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Small Communities 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 eight members from communities of 2500 or less, including two AUMA Board members. The AUMA Board has given the Small Communities Committee a 2013 mandate to:

- Advocate for resolutions affecting small communities.
 - Oversee the development of the Small Communities' newsletter.
 - Provide input on key legislative and policy changes pertaining to the MGA review.
 - Provide feedback on other key policy development such as municipal water and energy policies, long term infrastructure plan, etc.
- 24 drinking water projects;
 - 24 wastewater projects
 - 4 major road projects;
 - 2 disaster mitigation projects;
 - 1 public transit project; and
 - 1 solid waste management project.

Small Communities NEWSLETTER

Summer 2015

56 Municipal projects supported under Building Canada Small Communities Fund

As the national and provincial components of Building Canada have very limited opportunities for most municipalities, the Small Communities Fund (SCF) is the primary funding source for municipal infrastructure projects. Knowing that the \$94 million in federal SCF funding would fall far short of meeting municipal needs, AUMA advocated for a one-time, merit based application process that would not be too onerous for municipalities. AUMA hosted webinars in March 2015 to assist municipalities in submitting their project applications by the April deadline.

Over the summer, Municipal Affairs reviewed the nearly 300 applications which totaled \$1.1 billion in project costs. Based on the merit-based scoring system which considered factors such as public safety, environmental stewardship, and economic development, Municipal Affairs recommended projects for approval by the federal government.

The federal government recently announced its decision to allocate all of the \$94 million for municipal projects (i.e., no funding was allocated to improvement districts or Metis settlements). The \$94 million has been allocated to 56 municipal projects:

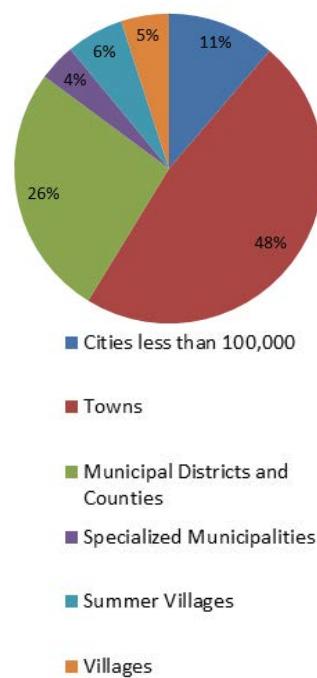
- 24 drinking water projects;
- 24 wastewater projects
- 4 major road projects;
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- 1 public transit project; and
- 1 solid waste management project.

The 56 projects are in 53 municipalities; 50 municipalities received funding for one project and 3 municipalities received funding for two projects. Regardless of the number of projects funded, no municipality received more than \$3 million from each of the federal and provincial funders (\$6 million total).

Further details on the approved projects are included below.

As outlined in the following chart, approximately 74 per cent of the funding was distributed to AUMA members.

Chart: Allocation of Small Community Funding



The province is required to match the federal funding, bringing the total funding by these two orders to government to nearly \$188 million. Municipalities must contribute the same amount as the federal government but, in many cases, are paying more due to the

project costs far exceeding the maximum grants.

Federal and provincial funding will be released on a quarterly basis based on approval of the municipality's submitted claims. Projects must be completed by December 31, 2022 to ensure municipalities can finalize reports and submit their remaining claims by June 30, 2023.

Municipalities may need to initially cash flow more than their share of the total project costs due to the delay in the provincial matching funds. As explained in the application guidelines, the provincial funding is only \$6 million for 2015, with the amount for future years dependent on the annual budget process. The province advised AUMA that it intends to annually monitor the incoming claims from the municipalities and to request adjustments to the anticipated cash flows each year based on the claims received to date. The adjustments will be subject to the budget process but the province is hopeful that this will minimize as much as possible the length of time municipalities will have to cash flow these projects.

Municipal Affairs has confirmed that the annual funding committed by the province can be carried forward to the year in which the project commences, up to the time that the grant program expires. For example, if a municipality is advised that provincial matching funds are \$50,000 in 2015-16 and \$100,000 in 2016-17 and the project does not start until 2016-17, the municipality can claim up to \$150,000 for provincial funding in 2016-17.

