

# MUNICIPAL VOICE

The magazine for the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities

SPRING 2018

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The UNSM is a not-for-profit organization mandated to represent the provincial interests of municipal governments across Nova Scotia. Total membership is 379 elected officials representing all 50 municipalities.

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## President's Message

Councillor Geoff Stewart, County of Colchester

*I am pleased to have the opportunity to share with you some progress on our key files.*

This January, the UNSM executive met with ministers at a provincial/municipal roundtable meeting. New terms of reference for these meetings were approved, and I am pleased with the changes that have been made. The roundtable will serve as a venue for shared accountability, monitoring progress of the Partnership Framework between the province and UNSM. It is an opportunity to discuss emerging issues as well and will serve to strengthen the relationship between the two orders of government. The process is in line with our resolutions and priorities, and commits to a public report on progress.

I would like to thank the Minister of Municipal Affairs, Derek Mombourquette, for his work in bringing his fellow ministers to the table. As well, I would like to thank the previous Minister of Municipal Affairs, Zach Churchill, for his work in developing the Partnership Framework. Minister Mombourquette was joined by the Minister of Finance, Karen Casey; Minister of Justice, Mark Furey; Minister of

Business, Geoff MacLellan; and Minister of the Environment, Iain Rankin. The tone of the meeting was very positive.

The roundtable meeting discussed the resolutions passed at our November conference, the progress in the past year under the Partnership Framework, a consultation process with Municipal Affairs for new legislation and/or regulations, and the impacts arising from the legalization of cannabis.

*“Working together with the province is critical, but so is working with other municipalities”*

I believe the collaboration between the provinces and municipalities is high. In the last year we have been invited to participate in a number of joint committees on matters of mutual importance. These include committees dealing with the legalization of cannabis, the new *Accessibility Act*, physician recruitment, policing, agricultural land use and short-term tourism rental accommodations, as well as soon-to-be-established committees on roads, housing and age-friendly places. These are in addition to the work we do in collaboration with Municipal Affairs, such

as parental accommodations, travel and expense policies, asset management, gas tax, municipal governance, and the *MGA* review.

Working together with the province is critical, but so is working with other municipalities. Our system of local government, based on property taxes, sets us up for competition. Our political boundaries were drawn in the days of horse and buggies! Surely we can recognize opportunities to address our current challenges so that the overall cost of local services is reasonable for all Nova Scotians. We can improve our delivery of programs and services. Minister Mombourquette uses the term “municipal modernization” to describe the move towards a new environment that encourages and rewards collaboration amongst municipalities. This builds on the conclusions of the Towns Task Force and Fiscal Review. I don’t know where exactly this will lead, but I am convinced we can work with the province and with each other to better support the goals and aspirations of our communities. Changes may be difficult, but so is maintaining the status quo.

We are focussing on how we can assist you as we build for the future. Building relationships with our neighbours, our community

groups, the business community, and the federal and provincial governments are key. We are hosting a CAO/CEO workshop on building relationships, and will be carrying this theme in our Spring and Fall Conferences and in our Regional and Caucus Meetings.

Our Spring Workshop will provide an opportunity to engage our members in developing our priorities. We anticipate the minister of Municipal Affairs will be available to discuss matters of interest. We are also extending our workshop into Saturday; a number of our members continue to work in addition to serving in an elected capacity.

As president, I serve on the Board of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, along with Warden Timothy Habinski, and Councillors Tom Taggart and Russell Walker. Councillor Bill Karsten is currently serving as First Vice-President. The FCM provides a tremendous opportunity to leverage our impact on the federal government. During the FCM Board Meetings, those in the Atlantic region also meet to discuss matters of particular interest to our region.

Nova Scotia will welcome our fellow Councillors, Mayors, Wardens and Reeves this June for the FCM Annual Conference in Halifax. I encourage you all to take advantage of the close location and attend the Conference and Trade Show, especially if you have never attended one. It is a great learning experience!

During the FCM conference, UNSM will be welcoming a delegation from Vietnam, as we are partners with FCM and the Cape Breton Regional Enterprise Network in a community economic development project. These are great opportunities to not only share our experiences, but to learn from

them as well – it is truly a two-way street.

We continue to do work on our resolutions: CAP, municipal finances, roads, physician recruitment, and connectivity. In addition, in recent months we have focussed on the legalization of cannabis and the new Accessibility Act. We will keep you updated in our report to Councils following each Board Meeting. As information becomes

available we will send it to you, and we are launching a new website to increase the ease with which you can find relevant information.

As always, it is a pleasure to work with our Board on your behalf. Please feel free to contact me if you have any questions, concerns or suggestions. Thank you for your support.

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## Executive Director's Message

Betty MacDonald

*It is an exciting time to be working at UNSM, soon to be the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities!*

The work on the renewal of our name and logo has presented an opportunity to check in with our members, to better understand what you think about UNSM and what you value the most. I would like to take this opportunity to share with you what we learned, and how our name and logo emerged. I hope you share my excitement!

Our rebranding committee included Mayor Cecil Clarke, Deputy Warden Linda Gregory, Deputy Mayors Laurie Murley and Wayne Mason, Warden Jim Smith and Councillor Geoff Stewart, along with Lyle Goldberg and Breton Murphy, Manager, Public Affairs, Halifax. The consultants chosen to work with us on the rebranding exercise were the team of John Thomson, President, the Creative Department (Albert Ianni, Creative Director/Writer), and Larry MacEachern, Brand Coach/Facilitator and Strategist.

The work began with research and discussions on what UNSM was about. A survey was sent to all

UNSM members and CAOs, and three teleconference calls were held to explore UNSM's purpose, who it serves, etc. The research showed that our members valued UNSM's role in advocacy (advancing municipal concerns, united front); networking opportunities (conferences, workshops, meetings) and sharing of knowledge and best practices; and resources (information, training, tools, ideas, advice). The survey also identified challenges to UNSM: how it could increase and strengthen its advocacy work, present a more united voice, and bring proactive solutions to municipal issues.

The consultants concluded the essence of the UNSM brand is as an enabler of effective local government. We do this through strategic advocacy, education and collaboration. As a result of our work we help local governments build strong, sustainable communities. In facilitating advocacy, we use the collective weight of municipalities to advocate for their interests with strategic partners at other levels of government. In facilitating collaboration, we provide a forum for municipalities to come together to identify and prioritize the policies, initiatives and resources that will

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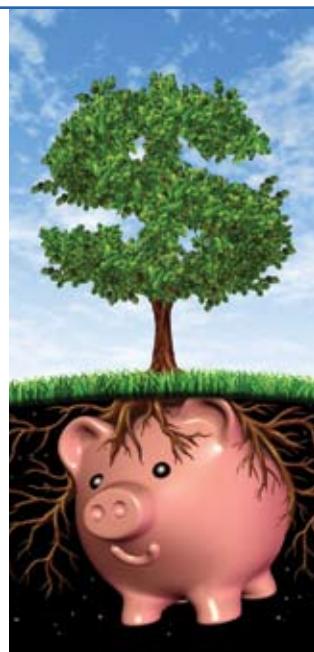
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enable them to offer the most effective local government in their communities. We facilitate education by sharing best practices, providing opportunities for shared learning through networking amongst our members.

The consultants identified our personality as an advocate – highly competent, driven, reliable, intelligent, active and professional.

UNSM wants to be taken seriously and we need to earn this. We want to be forward looking. This led to the exciting opportunity to consider a new name, logo, mission and vision.

As presented to those present at our Fall Conference, our new vision and mission is as follows:

***Mission:*** *To enable effective local government for Nova Scotia's communities by facilitating strategic advocacy, education and collaboration*

***Vision:*** *Effective local government and strong, sustainable communities*

The name needs to reflect the personality of the organization. For those who are wondering what was wrong with the old name, the understanding of the word “union” has changed over time, and led to some strange questions around labour issues, and why we couldn’t direct municipalities to do something as labour unions do. The name needed to clearly define who we are, so that various audiences and stakeholders would have a basic understanding of the organization without needing a big explanation. The word “federation” was presented as suggesting the bringing together of autonomous entities for a unifying purpose. It evoked a more formal, official and significant meaning. The Federation of Nova Scotia Municipalities was initially put forward,

but given feedback from some of our members, the board chose to reorder the name to the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities.

