

# The Express

Quarter 2 - 2009

Local Government Administration Association

welcome...

Norm McInnis

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There is not a lot report since our last newsletter in May. The LGAA continues to work on our two main strategic areas; training opportunities for municipal staff and working with our strategic partners to strengthen those relationships.

The Tri-Association committee working on the training issue has met twice to strategize and discuss a framework for a meaningful training program. The initial meeting was held in May during the SLGM conference. This meeting was informal and meant to gain an understanding of each of the three association needs regarding training programs. The second meeting was in was a week later on May 22 in Edmonton at Municipal Affairs offices. This meeting included the representatives from the three associations (SLGM, AARMA and LGAA) as well as representatives from Municipal Affairs. The follow up from the May 22 meeting was to review the section on training from the CAO survey undertaken by Municipal Affairs and to review the state of the material from the old Citation Program that was previously offered

by the Ministry. These reviews are now complete and although we have not had a follow up meeting two things are clear; there is a need for this type of program, and, the material from the old Citation Program is of little value because the content is no longer relevant. We ran into scheduling conflicts over the summer but the committee will pick up this work in the fall. It was my personal hope to have a program to launch this fall in order to be considered for the upcoming budget work but it appears that this will not happen.

Our second strategic area of strengthening of strategic partnerships has had some significant successes. Our Executive Committee has invested time into supporting the AUMA Future of Local Governance initiative. We have met with AUMA senior staff a number of times and provided feedback on the work being carried out by the FOLG committee. As we all know there are some historical divides in our industry, predominantly big\small and urban\rural. The LGAA executive played a significant role in

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**Save the Date!**

**LGAA Conference & Tradeshow**

**March 17 - 19, 2010**

## President's Message : Continued

bridging this divide. On August 6 a meeting on the Future of Local Governance was held in Calgary. This meeting was hosted by AUMA CEO John McGowan with significant input from AAMD&C Executive Director Gerald Rhodes. Administrative representatives from SLGM, AARMA, LGAA, Mid-Sized cities and Big cities were in attendance. As sad as it sounds, this is a rare occurrence. The meeting was exceptional and I believe everyone gained some new insight into just how much we all share concerning our challenges and opportunities. I look forward to the report from this meeting and further involvement in this very important work. One further note on the partnership work is that I have been invited to attend the AARMA conference in September to bring greetings from LGAA and to participate in their conference. I look forward to this opportunity on behalf of our membership.

The Board of Directors will meet for our annual planning retreat in September (24&25). Take the time to review our current strategic plan: [http://www.lgaa.ab.ca/documents/strategic\\_plan\\_financial\\_statements/LGAA\\_Strategic\\_Plan2009.pdf](http://www.lgaa.ab.ca/documents/strategic_plan_financial_statements/LGAA_Strategic_Plan2009.pdf)

Suggestions on areas for consideration or comments in general can be made through your zone representative. Contact information for zone reps can be found on our website.

I hope that the summer has allowed you the opportunity to get away and refresh. All the best as we approach another busy fall.

Norman McInnis, CLGM  
President  
Local Government Administration Association

## 2010 Conference - Special Guest Speakers

### Preconference Sessions



#### **Charmaine Hammond | After the Boom**

Sustainability and resiliency is critical for organizations and communities. *After The Boom* is based on Charmaine Hammond's action research project in a northern Alberta community in 2002. The findings of this study offer valuable strategies, tools and resources to help communities and organizations survive the boom, prepare for the bust, bounce back after challenge and deal effectively with what happens in between the boom and bust cycle. This workshop will provide the nine essentials for bouncing forward in 2010.



#### **Joan McCusker | Characteristics of Successful People**

A member of Sandra Schmirler's Olympic gold medal curling team and now a curling commentator for CBC Sports, Joan shares her observations of common characteristics of successful people. In this light and often humorous presentation, Joan's message is clear that *Ordinary People Do Extraordinary Things*.