Alvin Law: keynote speaker at the AUMA Convention opening ceremonies

Join us to see Alvin Law, motivational rabble-rouser at the AUMA Convention opening ceremonies September 23 starting at 12:30 pm.

Alvin Law is a Hall-of-Fame keynote speaker who uses his story to challenge and inspire even the most resistant, heard-it-all-before audience. As a living, breathing example of the power of attitude, he busts through the self-imposed blockages we all have about who we are and what we can achieve, and provokes us to examine and rewrite the stories we tell ourselves about our role, our abilities and our lives.

Take the time to [register now](#) or learn more about the event.



Small Communities NEWSLETTER

Message from the Chair

I hope everyone has been enjoying the summer weather we have had. However, fall is just around the corner, which means our annual convention on September 23-25 is coming up soon! Please register soon, and make sure you schedule in attending the Small Communities session. This year, our session

will discuss how to promote tourism in small communities, which I know will be of interest to many municipalities. I look forward to seeing you there!

Small Communities Chair
Mayor Cliff Ayrey,
Village of Longview

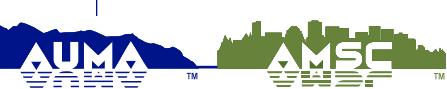


Resolutions at the 2015 Convention

At this year's convention, 12 member resolutions have been tabled on a range of issues:

- Continued Provincial Financial Support for Municipalities (City of Leduc)
- New Building Canada Fund (City of Red Deer)
- Grants in Place of Taxes for Social Housing (Town of Black Diamond/City of Brooks)
- Restoring Access to Canadian Police Information Centre (Town of Penhold)
- Promoting the Use of Nurse Practitioners within the Alberta Healthcare System (Village of Wabamun)
- Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women (City of Lethbridge)
- Decreasing the Voting Age to 16 (City of Lethbridge)
- Enhanced Provincial and Municipal Homelessness Response (City of Red Deer)
- Coordinate Approach to School Site Placement (Town of Morinville)
- Review of Broadband Internet Availability in Alberta (Town of Raymond/Town of Okotoks/Town of Pincher Creek/Town of Stavely/Town of Penhold/Town of Cardston/Town of Eckville/Town of Fort Macleod/Village of Delburne/Town of Nanton/Town of Claresholm/Town of Milk River/Village of Rosemary/Village of Glenwood)
- Sharing of Travel Cost to AUMA Convention (Village of Irma/Village of Chauvin)
- Include Auxiliary Cadets in Police Officers Collective Bargaining Act (City of Calgary)

Resolutions will be debated on Wednesday September 23 from 1:45 to 3:30 p.m., and on Friday September 25, from 9:15 to 9:45 a.m. at the TELUS Convention Centre. For a copy of the 2015 resolution handbook, click [here](#).



Get involved! Volunteer for a 2016 AUMA Committee

Get the most out of your AUMA membership by getting involved in one of our [committees](#). Joining a committee means you can:

- influence the course and direction of policies and initiatives
- ensure that your community interests are being addressed
- gain a greater understanding of AUMA/AMSC activities and initiatives and how they benefit our members
- increase your networks and connections, and
- enhance your leadership skills.

Click [here](#) to complete the committee application form. Applications are due by Monday, September 28

Small Communities NEWSLETTER

Small Communities Convention session: Promoting tourism in small communities

In addition to reporting on their year's activities, the Small Communities Committee will be profiling AUMA's new toolkit, **Tourism Vitality Alberta**.

Did you know that in 2012, tourist spending in Alberta totalled \$7.41 billion? Many small Alberta communities

recognize that tourism is important for their economic development, but may not know how to harness it.

To support small communities' tourism capacity, AUMA has developed a Tourism Vitality Alberta toolkit that members can use to measure and

improve tourism in their community.
Join Mike Stolte from the Centre of Innovation and Entrepreneurial Leadership to learn more.

