

Small Communities Newsletter

Spring/Summer 2010



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.

Contact

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

SCC Members

Bob Clark (Chair)	bbdclrk4@mcsnet.ca
Reg Pointe	clowe@telusplanet.net
Doug McDermind	dogrod@hotmail.com

AUMA Staff

Barb Sjoquist
Bob Manning
Dennis Evans

Zohreh Saher	zsaher@auma.ca
mayor@edgerton-oasis.ca	
bhmanelk@explornet.com	
d.evans@explornet.com	

When is Less really More? Re-engineering of Municipal Grants

Is less really more? Well sometimes less is more and sometimes less is simply less. As many of you are aware, Municipal Affairs has streamlined the grant system so that the process is easier and less labour-intensive. This change may be especially noteworthy to smaller municipalities where capacity issues are an omnipresent challenge. To aid in the management of grant applications, Municipal Affairs has introduced a [Web Portal](#) where you will find information on all provincial grant programs supporting municipalities. Within the portal, each municipal grant program has its own information page. These pages contain:

- a description of the program, including the type of projects supported and the eligibility requirements;
- links to copies of program guidelines, application forms, and reporting documents;
- a downloadable key dates calendar;
- links to program websites; and
- contact information for provincial program staff should you have any questions.

The changes to the grant process result from Municipal Consultation Sessions organized by the Government

of Alberta. Municipal Affairs reports that the new process should help with the standardization of application forms, program guidelines and reporting requirements; help streamline administrative processes; and help increase search capabilities to assist in researching available grants.

Interested in viewing the presentation on the streamlined grants and web portal? [Click here](#) to go to the Municipal Affairs website and then click on "Municipal Grants Information Session Presentation."

So what's the bottom line here? While administrators may certainly welcome the changes to the grant application system, there are still concerns to the overall decrease to funding for municipalities. The grant reengineering initiative was not tackling the issue of funding amounts. This initiative aims at making the process more effective which is certainly a positive change, but, in the long run, even the most efficient process will not replace predictable funding that is essential to municipal viability.

Small Communities Attend AUMA's June Mayors' Caucuses

Small Communities make up a considerable number of AUMA's membership. In fact, 72% of AUMA members are communities with populations less than 2500. Part of the rationale for holding Mayors' Caucuses is to allow for networking and discussion of local government issues among similar sized municipalities. Although many of the issues discussed at the June Mayors' Caucus impact all communities, regardless of population, the issues don't necessarily play out the same way in all communities. The Caucus format allows for a more focused discussion among municipal elected officials and administrators which in turn helps to shape and direct AUMA's advocacy and policy work.

The June Mayors Caucus focused on municipal viability, water conservation, welcoming and inclusive communities, Bill 203 and Franchise Fees, and Assessment and Taxation. There was also a well-attended session for Chief Administrative Officers. [All the presentations are now available on the AUMA website and can be seen by clicking here.](#) While this was the final Mayors' Caucus for 2010, new sessions of the Mayors Caucus are planned for 2011. Do you have comments or suggestions for next year? If so, AUMA would like to hear from you. Please contact Sandy Bugeja, Senior Priorities Coordinator, with any feedback you would like to provide at sbugeja@auma.ca.

Message from the Chair

Welcome to our Spring/Summer 2010 Newsletter. I hope that you find the information in this newsletter helpful and interesting. I have been Chair of the Small Communities Committee since January and I am thoroughly enjoying the challenges and rewards of the work.

This issue includes several articles relevant to small communities. We provide an overview of the June Mayors' Caucuses held in Calgary. There is also an update on the re-engineering of municipal grants.

This is the first time we have issued a combined Spring/Summer edition. We're

doing this so that we can offer you a special edition at Convention in November.

As we begin to look forward to the Fall Edition of this newsletter, we are seeking your input. Please email your comments, feedback and suggestions to Zohreh Saher, Research Analyst at zsaher@auma.ca.

Kindest regards,
Bob Clark, Committee Chair
Mayor, Village of Boyle



H₂O Conservation Planning Guide Available



AUMA's *Water Conservation, Efficiency and Productivity (CEP) Planning Guide* has been developed for municipalities to help in the conservation of this precious resource. This new tool can be adapted to each municipality's unique circumstances.

Small Communities, in particular, may need to tailor processes in the guide to take into account limited human and financial resources. The guide includes suggestions for implementation (such as partnering for neighbours) and examples from such small communities as Beiseker and Alliance. AUMA's Water Microsite, water.auma.ca includes sample data tables and checklists that municipalities can download, modify and use in the planning process. It also points to water use measurements which we hope all municipalities will work towards implementing. Using consistent approaches

to measuring water use and conservation will allow municipalities to track trends over time and compare progress with similar sized municipalities.

