

The background of the cover is a photograph of several black cows in a hay pen. The cows are lying down, eating hay. A wooden fence with two horizontal rails is in the foreground. In the background, there is a dark wooden fence and a sky with soft, warm light, suggesting sunset or sunrise. The overall tone is rustic and agricultural.

RC

RURAL COUNCILLOR

VOLUME 53 number 4
Winter 2020 ISSUE

PUBLISHED BY THE SASKATCHEWAN
ASSOCIATION OF RURAL MUNICIPALITIES
Publications Agreement #40062693

Governance

Supporting Administrators with On-Site Programming; What are the Powers of Council?; FCM Brings Rural Voices to Ottawa; Weed Management Plans; Pulling Teams Together; Local Government Week; Giving the Unheard a Voice; Education Governance Overview; An Interview with the Ombudsman

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Video Gaming
Systems &
Peripherals

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SARM

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Official publication of the
Saskatchewan Association of Rural
Municipalities and the Rural Municipal
Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan.

Published four times per year by:

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Views are those of the contributors and are not necessarily the views of SARM.

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Contents

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inside

- 4** Minister of Government Relations Message
- 8** Supporting Administrators with On-site Programming
- 9** FCM Brings Rural Voices Ottawa
- 10** Giving the Unheard a Voice
- 11** An Interview with the Ombudsman
- 12** OK... Now What?
- 14** Education Governance Overview in Saskatchewan
- 15** Pulling Teams Together
- 16** Let's All Walk the Talk
- 17** 2020 SARM Convention Sponsors
- 19** Lieutenant Governor's Award

regular features

- 5** Jay B. Meyer, SARM Executive Director
Why Is It So Hard To Work Together?
- 6** Michael Morris, Q.C., SARM Director of Legal Services
What Are the Powers of Council?
- 18** Joanne Kwasnicki, AAg,
SARM Division 2 Plant Health Officer
All About Weed Management Plans
- 20** Getting to Know SARM
- 21** Member News

our vision

By being the rural voice, SARM will effectively lead autonomous municipalities in creating a vibrant, diverse economy resulting in a strong, sustainable Saskatchewan.

our mission

SARM delivers timely, dependable programs and services to meet the needs of its members while influencing government policy and facilitating municipalities to work together to foster rural development and build strong, sustainable communities.



Minister's Message

By the Honourable Don McMorris
Minister of Government Relations

WITH MUNICIPAL ELECTIONS recently completed for rural Saskatchewan, I want to congratulate new and returning members to their respective councils, and applaud all candidates. Putting your name forward to run for municipal council is no small feat. It takes time, energy and commitment before and after getting into local public office. But thanks to such efforts, rural communities have dedicated individuals, who work hard to provide a voice about their communities' priorities for other levels of government to hear.

As they govern, all council members play a key role of meeting and identifying the needs of citizens. This is more important than ever. As local leaders, you have the tools to keep your communities strong and maintain your quality of life, particularly now as Saskatchewan navigates its way through the current pandemic.

Your provincial government continues to listen, as we invest in municipalities. For example, the provincial government's \$150 million Municipal Economic Enhancement Program (MEEP) continues to help local residents get back to work. Communities must complete their approved infrastructure projects and initiatives by March 31, 2022.

Announced in May 2020, MEEP's provincial funding remains a key component of the Government of Saskatchewan's \$7.5 billion, two-year capital plan, which is designed to support the province's economic recovery from the impacts of COVID-19.

This summer, the province fast tracked Municipal Revenue Sharing's record \$278 million for the 2020-21 fiscal year. Funding under this long-standing provincial program is stable, consistent, and can be invested as municipalities see fit – no strings attached.

Also accelerated was this fiscal year's more than \$62 million of federal Gas Tax Funding for municipalities administered by the province. Shortly thereafter, the province also distributed more than \$70 million under the federal Safe Restart Canada Plan to municipalities.

While the various funding programs are to help municipalities weather the pandemic, they are not the only shelter in the storm.

On October 30, project applications closed for the one-time COVID-19 Resilience Infrastructure Stream (CVRIS) under the Investing in Canada Infrastructure Program (ICIP). Overall, ICIP will provide more than \$896 million in federal funding for all types of Saskatchewan infrastructure projects over 10 years until 2028.

CVRIS project applications are currently under review. Successful applicants will be informed in due course, as CVRIS projects must be completed by the end of 2021 or 2022, depending on the size and location of the community where it's occurring.

A Landfill Decommissioning initiative under ICIP's Green Stream remains open for project applications. Additional intakes under ICIP will occur in the future.

The initiatives outlined are just part of what will keep our great province strong.

The determination of recently-elected local leaders and their communities will also be key, along with the unwavering character and resilience of Saskatchewan people.

In other words, we are well positioned to build and recover – together. Thank you.

Municipal Economic Enhancement Program 2020 (MEEP)

\$150 million
for shovel-ready
infrastructure
projects



Why is it so difficult to **Work Together?**

By Jay Meyer
SARM Executive Director

Let's build relationships and work together knowing that we are not the same, come from different places and may have different beliefs. These differences and the ability to understand and respect each other is how we will accomplish great things.

IN CANADA, we live under three levels of government, local, provincial and federal. Without cooperation among these levels, everyday life does not run smoothly. All levels of government have different powers passed by legislation or policy that determine what set of laws or rules are permitted. This can develop tensions between jurisdictions. Elections are used as a tool to assist democracy in putting individuals in place to pass legislation, regulation, laws and policies on behalf of people in different jurisdictions. One thing an election is good at is putting individuals in settings they have zero control over when it comes to who they are working together with. Often, these people will have different values and beliefs and will bring a different skill set to the table.

In today's world, why is so hard for levels of government to get along? Governments are growingly holding back and hindering each other. Competition will always be present between governments. The challenge is that it has become common that when one government feels like they have won, the other feels like they must have lost. The win-win situation is next to obsolete. It is not often you hear "What goes around comes around" or "If we bend a little this time, we will be provided the benefit of the doubt next time". There seems to be less "We are in this together". This is developed due to a lack of communication, understanding and trust. One could even suggest selfishness may play a part, and this can ruin any relationship in a hurry.

Now how and why does this happen? Divide and conquer is a technique often used to maintain control over competi-

tion by encouraging people to fight in order to prevent them from uniting. People are also different, having grown up in different places and learning different things along the way. People also have a tough time checking their egos at the door when working together. What you think is correct or right, does not mean everyone does. Give up that need to be right. While doing so, remember it is often not what people say, but how it is said. Relationships are a two-way street, and if you are constantly blaming others, you will lose the possibility of working together. There is also a theory that if something works, it creates work; hence, why some have an easier time saying no before yes.