**Wednesday,
September 23, 8:30 -
9:45 am**

Travel tips for AUMA Convention delegates

Flying

Sometimes, flying into Calgary could reduce your overall costs of gas, time, and parking rates in the downtown core. Visit Air Canada or WestJet for schedules and rates.

Bus

Taking the bus can be a convenient, relaxing and cost-effective choice. Carriers have private row seating, complimentary snacks and drinks, as well as plush seating and entertainment. For bus service, current rates, and routes in and around your home, visit Greyhound or Red Arrow.

Here are a few tips to get you started with a potential riding partner:

- Where will the designated pick-up point be? Some car pools have door to door service, while others prefer to meet at a convenient church or grocery store parking lot.

Rooms filling up fast!

Has your council booked your rooms yet? Make sure you have reserved your hotel rooms for this year's convention taking place in Calgary September 23 through 25.

The convention is the culmination of the year's

work, and an occasion for members to gather, network, deliberate, share, and celebrate! Don't miss your opportunity to share thoughts and concerns face-to-face with government leaders and your municipal colleagues.

This year AUMA has a block of rooms available at the Glenmore Inn & Convention Centre for a more cost-friendly option. Click [here](#) for more details.



Advocacy win: Hitchhiking mussels denied access to Sylvan Lake

AUMA's recent Mayors' Caucus in Strathmore, Alberta was an exciting opportunity for municipalities from across the province to meet and discuss important issues.

Members had the opportunity to network and attend sessions on a diverse array of important topics, such as building relationships with the new government, land use planning, addressing health and safety issues relating to marijuana production, requirements for municipal code of conduct, and policing—to mention just a few.

Representatives and speakers from the provincial government, recycling management boards, and the RCMP provided timely information and responded to feedback and questions.

Materials from the
June Mayors' Caucus
are now [available](#).

A boat carrying invasive mussels at Sylvan Lake was intercepted over the May long weekend. The contaminated boat did not make it into Sylvan Lake. However, the close call is a reminder to Albertans to clean, drain, and dry their boats to prevent these tenacious mussels from damaging Alberta's valuable aquatic ecosystems.

The boat was discovered during a provincial inspection, which are now mandatory following Eelstra and quagga mussels can spread quickly and live out of water for up to 30 days. Once introduced to a

Learning opportunities on the horizon

The ever-changing and demanding arena of municipal matters requires elected officials to continuously expand their knowledge and skills, and stay current. The Elected Officials Education Program (EOEP) offers a number of courses that provide a solid foundation for leading communities.

The EOEP was developed to provide municipal elected officials with an opportunity to broaden their knowledge and skills, raising the quality of municipal government and enabling those in office to effectively achieve the goals of their community.

the adoption of the Fisheries Amendment Act earlier this year. The amendments respond to AUMA's earlier advocacy calling for the provincial to enforce zero tolerance and mandatory inspections for Dreissenid mussels (zebra and quagga) to ensure the species does not invade Alberta.

Something suspicious on your boat or equipment, call 1-855-336-2628 (BOAT).

waterbody, they are virtually impossible to eradicate. The province estimates that an infestation of invasive mussels in Alberta could cost the province more than \$75 million annually – including damage to infrastructure and recreational opportunities. For more information or to report something suspicious on your boat or equipment, call 1-855-336-2628 (BOAT).

- **Citizen Engagement**
September 23 (AUMA Convention, Calgary)
 - **Municipal Governance**
October 29-30
(AUMA Offices, Edmonton)
 - **Citizen Engagement**
November 16
(Edmonton)
 - **Effective Planning & Strategy**
November 16
(Edmonton)

Update on MGA review

Small Communities NEWSLETTER

New government is exploring option to boost rural bus service

AUMA continues to advocate to the new government on the compelling reasons for the MGA review to proceed.

While AUMA has provided input on a number of proposed amendments to the Act, there remains a great deal of work on existing and new regulations that will be impacted by MGA changes.

At the spring and summer Mayors' Caucuses, AUMA sought input from our members on specific MGA policies to prepare for further discussions on the Act and regulations. This included proposed recommendations relating to amalgamation and annexations, codes conduct, and conflict of interest.