A new name and visual identity, along with a new website are being launched; next Municipal Voice magazine will reflect our new identity. As our name is en-

trenched in legislation, our official documents will still use the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities, until the legislation is changed.

Thanks to all who helped us get to this point. Now comes the hard part of living up to the image and presence you want UNSM to have.



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# Extended Producer Responsibility

*Contributed by Valda Walsh, BSc., TME EP,  
Regional Coordinator, Region 6 Solid Waste Management*

Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) is a policy approach that shifts the responsibility and costs of managing specific wastes/recyclable materials from municipalities to producers (i.e. brand owners and manufacturers).

Municipal curbside recycling programs are a type of producer funded EPR. In Canada, every province from Quebec west to British Columbia, except Alberta, has implemented EPR. Materials included in the curbside recycling program in Nova Scotia are referred to as 'packaging and printed paper' (PPP).

Provincial legislation is required in Nova Scotia to shift both the responsibility and the cost of recycling programs from the taxpayer

to the producer. This is referred to as EPR for PPP.

In Nova Scotia, the Solid Waste-Resource Regional Chairs, represented by elected municipal officials, have established a working group to focus on moving EPR forward. This group is called the Municipal-Provincial Priorities Group.

The Priorities Group is engaging with stakeholders to build an EPR program proposal that works for Nova Scotians. This proposal will build on insights and lessons learned in other provinces that have implemented EPR for PPP. Here are some of the Priorities Group's early discoveries:

**The UNSM Spring Conference 2018 will have a session on EPR.**

**Attend the conference to hear more!**

**May 10-12 at Mariners Centre, Yarmouth**

## **EPR - What's in it for municipalities?**

### **1. Funding to support recycling programs**

- Under this framework, producers are responsible for funding collection, processing and marketing of materials, as well as supporting education.
- Across Canada, in 2016, producers provided more than \$367 million to fund **provincially regulated** PPP programs. Nova Scotia received \$0.00.
- It is estimated that a Nova Scotia EPR model could generate a financial benefit of up to \$16M.
- Municipalities would no longer manage the risk of rising costs and fluctuating commodity markets.

### **2. Access to PPP programming for which Nova Scotia consumers are already paying**

- Producers fund PPP programs in Canada by incorporating program costs into their national product **pricing** [i.e. no eco-fees are charged as an added cost at point-of-sale]. This means the selling price on a box of cereal in Nova Scotia is helping fund recycling programs for that same packaging elsewhere.
- Nova Scotia consumers are already paying for the incremental costs of PPP programs in other provinces, but without an EPR program here, are receiving none of the benefits

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# Regional Caucus Update

*Councillor George MacDonald, Cape Breton Regional Municipality*

I am pleased to report on behalf of the regional caucus. I would like to thank Mayor Cecil Clarke for his work on the Board, including his term as President and Past President. I would like to welcome Councillor Clarence Prince back to the Board.

There was great discussion at our last caucus meeting, and I would like to assure you UNSM is working hard on your behalf.

There is growing support for the review of the CAP program. Parts of the business community are beginning to speak out about the impact CAP is having on the sale and building of new homes. For every dollar someone saves under the CAP program, someone else is paying a dollar more. We are hearing stories of young families not being able to afford the tax on their first home, and of seniors not being able to downsize because the tax on the smaller home will be higher than the tax they are paying on their current home. We need to find a better way to assist those who need it the most.

UNSM, along with Halifax and CBRM are working with the province to develop a new municipal government act that recognizes the ability of municipalities to manage their own affairs. Whether it be new charters, natural person powers, or legislation that enables municipalities to adopt the tools they need for their communities, we are confident we will get there. We are the experts in local government.

*The knowledge and expertise, especially on the policing implications, is very helpful*

We also understand the benefits of regionalization, and can share this with our fellow municipalities. The work on municipal modernization will focus on encouraging collaboration with our neighbours and our regions; we don't need to be restricted to those who share our borders.

UNSM appreciates the help we are getting from CBRM and Halifax on the cannabis file. The knowledge and expertise, especially on the

policing implications, is very helpful. It is a good example of sharing time and resources for the benefit of all municipalities, and UNSM wants to thank you, along with the other team members.

Housing is a priority for the regional caucus. UNSM and Housing Nova Scotia are working together to develop resources on the role municipalities can play in supporting good quality affordable housing. If you have any questions or concerns, contact our Executive Director, Betty MacDonald, at [bmacdonald@unsm.ca](mailto:bmacdonald@unsm.ca)

I encourage you to attend our Spring Conference in May. The planning committee has put together a program that addresses our current issues, and you will have an opportunity to raise your priorities to a provincial level.



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# Rural Caucus Update

*Warden Jim Smith, East Hants*

As we begin our new term, I would like to thank Deputy Warden Linda Gregory for her service on the UNSM Board; her contributions were numerous and valuable. I would like to welcome Deputy Mayor Emily Lutz to the rural caucus as a representative. I look forward to the coming year – it looks promising!

I am pleased to report a number of the rural caucus priorities are being addressed by UNSM, at least in some manner. Physician recruitment is a complicated issue, and has garnered a lot of media coverage. UNSM was asked by the Nova Scotia Health Authority to participate on an advisory committee focussed on physician recruitment. Other participants on the committee include Doctors Nova Scotia, the College of Physicians and Surgeons, Dalhousie Medical School, the Maritime Resident Doctors, Health Care Foundations, etc. The UNSM Executive Director is a resource to the committee, and is working with a few of the participants to develop a workshop for municipalities to identify the role municipalities can play.

Work has also begun on the roads issue. Staff from the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal are meeting with us to understand the service exchange agreement and TIR policies and approaches, with the initial aim of providing clarity to our members. This will be shared with you, and next steps will be determined once we have a clearer pic-

*The consultation protocol increases with the expected impact on municipalities, and does not include matters of an urgent nature or part of the budget process*

ture of the issues. This work will include rural roads and the arterial roads in towns.

The biggest challenge seems to be on the connectivity issue. We are told the provincial government work is progressing, and we are looking at holding a workshop for municipalities in September.

I am pleased with the new consultation protocol UNSM has signed with the Department of Municipal Affairs. As the department begins consideration of new legislation or regulations, they will consult with municipalities to determine if legislation is required, or if there are other ways to achieve the same results. This is something we have asked for, as we have often been impacted negatively from new legislation, without an opportunity to

explore with us whether the goals of the legislation can actually be met. What looks good on paper may be very difficult to implement on the ground. Our involvement in these discussions will lead to better outcomes for both orders of government. The consultation protocol increases with the expected impact on municipalities, and does not include matters of an urgent nature or part of the budget process. It is a good first step, and UNSM and Municipal Affairs are working to encourage other departments to adopt similar consultation protocols.

The work to prepare for the legalization of cannabis continues. Of special interest to our rural communities is the anticipated federal approval for 16 licenses to grow cannabis. UNSM and the Federation of Canadian Municipalities are pushing for measures to ensure our communities are safe and our youth are protected. As we learn more, we will share it with you.

The Board is now reporting on the status of our major initiatives following every meeting. Please watch for these reports, and contact me if you have any concerns or questions.

I look forward to our next caucus meeting in May, along with our Spring Workshop. I encourage you to attend - not only is it a great opportunity to learn, it is also an important opportunity to raise your issues at the provincial level.

# Towns Caucus Update

*Mayor Jeff Cantwell*

The Towns Caucus Executive met in February to discuss and plan our work on behalf of the towns caucus. It is a challenging time to be a town in Nova Scotia and some municipal units - be they town, rural or regional - are feeling an urge to rationalise service delivery to our property owners. We are committed to working with you to help make governance effective.

The Executive reviewed the minutes of the last towns caucus, and noted the issue of the deer population in towns and urban areas. This issue was sent to the minister of natural resources as a statement of municipal concern, and the minister has responded that the department is willing to work with municipalities, though it appears its ability to resolve the issue is limited. Mr. Mike Boudreau, Human Wildlife Conflict Biologist, Natural Resources, can be reached at 902-679-6150 or email at [michael.boudreau@novascotia.ca](mailto:michael.boudreau@novascotia.ca).

The towns caucus also requested the resolution process task each caucus with bringing their top resolution forward to the province. This request has been brought to the board and the board is working on improving the process.