Working together seems easy, but it is not. Relationships do not work unless you invest effort and time into them. Find time to understand what interests

the other party has. Keep in touch so you are not constantly discussing issues on a reactionary basis, which are typically contentious in nature. Engage with each other on some easy wins. Believe that people are coming from a good place and they aren't always trying to take advantage of you.

Building good relationships does not happen accidentally, it takes hard work and a lot of energy. The ability to manage relationships is important. As we know, it is easier to burn a bridge than to build one. So, let's get out there and try to understand each other. Let's build relationships and work together knowing that we are not the same, come from different places and may have different beliefs. These differences and the ability to understand and respect each other is how we will accomplish great things.

**Wishing you a happy
and safe holiday
season from the
SARM family
to all of you.**





What are the **POWERS** of council?

By **Michael Morris, Q.C.**

SARM Director of Legal Services

OVER THE YEARS, the SARM Legal Department has received many inquiries as to what, if any, authority individual members of council have. To answer these inquiries, it is helpful to take a step back and consider the broader issue as to who has the authority to exercise the powers delegated to municipalities by the legislature.

The general rule is that it is the council which exercises the powers of the municipality. Section 79 of *The Municipalities Act* provides that each municipality is governed by a council and that the council is responsible for exercising the powers and carrying out the duties of the municipality. To a similar effect, section 5 of the Act states that “Unless otherwise provided by any other provision of this or any other Act, a municipality is required to act through its council”.

That said, there are exceptions. In some cases, the authority is granted to a municipal official as opposed to the council. Examples include the administrator, a weed inspector, a pest control officer, a development officer and a building official.

It is necessary to check the statute to see if the authority rests with the council or an official. If the authority rests with an official, it is important that council not interfere with the exercise of discretion which has been delegated to an official.

It should also be noted that council has the power to delegate authority to, for example, an employee, agent or committee established by it. However, it should be noted (i) that to be a valid delegation of authority, it must be done by resolution, and (ii) that there are several powers which cannot be delegated (these are listed in section 127 of the Act).

Council itself can only exercise the powers of the municipality by action taken in the proper form. This means:

- i) By resolution or bylaw (section 5 of the Act);
- ii) Passed at a regularly constituted meeting (sections 119 to 125 of the Act);
- iii) By a majority of the members present (sections 100 to 102 of the Act); and
- iv) Provided that a quorum is present (section 98 of the Act).

Note this includes having given appropriate notice to the public of the meeting.

It is important to note that the legislation does not provide to individual members of council authority to act on behalf of the municipality. It is common to see problems arise in municipalities where individual members of council have acted unilaterally. Unless council has by resolution delegated authority to an individual member, he or she has no authority to act on behalf of or bind the municipality.

The consequences of acting without authority can be significant. Reference must be made in this regard to sections 159 and 192 of the Act. Pursuant to section 159 of the Act, a municipality may only make an expenditure that is: (a) included in its budget or otherwise authorized by its council; (b) for an emergency; or (c) legally required to be paid.

Pursuant to section 192 of the Act, a member of council who knowingly makes an expenditure that is not authorized pursuant to section 159 of the Act is liable to the municipality for the expenditure. The liability imposed on members of council pursuant to this section may be enforced by the municipality or a voter or taxpayer of the municipality.

In addition, any person found to have contravened this section would be disqualified from holding office in the municipality or in any other municipality for a period of twelve years after the date of the finding of liability.

CONGRATULATIONS to all newly elected council members in rural Saskatchewan!

For any organization to run as well as possible, there must be a clear understanding of the role of the governors and the role of the managers.

OUR EXPERTISE

- COUNCIL ORIENTATIONS
- COUNCIL MID-TERM REFRESHERS
- GOVERNANCE REVIEWS
- INTERGOVERNMENTAL COLLABORATION
- STRATEGIC PLANNING

Give your organization the best chance of success by getting and keeping everyone pointed in the right direction.

Congratulations

To the 2020 Municipal Hail Scholarship recipients



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University of Saskatchewan
Commerce



MORGAN LEHMANN
Hometown: Rosthern, SK
University of Saskatchewan
Agriculture & Animal Science



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**MUNICIPAL HAIL
INSURANCE**



Saskatchewan's wetlands: still hard at work, even under the ice and snow.

Nature-based solutions make good fiscal sense and should play a major role in efforts to address water quality, flood risk, biodiversity loss, and climate change. Saskatchewan's wetlands are part of these solutions and make significant contributions free of charge... all year long.

Providing habitat for wildlife and supporting biodiversity

Wetland plants form the foundation for these diverse ecosystems, and even during winter dormancy, provide major habitat value. Cavities in trees afford shelter for resident birds and mammals, willows provide browse for moose and deer, and cattails capture snow that serves as insulation and cover for many species.

Whether active or hibernating, Saskatchewan wildlife are able to meet their needs in wetlands in winter.

Ready for runoff and recharge

Wetland basins are on standby, ready to receive spring runoff, recharge local aquifers, and hold back any surplus flow, protecting our homes and communities.

Purifying water for next summer's fun

In deeper wetlands that don't freeze to the bottom, bacteria are still at work breaking down and removing harmful substances. And that means better water quality for your summer activities.

Wetlands are essential services.

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Supporting Administrators With On-site Programming



By Cheryl Barrett
RMAA Division 1 Director

THIS IS my first article for the *Rural Councillor*, so I'm a little nervous as I write this article and get my feet wet in the role of RMAA Division 1 Director. I hope everyone made it through election season, and I would like to welcome the new councillors and reeves into their exciting new roles.

When researching for this article, I could find a plethora of information on council governance, but I had more trouble finding material specifically on administration governance. The definition of governance is the action or manner of governing. In a nutshell, governance is the way we do things, how we make decisions. In the municipal world, the "Acts" are legislation that forms the framework on how municipalities govern. Section 5 of *The Municipalities Act* tells us that a municipality must act through its council. Councils are responsible and accountable for the decisions that they make, and they must ensure that they are always making decisions in the best interest of all residents. Recent *Saskatoon Star Phoenix* articles have brought to our attention how important it is for councils to be transparent/accountable and how the general public perceives transparency.