Make sure to stay subscribed to our weekly newsletter for the latest updated on the MGA review.

The province will be implementing a plan to restore rural bus service in many of the 150 Alberta towns and villages that lost the service three years ago, announced Transportation and Infrastructure Minister Brian Mason.

Minister Mason, a former city bus driver, plans to examine options to bring back the buses, but has not made any decisions at this point. As part of its platform, the NDP pledged to invest \$8 million to restore the bus

Access to bus service in small communities is important to the quality of life for rural residents and encourages more people to remain in rural areas.

Province listens to concerns about grants in lieu of taxes

In response to AUMA's advocacy on the need to continue with grants in lieu of taxes for social housing, the new NDP government has agreed to suspend the previous government's actions earlier this year to terminate the grant. AUMA will be working with the Minister of Seniors to ensure she is

Previously, Greyhound had operated in Alberta for 50 years under a government deal that protected it from competition in exchange for maintaining minimum service levels to rural communities. In 2011, Greyhound had approached the government to seek subsidies for some money-losing routes, but the government refused the request and opened to routes to external competition.

However, in some remote communities, private companies either failed to materialize or floundered financially, leaving residents without transportation to the cities. Some communities created their own programs such as volunteer groups driving patients for

AUMA President Helen Rice commented that the lack of bus service is a huge issue for residents of small communities—particularly the elderly and students—who don't have vehicles, don't drive, or don't want to face winter driving conditions. "I think bus service is critical for small communities," she said. But she said the government should tread cautiously in communities where private companies have taken over the bus routes. "They need to talk to the private operators who filled in some areas to ensure they enhance their service and don't put them out of business or compete against them," she said.

Regulation Schedule 2 until 2017, which authorizes a grant in place of taxes for 42 non-profit unsubsidized seniors' housing facilities. This extension provides the opportunity to fully review exemptions under the Municipal Government Act.

Early bird discount on October forum on Rural Economic and Community Development

The Alberta Centre for Sustainable Rural Communities is hosting a forum October 2-4 on rural economic and community development to discuss challenges, best practices and strategies. Located at Augustana Campus in Camrose, the forum is an excellent opportunity for elected officials and municipal staff to engage in knowledge exchange and network development.

Session topics include governance, social policy and services, natural resources management, investment attraction, business succession strategies, infrastructure, transportation and logistics, youth retention and recruitment, and grant writing.

Registration increases to \$175, September 1.

For more information about the forum, visit the [website](#).

Small Communities NEWSLETTER

Municipal success story: Village of Warner's Hockey School

12 years ago, the Village of Warner worked to save its school from closure and by doing so, has helped put the small southern Alberta community on the map.

The Warriors from the Warner Hockey School (WHS) have helped boost high school enrolment, bolster the local economy, and foster their town's community spirit. The girl's hockey academy and specialized hockey training school now attracts young women at the top of their game from across North America. Most of the students hail from Alberta, but some have come from as far as Sweden and Finland to receive one-on-one training from the WHS coaching staff.

The players scheduled to graduate this year will join a long list of alumni who have gone on to successful post-secondary hockey

careers across Canada and the United States, many of them picking up awards and scholarships along the way.

The hockey program was born out of the communities desire to keep the Village's high school open, and capitalized on the recently upgraded facilities. As a committee of local residents began planning, they soon came to realize that while there were many boys' hockey schools; there were very few opportunities for female hockey players. With that idea, the committee spent two years fundraising, hiring a coach and organizing the family billets. The Warner Hockey School opened its doors in September 2003 to a class of 20 students.

During the first two years, hockey players lived with billet families



Join a Regional Economic Development Alliance

Municipalities seeking to foster economic development may wish to consider joining a regional economic development alliance (REDA). A REDA is an alliance of municipalities and community organizations collaborating to optimize investments, stimulate business development and connect people and products to markets. They receive funding from the provincial government to support their activities.