The executive discussed ways to support regional approaches. The need to view services and programs from a regional perspective is one of the conclusions from the One Nova Scotia report, the Towns Task Force, Fiscal Review and the Don Mills urban centre proposal. This is also a theme of the municipi-

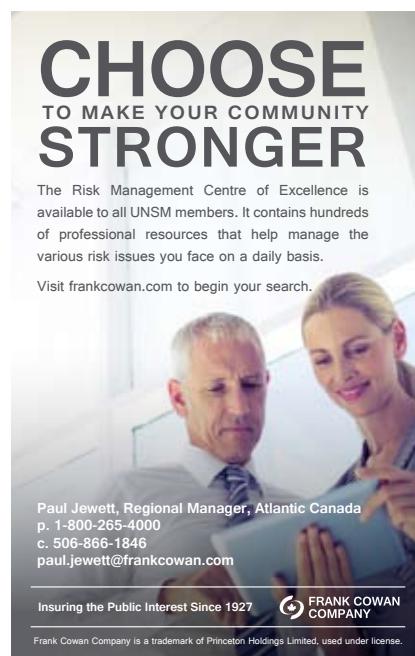
pal modernisation work. The issue is complex, and yet we need to find the way to do the right things for the right reasons. We are too small as a province to continue trying to do everything for everyone. Collaboration will help.

UNSM is working hard on some of the issues of significance to towns. The resolutions on roads will result in joint work done with the Department of Transportation and Infrastructure Renewal on the arterial roads issue, as well as rural roads. UNSM will host workshops on physician recruitment and connectivity. The need for more strategic assistance in infrastructure and asset management is being promoted through the resolution on municipal finances. We are building support with the business

community around the CAP. We continue to monitor the files on library funding and school closures. Policing and cannabis are also active files.

We are planning for the caucus meeting in May. In the meantime, please contact me about any issues, concerns or opportunities.

I look forward to seeing everyone at our spring workshop in Yarmouth. This is the Professional Development and Continuing Education opportunity for civic leaders, and if we are going to be those community leaders we must embrace and engage the best practices and appropriate governance shared at these conferences and workshops.



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# Waste Water, Not Resources

In the go-forward plan for municipalities across Nova Scotia, collaboration is perhaps the main theme. That is something the Town of Digby of Municipality of the District of Digby have been doing for years, including before “shared services” was truly a buzz term. Their respective efforts are greatly displayed in the Digby Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility.

Jointly owned by both bodies, the Smiths Cove-based facility treats wastewater from that community, the Town of Digby, Conway and Bear River; the town operates it. Back in 2008, the town faced older existing infrastructure and growing operational costs for its own wastewater treatment facility. The Smiths Cove facility was built in 2006, underutilized at the time and accounting for a 20-year development projection. Those facts lay out definite mutual benefit, and after approval from respective councils an inter-municipal agreement on operational costs was signed in February 2013.

The benefits of this partnership have proven great. It reduced the number of area wastewater treatment facilities to one from three, bringing down costs for the town

and municipality. It also was less impactful on the shellfish industry, and of course provided more and easier-to-execute resources. For the town, municipality and citizens of both, the move to a shared service was and remains a win.

In talks between UNSM (soon, of course, to be the Nova Scotia Federation of Municipalities) and its members, you’ve likely heard the word “collaboration” mentioned more than anything else recently.

Our smaller population and limited resources need it, and that’s something we can all agree on. With environmental protection at the forefront of so many discussions, the best possible wastewater treatment is a necessity. The Town of Digby and Municipality of the District of Digby have been at it for years, and their Digby Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility is a shining example of the power of collaboration.

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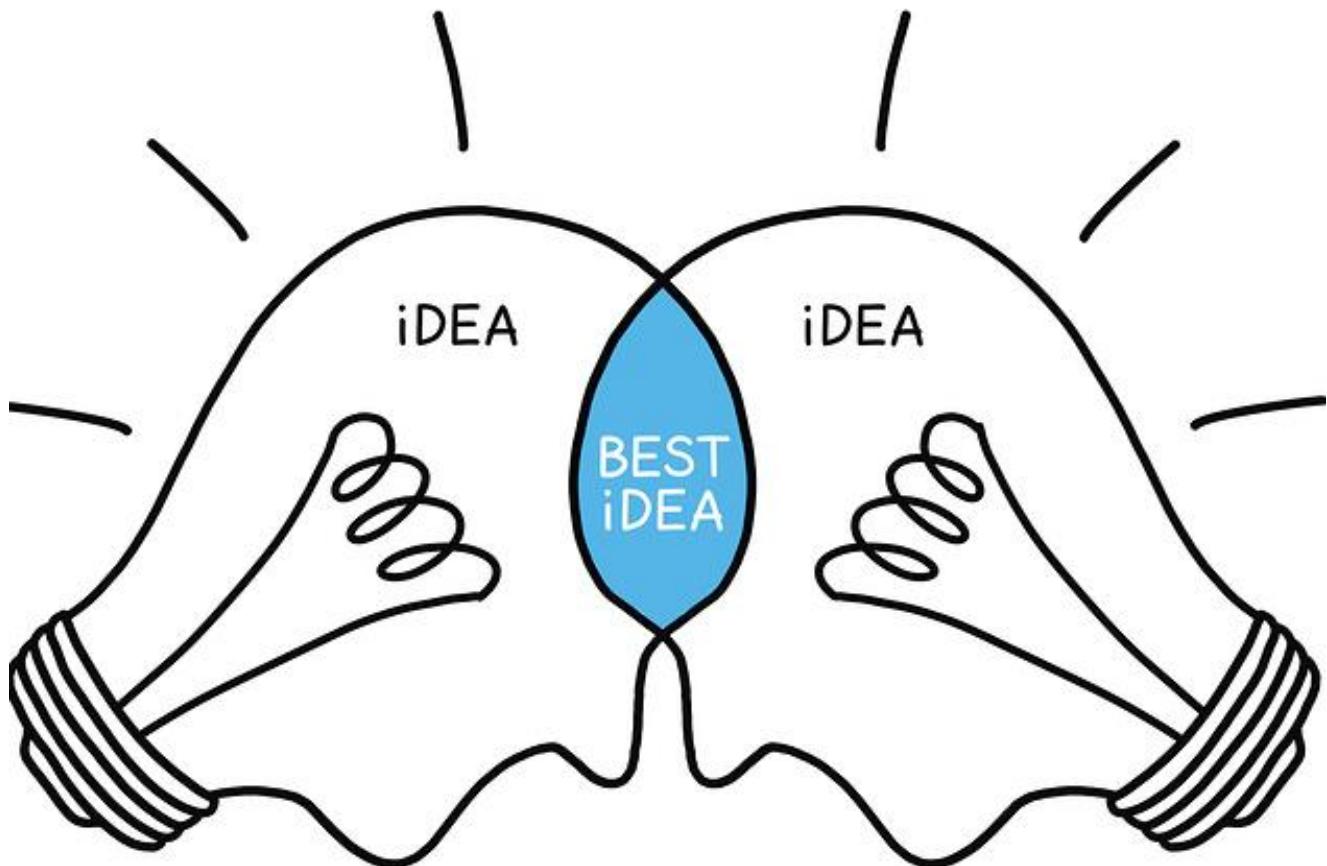
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# So What Is This Thing Called Municipal Modernization?

Contributed by: UNSM, AMANS and DMA



Municipalities are operating in a world which is changing at an unprecedented pace. Citizen expectations with respect to service levels continue to rise, areas of municipal responsibility are increasing, demographics are shifting, population in most regions is decreasing, infrastructure is aging, and there is competition for economic development.

Reports since 1947 have all indicated that the current way municipalities are operating, independently, is not going to work for future generations of Nova Scotians. Change is inevitable, and municipalities must move from a competitive model to a collaborative approach. How do we shift from managing decline to taking control of the situation, to facilitate change

that is proactive, creative and collaborative? How does municipal government meet the new realities of the changing world around it? If municipalities do not take control of their own destiny, who will? These are questions the Municipal Modernization Project is trying to answer.