### Thursday, March 18



#### **Chris Turner | Cornerstones for Change | Keynote**

**9:45 - 11:00 a.m.**

Chris Turner is the author of the national bestseller *The Geography of Hope: A Tour of the World We Need*, which was named one of the *Globe & Mail's* Best Books of the year. He writes a monthly feature on sustainability for *The Globe & Mail*

For more information about the 2010 conference & tradeshow visit us online at <http://www.lgaa.ab.ca/events/conf2010/conferencebrochure2010-onepager.pdf>

## What's New About Dissolution?

Dorothy Moore B.Ed., MBA  
Associate, Civic Solutions Inc.

In 2002, Alberta Municipal Affairs published *Municipal Viability Issues*, A scan for potential issues in local government. It provided a comprehensive checklist of items under these five viability criteria:

1. Can the municipality's economy and population grow?
2. Can council govern democratically and represent the interests of the community?
3. Can the municipality meet its responsibilities for administration and services, and satisfy legislation?
4. Is the municipality able to provide needed services to residents at a cost that they are willing to pay?
5. Can the municipality provide services from the available financial resources?

Smaller municipalities often felt that their identity and independence was well worth preserving, despite their considerably higher taxes and lower assessment per capita. Rural municipalities preferred to continue to focus on their rural priorities and development, viewing absorbing existing urban communities as counterintuitive to their agricultural and rural development and priorities. Since 1990, there have been 51 dissolution studies resulting in 23 dissolutions, including the City of Ft. McMurray and the Town of Lac La Biche.

The Village of Thorhild has now dissolved, despite rejecting that option a few years ago. Ten other municipalities, including the City of Cold Lake have initiated part of the dissolution process. Municipal Affairs Minister Ray Danyluk has been quoted as saying that about sixty of the province's 359 municipalities are struggling to exist.

What has changed? Attitudes about regional cooperation, dissolution and amalgamation have evolved over time. According to the 2009 AUMA Future of Local Governance Report, based on survey responses from 319 Alberta municipalities, 59% of respondents felt that municipal governance in Alberta needs to change.

The demonstrated economic success of the specialized and regional municipalities has influenced attitudes. On the other side of the spectrum it has become more expensive and complicated to retain incorporated status. According to former Thorhild Mayor Vivian Prodaniuk, who had been vehemently opposed to dissolution, their situation gradually became unsustainable. They had difficulty replacing their administrator when she moved on, and their taxes went up 46% in one year. Vivian is very happy with their hamlet status now. The County maintains the roads efficiently with their superior equipment, and their taxes are slightly lower. I talked to residents in Mirror, Torrington and Plamondon who are equally content with their new hamlet status.

Alberta Urban Municipalities Association president Lloyd Bertschi says the province has 44 villages of less than 300 people that don't have a capacity to raise sufficient tax revenues to provide services. A number of others are having difficulty finding skilled administrative staff.

Don Johnson, president of the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties, says a lot of small communities have seen their tax revenues dry up when rail lines have closed and grain elevators have shut down. He said many communities face massive bills to upgrade aging water and

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## What's New About Dissolution? cont'd

sewer lines--a bill that he believes could top more than \$500 million province-wide. Johnson said small communities can't carry those costs alone and even provincial and federal grants are problematic because communities are required to raise at least a third of the funds needed.

Not all small municipalities have the same sustainability issues, and some oppose the provincial move toward fewer municipalities. Since Summer Villages usually have a considerably higher assessment base than most villages, financial viability is usually not the issue. During the course of province-wide consultations with municipal elected officials in Fall 2008 and at subsequent events Minister Danyluk stated that he would be examining the ongoing existence of Summer Villages. Summer Villages have asked: "If, as in one rumored scenario, Summer Villages were dissolved and the governance assumed by the local County, Would property taxes increase? Would services be adversely affected? Would the County have the resources and/or interest in maintaining service levels? How would local interests be addressed? Who would represent those interests to the County? What would become of our financial and municipal reserves? These questions and many more remain unanswered".

It has been said that the only thing that is constant is change. Right now global economic uncertainty is driving unprecedented spending by governments, and probably triggering future inflation. We can be certain municipal governments will need to continue to adapt in response to unforeseen requirements, challenges, threats, competition, and opportunities.

