



Thank-you all and here is how I see it

by Wally Melnyk, CGA, CMMA and MMAA President

This article will mark the final opportunity for me to address readers of *The Leader* as President of the Manitoba Municipal Administrators' Association. The past two years must have been a very busy

time for me because they seem to pass in a flash. During this time, we have experienced a number of significant successes, but there is no doubt that these were accompanied by a few difficult challenges. Through it all, I

must say that I have truly enjoyed my time as President.

Upon reflection, one of the most enlightening and enjoyable duties of President was sitting as an ex-officio member of the Board of Directors of the Association of Manitoba Municipalities. The AMM and the MMAA have a unique partnership, one that is the envy of many other jurisdictions across this country. The strong working relationship that we enjoy has enabled elected officials and administrators to identify common positions on a wide variety of issues impacting municipalities. The result has been a united and, therefore, an even more effective voice for municipalities in our effort to ensure that the municipal perspective is always heard and considered. Single tier social assistance is a classic example of the strength of our combined voice and its ability to enlighten senior government and bring about policy change that is beneficial to all Manitobans.

In the weeks and months to come, municipalities will face a number of issues in which the ability of AMM and MMAA to stand united will once more prove to be important. The Planning Act Review, potential changes to the *Local Authorities Election Act* and a 'New Deal' regarding municipal revenue are all examples of initiatives that will require elected officials and administration to stand together if we expect to see positive results.

Our two associations have not always been on the same side of issues and, in fact, there have been a number of good reasons why this may have been so. This is where I think our strong relationship has truly demonstrated itself. When people agree it is easy to get along, to work together and to partner on issues. It takes a much stronger relationship; one based on respect, honesty and goodwill to continue in the face of adversarial positions. I am proud to say that I believe that the AMM and MMAA have a partnership built on those principals of respect, honesty and goodwill. We may not always agree on an issue but we endeavor to understand why the other organizations' position differs from our own and with that knowledge develop strategies for compromise.

On a personal note, I want to thank President **Stuart Briese**, Vice President **Ron**

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“ The AMM and the MMAA have a unique partnership, one that is the envy of many other jurisdictions across this country. ”

Bell, Vice President **Garry Wasylowski**, and Executive Director **Joe Masi**, along with the entire Board and staff of the AMM, for welcoming me and sharing the excellent working relationship that I have enjoyed over the past two years. The opportunity to provide my input; the invitations to bring the MMAA perspective; and the privilege of sharing our MMAA members' experience was truly satisfying.

The AMM continues to become an even stronger voice for its members on all-important issues. There is no doubt in my mind that the main reason is the quality of the people who guide and manage the organization. The strengths of a volunteer organization, whether it is the MMAA or AMM, are in the people who are a part of it. The ideals, motivation and direction of the organization come from members who actively participate and contribute.

I once read about an organization that was struggling with its future, its current mandate and the motivation of members. Many believed that there was a need to look at drastic changes to revitalize the organization. In the article, the Chairman of the organization was asked if he had any concerns about a projected loss of 10 to 25% of its membership if the organization proceeded in a new direction. I found his answer very interesting. He concluded that, to succeed from the organization's perspective, it was better to have 200 fewer members, as long as those remaining wanted the organization to succeed. He suggested that those remaining would have more opportunity to remain positive and look for opportunities to attract members of like mind who were prepared to contribute. He also suggested that maintaining the status quo might cause the organization to be lost due to apathy. Like a tree unable to grow and bear fruit when it has too many dead branches, so organizations can become stagnant when too many of their members are apathetic and not involved.

Ultimately, however, it has been my observation that dead branches soon fall from the tree and some branches that appear dead often sprout new growth in spring. My point is that our MMAA is just such an organization. It has become stronger through the years by feeding off the energy and dedication of members who choose to be involved. As I pass from this President's position, I want to recognize those involved individuals and especially my Vice President

Val Turner and the members of the Board of Directors with whom I have been honoured to service. I also want to challenge those who haven't been involved to re-dedicate themselves to the ideals and principals of their organization. The Mission Statement of the Manitoba Municipal Administrators Association is:

“... to promote and increase the professional growth of its members and to be

the voice on issues affecting municipal administration.”

I challenge all of our membership to participate in our quest to fulfill this very honourable Mission Statement, and I ask all those who work with us for their support in the interest of all citizens of Manitoba. ●

Sustainable Development

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