In the administrative world of municipal government, the administrator is responsible for the implementation of council's directions/decisions. The administrator is directed by bylaws, resolutions and policies. An administrator wears many different hats during his/her day, and he/she is responsible for ensuring revenues, expenditures, budget, policy and staffing, to name just a few, are prepared and executed properly. The administrator's work is legislated to be audited yearly, so it is extremely important that an administrator has exemplary work ethics and morals.

The Rural Municipal Administrators Association (RMAA) Executive Board takes its role as the governing board of our membership very seriously. The Board felt that our administrators, specifically new administrators, needed more support in the quest for governance. There are a large number of our RMAA membership who are entering or approaching retirement age. As our experienced administrators retire, the wealth of knowledge that they bring to the job can get lost.

It is felt that there is a demand for structured mentorship and on-site assessments. Many have expressed the need for on-site visits to RM offices to provide a means to review work

for correct practices, legislated requirements, suggest areas for improvement, flag areas of concern or areas that need improvement. Developing an on-site program that would review general office procedures, content and writing of minutes, bank reconciliations, filing systems, hail insurance procedures, weight/road permitting, asset management, etc., while alleviating anxieties and building confidence in new administrators, would be a great building block to a successful administrator.

The RMAA Executive Board applied to the Targeted Sector Support (TSS) Initiative with a pilot project called On-Site Office Inspection/Mentorship Service. The proposal was for two new positions to be created to provide general guidance to new administrators. This new program's goal is to "Contribute to the professional skillset for individuals in administrator positions at entry level and/or remote locations where resources may be limited and/or where creating interpersonal professional contacts may be overwhelming. Asking for help in a profession where you are new or remote can be intimidating, and the on-site visit would allow for the creation of a positive relationship of advice and networking."

The RMAA received confirmation from the TSS Steering Committee that we are approved for the first year of a two-year pilot project. The two positions are TSS coordinator and TSS designated advisor. The RMAA Board advertised and hired for both positions and is very happy to advise that Administrator Don McCallum accepted the position of TSS Coordinator, and soon to be retired Administrator Wendy Gowda accepted the position of TSS Advisor. Both Don and Wendy have over 65 years of combined experience to bring to these new positions. The RMAA Board is extremely happy with the wealth of knowledge that both will be able to share with new administrators, and it welcomes the start of this exciting new project.

In summary, I strongly urge you to review the 2016 editions of the *Rural Councillor* as there is a four-part series (one each edition) called *The Effective Rural Council* that is extremely valuable, especially to councils. I personally make sure my new councillor(s) get a copy of these articles in their New Councillor Package after each election.

As this extremely challenging year ends, I wish everyone a healthy and happy holiday season, and I know we all look forward to a "normal" 2021!



FMC brings rural voices to OTTAWA

By **Garth Frizzell**
President, Federation of Canadian Municipalities

AS MUNICIPAL LEADERS, we all learn from one another. It makes us stronger, and it makes our communities stronger. That's the driving force behind SARM's impact throughout Saskatchewan – as well as the Federation of Canadian Municipalities's (FCM) influence at the federal level.

As FCM President, I'm committed to building on the engagement that helps us learn and grow. That's why one of my priorities is to work in partnership with SARM, and with each and every one of you, to continue bringing rural voices to the national agenda.

FCM is making important progress in shaping Canada's COVID-19 response to reflect our rural realities. With your support, we've secured **\$70 MILLION** in federal Safe Restart funds for Saskatchewan communities, so you can keep your residents safe.

FCM is making important progress in shaping Canada's COVID-19 response to reflect our rural realities. With your support, we've secured \$70 million in federal Safe Restart funds for Saskatchewan communities, so you can keep your residents safe. FCM's advocacy has led to more support for rural frontline workers and for farmers, as well as to a federal commitment to bring high-speed Internet to all Canadians faster.

Our Western Economic Solutions Taskforce (WEST) is also working hard for you. This taskforce unites municipal leaders from across Western Canada to drive concrete solutions for struggling communities. In fact, last spring's \$1.7 billion federal investment into cleaning up orphaned and inactive oil and gas wells was a direct response to a key WEST recommendation.

FCM gets results because we bring together thousands of municipalities from across the country. It's because our board includes strong rural voices like SARM's President Ray Orb. It's because we speak with a strong and united national voice.

Now we need to ramp up our efforts – to keep our communities supported today and to position them at the heart of tomorrow's nationwide recovery. All of you will have a vital role to play.

Building this country back from the COVID-19 pandemic will require a bold and ambitious plan – driven by the governments closest to daily life. After all, we're the ones who understand people's everyday needs and challenges, and we deliver for Canadians.

I firmly believe – as does FCM – that strong and vibrant rural communities need to be at the heart of any national recovery plan. Rural Canada is home to 10 million Canadians, supports vital industries, and drives nearly a third of this country's GDP. You've long been essential to Canada's economy and quality of life, and you'll be a big part of building our shared future.

That's why FCM's call to build a "rural lens" into the federal government has never mattered more. In practice, that means adapting funding criteria and processes to account for rural needs. It means strengthening rural infrastructure and supporting regional economic development agencies, like Western Economic Diversification Canada. It means finally closing Canada's digital divide, so that every rural community has the tools to reach their full potential.

Fundamentally, a rural lens means bringing rural realities and expertise to the table more often. That's how we'll build a recovery that all communities can be a part of.

So let's continue working together to bring opportunity and prosperity to Canada's rural communities. And together, let's deliver our message loud and clear: there can't be a strong Canada without a strong Rural Canada.

Garth Frizzell is President of FCM and a councillor in the City of Prince George, BC. FCM is the national voice of Canada's local governments, with more than 2,000 members representing 90 per cent of Canadians.

Giving the unheard **A VOICE**

A guide to equal representation and avoidance of ageist policy in governance

By Zaiden Osicki

Eagle Hills Multiple 4-H Club

MOST ADULTS believe themselves adequately well rounded in terms of what the world should be. Enforcing agenda and dialogues of industry and trade, also based on things like personal needs or strictly for the fact of band-wagoning party identification. Through the past years, the new generation has been stirring the pot. Activism mainly, alongside protests of varying ranges that have all moved for the same thing, for our voices to be heard, and I know we're worth listening to.

The voice of youth in governance is quite possibly the most effective contingency plan to ever have existed. I acknowledge this comes with a bias, but I stand firm on that belief. The youth nowadays will, without a shadow of a doubt, be the ones that come to power. So why is it that they are left perpetually so unexposed and, in a sense, blocked from meeting the ideals of contingency in governance?

