

# AMM Education Workshop



Wednesday, February 28, 2007, Keystone Centre, Brandon

A total of 143 registrants braved Brandon's wintry weather to attend the first Education Workshop in the AMM's 2007 Education Series. They were not disappointed, as an esteemed panel of experts discussed various aspects of human resources that elected officials may be involved in.

Winner of the draw for free registration and a Canad Inns Gift Card was **Morley Butler**, Councillor, RM of Birtle.

## Part 1: Hiring a CAO

Many municipalities are facing, or soon will be facing the prospect of replacing their retiring Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or other key employees.

**Gail Anderson** and **Linda Baleja**, Municipal Service Officers with Manitoba Intergovernmental Affairs, provided an overview of the *Guide to Hiring Your Chief Administrative Officer* and discussed the many strategies that can be used to improve the recruitment and retention of CAOs as well as other employees.

"There is much more to being a CAO than looking after the budget and the finance. This individual must also be able to provide professional, unbiased advice to council, have technical expertise, and an institutional



memory, meaning they are responsible to bring information and recommendations (research and pros and cons) to council for council to make decisions. The person needs to be council's 'giant eye.'"

Gail and Linda also outlined the five steps necessary to recruit a CAO, including looking forward, determining the skill requirements, targeting your search, interviewing and screening, and finally conducting reference checks and making the offer.

## Part 2: Performance Appraisal of your Municipality's CAO

**Sheila Bayda**, Senior Consultant, People First HR Services

With more than 13 years of consulting experience in the private and public sectors, Sheila explained the importance of CAO performance management.

Sheila stressed that a regularly scheduled and well-planned performance appraisal that gives feedback can be a valuable asset



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## UPCOMING EVENTS

April, 2007	
12	AMM Education Session #2 – George Cuff – Winnipeg
19	AMM Education Session #3 – George Cuff – Brandon
26-27	Rural Forum - Brandon
June, 2007	
1-4	Federation of Canadian Municipalities 70 <sup>th</sup> Annual Conference – Calgary, AB
7	AMM June District Meeting – Northern District
8	AMM June District Meeting – Interlake District
11	AMM June District Meeting – Eastern District
12	AMM June District Meeting – Central District
13	AMM June District Meeting – Western District
14	AMM June District Meeting – Midwestern District
15	AMM June District Meeting – Parklands District
October, 2007	
5	AMM Education Session #4 – Governance Success with Gord McIntosh – Portage la Prairie
November, 2007	
26-29	AMM Annual Convention – Brandon

to the future success of your organization. She noted that it is necessary to acknowledge a CAO's performance and determine where improvements may be made or what aspects of the job may need to be re-evaluated or restructured.

Shirley's top tips for the CAO performance appraisal are:

- Be sure documentation is maintained.
- Be prepared, clear and consistent
- Start with the positive
- Make it a two-way conversation
- Be a good listener
- Discuss work life balances
- Review regularly

“An esteemed panel of experts discussed various aspects of human resources.”

### Part 3: The Municipal Employees Benefit Program

Rose Neufeld, *Executive Director, Municipal Employees Benefit Program*

The MEBP provides pension, disability income and group life insurance protection to municipal employees. Rose's presentation included the role of the municipal employer as well as a description of the benefits offered by MEBP.

The MEBP was created in 1977 to provide universal pension and group insurance benefits to Municipal employees. Their long-term disability plan began in 1981, which is governed by a joint board of trustees. Rose explained the pension benefits of municipal employees long with the disability income and group insurance.

### Part 4: Media Relations 101

Shirley Muir, *President, The Media Bank*

Shirley Muir had had a career that includes 15 years in the media in both print and television. Shirley was the Public Affairs Manager for the City of Winnipeg where media relations and crisis management was a daily task. Shirley provided practical tips and advice to help us keep a cool head and dry palms under the hot lights.

“By engaging and responding to the media,” Shirley explained, “you can make

a dramatic difference in the way ratepayers and voters think of you, your leadership and key community projects that you are championing.”

Shirley noted that every project needs the following:

1. A project “champion”
2. Assets
3. Process
4. Communications – this provides the stabling “leg” of the project

She also noted that it is crucial to be proactive and not reactive, and that the business plan and communication strategy are in place.

Shirley also gave us a glimpse of the reporter's role, noting that they have a job to do and are usually under time constraints. They are required to explore all angles; talk to many; collect background; get visuals/sound; meet their deadline; AND beat the competition. Shirley explained that it is OK to tell a media person that you will call them back; you simply need time to find out more about the situation. Finally, don't hesitate to ask THEM questions, to see who've they've spoken to already. That may tell you what information needs to be clarified or if further information must be given. ☛

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