue to work on training opportunities for municipal staff and will continue to work with our strategic partners to strengthen those relationships.

The new Board of Directors had their first meeting on May 29, 2009. We had a narrow focus last year, attempting to move forward the two priority areas mentioned above. We were successful in many areas, the agreement to form a joint committee with AARMA and SLGM being a major milestone.

This committee has yet to put forth any substantive work but I am hopeful that this will be the foundation from which we can move Alberta to the level of accomplishment we see in some of the other provinces regarding our profession. Reflecting on the recent AUMA President's Summit held in Red Deer at the end of April, there was a strong message that our two provincial associations representing elected officials need to work together with the Province in order to re-position local government. I strongly

believe the same is true for our administrative associations.

Listening to the messages coming from the Minister of Municipal Affairs, it seems that the writing is on the wall, there will be changes made in the near term. The Minister has been clear in his message that there are a number of municipalities in trouble and change is necessary. The suggestion is that smaller communities should beware. I congratulate the AUMA on their recent work on the Future of Local Governance. The report and content of the President's Summit is an attempt to work with Municipal Affairs and counter the top down approach that some think the Ministry is taking. In order for AUMA to facilitate a more grassroots approach, LGAA was asked to provide feedback to their report. Our membership did not perform so well in this task. Zone directors were asked to facilitate a zone discussion on the report but did not get a lot of feedback. There will be another opportunity to comment on the results of the President's Summit, please take this opportunity. The membership of the LGAA is represented very well by small communities. As Administrators in these communities, your insight is important.

I look forward to the challenges and opportunities that our Association will face over the next year and look forward to working with our membership to meet those challenges and take advantage of the opportunities.

land use framework - what does it all mean?

What Will the Alberta Land Use Framework Mean to My Municipality?

Dorothy Moore
Civic Solutions Inc.

The Land Use Framework, if it successfully passes in the legislature, will be rolled out in stages from 2010 to 2012. You will recognize similarities between the goals of the Land Use Framework and your Municipal Sustainability Plan (or ICSP) requirements: long term and triple bottom line sustainability- but on a provincial scale, with regional and local implications. Your MSP may have already provided the alignment with the overall provincial direction that your “context statements” will require. Municipalities’ second requirement will be to amend municipal planning documents to “adopt and implement regional planning directions”.

Minister Morton insists that municipal planning and decision making roles will be maintained. Additional resources and authority will assist municipalities with preservation of protected areas where appropriate and facilitate other measures that will aid in meeting or exceeding local or regional goals or standards. Existing appeal bodies will remain.

Market based tools are preferred where possible. Incentives are planned for innovative solutions which mitigate impacts or add value or capacity. Examples could be collaborative processes where heat or other waste products provide added value to another activity.

The Land use Framework seeks to preserve the viability of Alberta's land and to limit the negative impacts of human activities over time. The broad regional plan will have set “economic, environmental and social outcomes” that are appropriate for that particular region's landscape and align with the provincial direction for the Land Use Framework. Temporary regional advisory boards will take into account the provincial public lands (60% of Alberta) as well as the private lands within the region. Sub regions may be necessary where the landscape is markedly diverse. An LUF Secretariat will provide project management, communication, policy, and information technology expertise to the provincial cabinet committee responsible for LUF implementation.

The Land Use Framework seeks first to understand the land and what its carrying capacity is in different areas and for all types of activities. People and expertise are being gathered to create a leading edge database system and provincial baseline for land, air, water, biodiversity, industrial, commercial and planning standards and perhaps other things that we may measure in the future. We are duplicating efforts and resources now in a myriad of separate regulation and monitoring systems. A common database called Geo Discovery Alberta is being developed to collect and store all kinds of information in a virtual database with standards, and provide reliable, real time layers of information for users. Sensitive information will be protected, and complementary information will be shared with appropriate users

with levels of access, including the general public. “It will not be cheap to do, but there will be huge added value.” Alberta's municipalities and other sectors will lead the country with access to up to date information where and when it is needed to support the best possible decisions for the future of Albertans.

Save the Date!

**LGAA Conference & Tradeshow
March 16 - 19, 2010**

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BILL 36 Alberta Land Stewardship Act - A Commentary

by Brownlee LLP

Bill 36, the Alberta Land Stewardship Act (the "ALSA") has received second reading in the Legislative Assembly, and is expected to be passed at third reading this month (June 2009). The ALSA is intended to implement the strategies set out in the Land Use Framework Policy Paper Government of Alberta, December 2008). The ALSA amends 25 other statutes, almost all of which directly impact on municipalities.