Last summer, the Honourable Derek Mombourquette, Minister of Municipal Affairs (DMA), and members of his staff met with every municipal council. At the 2017 Fall UNSM Conference, the minister talked about what he heard from municipal governments in the province; the successes and the challenges. In his address, he said "Many municipalities talked about the need for change in the existing municipal structure

and about working with the province to bring about this change. In general, most of the councils I met with agreed that increased regional cooperation is necessary." The minister's mandate letter from the premier talks about municipal modernization and, in his address to the UNSM, he defines it as "Continued and expanded collaboration and cooperation as a way to ensure municipal viability." His vision of municipal modernization is a province where municipalities are working cooperatively, and have a modernized legislative framework to advance the work they do as local government.

## Municipal Modernization

**"Continued and expanded collaboration and cooperation as a way to ensure municipal viability"** *The Honourable Derek Momburquette*

The minister's speech was a clear indication that the province wants to work with local government leaders and stakeholders to support municipalities in building healthy, safe and vibrant communities. On January 31, 2018, Mayors/Wardens, Village Commissioners and CAOs came together to start the conversation around municipal modernization. The event was hosted and organized by the AMANS, UNSM and DMA. The intent of the day was to engage municipal leaders to better understand the challenges and opportunities of today's local government. The goal was to generate ideas and begin the conversation around finding new ways to do things.

Over 75 percent of municipalities were represented, with almost 90 people in the room. To have all those municipal leaders in the room with senior provincial staff and the minister for a day-long conversation about challenges in municipal government was unprecedented. The day opened with remarks from all three organizations: the Honourable Derek Mombourquette, Minister of Municipal Affairs, Councillor Geoff Stewart, President, UNSM and Alain D. Muise, President, AMANS. Their remarks reflected the shared commitment and partnership of the three organiza-



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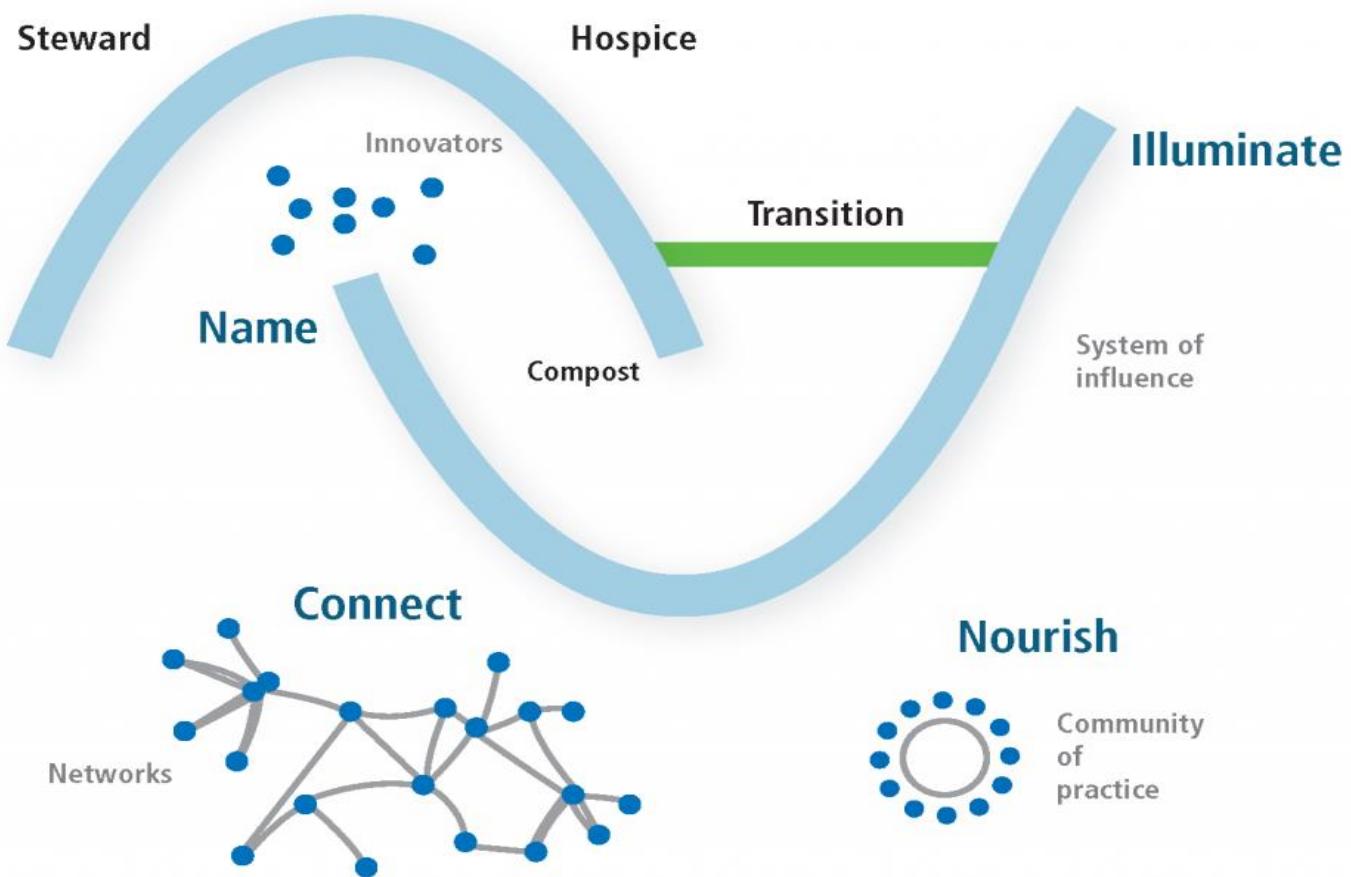
tions to lead by example and work collaboratively to come forward with ideas. Some of the underlying themes of their remarks were that we do not have all the solutions, we know that there is no “one-size-fits-all solution” and that this is the beginning of many more conversations.

Systems Change Strategist Tim Merry facilitated the conversation. Tim set the stage, brought context to the day and created an environment in which everyone could contribute openly and candidly. The first conversation of the day centred around sharing examples of municipalities working together for significant change. A wide spectrum of shared services and initiatives was discussed, which echoed the fact that there is good work being done. But, is it at the scale that is needed?

The discussion moved to “what is holding municipal governments back?” Issues such as past studies focused on “winners” and “losers,” lack of historical reconciliation and absence of the will to move forward were raised.

*Many issues municipalities are dealing with today are too complex to be addressed individually or by organizations working alone in their silos. What in the past would have appeared as a straight forward problem now, more requires working with multiple stakeholders.*

Tim and his partner, Tuesday Ryan-Hart, then led the group through a presentation on large-scale systems change, how big change happens and the key roles that are involved. They explained that as one system winds down and starts to collapse, isolated alterna-



tives slowly begin to arise and give way to the new. Systems work in cycles – just like life itself. The length of time of the cycles may vary from a few years to decades. They used the example of the oil crisis back in the 1970s and 80s, noting that at that time there was speculation that oil had peaked, which spurred some experimentation with other forms of energy such as solar, wind and water. Research was expensive, support and buy-in were low and it took decades. But today, many of these forms of energy are now more cost-effective and environmentally friendlier than oil. It was not easy to see or believe in this possible future at the time. Innovators, trail blazers and pioneers are always experimenting with new ideas. Some of those new ideas seem completely off the wall to many who are still operating in the old system, and do not yet see the need for new innovation.

Following the system change discussion, Alain Muise, President, AMANS and Shannon Bennett, Director of Governance and Advisory Services, DMA, gave a presentation on municipal modernization. They talked about why we are having these conversations. What's the problem anyway? They discussed how municipal government is working in a system of competition, not collaboration, where benefit goes to one and is not shared. How do we change our system and culture to make collaboration a norm? Shannon and Alain then talked about several ideas that a group of

administrators, the province and the executive directors of UNSM and AMA have discussed as possible ways some municipalities could collaborate. The objectives of that discussion were:

- Prioritizing investments in local infrastructure to meet current and future needs of NS citizens;
- Strong local government units with capacity (both human and financial);
- Best allocation of limited provincial and municipal resources;
- Clear regional vision that capitalizes on existing infrastructure and opportunities; and
- Clear economic development plan that capitalizes on the strengths and abilities of our communities.

The main objectives were NOT fewer municipalities, to lower taxes or reduce municipal budgets, although savings could be realized over time.

The following three ideas were explored as possible options to start a dialog. More work will only begin once we have agreement among our partners that these are the right areas on which to focus our attention.