### events calendar

#### **Alberta Urban Municipalities Association**

Annual Conference & Tradeshow -November 3-6, 2009  
[www.munilink.net](http://www.munilink.net)

#### **Alberta Association of MDs & Counties**

Annual Conference & Tradeshow - November 16 - 19, 2009  
[www.aamdc.com](http://www.aamdc.com)

#### **Alberta Public Works Association**

Conference & Tradeshow -October 5-7, 2009  
[www.publicworks.ca](http://www.publicworks.ca)

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

### Changes to member service - LGAA Member Questions

The LGAA strives to ensure that the needs of the membership are met while balancing a reasonable approach to email distributions. As such, we have limited the number of emails in the past year to a weekly or bi-weekly distribution. With that said, a number of members have indicated that the Member Question Service is struggling to meet their needs for timely response. Moving forward, we will be distributing the member questions as we receive them. When possible, we will consolidate the questions into one email PLUS continue our distribution of the questions on our website ([www.lgaa.ab.ca](http://www.lgaa.ab.ca)) as well as in the member bulletins circulating weekly/bi-weekly.

Please provide me with feedback. As an association, our member's needs are our focus and we want to make this service relevant and reasonable for all.

Stacy Byer  
Communications Coordinator, LGAA



## Municipal Assistance Programs - Key Dates

### August

Application Deadlines	Reporting Deadlines	Agency/Program	Initiative/Grant	Ministry
<b>AUGUST</b>				
	<b>August 1</b> - Acknowledgement of Compliance due for 2007/2008 program year.	Alberta Emergency Management Agency	Emergency Management Ground Search and Rescue Training Grant	Municipal Affairs
	<b>August 15</b> - Submit a detailed evaluation plan.	Safe Communities Innovation Fund	Community-Based Projects	Justice and Attorney General
	<b>August 15</b> - Submit a detailed evaluation plan.	Safe Communities Innovation Fund	Community-Police Partnership Projects	Justice and Attorney General

For a complete list of dates visit:

[http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/ms/Calendar\\_PDF\\_FINAL\\_based\\_on\\_14-jul-09\\_lr.pdf](http://www.municipalaffairs.alberta.ca/documents/ms/Calendar_PDF_FINAL_based_on_14-jul-09_lr.pdf)

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## Municipal Assistance Programs - Key Dates

# September

Application Deadlines	Reporting Deadlines	Agency/Program	Initiative/Grant	Ministry
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>				
<b>1</b> Other application deadline: February 1	No formal reporting requirement.	Alberta Historical Resources Foundation	Heritage Preservation Partnership Program	Culture and Community Spirit
<b>1</b>	Project report due 60 days after stated project completion date.	Alberta Foundation for the Arts	Community Support Organizations – Project Grant	Culture and Community Spirit
<b>4</b>	Interim Report due six months after start of internship. Final Report and Financial Summary due within 30 days of internship completion.	Municipal Internship Program	Administrator Funding	Municipal Affairs
<b>4</b>	Interim Report due six months after start of internship. Year One Report and Financial Summary due at end of twelfth month of the internship. Final Report and Financial Summary due within 30 days of internship completion.	Municipal Internship Program	Land Use Planner Funding	Municipal Affairs
<b>30</b>	<b>January 31 or sooner</b> (within one month of project completion) - Acknowledgement of Compliance due for 2007 program year. Benefits Report for the 2007 program year must be provided for grants of \$50,000 or more. <b>May 1</b> - Review Engagement Report for projects completed in 2008 with grants of \$500,000 or more.	Municipal Sponsorship Program	Primary Grant	Municipal Affairs
<b>30</b> Hosting Grant Application Submitted (Letter of Intent at least six months prior to the event.) Other Application deadlines: December 31, March 31, June 30	Hosting grant application submitted. Event financial statement due within 90 days of the event's completion.	Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation	Hosting Program	Tourism, Parks and Recreation
	<b>September 15</b> - Final Report due.	Community Spirit Donation Grant Program	Community and Voluntary Services	Culture and Community Spirit
	<b>September 15</b> - Submit project progress report.	Alberta Emergency Management Agency	Joint Emergency Preparedness Program	Municipal Affairs

### Greening up the work place

Greener homes are in the spotlight these days, but what about the other places where many of us spend huge chunks of our time—our offices?