Each REDA identifies projects that best suit their regions and benefit their membership. Mayor Margaret Plumtree of Vauxhall says, "REDA's allow our municipalities to collaborate for the betterment of our region by sharing resources that would normally be unavailable."

REDA's seek to promote their region as an attractive environment in which to live and do business. They have core programs aimed at attracting and retaining businesses and families. Other programs include economic development training and learning opportunities and the production and distribution of marketing materials that help to advertise the region.

Projects are implemented to ensure that regions are not lagging behind when it comes to accessing technology and other programs and services. Barriers such as broadband access and rural bus service have been identified and solutions are being developed to enable continued regional development.

[Learn more about REDAs and how to join one.](#)

Small Communities NEWSLETTER

Municipal success story: Town of Old's own internet O-NET

The Town of Olds has a unique claim to fame; its residents have the fastest internet service in the country! While some small communities have limited access to high speed broadband, homes and businesses in Olds can access a full gigabit (or 1,000 megabits) per-second of bandwidth. To put this into perspective, the Canadian government's current minimum speed for rural broadband is 5 megabits per second.

This unique high speed internet project came to fruition after concerned Olds residents and politicians formed the [Olds Institute for](#)

[Community and Regional Development](#), a non-profit organization tasked with improving the town's economic prospects. The community was concerned about retaining its youth and continuing to attract businesses. In 2004, Olds Institute began focusing on laying the foundation for a connected community and saw high speed internet's potential as an economic driver. With that in mind, the Institute set out to create a community economic development strategy that saw Olds become the small and medium enterprise capital of Alberta. The network was financed by loans and

loan guarantees provided by the Town of Olds to the Olds Institute. The Olds Institute has created a for profit service provider, O-NET which provides service to all residents and businesses in the community. The O-NET network also transformed Olds College as the number of devices connected to the campus's Wi-Fi network doubled and number of students increased since its introduction.

To find out more about how the community and its leaders collaborated to develop this unique partnership, [view a short video presentation](#).

Railway safety bill passed

regarding dangerous goods:

- The Bill is meant to strengthen the liability and compensation regime for federally regulated railway companies
- Major reforms to the insurance and third party liability regime for railways and dangerous goods shippers, including higher insurance limits for railways and the creation of a new supplementary fund to be capitalized by a levy on crude oil shippers, with the potential to introduce levies on
- New regulation-making powers that can require railways to share information with municipalities.

View the full text of the [Safe and Accountable Rail Act](#) [here](#).



Mark your calendars for these interesting webinars

Date and Time	Description
Wednesday, September 30 <i>11:00 a.m.—noon</i>	Pulling in the same direction: aligning land use decision making AUMA is collaborating with the province to host a webinar series for municipalities to learn more about and provide direct input to the development and implementation of regional plans under the provincial Land Use Framework.
Thursday, October 8 <i>11 a.m.—noon</i>	Community Wellness AUMA is working with the Alberta Recreation and Parks Association and Alberta Policy Coalition for Chronic Disease Prevention to highlight programs and grants that support community wellness (e.g., recreation, walkable communities, healthy eating, etc.) during this webinar.
Wednesday October 14 <i>10—11:30 a.m.</i>	Tourism Vitality Alberta Join Mike Stolte to learn more about AUMA's new toolkit, Tourism Vitality Alberta (TVA). This webinar will instruct you on how to use TVA and assess your community's tourism potential.
Wednesday October 21 <i>Time TBD</i>	Policing Join the Alberta Association of Police Governance, Alberta Justice & Solicitor General, and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police to talk about police governance and how you can become more involved in improving policing in your community. Topics include: what is police governance; why does it matter to you; what is a police commission, policing committee and police advisory committee; what is the municipal police service agreement; and what role can you have in policing in your community. Learn where you can turn for resources and have your questions answered.
Wednesday, October, 28 <i>11:00 a.m.—noon</i>	This old plan: preserving Alberta's history through land use planning AUMA is collaborating with the province to host a webinar series for municipalities to learn more about and provide direct input to the development and implementation of regional plans under the provincial Land Use Framework

Visit www.auma.ca/events to learn more and register for any of these webinars