(More on the Berkana Two Loops system change can be found at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2jTdZSPBRRE>)

## Revenue Sharing



**Is there a way to equitably share future property tax growth within a region?** How can municipalities be encouraged to plan for growth and economic development regionally?

- Concept that rising tides lifts all ships
- Reduce competition over new growth
- Ensure new growth is located where most efficient and aligns with existing services
- Reduce urban sprawl
- How can it be recognized that growth in a region has impact on service demands and delivery, and ensure all services providers have increased revenues to offset the costs?
- How can it be ensured that those benefiting from regional services are supporting the services financially?
- How can regionalization work for:
  - Economic Development
  - Regional Planning
  - Infrastructure?

## Regional Infrastructure Plan



### What if regional plans are required and used for allocation of infrastructure funds?

- Ensure that core infrastructure in a region is getting the required financial support
- Regional/strategic prioritization of needed infrastructure; focused use of provincial and federal funds

## Review Provincial Programs



### How can we build on the work completed during Fiscal Review and Partnership Agreement?

- How do we ensure rural and urban interests are balanced?
- Can we incentivize regional cooperation - those who choose not to work regionally would be opting out of financial support?

Deputy Minister Kelliann Dean started the session off after lunch, noting that what was presented before lunch were ideas of what municipal modernization could look like, but that there is no predetermined plan. The three partners want to engage all municipal leaders to help shape a plan.

The afternoon consisted of conversations around what we need to understand to give municipal modernization a better chance of success. What leadership is needed? And where do we need to focus our attention, resources and actions for greatest impact?

### Five themes emerged from the afternoon's conversations:

#### 1. Municipal/Provincial Leadership

There was a clear recognition that there needs to be strong support and leadership at both provincial and municipal levels. Elected representatives must be willing to risk political capital or re-election to move this forward for the greater good. Municipalities need enabling legislation that allows more flexibility such as shared decision-making ability. Equally important is a strong commitment from the province to actively engage municipalities in ongoing legislative and operational changes.

The group felt that we must have municipal leaders who are strong and altruistic, and who will champion new and innovative ways. Municipal leaders must be willing to stay the course even when the road gets bumpy. Leaders must be able to relate to local communities and know their needs. It was also felt that there had to be a mechanism to resolve disputes when needed.

#### 2. Communications and Citizen Engagement

There was strong recognition that the public needs to be part of the process. The first challenge will be to articulate the extent of the problem facing municipal government in a meaningful way. The public needs to understand why councils are making the decisions they are. How do we explain municipal modernization to citizens? Conveying the difference between government and governance will be important, as well as the benefits of regionalization. There must be a plan to engage and communicate to citizens. Consistent and common messaging should be developed. It was felt that communication and transparency with AMA and UNSM members were extremely important for this project. Equally important is open communication between municipalities to continue to identify opportunities, benefits and successes. Having open and frank discussions with councils of the benefits of

working together for the benefit of the region will have a significant impact.

### 3. Building Buy-In and Trust

There seemed to be consensus with the group that significant attention should be given to building buy-in and trust. This applies to trust among the UNSM, AMA and province, trust between neighbouring municipalities and communities and trust between citizens and both levels of government. We must move on from our historical differences and look to the future. Transparency and accountability play a big part of building trust. Engaging champions who are well respected in the municipal community will be important. It was suggested that there will be fear as we move this forward, but if we spend the time to build trust, fear will be easier to overcome.

### 4. Structure

It was felt that relationships must be better understood between demographics, boundaries, geography and services. The boundaries in NS have not changed since confederation and they no longer work. Service delivery should not be determined based on a line on a map. What do other governance models look like? What supports do we need to build on the strengths? Other issues raised were that there needs to be a level playing field with respect to towns and rurals and that council structure should be reviewed with respect to representation ratios. It was also suggested that capital funding be based on need and regional priorities.

### 5. Service Delivery

A recurring theme was that there should be regional municipal planning with a focus on economic development and infrastructure. Also

widely discussed was the need for the elimination of service delivery duplication. Some felt that there should be a compulsory participation in the governance and cost of shared services. Revenue sharing was also a topic of conversation. It was proposed that we begin with issues where there is consensus and build from there.

We recognize that the above is representative of only those in the

room, and therefore held a teleconference/webinar in March to gather input from others.

At the end of the day, there was clearly an expectation that this work should continue and to not lose the momentum. AMA, UNSM and DMA are now ready to develop a process for pursuing municipal modernization.

Stay tuned!



The logo for the Nova Scotia Ground Water Association features a large, stylized blue water droplet shape. The outline of the shape follows the coastline of Nova Scotia. The word "Nova" is written above the top part of the outline, and "Scotia" is written below the bottom part. To the right of the droplet, the words "Ground Water Association" are written in a bold, sans-serif font. Below the logo, the text "WATER is one of our most precious resources." is written in a smaller, italicized font. The background of the graphic is a close-up, high-contrast image of water droplets and ripples.

The Nova Scotia Groundwater Association would like to remind you that by hiring people certified with Nova Scotia Environment to drill or dig your well and to install your pumping equipment, you are helping to protect our water for future generations. Ask your contractor to show their Certification of Qualification card. This will indicate that they are insured and qualified to do the job.

<https://novascotia.ca/nse/water/wellcontractors.asp>



# Do Your Homeowners Know? Workplace Safety Evolving into the 21<sup>st</sup> Century



*Contributed by The Residential Construction Safety Association (RCSA)*

Many of your citizens hire workers to repair, renovate and/or build their homes. Do they know they may be held responsible for accidents that might occur during this work? You can help spread the word! Over the last twenty years workplace safety has become a household topic. It has touched everyone in one way or another.

We would like to take this opportunity to introduce ourselves to you. We are the *Residential Construction Safety Association (RCSA)*, a not-for-profit organiza-

tion. We help provide occupational health and safety education and skills development for homeowners, as well as independent and self-employed individuals who work in residential construction.

Many sectors of our industries have become more proactive than ever before, and it shows in their successes and milestones. These great achievements were not accomplished by the efforts of one lone individual: They were done through extended partnerships with various groups, organizations, agencies and

provincial government departments. All of them share in those successes, in the reduction of fatalities and accidents at our workplaces.

Some areas of the safety industry have been less proactive in responsibility and general awareness; residential construction is one of those sectors. There are areas of responsibility and duties every homeowner should be aware of under the *Occupational Health and Safety Act*, but for the most part these parties are unaware of this. As well, homeowners should also be aware how they may be deemed a general contractor under the act, which will place a greater degree of control and responsibility on them during the project.

The residential construction sector's needs and concerns are at times found to be outside the box of an employer - employee relationship, not addressed in the skills development safety training specific to their job description. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* Regulations is one of those documents that most people don't read beyond their personal job description.

It is up to the homeowner to know what they need to know or should have known when hiring someone to carry out work on their property. The *Occupational Health and Safety Act* now reaches beyond the traditional employer – employee relationship: it also applies to independent contractors and self-employed individuals. The foundation of the *Occupational Health and Safety Act* is the Internal Responsibility System, which is a shared responsibility for the health and safety of persons at the workplace. This shared responsibility is only as effective as its weakest link.

The Residential Construction Safety Association mission is to strengthen those weak links by providing both the homeowner and those they hire to carry out the work on their property a better understanding of their relationships, their duties and responsibilities that exist between them. We will achieve this through consultations, workshops and skills development training. By working together over time, we will achieve a successful reduction in the number of workplace fatalities and accidents found on residential construction sites, just like other sectors of industry can proudly proclaim.

Homeowners are one of, if not the largest stakeholders of their municipalities. Those same stakeholders are also who the Residential Construction Safety Association represents. In some ways the homeowner is also that independent or self-employed individual. Obtaining this knowledge takes you beyond the competent-worker title you may already have, and pro-

vides you with a greater understanding of the scope of what it takes to create a safer working environment.

Workplace safety is driven by economics in many ways. Here are some of the negative impacts: One of them is in the delivery of the healthcare system, the cost of medical attention to the injured person which is measured in tax dollars. It can prematurely require a disability pension, which takes away the ability of an individual to be independent and contribute to society. In some cases it adds to the case load of the social assistance system.