The simple answer is found everywhere, from provincial to municipal communities alike, the common form of Multi-Generationalism is something of a taboo to anything with any conceived importance. This is harmful in more ways than one, this can quite easily be reflected in the ideals of society today.

From HR Statistics Canada it was found that on average, the age of workers in the federal government was 44.6 years of age, while Saskatchewan brags the youngest provincial government at an average age of 39.1. This clearly reflects the issue at hand being that the youth of our population are being left out of the conversation. The issue of this is the fact that conversation is not being generated in a manner in which ageism may be dissolved. This prioritization of single-generational concerns dissuade hopes of any adaptability and desire for future generations' well-being and adaptability. These are mistakes due to the fact that, if all goes wrong, the reparations are set to be problems of the future generation.

There are multiple ways in which this new multi-generational form of governance best assists both sides. The main of that being the development of strong governmental intellectualism that would be created on both sides of this crisis, second to that can be the education of future and current majorities,

so that the commonplace of ageist policy can be halted. Lastly, it would see a new shared role of generations in society, seeing mutual respect for ideas and ideals. The sides benefit to this conclusion, and it would see the end of generational despise with an example to new phrases of "OK Boomer" and the general, initial hatred of women named Karen seen from the youth as well as the automatic hatred of Millennials from the older generations.

Of course, as a person with common sense could deduct, the world simply doesn't become sunshine and rainbows from simple theory. This goal can easily be made a tangible achievement to which can easily be met in many forms of government. The ways that these ideas can be made tangible results can be that of a slow inclination towards true good governance over generational equality.

The beginning of such an initiative would be to encourage those around you, or the youth of the community, to engage themselves in political or governmental procedures whether through debate teams or attending sessions of parliament to where questions can be asked and a familiarity with the rules and regulations can be established.

Second, the progression towards an understanding of a generational level could be reached through familiarity stated previously, which could be shared and identified through values that we would see expressed in places of government.

Lastly, with the increasing intensity of the established programs, the activity and involvement of multi-generational governance would begin to soar to create better relationships between government and its people. As stated by Jeane Kirkpatrick, "Democracy not only requires equality but also, unshakable conviction in value in each person, who is then equal."

So why have we confined value to ourselves and our own generation's means of thought. Instead, I propose this alternative. The alternative of giving the unheard a voice.



An Interview with the Ombudsman

SASKATCHEWAN'S OMBUDSMAN, Mary McFadyen, and her staff respond to complaints about provincial government entities and municipalities, including RMs. Here's what she had to say about what the Ombudsman's Office does and how they do it.

What does an Ombudsman do?

As Ombudsman, my role is to help ensure that provincial and municipal governments entities carry out their programs and services fairly. We take complaints from people who believe they have been wronged by the actions or decisions of these public entities. We also take complaints about council member conflicts of interest and misconduct. As an office of last resort, we usually do not get involved unless the complainant has already tried all reasonable ways to have their issues resolved, including other available review and appeal processes. We review complaints independently, impartially and confidentially.

How long has your Office been around?

The Ombudsman's Office opened in 1973, with jurisdiction over provincial government entities. In 2015, we were given jurisdiction over municipalities and council members.

How many complaints does the Ombudsman receive about RMs?

Since 2015, we have received over 2,300 complaints about municipalities, 752 (about 32 per cent) of which were about RMs. We have received 106 complaints about RMs so far in 2020.

What are the most common complaints your Office receives about RMs?

In 2019, the top three types of complaints about RMs were:

1. Council member misconduct
2. Taxation
3. It's a tie: Road Maintenance, and Planning, Development & Zoning

How does the Ombudsman deal with complaints?

First, we determine if the complaint is about an entity that we can take complaints about. If it is, then we find out what the person has done to try to deal with the complaint themselves. If there is an appropriate complaint-handling process they haven't tried yet, we refer them (for example, the RM office, the council, or an appeal body). We let them know they can call us again if they get a final decision and remain unsatisfied.

Even after a person gets a final decision, we do try to help resolve the matter informally if we can. If informal resolution

is not possible, in some cases, we investigate. This process often results in us making formal recommendations to an RM, depending on our findings. Our recommendations are aimed at improving how an RM carries out its public duties.

How would an RM know if the Ombudsman's Office is going to do an investigation about them?

We always give written notice of our intention to investigate.

What is your role in complaints about council member misconduct?

All municipal councils are required to have a code of ethics that council members must follow and a process for dealing with contraventions of the code. If a person complains to us about a council member's conduct (including an alleged conflict of interest) and they have not gone through the council's complaint-handling process, we will, in most cases, refer them back to use it first. However, we can look at the complaint without referring them to the local process if we think it is appropriate. If we decide to review an allegation, we treat it like any other investigation. We interview everyone involved to determine what happened, we review all the relevant rules and prepare a report detailing our findings and conclusions, and we make recommendations to the council about how we think it should deal with the matter.

For example, *The Municipalities Act* was recently amended to allow a council to declare a council member's seat vacant on the basis that the council member has become disqualified (for example, by participating in a council decision in which they had a conflict of interest.) So, if we find that a council member had a conflict of interest, we may recommend that the council consider declaring their seat vacant. Because councils now have this extraordinary power, it is more important than ever for RMs to have fair and reasonable processes for dealing with complaints about a council member having done something that could lead to their disqualification.

How do I know if I am in a conflict of interest?

On July 3, 2020, *The Municipalities Act* was changed to make it clear that a council member has a conflict of interest if they make a decision or participate in making a decision in the execution of their office and at the same time know, or ought reasonably to know, there is the opportunity to further their private interests or to improperly further another person's private interests.

For more information, visit: www.ombudsman.sk.ca. Look for the "For Municipalities" tab.

OK... Now What?



By Ken Acton & Keith Comstock
JSGS Executives in Residence

LET YOUR NAME STAND for council they said. It will be fun they said. So, you said OK after all, you care about your community and want to see it thrive too. Then those first few meetings take place. Tangible capital assets (huh?), conflict of interest (I hate conflict), Freedom of Information (double huh), "the Act says we have to" (who writes this stuff?), Robert's Rules of Order (who does this Robert guy think he is anyway?) the list of strange terms, new responsibilities and things you never thought a municipal government had to worry about gets longer by the week.

Our message to you today is not to despair. Learning how to govern is a skill that develops over time, and like any skill, it needs to be practised. Achieving the goal of having council think and perform as a strong team that acts in the best interests of all needs a plan and commitment from every council member.

