



RMAA Review

News from the Rural Municipal Administrators' Association of Saskatchewan

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*"Sometimes we're tested not
to show our weaknesses, but
to discover our strengths."*

— Unknown

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Plan Now to Attend the 2021 VIRTUAL RMAA Convention

The 2021 Annual RMAA Convention will be held in a virtual format in May 2021. We hope all of our members will make the effort to attend. Please let your Council's know this is as important as attending in person and encourage them to close the office while you 'attend'. The convention committee is working on putting together a format that is virtual friendly and informative for our members. While nothing can take the place of meeting in person, we are determined to ride the wave and adapt to conduct the business of our association. Stay tuned for further announcements!

Thank you to those who participated in the convention survey. The committee will consult the survey results when

considering items to be presented at the convention.

PD Hours 2021

Professional Development is a key component of successful administration. Ongoing learning and attending pertinent workshops is necessary to keep up to date on legislative changes, operational updates such as payroll, human resources and other employment matters as well as personal development opportunities. As you know the PD hour requirement was suspended for 2020. Stay tuned for announcements for 2021!

Lou Jacobs Award

To preserve the integrity and prestige of the RMAA's highest honour, the Lou Jacobs Award, the executive will not be seeking to receive nominations at this time. It is the board's intent to fully honour the 2020 recipient, Rodney Schoettler, at such time when we can convene in person and acknowledge Rodney's contributions to the association in the manner that is deserved.

Congratulations Rodney!



President's Ponderings



It is at this time of year that many reflect on the past year – it's events, the highs, and the lows. I have been doing that lately and would briefly like to share my reflections. When I reflect on this past year the word that comes to mind is "Unbelievable". The previous year's word would have been "Chaotic" but this 2020 year wins by a mile... As 2020 comes to a close, I would rather reflect on the challenges we all faced and how we managed them. We had to postpone our 2020 annual convention. Somehow we all survived! We led the way for many to follow on how we could conduct business in a virtual format and we succeeded in that process. We all continued to maintain our offices in a safe and regulated manner. Many challenges were presented to us but we persevered and continued serving our municipalities to the best of our abilities. A late election with an early snowstorm brought unwarranted stress to many of us, but we made the best of it and did our part to aid in the democratic process.

This past year has been an incredible challenge. Now I want to look ahead. If Saskatchewan is given the green light to proceed with life, we are committed to get back into action. Whatever we are permitted to proceed with, we will work to achieve all of the necessary goals and keep planning for the next phase. We appreciate everyone's understanding during this time. I hope 2021 will bring us all a new set of welcomed challenges and hopefully we can all unite and get caught up.

As the New Year welcomes you, may new hopes, new aspirations, new resolutions and new spirits guide you through a bright and prosperous 2021. Merry Christmas to you and all your near and dear ones!

-Guy



Targeted Sector Support Initiative

Congratulations to Don McCallum, TSS Designated Coordinator and Wendy Gowda TSS Designated Advisor on their new roles! This Pilot Project was made possible with financial support from the Ministry of Government Relations and the support of SARM. The RMAA is pleased to be launching this program this month and looks forward to providing our members with updates as we progress! While initially intended to provide on-site office visits of newly qualified Administrators to provide guidance and resources as they begin their careers, the program has been modified, due to current circumstances, to a form of virtual and/or telephone offsite check-ins between the new administrator and the designated advisor. This service is provided free of charge so we are hoping to generate a lot of interest. The Administrators being contacted will be in a unique position to provide insight as to whether this type of resource is helpful, and target areas for improvement and inclusion as the program develops. If you are relatively new to the field and haven't been contacted yet or are interested in hearing more about the program please contact the RMAA at tsscoordinator@sasktel.net



Welcome New Members!

We would like to welcome the following new Administrators who have recently achieved their Rural 'C' Certificates.