The largest cost that can't be measured in dollars is in the form of the individuals who experience the workplace injury. What they experience, and the pain and suffering they live with both mentally and physically every day can't be measured in dollars. Becoming an injured person also extends itself beyond that individual, as it also has a direct impact on their immediate family and friends.

The present Board of the Residential Construction Safety Association recognised this gap within our construction industry. As we worked together over many years we felt, as leaders of workplace safety, that it was the right time to form this association and aid in the reduction of workplace accidents and fatalities in this sector. Municipalities can assist us in this. Help spread the information about the importance of this issue.

Preventing accidents and reducing the severity of accidents benefits government, homeowners and workers. The cost of training needs to be shared. Every major safety association provider of our various sectors of industry would tell you that having support funding by way of a levy and provincial government department programs is essential to their growth and development. We need your help to make this happen.

Let's start the conversation! Contact us via our website ([www.thercsa.ca](http://www.thercsa.ca)), Email ([rcsa@bellaliант.net](mailto:rcsa@bellaliант.net)) or phone (902-222-8932).

We look forward in helping you with respect to your questions and concerns on OHS at your workplace.

***Respectfully Yours,  
The RCSA Team***



# Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia...

## *Supporting you - from the ground up!*

*Contributed by Brittany Hunter, Executive Director*

The Recreation Facility Association of Nova Scotia (RFA NS) is a Not-for-Profit provincial organization dedicated to providing leadership in developing, promoting and advocating excellence in recreation facilities, operations and its personnel. The Association was formed on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 1992, through the amalgamation of the Arena Managers and Aquatics Facility Managers Associations of Nova Scotia. Over the past 26 years, RFA NS has continued to serve those members, as well as expanding to all recreation facilities.

RFA NS is committed to:

- Promoting and encouraging the professional development of recreation facility personnel and providing opportunities for this development;
- Acting as a unified voice for recreation facility personnel regarding issues affecting facilities and their management;
- Improving communication between facilities; and
- Promoting the provision of high quality, safe recreation facilities.

RFA NS has recently rebranded and started growing the Association to better serve our members and reach other recreation facilities throughout Nova Scotia. This rebranding has improved communication with our members, who largely consist of recreation facilities and municipalities. More contact with members has allowed us to communicate important infor-

mation, educational resources, training and funding opportunities to help members better utilize the resources available to them.

Currently, RFA NS provides training for arenas and pools along with programs for all recreation facilities. In terms of coursing, we offer Second Class Refrigeration, Basic Arena Refrigeration, Ice Maintenance and Painting Technologies and a Certified Pool Operators course. We anticipate the addition of supplementary courses to reach more demographics in the field over the next few years.

Additional to training, we have a Hockey Helmet Program and an AED Program accessible to all recreation facilities, which offers subsidized rates for purchasing the equipment for facility use.

RFA NS is also excited to announce the addition of the Recreation Facility Asset Management (RFAM) software to our association. RFAM is a user-friendly web-based application which assists recreation facility professionals in the collection and management of recreational facility asset data. The RFAM software is designed to simplify daily activities necessary to manage municipal recreation facilities, help mitigate risk and maximize return on investment. Access to this software is available for free to RFA NS members!

To learn more about RFA NS and our initiatives visit <http://www.rfans.com/>.

# Success by Design

Contributed by Angélique LeBlanc of the Western Regional Enterprise Network

A democratic system is synonymous with change. Along with our electoral cycles come changes to our economic development landscape. How do we remain focused and effective when surrounded by so many moving parts?

It may seem counterintuitive but being nimble and operating in a constantly changing environment does in fact require a strategy. It most definitely requires certain skillsets.

A solid economic development strategy must begin with a scan of the current environment, which, as noted earlier, changes rapidly. Political, economic, social, technological, environmental and legal factors all play a role in shaping the environment. These factors change on a daily, even hourly, basis, and must constantly be revisited. Consider how the organisation is impacted vis à vis these factors, and revisit strategy often enough using tools such as SWOT analysis to determine if tweaks, or course corrections, are required.

A strategy is a roadmap forward but must not be so rigid as to limit opportunities. The most successful strategies allow for a balance. We can choose to drive, to fly, to go by rail or by boat; even a combination of one or more of the above. You can choose the fastest route, the cheapest route, or the most scenic. Although the ultimate destination remains the same, travel plans may change. Most Canadians attempting to travel anywhere in the winter are well-aware of this challenge! Environment is often uncontrollable. Flights are delayed; weather happens. What is controllable is your reaction to that environment. Rare is a journey that goes exactly as planned and your ability to stay focused on your ultimate destination is key!

Leading the implementation of a strategy requires that ability to focus on the goal. Organisational core values, vision, and mandate must be defined and revisited periodically. These values are at the heart of any strategy and must permeate the entire culture of the organisation. With this foundation, when the organisation is being pulled off course, and it most certainly will be, a solid strategy with a clear vision will provide the course correction.

Allocating resources, and leveraging those resources is key – from dollars to HR, from physical assets to

technology, how will they be applied most effectively? The greatest of strategies are meaningless without solid operational decisions. As with the strategy, implementation must be nimble and responsive to the constantly changing environment.

Communicating the strategy in a clear, succinct way is essential. Partners and stakeholders must understand the strategy and how actions line up with both shared and individual goals. Clear lines of communications are critical to the success of all partnerships, we must all be pulling in the same direction. Internal and external communication are equally important and must be considered on an ongoing basis.

Success must be defined and measured. When deciding what to measure, ask yourself and your partners 'what is in our control?'. What will be measured must be within the control of the organisation and its' partners, otherwise it is not a true measurement of impact. This is particularly true in the field of economic development, where success depends on activated and coordinated partnerships as well as criteria outside of any one organisations' control.

A rational, clear-headed approach, grounded in core values, enhanced by communication, and informed through frequent environmental scanning will most certainly increase strategic impact in your region. Keep your eye on the destination!

Angélique LeBlanc is CEO of the Western Regional Enterprise Network and teaches Strategic Management at Université Sainte-Anne.



# Economic Opportunities for Agriculture

*Contributed by the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture*

The release of the “Unleashing the Growth Potential of Key Sectors” report – commonly referred to as the Barton Report - identified key economic opportunities for Canada to raise GDP. The Advisory Council that developed this report identified Agriculture and the Food and Beverage sectors with substantial opportunities for growth domestically as well as on the global markets.

For agriculture products, the Advisory Council indicated that Canada could target at least an 8% global market share in agricultural products by 2027. Assuming proportionate growth across Canada’s provinces, this

would mean an additional \$140 million in export revenue.

It goes without saying that Agriculture plays an important role in the rural economy of Nova Scotia. Directly, there are 9,200 jobs on farms and statistics show that 1 in 9 jobs are related to the agriculture and agri-food industry. In 2016, the farm cash receipts for Nova Scotia farms totaled \$595 million.

The goals identified in the Barton report are definitely something to strive to achieve. However, like any growth, resources are needed. Capital costs for in-

## Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture

The Voice of Nova Scotia Farmers

Representing more than 2,400 family farms across Nova Scotia, the Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture advocates on behalf of farmers on issues including:

- Agricultural Land
- Canadian Agricultural Partnership
- Labour
- Public Trust
- Regulatory Burden



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vestment are a given; however, there are some required resources that are unique to agriculture.

Agriculture is one of the only industries that rely on an abundant, healthy soil base. Availability of agricultural land is in decline with increasing urban encroachment and farm land values. The irreversible nature of developing land for urban development indicates an immediate need to protect agricultural land.

Over the last 12 months or so, significant traction has been made on the efforts to protect agricultural land - the Agriculture Land Inventory Project has been updated, a resolution was passed at the Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities Annual Conference to protect agricultural land and the Annapolis Valley Farmland Trust placed its first easement on agricultural land. These are no small feats - there certainly is traction to protect agricultural land.

Another unique resource to agriculture is agriculture extension services. Many governments and regions throughout the world are increasing extension services available to farmers and others in the agriculture industry. Extension provides benefits to rural econo-

my and consumers in general. A perfect example of the benefits of extension is food safety. Farmers and agri-food producers are required to adhere to a significant amount of regulations which are best to be navigated with the support of an extension specialist. Yes, the farmer and Agri-food producer directly use the extension service; however, Nova Scotia consumers benefit by knowing that the food they eat is safe. In 2000, extension services along with \$8 million were cut from the Nova Scotia budget and Perennia was developed with an annual budget line of \$2.2 million. \$5.8 million. That's a significant cut in extension services to farmers and Nova Scotians alike.