One foundational element to building a strong council is rooted in the need for you to have a clear and abiding understanding of your roles and responsibilities – and those of your teammates. What is your role as an elected official, as a councillor and what is the role of the Administrator? Reaching a clear understanding among the councillors and the administrator can go a long way to avoiding conflict and misunderstanding around the council table.

As a councillor you have been elected to represent the interests of your division; the priorities of the ratepayers in the division. Knowing these priorities and speaking for them is one of your roles however you ultimately must make decisions in the best interests of the entire municipality. This can be a real challenge – what if the broader interests of the municipality do not align with the interests or expectations of those in your division? How do you find an appropriate balance? Successful councils manage to create a safe environment where everyone has a voice, and before a decision is made there is a full discussion about the overarching objective and the impact it will have across the municipality. Only then, as a collective, does council make a decision.

The biggest factor in your success or failure will depend on your attitude. Are you willing to work with others, to always be respectful, to listen and work collaboratively? You should arrive at the council table as an independent thinker asking questions of clarification and not attack. You need to be collaborative with colleagues by seeking to understand their perspective and the interests of those in their division. Above all consider what is best for the entire municipality and the impact your decisions may have on surrounding municipalities or communities.

In addition to approaching the job with the right attitude it can also be helpful to review relevant legislation and other documents specific to your municipality.

The Municipalities Act (the Act) is pretty clear – municipalities exist to provide good government, to provide needed services and facilities, to develop and maintain a safe and viable community, to foster economic, social and environmental well being and to provide wise stewardship of public assets. Specific responsibilities for councillors can be found in Sections 92 and 93 of the Act.

You can boil this down to three overarching tasks – setting direction, monitoring, and reporting to citizens. You set direction by building an official community plan, strategic plan, an operational plan, and the corresponding budget to support them. You provide oversight/stewardship of the municipality's human resources, infrastructure and financial assets. Review these plans early in your term, and if they don't exist – you need to ask why.

Learning how to govern is a skill that develops over time, and like any skill, it needs to be practised.

The administrator is responsible for all aspects of management and is accountable for the performance of the municipality and implementation of the council's policies. The administrator provides advice on financial matters, maintains an effective system of internal controls AND advises council in relation to applicable statutes, regulations and other policies and procedures reflecting best practice for council. Sections 110 and 111 of the Act provide more detail.

So where should you begin? After reviewing existing plans and documents, understanding your fiduciary duty including confidentiality, conflict of interest guidelines and your duty of care are good next steps. Finally chat with other councillors and the administrator about meeting structure and the dynamics around the council table.

Learning to govern takes time and dedication. Build time to do that into your schedule – you will be glad you did.

Thank you for letting your name stand for election and agreeing to give back to your community. It will be challenging at times. Approach each day with humility, empathy for others, and a desire to learn and you will make a positive difference.

JSGS delivered an online three day Public Sector Governance Program, and you can register now for the Winter offering at www.schoolofpublicpolicy.sk.ca (click on Executive Education, then Public Sector Governance Program) or email js_training@uregina.ca for a custom learning session for your council.



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UNSOLVED CASE

On Monday, October 12th, 2020, Regina Conservation Officers received a TIP Call regarding a calf moose and a White-tailed deer fawn that were found dead in the ditch along Highway #10. The animals were located 4km Northeast of Balgonie on the highway to Fort Qu'Appelle. Officers investigated and determined the animals were not shot in this location but just dumped in the ditch. It is believed these animals were abandoned between the evening of October 10th and the morning of October 12th. These animals were left to waste and were not legally tagged.

Visit www.sasktip.com for all of the latest cases.

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Education Governance Overview in Saskatchewan

By Saskatchewan School Boards Association

EVERYONE has a stake in the success of education in our province. When schools are strong and students succeed, we all benefit.



LIKE MUNICIPALITIES, locally elected school boards are an important part of Saskatchewan’s democratic systems. Board members make decisions about education close to home. They bring forward the voices of the students, families and communities they are elected to serve. There are 27 school boards in Saskatchewan, with great diversity in geography and population. There are public, separate and francophone boards. The provincial government has delegated boards with many responsibilities for monitoring and guiding the education of young people.

On behalf of the citizens they represent, a board has authority over the school system and its resources. Boards set strategic direction through planning and budgeting and then follow and evaluate the results. Leadership, stewardship and engagement are crucial roles for school boards, along with ensuring safe and supportive environments for teaching and learning. They are accountable when things go wrong and must take a broad and proactive perspective. Issues that boards may face can range from air quality to bullying to retaining staff.

All community members have a right to know what students are learning and how well they are learning. They also have a right to know how tax dollars are being spent and to participate in discussions about the allocation of resources. Boards provide an essential connection to communities.

While boards are the locally elected governments for school divisions, other educational organizations and partners also represent various interests within the system. These play important roles in shaping policy and practice in the province regarding publicly funded education.

- The Ministry of Education leads the responsibility for Pre-Kindergarten to Grade 12 education. It is responsible for funding school boards, developing curricula, maintain school records, certifying teachers and developing regulations for independent schools and home-based education.
- The Saskatchewan Teachers’ Federation (STF) has functions that fall in two broad categories. It is a self-regulating, professional association that provides services to teachers and has disciplinary powers. The STF is also the agent that negotiates collectively for teachers at the provincial level.

- The Saskatchewan Association of School Business Officials (SASBO) is a professional association for officials in transportation, facilities, technology, human resources, payroll, communications, finance and procurement. SASBO provides professional development and networking opportunities.
- The League of Educational Administrators, Directors and Superintendents (LEADS) is a professional association of educational administrators. Members include directors of education and superintendents. LEADS provides opportunities and represents members in various forums.
- The Saskatchewan School Boards Association (SSBA) represents all school boards in Saskatchewan and serves a critical role in the education sector. The organization is governed by an Executive made up of representatives from various constituencies. Priorities are also established by resolutions.

While many First Nations and Métis students attend the publicly funded education system, there are First Nations on reserve that have a separate funding source for education. We are working together to support better outcomes for all students. Everyone has a stake in the success of education in our province. When schools are strong and students succeed, we all benefit. The more people who care about and get involved with their local schools, the stronger they become. Students and families, community members, social agencies and business people all have a role to play, whether it’s in the classroom, the boardroom or at the ballot box at election time.

The longest lasting and most fundamental responsibility of school boards has been to bring the voice of the public to publicly-funded education. The work of the SSBA and its member boards remains deeply rooted in the belief that every child in Saskatchewan, regardless of where they live or their personal circumstances, must have the resources and supports they need to achieve and succeed. Collectively, the women and men who serve on Saskatchewan’s boards of education are committed to serving children, youth, families and communities.