<i>Certificate</i>	<i>Name</i>	<i>Municipality</i>	<i>Certification Date</i>
1592	Kimberley Lake	No. 442 Manitou Lake	June 1, 2020
1593	Jennifer Gutknecht	No. 434 Blaine Lake	June 19, 2020
1594	Amanda Baumgartner	No. 95 Golden West	June 19, 2020
1595	Garry Schageter	No. 51 Reno	June 25, 2020
1596	Sarah Leck	No. 36 Cymri	June 25, 2020
1597	Alan Parkin	No. 502 Britannia	July 20, 2020
1598	Kelli Timmerman	No. 339 LeRoy	September 10, 2020
1599	Julie Knaflec	No. 338 Lakeside	October 8, 2020
1600	Joan Corneil	No. 401 Hoodoo	October 27, 2020
1601	Tina Ross	No. 471 Eldon	October 27, 2020
1602	Crystal Rosenthal	No. 471 Eldon	October 27, 2020

NEW - 2021 RMAA Membership Dues

New for **2021** - The Regular Membership fee for active members is \$400.00 while Associate Membership is \$155.00. We have enclosed a separate membership invoice as part of your package. **NOTE:** Only regular members are extended voting privileges. Active Administrators **must** purchase a regular membership. Certificate holders who work in the office but are not active Administrators **may** purchase either a regular or associate membership. It is expected that all certificate holders that are not practicing Administrators, and those wishing to be placed on the relief list, purchase at least an associate membership. Retired members are encouraged to purchase an associate membership. This is the only notice you will receive for RMAA Membership dues! For those who wish to do so, we will allow a two part payment; one half the fee (\$200.00) is to be paid no later than January 31st and a post-dated cheque for March 31st for the other half (\$200.00) must be included. Receipts will be issued to the party whose name is on the cheque and will only be issued upon request. Please consider the environment and request a receipt only if it is absolutely necessary. We want to acknowledge and thank Councils for recognizing that the RMAA member fees fund valuable committee work that not only benefits administrators but also benefits the Councils and ratepayers that our members serve!

Moving or Retiring?

Please let us know if you are moving, retiring or exiting the field. Drop us a line at rmaa@sasktel.net.

Q & A - With Ray



Sitting on both the SARM Board and the RMAA Board affords you the unique perspective of considering matters from both sides of the fence; the Admin view and the Council view. As a member of Council, what do you think is important for Admins to know about Councillors and where they are coming from? i.e. What do you think the average Councillor wants to know but is reluctant to ask?

I think Administrators need some information about the Council members, especially the new Councillor. One idea would be an informal meeting with the Administrator and the new Councillor for the purpose of getting to know one other. One question that always comes to mind that the Administrator could ask would be “What made you interested in running for Council?” and “What do you expect your experience on Council will be like?” This can be done before an official orientation session that needs to be discussed as well. I think most Council members are interested in what their duties and responsibilities are which can be better spelled out in formal orientation sessions.

Often Council and Administrator interaction can be limited in the sense that they are together on meeting days and perhaps a Councillor will drop in the office to ask a question or pay a bill etc. On the surface this can make an Administrators job look somewhat simplistic and straightforward (they take my money, hear my road complaints, talk about the weather and send me on my way).

What do you think Administrators could do to give new Councillors a better idea of what they actually do?

SARM has been working on a Municipal Capacity Building strategy and has done extensive consultations with Council members and Administrators. Arising from that is the need to develop a more uniform orientation guide or module that Council and Administrators can use, not only for new Council members, but for those who want a refresher course. I personally feel that I would have welcomed this kind of training before I attended my first Council meeting...a long time ago. It was basically, “Your first meeting is on this day in January, it starts at 10 a.m. and don't be late!” The MLDP module 1 is a good start but we need to develop a more comprehensive orientation policy as an enhancement to the module.

If you were to impart some wisdom on a new Councillor what would that be?

