

# Small Communities Newsletter

## Contact

Please feel free to contact any of the following people with questions or comments about the newsletter or the Small Communities Committee.

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## Small Communities

### Standing Committee

The Small Communities Committee is a unified voice, advocate and resource, focusing on urban municipal governments with populations of 2,500 or less. The Committee is comprised of seven members from communities of 2500 or less, including two AUMA Board members.

The Committee is accountable to the Board for: sharing services - regional and AMSC aggregated; reviewing and recommending suggestions for under 2500 Mayor's Caucuses; reviewing the status of MSP (Municipal Sustainability Project) that is impacting Small Communities; and defining the process, developing a Work Plan and updating the Terms of Reference for the Committee.

## Water Conservation Tops the List of Priorities for Small Communities

Though the top rated concern of small communities, water conservation is receiving great attention from municipalities of all sizes.

AUMA is developing its Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Plan with the help of a Team of Experts from Alberta municipalities. To supplement the efforts of the team, input has been sought from stakeholders across the province. In November 2008 a Municipal Water Conservation Workshop was held in Red Deer to share water conservation best practices and establish key areas for the initial implementation of the Water CEP Plan. Subsequently, the fundamentals of the plan were discussed at the recent Mayors' Caucus.

To date, the majority of Small Communities agree with the fol-

lowing targets for Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Plans:

1. 80% of AUMA municipalities calculate their base line Infrastructure Leakage Index and identify ways to reduce leaks by December 2010.
2. 80% of AUMA members produce water conservation plans by December 2010.
3. 80% of municipalities take action to improve the uptake of low flow fixtures in Alberta residences by December 2010.

Darren Aldous, Mayor, Village of Breton, AUMA Board Member, and Team of Experts Member, is "really proud of the fact that small communities have accepted the challenge, are looking

forward to making a difference, and realize that targets have to apply to us too." He goes on to acknowledge that a handful of small communities are already well on their way to addressing the issues of water conservation, citing examples of plan development, programs and policies promoting low flow fixture installation, and leak index monitoring and repair.

A draft of the Water CEP Plan will be released in the spring for member comments, and will be on the Agenda of the next Mayor's Caucus. For more information contact **Lauren Baldwin** [lbaldwin@auma.ca](mailto:lbaldwin@auma.ca) or **780.974.5436**.

## Small Communities Preparing to Shape The Future of Local Governance

At the fall convention, it was rumored that 60-70 municipalities may be in trouble and this is a cause for concern to many, especially those in small communities. Bruce Rowe, Mayor of Beiseker and Small Communities Committee Chair explains that "the Small Communities Committee is trying to establish which communities are having trouble, the reasons why they are in this situation, and what the AUMA can do to assist them.

In addition to the work of the Small Communities Committee

there are a number of AUMA initiatives underway to assist in charting the course for Local Governance.

### Task Force Identifies Policy Options for Local Governance

A team of senior administrators from Cities, Towns, Villages and Summer Villages from across Alberta has been assembled to develop a Policy Options Report for the AUMA 2009 Convention. The AUMA Future of Local Governance Policy Options Report will include: the current state of local governance; clear options related to a more

effective local governance structure; consideration of the risks and benefits of proposed options for change and the incentives required to make changes; and a review of examples outside of Alberta where local governance has been restructured.

Preliminary Policy Options have been identified, and are being tested in a web-based survey to municipalities. If you have not received an email message with access to the survey, please

*continued*

## Message from the Chair

Greetings Small Community colleagues! Our committee has been hard at work since the AUMA convention in October 2008 and I am pleased that in our first newsletter of 2009 we have much to share with you.

At the convention, all delegates had the opportunity to voice their concerns, voting with the click-a-pad, to help set the priorities for working Ahead.Together. For small communities, the top three issues were identified as: Water Conservation, Future of Local Governance, and Safe Communities.

In this edition of our Small Communities Newsletter, you will read about some of the activities undertaken by our committee, reinforcing your knowledge of the breadth and depth of the issues small communities face. You will also learn about the various opportunities available to you in advocating for small communities and developing solutions that will ensure their prosperity and growth.

I don't know about you, but, my calendar for 2009 is mighty full. Supporting our municipi-

palities is a second job for many, adding to the challenge of keeping things moving forward on all fronts. That is why it is important to leverage the knowledge and resources of the AUMA and of our committee. To that point, we are actively exploring the issues, creating a foundation of support, and developing the tools and resources to assist small communities in addressing the challenges they face.

On behalf of all committee members, I'd like to take this opportunity to invite you to become part of the process of ensuring that our small communities have a voice and a hand in determining their destiny. Don't hesitate to come out to the various sessions planned for 2009, to email or to call any one of us on the Small Communities Committee with your concerns or suggestions.

Kindest regards,

**Bruce Rowe**, Committee Chair  
Mayor, Village of Beiseker



## Small Communities Preparing...cont'd

contact Sue Welke, [swelke@auma.ca](mailto:swelke@auma.ca) or at 780-431-4531

**President's Summit Set To Explore the Future Of Local Governance** Thursday, April 30 and Friday, May 1, 2009 - Red Deer, Alberta: Holiday Inn

This two-day event is designed to help municipally-elected officials, senior administration, community leaders and other stakeholders explore the future of local governance. Participants will learn from speakers and experts, from both inside and outside the

province, with a goal of building AUMA's 2009 Policy Options Report on the Future of Local Governance.

For more information and to register [click here](#).

## Mayors' Caucus Reflects the Challenges of Small Communities

In a move to facilitate decision making by improving the flow of information between itself and members, the AUMA Board of Directors has established The Mayors' Caucuses, with Mayors representing their municipalities at one of three meetings, based on population thresholds.

The first Mayors' Caucus – under 2500, held recently, was attended by over 70 Mayors and Elected Officials from across the province. Feedback from participants indicated a great appreciation for the amount of effort being expended to address the issues faced by small

communities as well as a favourable response to this new platform, developed to provide the Board with clear direction on specific matters.

Throughout the day, presentations provided background to a number of RFD's that were delivered pertaining to: *Future of Local Governance; Water Conservation; Policing - Safe Communities; Provincial Municipal Partnership - Ahead Together; Building Codes; and Attracting Doctors*. Additional presentations were made providing updates for: *Municipal Sustainability Initiative Impact; Municipal Sustainability Planning Initiative; Rural Communities*

*Programs; and Sharing Services*.

Bob Clark, Mayor, Village of Boyle, AUMA Board Member and Small Communities Committee Member, thought that "it was all quite positive. Everybody had an opportunity to ask questions and raise issues. The best part is that a lot of Mayors stood up and shared their views and their experiences...and this is where ideas come from."

The next Mayors' Caucus for municipalities up to 2,500 takes place on June 10<sup>th</sup> at the Delta Bow Valley in Calgary. For more details or to register [click here](#).

## Are You Tuned In?

### Events Calendar

The AUMA and other organizations host a number of conferences and events throughout the year that are of interest to small communities. To find out about events that are key to your community, [click here to visit the AUMA web site calendar](#).

### Weekly Digest

Each week the AUMA and AMSC release a Digest that covers information on advocacy efforts, AMSC services and other topics of interest to municipal politicians and administrators. Make sure that you are in the know by subscribing via the AUMA web site. [Click here to subscribe](#).