Pulling Teams Together

THE ELECTION is over, and you now know who you are working with for the next four years. Looking around the council table, these are the people who will be your first team. Along with you, they will know more about your community than anyone else, even your own families. As a group, you will be making decisions for now and for the future.

Getting that team of individuals to all pull in the same direction is often no easy task. Each person brings their own history and their own strengths to the office, and they may also bring conflict from the past or from the campaign. Getting off on the right foot is critical.

While it is not mandatory, it is always wise for a new council to have a formal orientation process to help them understand their role and their community. Even for those people who are returning as council members, a refresher of the expectations of the job is a good idea. The orientation is part professional development and part team building.

Understanding the role of governance versus management and service delivery is critical. A lack of clarity at the top will cascade down into an inefficient operation where the rubber meets the road – sometimes literally. Council members who want to drive the grader rather than set policy about how deep the gravel ought to be or how often the snow needs to be plowed are in for a very long four years. The RM or town staff are also in for a long four years if the lack of clarity persists.

A good orientation should have several major components to it, including:

- Background of local government in Saskatchewan;
- Roles of:
 - Governance (duties, roles, and principles of members of council),
 - Management (duties and roles of CAO), and
 - Service delivery ('where the rubber hits the road');
- Ethics and conflicts of interest;
- Intermunicipal collaboration;
- Council tools:
 - Meetings, protocols, agenda content, committee of the whole, in-camera, freedom of information,
 - Decision-making processes and conflict resolution,
 - Issues management,
 - Importance of strategic planning,
 - Budgeting based on priorities, and
 - Setting municipal priorities;
- Partnerships and regional coordination;
- Managing public expectations;
- Dealing with the media; and
- Specific 2020 campaign issues and priorities.

Once the orientation is done, professional development ought to continue. Most municipalities will have money set aside for conferences, courses and other professional development opportunities for elected officials. These can be done alone, or they can be done with colleagues as a way to keep the team bond strong.

The Cheshire Cat said to Alice “if you don’t know where you’re going, any road will get you there.” This is exactly the opposite of what a prudent council will decide early in its term. Thinking and looking down that road, what is different in your municipality at the end of your term than it is now? What will be this particular council’s legacy? How will a group of newly elected people prove that together they are greater than the sum of their individual parts?

Understanding the role of governance versus management and service delivery is critical. A lack of clarity at the top will cascade down into an inefficient operation where the rubber meets the road – sometimes literally.

The best way to identify the road the council wants to follow is to create or update a strategic plan, complete with a vision for the future and a set of goals and strategies that will help council know how progress towards the end of that road is coming.

This governance planning is critical and so is tying a budget to achieving those high priorities. You will have limited resources, and you need to put them where they will do the most good. Allocating dollars to priority items, rather than just adding 2 per cent to last year’s budget, is a sign of good stewardship and the alignment of a governance-focused vision to achieving a successful future for your first team.

Much of what is written here is excerpted from Ian McCormack’s new book *Who’s Driving the Grader – and other governance questions*. This is an essential primer on what good governance looks like in Canadian local governments. The book is available from Municipal World at <https://www.municipalworld.com/product/whos-driving-the-grader-and-other-governance-questions/>.

As always, I’m interested in your thoughts about this topic. Is your newly elected first team designed to provide ongoing good governance? You can find me at ian@strategicsteps.ca. The company’s Twitter profile is [@strategic_steps](https://twitter.com/strategic_steps).



Let's All Walk the Talk

By Brad Blaisdell
Managing Director – Respect in the Workplace – Respect Group Inc.

GOOD GOVERNANCE has eight major characteristics. It is participatory, consensus-oriented, accountable, transparent, responsive, effective and efficient, equitable and inclusive and follows the rule of law.

What is governance and why is it important?

Good governance is at the heart of any successful business. It is essential for a company or organization to achieve its objectives and drive improvement, as well as maintain legal and ethical standing in the eyes of shareholders, regulators and the wider community.¹

To really sum it up, it's establishing joint accountability and clear standards for everyone to be guided by, and having the opportunity to become Respect Certified with Respect in the Workplace program is a great first step to take for ALL municipalities.

In October 2018, the Government of Saskatchewan was the first province in Canada to launch government wide Respect in the Workplace training for

employees with Respect Group. Since that time, Saskatchewan has been leading the way with more than 75 additional organizations coming on board, with SARM also stepping up to the plate.

How we work, who we are, our attitudes, and behaviour are diverse and unique. When we all interact respectfully, this diversity fosters a robust workplace and an inviting municipality and operation to be proud of. However, without that foundation of respect, BAHD (bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination) behaviours creep in and can turn an otherwise healthy workplace into a toxic environment, and the cost of doing nothing adds up quickly.

The cost of doing nothing

Three in ten Canadians say their workplaces are not psychologically safe and healthy², and nearly half report having experienced one or more acts of workplace harassment at least once a week for the last six months.³ Employees coping with these toxic work environments take twice as much sick time.⁴ Statistics

Canada estimates the cost of employee absence due to bullying and harassment is roughly **\$19 billion per year**.

Respect in the Workplace was developed to provide organizations, of all sizes, with a standard, cost-effective tool to empower your team with the skills to prevent bullying, abuse, harassment and discrimination (BAHD).

We like to think it's about improving culture, first and foremost. The secondary benefit is organizational risk and liability reduction.

Our Respect Group team have been assigned to help every municipality in Saskatchewan – both SARM and Municipalities of Saskatchewan – to become Respect Certified and expand on how your municipality can take advantage of a 50 per cent reduced cost of \$20 per stakeholder. To engage in the discussion and learn how your municipality can take the next step in becoming Respect Certified, contact Brad Blaisdell at bblaisdell@respectgroupinc.com.

Let's All Walk the Talk.

1. Governance - Simple English Wikipedia, the free encyclopediasimple.wikipedia.org > wiki > Governance

2. www.rueters.com/article/us-work-mentalhealth/three-in-ten-workers-say-workplace-not-psychologically-safe-idUSBRE82DoLF20120314

3. www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/75-006-x/2018001/article/54982-eng.htm

4. www.mentalhealthcommission.ca/sites/default/files/February_workplace_webinar.pdf

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All About Weed Management Plans

and why every RM should have one



By Joanne Kwasnicki AAg

SARM Division 2 Plant Health Officer

WHILE IT MAY SEEM ODD to think about weeds in the fall and winter, when most plants have died or gone dormant, it is actually an ideal time to reflect on the previous growing season and plan your weed control for next year.