There is a lot of information on the Government Relations website that can be provided to the Council members in regards to what the Administrator actually is required to do as set out in *The Municipalities Act* and with some helpful Q&A documents that describe it quite well. Unfortunately, many Council members do not realize that the Administrator is often the “face” of the municipality, and in effect is the front line worker in the municipality.

Is there anything else that you would like to share with the RMAA members?

The last bit of information I'd give to a Council member would be to be attentive, be willing to take training whenever possible and to be respectful to everyone around you during your entire tenure on Council. Hopefully these tips will take you a long way in the world of municipal politics.

2020 - 2021 RMAA Executive

President	Guy Lagrandeur	Rouleau
Vice-President	Sheila Keisig	Balcarres
Director Ex-Officio	Ray Orb	Cupar
Immediate Past President	Wendy Gowda	Christopher Lake
Executive Director	Rose Zimmer	Wolseley
Division 1	Cheryl Barrett	Moosomin
Division 2	Mike Wirges	Moose Jaw
Division 3	Raylene Packet	Webb
Division 4	Barry Hvidston	Canora
Division 5	R. Doran Scott	Bradwell
Division 6	Michelle Buechler	Paynton

Meet Division 4 Director Barry Hvidston



Where are you from and how did your path lead to Administration?

Some of my earlier recollections as a child was sitting in the R.M. of Tisdale No 427's Board Room helping my father fold tax notices listening to the dot matrix printing off the next batch with him running to the computer every time the printer jammed. Little did I know, 20 years later, I would be doing the same thing except in my own office... with my own dot matrix printer. Thank goodness those are no longer used. Therefore, I could say it is in my blood. My father (Terry) was the Administrator for the RM of Tisdale until 2009 when he retired. He also sat on the RMAA Board of Directors for two years. My mother (Valerie) was the Superintendent of Business for the Tisdale School Division from the mid 1980s until amalgamation of school divisions. She sat on the SASBO Board for a time. My only brother (Brad) returned to the Town of Tisdale and is currently the Administrator for the town. He had sat on the UMAAS Board for a few years.

What is your favorite thing to do when you are not working?

Watching movies with my two daughters or watching them practice Tae Kwon Do (and hopefully not on each other). When not with them, I enjoy working on the computer or creating spreadsheets.

Favorite Food? Deep fried mushrooms or my homemade meat sauce on spaghetti (even though my girls will not allow me to use chili powder anymore).

How long have you been an Administrator?

Training started in April 2004, started my first position at the RM of Cote No 271 in January 2005.

What compelled you to become a board member?

The chance to help others. After 14 years as Administrator, I wanted the chance to help other Administrators.

What is most rewarding about being on the board?

The contacts. Whether it is other Administrators, Councils, Board Members, Government Officials or Politicians.

What would you say to anyone considering letting their name stand for a board election?

Just like with Council, you get what you put in. There is a lot of work and research to be done but it is very rewarding for the right person.

If you could give one piece of advice to a new Administrator what would that be?

Do not take other people's comments personally. When someone comes into the office (or phones) upset, they may not even be upset about the issue they are bringing forward. They may have had a fight with their family, equipment breakdowns or something else. They may be upset about a council decision or policy. Once it becomes a personnel issue, the relationship generally swirls like the drain of a toilet with little chance of the relationship resurfacing.

What about advice for a more seasoned Administrator?

One of the unique items that the RMAA can boast of is the networking and sharing of information between Administrators. If a new Administrator comes into the area, do not be afraid to reach out and welcome them.

What advice would you give to a new Council member?

The relationship between the Council and an Administrator can make or break the next four years. Do not be afraid to ask questions, but be willing to listen to the answers. At the start, it is a steep uphill learning curve but it can be a very rewarding position. Congratulations!

Anything else you would like to share?

Good luck in 2021! Hopefully we can all get together soon!