Some simple changes of habit can save energy and resources at work, and these small steps can be multiplied by persuading the powers-that-be at your workplace to adopt environmentally friendly (and often cost-effective) policies.

### Be bright about light

Artificial lighting accounts for 44 percent of the electricity use in office buildings.

- Make it a habit to turn off the lights when you're leaving any room for 15 minutes or more and utilize natural light when you can.
- Make it a policy to buy Energy Star-rated light bulbs and fixtures ([www.energystar.gov](http://www.energystar.gov)), which use at least two-thirds less energy than regular lighting, and install timers or motion sensors that automatically shut off lights when they're not needed.

## Municipal Assistance Programs - Key Dates

# October

Application Deadlines	Reporting Deadlines	Agency/Program	Initiative/Grant	Ministry
<b>OCTOBER</b>				
<b>1</b> Other application deadline: May 1	Project evaluation and financial accounting report due within three months of stated project completion date.	Human Rights, Citizenship and Multiculturalism Education Fund	Human Rights and Multiculturalism Grant Program	Culture and Community Spirit
<b>1</b> Other deadline: April 1	Program Evaluation Report and Financial Statements due within 60 days of expiration of funding agreement.	Victim Program Grants		Solicitor General and Public Security
<b>1</b> Other application deadline: May 1	Accountability Report due within 60 days of project completion date.	Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation	Canadian Sport for Life Project Grant	Tourism, Parks and Recreation
<b>1</b> Other application deadlines: January 1, May 1	Accountability Report due within 60 days of project completion date.	Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation	Development Initiatives Program	Tourism, Parks and Recreation
<b>1</b> Other application deadline: May 1	Accountability Report due within 60 days of project completion date.	Alberta Sport, Recreation, Parks and Wildlife Foundation	Sport Participation Initiative Program	Tourism, Parks and Recreation
<b>1</b>	Final payment claim form due upon project completion.	Community Airport Program		Transportation
<b>15</b>	<b>September 15</b> - Submit project progress report. <b>March 31</b> - Projects approved in the 2008/2009 fiscal year must be completed and all funds expended.	Alberta Emergency Management Agency	Joint Emergency Preparedness Program	Municipal Affairs
<b>15</b>	Final report due 30 days after the termination period of the grant.	Alberta Community Restorative Justice Grant Program		Solicitor General and Public Security
<b>October - TBD</b>	<b>January 31</b> - Final program reports and financials are due for the 2008 program year.	Alberta Environmentally Sustainable Agriculture Program	Farm Based Grants	Agriculture and Rural Development
	<b>October 1</b> - Progress report and financial statements due.	Safe Communities Innovation Fund	Community-Based Projects	Justice and Attorney General
	<b>October 1</b> - Progress report and financial statements due.	Safe Communities Innovation Fund	Community-Police Partnership Projects	Justice and Attorney General
	<b>October 31</b> - Final report (claim) due.	Summer Temporary Employment Program		Employment and Immigration

### Maximize computer efficiency

Computers in the business sector unnecessarily waste \$1 billion worth of electricity a year.

- Make it a habit to turn off your computer—and the power strip it's plugged into—when you leave for the day. Otherwise, you're still burning energy even if you're not burning the midnight oil. (Check with your IT department to make sure the computer doesn't need to be on to run backups or other maintenance.) During the day, setting your computer to go to sleep automatically during short breaks can cut energy use by 70 percent. Remember, screen savers don't save energy.
- Make it a policy to invest in energy-saving computers, monitors, and printers and make sure that old equipment is properly recycled. Look for a recycler that has pledged not to export hazardous e-waste and to follow other safety guidelines. Computers that still work, and are less than five years old, can be donated to organizations that will refurbish them and find them new homes.

# Aggregated Services

**Insurance  
Benefits**

**Risk Management  
Energy**



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.

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