Were there any new weed species spotted in the area? What was the RM able to accomplish with weed control efforts on RM land and private land? What would council like to accomplish in the future? All this information and more can be captured with a weed management plan.

Why create a plan?

For the same reasons you plan for anything else, creating a weed management plan will help an RM outline what its priorities are for weed management and reach its goals. Having a plan in place can help a council stay focused and measure progress year to year.

If a RM has large, widespread infestations of a noxious weed, having a well thought out plan can make the task of controlling and containing that weed seem achievable and not so overwhelming. A weed management plan is also useful in communicating to ratepayers what the are the RM's current weed priorities.

The purpose of a weed management plan is to prioritize the weeds a RM or First Nation Band (FNB) is committing to work on. The prioritization of weeds should follow the guidelines set out by *The Weed Control Act*; that is to prevent the establishment of new invasive weeds, eradicate isolated infestations of prohibited and noxious weeds, and to contain and control established noxious weeds in the municipality.

A list of prohibited, noxious, and nuisance weeds can be found in the Minister's Order Designating Prohibited, Noxious, and Nuisance Weeds (found by searching for weed inspectors on saskatchewan.ca). The weed species focused on in a weed management plan will vary depending on the area.

Who can make a plan?

Weed management plans can (and should) be created by municipalities, First Nations Bands, landowners, and other stakeholders. For the purposes of this article, we will focus on RM and FNB weed management plans. These weed management plans cover both RM/FNB land and private land within an RM.

How do we know which weeds to prioritize?

Typically, the weeds to prioritize in a weed management plan are ones that are present in the RM or are found in nearby municipalities. Because research out of Australia¹ has shown that the return on investment of resources is highest if a weed is eliminated as early as possible in its stage of introduction to an area, the prohibited or noxious weed you have the least of should be the highest priority. More common weeds will be a tougher fight and will consume more of the the RM/FNB's limited resources and recovery of the area will take longer.

Consult the iMapsInvasives database to see which weeds have been logged in and surrounding the RM. One can even set alerts in iMapsInvasives to notify you by email when a new infestation of prohibited or noxious weed is found in your municipality. Ensure your weed inspector is monitoring the municipality for noxious and prohibited weeds and logging any occurrences on iMapsInvasives. Train RM staff, especially mower and grader operators, to identify common weeds, so they can flag any infestations for treatment. Use public outreach to let ratepayers and landowners know which plants to keep an eye out for. Your plant health officer (PHO) is a resource you can use to assist with these tasks.

We have a weed management plan, what do we do with it?

Circulate it! Make sure ratepayers know you have a plan and what it is. Let them know what the RM/FNB is planning to do about invasive weeds.

Make sure residents are aware of which invasive plants to keep an eye out for and to report any infestations to the weed inspector. Make your plan available to other stakeholders in the RM, especially any entities that the RM may want to coordinate with for weed control efforts.

Review the plan annually and update it completely every two to three years to ensure the information is relevant. Weed populations can change rapidly in just a few years, so weed management plans should be updated as well. Also, be sure to include a budget as part of your weed management plan to ensure that you have resources allocated to implement the actions identified.

What are the other benefits to having a current weed plan?

It helps ensure that you are eligible for funding, including the Invasive Plant Control Program (CAP-IPCP), administered by SARM. RMs, FNBs and other stakeholders can access rebates of up to 50 per cent back on eligible herbicides used to control eligible noxious and prohibited weeds, and one of the requirements of the program is having a weed management plan in place.

A current weed management plan also helps demonstrate to third-party agencies, such as the Ministry of Highways and Infrastructure, railway companies, and Environmental Non-governmental Organizations, that the RM is prioritizing weed control and actively monitoring for and controlling invasive plants, and encourage them to do the same.

What are some other resources to access?

Your local PHO can help with the creation and updating of weed management plans, information and training on iMapsInvasives, and information to distribute to ratepayers and RM staff. Sample weed management plans are available through your PHO and on sarm.ca.

1. Jayasuriya, RT Jones, RE & van de Ven, R 2008, 'An economic decision tool for responding to new weed incursion risks in the Australian grains industry', CRC for Australian Weed Management Technical Series No. 11.

Lieutenant Governor's Award for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan

THE LIEUTENANT GOVERNOR'S AWARD for Outstanding Service to Rural Saskatchewan, is awarded to a reeve, councillor or administrator for his or her lifetime contribution to rural Saskatchewan (both retired and/or actively working individuals).

Rural municipalities may nominate a reeve, councillor or administrator for this award.

Nominations should be sent to the SARM office by **January 31, 2021**.

The award is presented to the successful candidate at the Opening Ceremonies of the SARM Annual Convention. This forum provides an excellent opportunity to publicly recognize the recipient of this prestigious award.

The selection committee reviews all nominations and selects one individual who has not yet been formally recognized for his or her exemplary contributions in making rural Saskatchewan a better place to live. The committee includes representatives from the following organizations: The Lieutenant Governor of Saskatchewan's Office, SARM, the Ministry of Government Relations, and the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association.

Rural municipalities may nominate a reeve, councillor or administrator for this award. Nominations should be sent to the SARM office by **January 31, 2021**.

To obtain a nomination form and guidelines, please reach out to Committee Secretary, Kathleen Israel, directly at executiveassistant@sarm.ca.

Wishing you
a warm &
happy holiday
season

From the Board, management &
staff of Municipal Hail

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**MUNICIPAL HAIL
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Getting to Know SARM's staff members



JODI HUGHES



CRAIG WILLIAMS



LISA SHORDEE

JODI

Q What is your role at SARM?
Employee Benefits Administrator.

Q What is your wildest winter in Saskatchewan story?
Hmmm... I would have to say the eight hour drive from Regina to Saskatoon to see my brand new twin nieces; we hit a massive snow storm and literally crawled to Saskatoon, very scary!

Q Why do you like working at SARM?
I enjoy engaging with our the RMs/ members and being able to assist with benefits and set ups any way I can!

Q Where were you born?
Wolseley, Saskatchewan

Q What is one word that describes your family?
Supportive.

CRAIG

Q What is your role at SARM?
I am the Director of Insurance and Benefit Programs.

Q Why do you like working at SARM?
I love the team environment here at SARM. It feels like we're a family. I also get a lot of enjoyment from the wide variety of duties which I perform for the organization.