Who does what....Committee Listing 2020-2021

COMMITTEE	CHAIRPERSON	MEMBER(S)
Asset Management	WIRGES	
Convention Sponsorship & Door Prizes	BUECHLER	Hvidston, Packer
Convention Trade Show		
Council Mediation	SCOTT	Wirges
Board of Reference	HVIDSTON	Zimmer (Secretary)
Golfing	WIRGES	Hvidston, Packet
Legislative Review	SCOTT	
Humanitarian Services	BARRETT	
RMAA Home Page	PACKET	
Curling	HVIDSTON	Barrett
Recruitment (including MAIP) Retention & Recruitment	BUECHLER	Barrett
Training, MOU Education & MLDP	HVIDSTON	Barrett
911 Rural Addressing	SCOTT	
Local Government Authority	PACKET	Scott
Resolutions	BARRETT	Wirges
Rural Advisory to SAMA	WIRGES	Scott
Enhanced Benefits	SCOTT	Buechler
Mentor Co-ordination/PEER Network	BUECHLER	Packet
Centennial Committee	BUECHLER	Keisig, Scott
Board of Examiners (VP)	KEISIG	Palichuk (Secretary)
Convention Workshops & Guest Speakers	KEISIG	Scott
Women On The Go	BARRETT	Buechler
Personnel	WIRGES	Scott, Lagrandeur
Disciplinary (VP Chair)	KEISIG	Scott, Wirges
M.E.P.P. (Past President)	GOWDA	
Salary Negotiations	GOWDA	Lagrandeur, Keisig, Zimmer
Executive & Finance	LAGRANDEUR	Keisig, Orb, Zimmer
Municipal Programs & Services Steering Committee	LAGRANDEUR	Keisig
Ex-Officio Director	ORB	

Inquiring Minds Want to Know.....

We asked Advisory Services what the top inquiries they receive from either Administrators, Councils or the general public. This is what they had to say:

The Advisory Services Unit of the Advisory Services and Municipal Relations Branch within the Ministry of Government Relations received over 3,400 calls from September 2020 – November 2020. Outside of election questions, the top questions were regarding administration, taxation and council. Following are five of the most common questions:

Q: A ratepayer wants to know what the taxes are on his neighbour's quarter – can I provide that information to them?

A: No matter the situation, the first thing to consider when being asked for information is whether or not what is being asked for is covered under section 117 of *The Municipalities Act* (Act). This section identifies documents available for public inspection during regular business hours such as minutes, bylaws, financial statements, public disclosure statements, oaths of office and other certain municipal records. If the information being requested is not identified as a document available for public inspection under this section, council policy or other legislation, the individual may then choose to submit an access to information request under *The Local Authority Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act* (LAFOIP) and follow the procedure required under that legislation in responding accordingly. In this particular scenario, however, the ratepayer has the ability to purchase a tax certificate for the property in question. Section 276 of the Act provides the authority to issue a tax certificate that identifies the current year's levy, the total amount of arrears (if any) and other information related to the property's assessment and taxation.

More information about access to information and online trainings can be found on Saskatchewan.ca under "[Access to Information](#)".

Q: Is it acceptable for council members to make decisions by email, text message or by meeting together outside council meetings?

A: Council may need to be reminded that legislation does not provide them with the authority to make decisions by electronic messages or through informal meetings. It is clearly stated in the Act that "an act or proceeding of a council is not effective unless it is authorized or adopted by a bylaw or a resolution at a duly constituted public meeting of the council" (Section 119(1)). After decisions are made at a meeting, administration has the necessary direction to implement those decisions. Decisions made outside the legislative authority puts individual members at risk of being financially or legally liable for their actions. A good practice is for council members to review the publication [Council Member's Handbook for Municipalities](#). Participation in workshops, conventions and training sessions will also provide education to help them become effective and successful council members.

Q: How can council hold a special meeting if there is no administrator?