The strategies in the Land Use Framework Initiative as carried forward in the ALSA are fundamentally progressive strategies that, if properly implemented, will enhance the quality of life for Albertans, and future generations. These strategies include the following:

- Developing of Regional Plans to integrate Provincial policies at a regional level and to govern the Provincial Government departments and boards, as well as municipalities;
- Enhancing communication through establishment of a Land Use Secretariat and Regional Advisory Councils (the latter of which will only be in place during initial development of Regional Plans);
- Enhancing cumulative effects management to manage the impacts of development on land, water and air;
- Developing a strategy for conservation and stewardship on private and public lands;
- Promoting efficient use of lands by decision-making processes by reducing the footprint of human activities on Alberta's landscape;
- Establishing information management systems together and monitor impacts; and
- Including the Aboriginal peoples in the consultation.

These are important and critical strategies. However, the legislation does raise concerns, which if not properly addressed, may tend to frustrate achievement of these strategies, and indeed, create uncertainty of development. These concerns are summarized below:

- Timing of Regulations – much of the framework and process referenced in the ALSA will be left to Regulations. While it is currently contemplated that the ALSA will be proclaimed into effect prior to adoption of the Regulations, this may create uncertainty in a number of areas .
- Impact of Regulations – there is a potential danger that provisions of the Regulations may impact and conflict with other Acts, such as the MGA.
- Appointments to Regional Advisory Councils – the Regional Advisory Councils will perform a critical role with respect to formation of Regional Plans, yet municipal representation has, to date, been limited.
- Lack of Consultation Process – Further delineation respecting the consultation process is necessary, both with respect to the Regional Plans, and other Regulations.
- Robust Consultation Required – short time frames have been targeted with respect to formulation of Regional Plans (in the range of 14 months). Consideration should be given to enhancing the consultation process.
- Term for Regional Plans – the ALSA contemplates that each Regional Plan will have a term or lifespan of up to 10 years. Consideration should be given to shortening this term for the initial Regional Plans (to say, 3 years) given that essential elements for the regional planning process have not yet been finalized (for example, the numerous Regulations contemplated under the ALSA; provincial policies respecting transportation and utility corridors; and provincial policies respecting fragmentation of agricultural lands).

Cont'd on next page

In our view, it is of critical importance that the GOA receive meaningful consultation and input from municipalities having regard to: the important role that municipalities play in planning and development processes; the expanse of the province under municipal jurisdiction; and the unique position that municipal elected officials play in balancing competing considerations for the overall public interest;

To date, only two Regional Advisory Councils have been formed (in the Lower Athabasca and South Saskatchewan basins). Consider the Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council; there are fifteen individuals who serve on the Regional Advisory Council; only three are municipal representatives (two are elected officials, and one is a senior planner).

Municipalities govern 90% of the land mass of the Province of Alberta. However, using the Lower Athabasca Regional Advisory Council as an example, only 20% of the representatives on the Regional Advisory Council are municipal representatives.

Democratically elected municipal officials have the mandate of balancing competing interests between different stakeholders. Likewise, municipal administrators, on a daily basis, provide advice on balancing competing considerations between different interests; municipal elected officials, as well as administrators, are uniquely skilled at balancing competing considerations within the context of planning matters. It is unfortunate that the representation on the Regional Advisory Council has, to date, not given a more prominent place to municipal input. It is to be hoped that the GOA will give consideration to significantly increasing municipal representation on the Regional Advisory Councils. At all events it is critical that municipalities make use of the existing and evolving consultation processes with a concerted effort to gather and provide meaningful and well considered input to decisions that will have such far reaching impacts on the planning of our province's future.



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Alberta Ventures' 10 Best Communities For Business

Economic Developers Alberta (EDA) is pleased to recognize those members who are being profiled in the June 2009 issue of Alberta Venture magazine as a top community for business.

"Alberta's Economic Development Officers work tirelessly on business retention, business expansion and investment attraction activities to expand the economic base in their communities," states Kent Rupert, EDA President, "Alberta Venture's Top 10 project brings profile to some of the great economic development work going on throughout the Province, enabling us to continue to improve and diversify our economy".

Alberta's 10 Best Communities for Business are featured in the June issue of Alberta Venture, with an expanded program of 30 community profiles available online at www.albertaventure.com.