Q Where were you born?
Moose Jaw, Saskatchewan, at the former Providence Hospital.

Q What is one word that describes your family?
Amazing!

Q What is your wildest winter in Saskatchewan story?
A fairly recent story would be from the Winter of 2012-2013. I remember feeling like we got a foot of snow here in Regina every week on Wednesday, because I would come home from work, clear the yard of snow, have supper and go curling. My arms were like rubber on Thursdays that whole winter! By the time February and March came, the snow piles in the front yard were taller than my truck in the driveway!

LISA

Q What is your role at SARM?
My role is Insurance Program Administrator. I administer the Property Self-Insurance Program, Fidelity Bond Self-Insurance Plan, as well as the Municipal Leadership Development Program.

Q Why do you like working at SARM?
At SARM, I have had the opportunity to learn more about and see areas of this province that I was not familiar with. I enjoy communicating with and getting to know the members and being there to provide support or answer questions they may have.

Q Where were you born?
I was born in Regina, but I grew up in Fort Qu'Appelle.

Q What is one word that describes your family?
Down-to-earth.

Q What is your wildest winter in Saskatchewan story?
Several years ago, I was coming back to Regina from Saskatoon on the bus. With a winter storm blowing through, the highway ended up closing at Davidson, causing all traffic to stop and gather at the community hall. It was fascinating to see complete strangers come together in an unusual situation and pass the time until we were able to continue on the road. The wild Saskatchewan weather turned a two-and-a-half-hour trip home into an eight-hour event.

Member news



Neil Sutton
RM of Kinistino No. 459
In Memoriam

Neil Sutton was born in Kinistino, SK on September 4, 1949. He worked and farmed in Kinistino all his life. Some of

his earliest memories are of riding the tractor with his father. He became a councillor for the RM of Kinistino in February of 2007.

Neil is survived by his wife, Linda, and his three children, David, Amanda, and Jennifer, as well as his grandchildren, Cameron, David and Phoebe.

Neil was known for his good humour who was generous and considerate of others. He contributed much to his family and community, and he always held a positive attitude through serious health issues. He will be sadly missed.



Joseph Siegfried Hoffmam
RM of Frenchman Butte No. 501
In Memoriam

Joseph was born August 30, 1943 in Paradise Hill, SK, the youngest of 12 children for Joseph and Helena Hoffman.

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He grew up on the family farm in Bolney, SK. After high school, he traveled and worked across Canada for a year, and then attended the University of Saskatchewan for a year. For the next few years, he worked as a miner in Yellowknife, a logger in Hinton, and at Alberta Government Telephones in Edmonton, where he met his wife, Agnes. They were married in July 1966. Joe purchased land, and he worked hard to establish a farm. He worked ten winters on the oil rigs to support it. He started out as a mixed farmer, but he eventually became a grain farmer. Building the farm was a source of pride and frustration, and he considered it his calling.

Joe was an active member and leader in the community. He spent 25 plus years on the CO-OP board and 11 years as an RM councillor. He volunteered for many years for the Ag Society organizing ball at the fair. He was a minor hockey coach, softball coach and manager, and he was a director of the River Side Ski Hill.

He loved playing sports. He played ball with West Hazel and later with the Combines. He enjoyed skiing and spearheaded many family trips to the mountains. He also enjoyed bowling and loved to travel the country playing in the Senior Games. Memorable trips were to Whitehorse, Newfoundland, and New Brunswick.

Joe was happy in his retirement. He enjoyed traveling, visiting family and friends, checking on the cows and shooting gophers. He was also proud of his family. He enjoyed telling stories, teasing and giving nicknames. He had high expectations and instilled a strong work ethic in everyone he worked with. He was the best grandpa. Joe passed away August 13, 2020. He will be missed.



Joseph Nicodemus
RM of Frenchman Butte No. 501
In Memoriam

Joe Nicodemus passed away at the age of 88 years on September 12, 2020 in Lloydminster, AB. Joe was born in Calgary in 1932, and he was the oldest of three children. His childhood was

marked by two world events – the Great Depression/Dirty 30’s and WWII. Both events instilled a work ethic into the family. Joe’s father was a professional civil engineer, and he had a large road construction company. As children they often felt like gypsy’s following construction jobs. In 1948, when Joe was 16, he followed his father to Lloydminster to help on the road construction that was being done there. He remained in Lloydminster, and at age 18, he met his wife to be (Fay), and they were married in 1953.

Fay worked as a nurse, and Joe had his own construction company, Lloydminster Earth Movers. Joe and Fay were blessed with seven children.

They loved going for family drives always looking at the land and the cattle around the country. In 1965 they followed their dreams and purchased a farm in the RM of Frenchman Butte. Joe always loved all types of animals, and it was not long before he was raising Herfords and Speckled Park at his farm.

As he transitioned into farm life, he grew to love his rural community and wanted to give back. He always loved politics and loved to hear the different perspectives from people, so it was natural for him to become a councillor with the RM. Although usually quiet in council meetings, his wealth of construction knowledge was an asset when any road building was discussed. He remained on council from 1997 until 2015, at which time his failing health necessitated his move back to Lloydminster and his resignation.



Brian Patterson
RM Of Kellross No. 247
Award

Brian Patterson served as councillor for Division 5 for the RM of Kellross No. 247 for 25 years. Pictured is Deputy Reeve Bashutski presenting a Service Award Certificate and a gift card to Brian. We thank Brian for his dedication to the RM, and we are grateful for the knowledge he provided throughout his service. We wish him the best in the future.

Member News submission tips:

- Photos: JPG, PNG, TIFF or PDF files at 300 dpi resolution. Check the file size. If it is <100 kb, it may not print properly.
- Write-up length maximum: 250 words.
- Email submissions to sarm@sarm.ca.
Thanks for sharing your stories with us!



SAMA conducts revaluations based on a four-year cycle. 2017 was the year of the last revaluation, and the 2021 Revaluation will see assessed values updated to reflect a new base date of January 1, 2019. The legislated base date means that 2021 values reflect a property’s value as of January 1, 2019.

Municipalities should have received a preliminary values package for the upcoming 2021 Revaluation. Please take the time to review the information you were sent, and contact SAMA with any questions or concerns you may have regarding the 2021 Revaluation.

Thank you for your continued support as we look to provide service for our municipal clients while being mindful of the health and safety of our staff and the public.

For more information visit our website at www.sama.sk.ca.

Contact SAMA by phone at: 1-800-667-7262,
 or by email: info.request@sama.sk.ca.



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