A: The council procedures bylaw, of which a [sample](#) is available, must now designate a person to call a special meeting in the event that the administrator is unable to act or the position is vacant. This person could be the administrative assistant, public works employee, or maybe the administrator of another municipality. The sole role of this person is to simply 'call' the special meeting in accordance with legislation and the municipality's council procedures bylaw. Do not confuse the designation of the person to 'call' the meeting with the person appointed as the acting administrator for the purpose of that meeting. This may be two different individuals. It will be important for the designated person to have agreed to the appointment and also have copies of the applicable legislation and municipality's bylaw in order to provide the required notices. Please remember that public notice is required when amending the council procedures bylaw. More information can be found on Saskatchewan.ca under [Council Procedures](#).

...continued on next page

Inquiring minds... continued from page 7

Q: Who do I call if I have a question regarding municipal zoning, land use or development permits?

A: The Community Planning Branch of the Ministry of Government Relations responds to all questions on municipal zoning, development permits and other land use matters which are pursuant to *The Planning and Development Act 2007*. A planning consultant may be reached at either of the following numbers: Regina, 306-787-2725 or Saskatoon, 306-933-6937. **More information can be found on Saskatchewan.ca under [Community Planning, Land Use and Development](#).**

Municipalities are provided authority for specific actions under several different pieces of legislation and regulations. In order to avoid multiple calls, it is best to contact the branch, within the appropriate ministry, that is directly responsible for the specific legislation. If you are not sure which ministry to contact, Publications Saskatchewan contains a document entitled [Assignment of Responsibility for the Administration of Acts and Regulations](#), which lists the Ministry responsible. There is also an [Administrators Reference Guide](#) which may assist you in locating the appropriate contacts and/or resources.

Q: How do I pursue tax enforcement on a property where the owner passed away a long time ago?

A: The tax enforcement process remains the same whether the owner is alive or deceased. However, the required notices must be sent to the legal representative of the deceased. A legal representative may be named on the title registered with ISC as a representative of the estate, but when it is not, the municipality will be required to obtain a Surrogate Registrar Certificate. In cases where neither a legal representative is on title or identified on a Surrogate Registrar Certificate, section 25 of *The Tax Enforcement Act* requires all notices be served on the Official Administrator for the province which in this case is the Office of the Public Guardian and Trustee. More information about tax enforcement can be found on Saskatchewan.ca under [Municipal Tax Enforcement](#). Specifically, the [Tax Enforcement Manual](#) provides further details on these steps, including contact information for both offices.

Silver For Gold—Humanitarian Efforts

Each year, at our annual convention, the RMAA has a fundraiser for a special cause. In the past we have raised funds for MS, Canadian Blood Services and the Food Bank to name a few. Recently you will have received an email regarding saving your can tabs for childhood cancer research. Please encourage your ratepayers to participate by allowing them to drop off their can tab at your office. The RMAA Division with the most tabs will be recognized at our next in person convention! For more information on this program please contact Humanitarian Committee Chairperson Cheryl Barrett at div1rmaa@sasktel.net.



Annual RMAA Member Survey

Don't forget to complete and return your annual survey promptly in late January.

We will continue to use Survey Monkey to assist us in conducting our annual survey in hopes that our overall response rates improve. Many thanks to each of you for making it a priority to complete and return this survey. We will send the survey out to you in late January 2021. We intentionally keep the member survey as brief as possible so that it will only take 3 to 5 minutes to complete. Note, that there will again be a question on the survey concerning retirements as we continue to track the number of Administrators who will be in a position to, or expect to, retire in the near future; this is a statistic that we feel we must track on an ongoing basis. The summary salary information is also an important statistic that we feel we must track on an ongoing basis. The Salary Negotiation Committee uses the information gathered in our annual survey so we ask that each and every one of our members participate in the survey. The summary salary data is an important and integral part of the data presented when the committee meets with the SARM Board.

Please remember that your individual survey information is kept *strictly confidential* but we do share the membership summary of results in the spring newsletter.

**Please remember to complete
and return your member survey
as soon as you receive it in January!**

The RMAA Board of Directors wishes you a Merry Christmas!