As demonstrated, the growth potential for agriculture in Nova Scotia is significant. Together, farmers and governments can work together to increase agriculture production.

The Nova Scotia Federation of Agriculture represents the interests of over 2400 farm families in Nova Scotia. Founded in 1895 to provide Nova Scotia's farm community with a single voice, the NSFA is the province's only general farm organization.

## DID YOU KNOW?

### *Cape Breton Outlook 2017-2021*

***GDP growth to average 1.7%***

***Labour force growth to average -0.57%***

***Employment growth to average 2.07%***

### ***Competitive Advantages***

***Natural resources***

***Accommodation and food***

***Healthcare and social assistance***

***Information, culture and recreation***

***Educational services***

### ***Halifax Outlook 2017-2021***

***GDP growth to average 2.12%***

***Labour force growth to average 0.34%***

***Employment growth to average 1.07%***

### ***Competitive Advantages***

***Professional, scientific and technical services***

***Finance, insurance, real estate and housing***

***Public administration***

***Utilities***

***Transportation and warehousing***

***Educational services***

***Information, culture and recreation***

***Accommodation and food services***



# **There is No Such Thing as a Dragon**

*Contributed by Christina Benty, Owner, Strategic Leadership Solutions*

I somewhat jokingly like to call myself an asset management evangelist. My superpower is that I can turn any conversation into one about asset management (and I still have friends, albeit well versed in eye-rolling). I see asset management analogies and metaphors everywhere; I may, however, have taken it too far. Now that I have a granddaughter, I love looking for kid's books with meaningful life messages. This past Christmas, I came across a book called *There's No Such Thing as a Dragon*. It is a story of a young boy who wakes up to find a kitten-sized dragon in his room. When he tells his mom about it, she insists that there is no such thing as a dragon. The little dragon eats all the little boy's food and it starts to grow. As it grows and grows, it fills his room and fills the upstairs. The boy is mystified. If there is no such thing as a dragon, then it would be silly to do anything about it! The dragon continues to grow until eventually, it fills the whole house. When the house is lifted off the foundation by the dragon, his family asks "How did this happen?" The little boy points to the dragon. His mother starts to deny the existence of dragons but the boy is resolute: "There IS a dragon and a very big one." Once the family acknowledges its presence, it begins to shrink until it is back down to a manageable size.

## ***SO you probably know where I am going with this, right?***

Given that the national infrastructure deficit is quoted as being somewhere around \$300 BILLION, there is a dragon and a very big one. The longtime practice of short-term decisions about investment, maintenance,

and renewal is not sustainable. Municipalities across the country are compelled to confront this challenge of managing public assets in a formalized process. By now, local governments know that sound asset management practices help communities use their limited resources wisely to ensure safe, reliable, and secure services are provided in a predictable, cost-effective manner now and into the future.

## ***I know, I know, I am preaching to the choir!***

Local governments may be reluctantly facing the dragon but who else needs to know? I live out west and here in BC, we have local government elections coming up this fall - as do the Yukon and Ontario. The question we must ask ourselves is this: Will the citizenry acknowledge the dragon, or will the broad range of problems far beyond the scope and expertise of local government dominate election conversations? Many communities continue to fall into the trap of expending significant time and energy on issues outside the core responsibilities of local government. Housing, economic development, pipelines, refugees, GMOs, poverty reduction, childcare, and school closures are all pressing social issues and important community concerns; however, they also tend to be highly distracting from the legislated work of local government. What is most disturbing is the fact that a growing infrastructure deficit (the dragon) is forced to fight to stay on the radar. The state of our communities' assets - of which the operations, maintenance and care is a fundamental role of local governments - should not have to compete with other critical provincial and national concerns.

Regardless of the election cycle, anytime is an opportunity to get the message out there, to quantify the true cost of providing, maintaining, and renewing community-owned capital assets, and balance it against the community's willingness to pay for those services and assets. Communication and engagement with residents and future candidates is needed to build a better understanding of both service delivery realities and the inter-organizational pressures that accompany them. It is critical that the limits and challenges of local government are rightly understood in the context of the broader government system. Local governments and their citizens need to face their growing problems with aging infrastructure together. Citizens can no longer demand an increase in services because local governments cannot afford to do either. Governing bodies have a stewardship responsibility as custodians of the future. In turn, citizens have a reciprocal responsibility as those who are co-creators of the system. Residents must understand the magnitude of the problem and the financial implications, so that everyone can work together to face these challenges. It is not an "us versus them" problem. It is "our" problem, and therefore, it is important to build a "we" culture. Collectively, we must remember that we have inherited our prosperity and therefore, we have inherited the responsibilities that go with it.

It is only when we stop saying there is no such thing as a dragon that we can reverse the trend of declining infrastructure, and systematically engage in the long-term planning of asset renewal investments that support our communities' quality of life, protect our health and safety, and promote our social, economic and environmental well-being. By facing the dragon together, new councils can focus on what really matters right out of the gate: protecting the very foundation of what makes our communities wonderful places to live, work, and play. We owe it to ourselves to see, to acknowledge and to manage the dragon.



Christina Benty, MA, is a retired politician, a jazz singer, and the owner of Strategic Leadership Solutions ([www.christinabenty.com](http://www.christinabenty.com)), a consulting firm designed to assist teams in building a culture of excellence in leadership and governance. As former mayor for the Town of Golden, Christina considers herself an asset management evangelist who is desperately trying to inspire local governments to take their stewardship responsibilities seriously, and to inject some passion and enthusiasm into this complex topic.

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# Asset Management and the Infrastructure Challenge

*Contributed by Federation of Canadian Municipalities*

Canada may be among the world's most diverse countries, but municipalities from coast to coast to coast face the same infrastructure challenge. Much of Canada's community infrastructure – roads, bridges, water and wastewater systems, and more – is either past or near the end of its lifecycle. By some estimates, solving the problem will cost \$123 billion, and ensuring that investments in infrastructure projects deliver long-term benefits to citizens requires a great deal of analytical and planning expertise. Municipalities must determine which assets to fix, which to replace and when best to do it. Setting infrastructure priorities can be a tough job, particularly for a municipality with a small staff.

"Sewer pipes might need replacing, but it's not a very exciting project for council or residents, so other priorities sometimes win out," says Rob Frost, Chief Administrative Officer of the Municipality of the District of Barrington.

Barrington, in the southwest corner of Nova Scotia, has approximately 6,600 residents scattered among some two-dozen communities up to an hour's drive apart. While most of Barrington's roads belong to the province, the municipality is responsible for a long list of assets, including recreational facilities, water and sewer systems, and public-works buildings. Many of these assets are in need of regular repair or replacement.

"As with many other municipalities, sometimes projects get put on the back burner because our councillors have only subjective, anecdotal information about the condition and performance of infrastructure," says Frost. "Asset management promises to change that by giving them the reliable and relevant data they need to make sound long-term decisions."

Asset management is a calculated, strategic approach to infrastructure planning; data about condition, performance and costs inform spending priorities, as well as decisions about replacement and repair. Nova Scotia municipalities can now take advantage of asset management thanks to a collaborative, targeted effort among multiple levels of government.



*"MAMP is designed to meet the specific needs of municipalities of all sizes," says Bill Karsten, a Halifax Regional Municipality councillor*

In 2016, the Government of Canada provided the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) with \$50 million to fund the Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP – see sidebar) for five years. MAMP funding supports a range of activities, such as training, studies and plans, along with practical online resources and tools. Barrington received MAMP funding to inventory the municipality's buildings and linear assets (pipes, roads, sidewalks and trails), and to document their current condition. This essential first step in asset management generated valuable data that will inform deliberations about Barrington's budget for next year. In addition, several members of the Municipality's staff participated in FCM-funded workshops.

"MAMP is designed to meet the specific needs of municipalities of all sizes," says Bill Karsten, a Halifax Regional Municipality councillor. Karsten also serves as a First Vice-President of FCM and co-chairs the organization's MAMP steering committee. "Elected officials come and go, but infrastructure planning requires a deliberate, long-range view. Through FCM, MAMP supports training for both elected officials and municipal staff to develop in-house expertise."