This year, Alberta's International Region (which includes the City of Leduc, Leduc County and the towns of Beaumont, Calmar and Devon) grabs the number one spot as best overall community from the more than 30 communities surveyed and compared to compile the list. The other nine runners up profiled are: Airdrie, Calgary, Camrose, Edmonton, Lethbridge, Red Deer, Lloydminster, Strathcona County and Strathmore.

Congratulations to those communities chosen for this prestigious recognition.

For more information on these communities please visit:
<http://www.albertaventure.com/>

Top Thirty

Alberta's International Region (which includes the City of Leduc, Leduc County and the towns of Beaumont, Calmar and Devon)

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| Airdrie | Lethbridge |
| Alberta's International Region | Lloydminster |
| Calgary | Medicine Hat |
| Camrose | Okotoks |
| Cochrane | Peace River |
| Didsbury | Red Deer |
| Drayton Valley | Rocky View Municipal District |
| Drumheller | Slave Lake |
| Edmonton | Spruce Grove |
| Fort Saskatchewan | St. Albert |
| Grande Cache | Strathcona County |
| Grande Prairie | Strathmore |
| High River | Sturgeon County |
| Hinton | Whitecourt |
| Joint Economic Development Initiative Region | Wood Buffalo (Regional Municipality) |
| Lacombe | |

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The AMSC, a wholly-owned subsidiary of AUMA, provides aggregated services to members including benefits, pensions, general insurance, utilities, casual legal and many other services creating stability and savings. Through these member-owned programs, we strive to grow and improve our offerings based on member needs.

AMSC's Emerald Award Winning Energy Aggregation Program was launched in 2001 and has over 190 participating members. The program enables participants to accurately plan and budget their long term energy costs through stable pricing. Renewable energy comprises a 20% threshold of all electricity purchased, with resulting emission credits provided to each member based on consumption.

One of the core services for member employees is a comprehensive Benefits & Pensions Program, with a large self-insurance component, which offers a variety of protection including Life, Disability, Prescription, Dental, Health Care coverage and others. This is unparalleled in the benefits industry where the trend is increased rates of 10-25% each year.

The General Insurance Program provides coverage for over 260 members through subscribing to a self-insurance reciprocal (MUNIX), are owners of the program. In self-insuring losses, MUNIX has delivered back participation and risk management credits of over \$7.3 Million since inception.

Risk Management is an important tool in managing risk in your community and is a critical component of self-insurance. Managing risk is about preventing loss to property, safety and reducing accidents. Human suffering and financial loss can be avoided with sound risk management policies and procedures. Everyone deserves safe and consistent service from their municipal service providers. Risk management advice and training is provided through the Risk Control Program.

To learn more, or to take advantage of all of AMSC's services, contact us today!

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2009 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence



Honourable Ray Danyluk, Minister of Municipal Affairs, is pleased to announce the 2009 Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence. The eighth annual awards will recognize municipal government excellence and promote the sharing of knowledge among municipalities.

An independent review committee comprised of representatives from various municipal associations will recommend award recipients in four categories:

- Innovation – recognizes a leading practice embodying the first use of an idea in a municipal context in Alberta;
- Partnership – recognizes a leading municipal practice involving consultation, co-ordination and co-operation with other municipalities, jurisdictions or organizations; Safe Communities – new for 2009, this award recognizes a leading practice focused on making municipalities safer through prevention and enforcement;
- Smaller Municipality – recognizes the innovative practices developed by communities with less than 2,500 residents; and
- Outstanding Achievement – recognizes a municipality or municipal partnership that has helped to inspire action and change that has benefitted local government practice in Alberta. This award, chosen by the review committee, recognizes the best submission from the all other categories.

The review committee considers the practice in relation to the size and available resources of the municipality. Applications are made up of two parts. The first part is the practice collection form and the second part is the category-specific awards submission form. The deadline for applications is July 15, 2009.

If you have any questions regarding the Minister's Awards for Municipal Excellence or the Municipal Excellence Network, please direct them to the Municipal Excellence Team, toll-free at 310-0000, then 780-427-2225 or by email at menet@gov.ab.ca.

To download a copy of the submission forms, please visit:

http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/mc_municipal_excellence.cfm

events calendar

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association

Annual Conference & Tradeshow -November 3-6, 2009

www.munilink.net

Alberta Association of MDs & Counties

Annual Conference & Tradeshow - November 16 - 19, 2009

www.aamdc.com

Alberta Public Works Association

Conference & Tradeshow -October 5-7, 2009

www.publicworks.ca

If you have an event you want posted in this newsletter or online, please contact Stacy Byer at 403-990-APWA.