AUMA will rely on members to share information on water use so that we can report on urban municipal progress towards province-wide efficiency objectives. AUMA will only report data it receives on an aggregated basis.

It is essential that members share not only data with the AUMA, but also their ideas and challenges. We want to hear whether the resources we are developing will help your municipalities reach the targets set out in our association wide CEP plan. Contact rbocock@auma.ca to provide feedback, share challenges and promising practices and to inform us your progress.

Running for Municipal Office

As we are in a municipal election year, many small communities are looking to encourage residents to consider running for Council. The Alberta Urban Municipalities Association has compiled resources that can assist your community members in making their decision to run for elected office. Visit the AUMA website at www.auma.ca and click on Everything You Wanted to Know...but were afraid to ask... to find out more.

The Municipal Climate Change Action Centre is well positioned to serve small communities

The Municipal Climate Change Action Centre (MCCAC) is building momentum, a permanent space and a team, as it prepares to engage municipalities of all sizes. In particular, it is positioned well, both literally and figuratively, to build capacity in small communities across the province.

The MCCAC recently hired Brad Rabiey as the Coordinator. Brad works from Alberta Municipal Place, where new office space for the MCCAC will soon be constructed, as well as from his home office in Peace River. This working arrangement provides unique opportunities for the MCCAC to be a leader in telecommuting, while also enhancing regional expertise and capacity. Brad was also born and raised near Manning, which means he knows from firsthand experience the value of small communities, as well as the difficulties they face in terms of resources.

The process has also begun for hiring Project Analysts to complete the "Action Team" for the MCCAC and the full staff should be in place by August 2010. The team will be a key resource for small communities who have questions about climate change goals and the ability to decrease emissions, while simultaneously reducing operational costs. For small

communities, who may not have staff resources to explore these issues the MCCAC will be an essential one stop shop for everything from project examples to funding opportunities.

The planning to date for the MCCAC has culminated in the development of a Three Year Work Plan, which was recently approved by the Executive Committee. The Committee is a reflection of the MCCAC partnership approach and is comprised of representatives from Alberta Environment, Alberta Municipal Affairs, the Alberta Association of Municipal Districts and Counties and the Alberta Urban Municipalities Association. The Three Year Work Plan will focus on the objectives of: Communication and Education; Baselines and Planning; and a Project Showcase.

Members will be engaged in the weeks to come, so watch for more news from the MCCAC and your chance to participate!

Please [click here](#) for background information on the MCCAC and the Municipal Climate Change Action Plan.



The 2009-10 Small Communities Committee in the lobby of Alberta Municipal Place: L-R (back row): Bob Manning, Dennis Evans, (front row): Reg Pointe, Barb Sjoquist, Doug McDermond, Bob Clark (Chair)

Village of Mannville Hosts Alberta Small Communities Conference May 28-30, 2010

Over 40 Alberta Small Communities gathered in Mannville, Alberta May 28-30th for a full weekend of networking designed to maintain the uniqueness of small communities while working together to share and seek solutions for success and long term sustainability. The last conference in 2007 was held in Forestburg and focused on communities with a population of 2500 or less.

Mannville started things off Friday night with a meet and greet held in conjunction with the Village's annual Invitational Golf Get-Together. Even though the weather was rainy and chilly, it didn't put a damper on the spirits of true golfers! A good time was had

by all who attended, especially during Brenda Robinson's humorous presentation.

Mannville Chamber of Commerce served a pancake breakfast followed by opening remarks and welcomes. Mr. David Beurle (keynote speaker) from Innovative Leadership Australia spoke about community revitalization and how crucial it is for development and growth. Various breakout sessions were held at Mannville School on a wide variety of topics. Sessions included: building a successful emergency services department; challenges with providing quality education in small rural communities; water conservation and metering; and community involvement

with local health services. AUMA, one of the conference sponsors, was happy to present on two of its initiatives: Welcoming and Inclusive Communities, with a focus on attracting newcomers to smaller centers and Municipal Sustainability Planning (MSP)..

The conference wrapped up Sunday with a final keynote presentation and a question and answer discussion panel facilitated by Heather Nickel of Culture and Community Spirit. Delegates enjoyed meeting new contacts and addressing similar concerns and issues at hand. For further information on the conference please visit www.albertasmallcommunities.com or phone (780) 763-3500.

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.](#)