The Union of Nova Scotia Municipalities (UNSM) is a key partner in MAMP training.

"The beauty of MAMP is that it involves a co-ordinated, national approach," says Debbie Nielsen, UNSM's infrastructure and sustainability officer. "It increases the capacity of municipalities to use asset management and improve the services they deliver to citizens."

Another partner in the broad asset-management effort is Atlantic Infrastructure Management (AIM), a not-for-profit group of professionals from the public and private sectors. To help expand the practice, AIM delivers workshops, shares tools and facilitates information exchanges. Attending an AIM workshop in 2017 led to something of an epiphany for Laurie Boucher, Mayor of Antigonish.

"It was a real eye-opener for me," says Boucher, an experienced councillor elected mayor in 2016. "It made me recognize how asset management enables municipalities to look beyond the four-year political cycle."

To illustrate the point, Mayor Boucher points toward a challenge facing the town of 4,300 residents. "We have a volunteer fire department with aging equipment – some of the vehicles are more than 30 years old and increasingly expensive to maintain. That's a huge liability for the town, because new fire trucks

can cost half a million dollars each. To manage the challenge, we adopted a long-term approach: Council approved a special fire levy to finance one new truck as part of a 25-year fire-vehicle replacement program."

Organizations such as AIM and UNSM access MAMP funding to provide practical support to individual municipalities.

"Another key aspect of MAMP is its flexibility," says Nielsen. "We were able to access MAMP funding to complement the Province of Nova Scotia's support for municipal infrastructure-planning."

Last spring, Nova Scotia's Department of Municipal Affairs launched the Asset Management Pilot Project as a first step in a larger initiative. The pilot project tests various methods to collect and measure data about the condition of infrastructure assets in five municipalities. Last fall, UNSM shared some preliminary findings of the pilot project with municipalities during a series of workshops for municipal staff and a webinar for elected officials. The sessions generated valuable feedback that enabled the engineering firm responsible for the project to implement several improvements.

"Ultimately, municipalities must have a standardized and proven methodology for collecting data and assessing the condition of linear assets," says Nielsen. "Without reliable data, there is no way to plan effectively, and there's no way to maximize the value and impact of taxpayer investments in public infrastructure."

## Municipal Asset Management Program (MAMP)

Funded by the Government of Canada and delivered by the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, MAMP is a five-year, \$50-million initiative designed for all municipalities, regardless of experience with asset management. MAMP funds a range of activities, such as: documenting asset-management goals and formalizing the plans needed to achieve them; assessing the condition of assets; and documenting operating and maintenance costs, along with desired service levels, to calculate an asset's lifecycle cost. Visit the FCM website for more information.

# New Provincial Legislation or Regulations? We'll Be Consulted!

Contributed by Betty MacDonald, Executive Director, UNSM

Municipalities will be consulted early in the development of new provincial legislation or regulations impacting them! A new agreement has been struck between the Department of Municipal Affairs (DMA) and UNSM under the Partnership Framework. It establishes a protocol to follow to ensure any new legislation can be implemented successfully.

This is significant! There are a number of examples where legislation or a new regulation impacting municipalities was imposed without a full understanding of the implications for municipalities. This is not surprising, given all our municipalities are different. As well, new legislation is often announced without advance warnings. This can lead to municipal budgets being impacted, with limited ability to adjust. As municipalities are required to have balanced budgets, changes mid-year often mean cuts and decreases in services and programs.

The Fiscal Review study completed in 2014 included recommendations calling for early consultation with municipalities, along with both economic and financial analyses of the proposed changes. The report also recognized the need to look at the cumulative impact of legislation and regulations on municipalities. Each regulation on its own may have merit, but when combined with all the others, priorities may need to be set. The agreement between UNSM and DMA, signed by Minister Mombourquette and President Geoff Stewart in January 2018, reflects these recommendations.

Both parties recognize the value of meaningful participation in the development of legislation and regulation. Both parties want to achieve mutual objectives in making more informed decisions. Outcomes of early consultation include:

- **improved municipal budgeting, preparedness and decision making, particularly capital budgeting;**
- **more sustainable and cost effective regulatory requirements;**

- **strengthened connections between DMA, other government departments and municipalities;**
- **less red tape and administrative burdens for municipalities, the business community and/or the public;**
- **greater municipal adherence to regulatory requirements; and**
- **greater opportunity for municipalities to seek out alternative service delivery options, and for partnering when appropriate to make compliance more efficient or effective.**

*The report also recognized the need to look at the cumulative impact of legislation and regulations on municipalities*

The agreement commits to early consultation, measuring and tracking impacts and undertaking cumulative impact analyses.

The extent of consultation will vary depending on the anticipated cost of compliance and the complexity of the legislation. For those with a low cost of compliance (less than

\$100,000 total for all municipalities) and little complexity, the consultation will be relatively short and may be mostly for information purposes. For those with a medium level of compliance cost (less than \$500,000 total for all municipalities), consultation will include the opportunity for feedback, but not all municipalities may be consulted. For those with a higher level of compliance cost and high complexity, consultation will be broader and may include such things as workshops, joint working committees, focus groups, presentations, or advisory committees.

There are limitations, in that the province reserves the right not to consult if the matter is an emergency situation, part of a provincial budget, or sensitive in nature.

For this to work, municipalities need to participate when asked. Municipalities know their operations and communities best; this expertise needs to be shared if we are to ensure any legislation or regulation is appropriate and effective.

Municipalities are asked to bring forward issues with existing legislation and regulations. These need to be documented, provincewide, so that there is a clear understanding of how the legislation or regulation should be changed.

As we gain experience under these guidelines, changes may be appropriate. In the meantime it is a great beginning, and worth a serious try.

***The Consultation Guideline is available on the UNSM website.***



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# Thinking Inside the Box: Testing Innovative Battery Storage Solutions

Contributed by Nova Scotia Power



TESLA Substation Battery

What do you get when you mix a wind farm, a substation, and nearly a dozen Tesla batteries? Nova Scotia Power's Intelligent Feeder Project.

This pilot project is one of a number of innovation initiatives underway to help us learn how technology can help us better serve our customers.

The project involves installing a grid-size battery (Tesla Powerpack) at our Elmsdale substation and 10 residential batteries (Tesla Powerwalls) at homes in the community of Elmsdale, which is partially powered by the Hardwood Lands wind turbines.

"Technology such as battery storage is making traditional utility systems smarter," says Jill Searle, Project Manager. "This project is one of the first of its kind that we know about, and we're excited to be leading the charge. It has great potential to positively impact

system reliability and help us provide power to customers when they need it most."

The Hardwood Lands wind farm generates clean energy, but like the other 600 MW of wind on our system, it can only produce power in certain weather conditions. If there is too much or too little wind, we can't rely on their operation and other power sources are needed.

All 10 of the Powerwalls were installed this fall by MPOWER Energy Solutions. The Candows are one of the Elmsdale families who are participating in the project and have had a Powerwall installed in their home. Mark Candow said he is committed to minimizing his family's impact on the environment, and is also considering purchasing an electric vehicle to become even more energy efficient.

"With two young boys, we naturally care about sustainability and using our energy smarter," he says. Mark notes that over the past few years he's seen many more wind turbines around the province, and it's an encouraging sign.

Nova Scotia's electricity is becoming cleaner and cleaner. We've tripled our renewable energy generation over the past decade, achieving 28 per cent renewable electricity generation in 2016 and we're on track to meet 40 per cent renewable energy in 2020.

With the Powerpack battery now installed at the substation, we will soon begin the heavy data collection and analysis that will tell us how the batteries are working under a variety of scenarios. We're excited to learn more about this technology and how it could help us provide clean, reliable electricity for future generations. [www.nspower.ca/intelligentfeeder](http://www.nspower.ca/intelligentfeeder)



## Testing cutting edge **Tesla battery storage technology** in our own backyard



We've installed Tesla Powerwalls in the homes of 10 Elmsdale customers to study how they work on our electricity grid, as well as a Tesla Powerpack at our Elmsdale substation.

The batteries are paired with the nearby Hardwood Lands 6 MW windfarm, so we can test the potential of storing clean, renewable wind power to use when customers need it most.

Learn more at [nspower.ca/intelligentfeeder](http://nspower.ca/intelligentfeeder)



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