

A  
CENTURY  
OF VISION

A  
DECADE OF  
PARTNERSHIP  
RECAP


AMM 10TH ANNUAL CONVENTION  
NOVEMBER 24 - 27, 2008  
WINNIPEG CONVENTION CENTRE



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## A LOOK BACK at the 10th Annual Convention

By Lynne Bereza, AMM Communications Coordinator

**THE AMM 10TH ANNUAL CONVENTION** has come and gone, but the 986 registered delegates will have fond memories of this event for many years to come. The AMM strives each year to put on an exceptional event for our members, but this year stood out for a variety of reasons. Naturally, our 10th anniversary called for some extra-special touches, which we think we pulled off in grand style. We also launched a history book, debated an above-average number of resolutions, elected a new president, and enjoyed world-class entertainment. Here is a complete recap of this spectacular event.

### MONDAY – A LOOK BACK

This year's Convention kicked off with the official launch of our history book, *With One Voice: A History of Municipal Governance in Manitoba*. Our author, **Gordon Goldsborough**, gave a reading of his book (allowing us to enjoy his storytelling prowess first-hand) and also presented the AMM with a birthday gift of sorts – a complete list of those who attended the 1905 Brandon convention that led to the formation of the Union of Manitoba Municipalities. This list can be viewed at [TinyURL.com/AMMFounders](http://TinyURL.com/AMMFounders).

#### PAST-PRESIDENTS WHO ATTENDED THE 2008 AMM OPENING CEREMONIES

Alan Beachell  
Stuart Briese  
Grant Buchanan  
Glenn Carlson  
Al Ducharme  
Art Dyck  
Homer Gill  
Margaret Hodgson  
James Knight  
Stella Locker  
Manson Moir  
Wayne Motheral  
Jack Nicol  
Bud Oliver  
Ray Sigurdson

Several delegates who attended the book launch realized a connection on this list, including Councillor **Garry Dalgarno** of Strathclair (see p. 9 for details). President **Ron Bell** did as well, upon realizing the house he grew up in was built by one of the founding members – **William Taylor**, Reeve of the RM of Miniota.

We were fortunate to have **The Honourable John Harvard**, Lieutenant-Governor of Manitoba, attend our book launch to personally receive his copy of the book.



His Honour is an avid historian himself and thanked those in attendance for being a part of “the continuing story of our great province.” In congratulating our author Gordon Goldsborough, whom he described as a good friend, he had these words to say: “You probably know Gordon as a university professor, a biologist, and a water quality specialist. But I think above all, he is a gentleman, a respected citizen who has a deep compassion for history, and who cares deeply about his community.”

The rest of Day 1 was devoted to the AMM Annual Business Meeting where we heard **Ken Phernambuq** of The Exchange present our financial statement, and **Art Elias** of HED Insurance present a program overview. Unfortunately, our invited federal speaker, the **Honourable Vic Toews** was unable to attend this year. However, he did send a statement that was read by Executive Director **Joe Masi**,



which promised the Building Canada Fund “...will provide long-term, stable and predictable funding to meet Manitoba's infrastructure needs.”

**Mike Duffy** then took the stage as the first keynote speaker of the event, and amused and informed the audience with his particular brand of political commentary. The “Ottawa Insider” did not disappoint! Who would have thought that today Mike Duffy would be one of our new senators in Ottawa?

The always popular roundtable discussions closed the day with delegates breaking into groups to discuss shared concerns. An overview of these discussions is listed on p. 23.

Monday evening's Icebreaker was jam-packed and enjoyed by all who attended.

### TUESDAY – A.K.A. THE PAST, THE PRESENT, AND THE FUTURE

Day two of the AMM 10th Annual Convention began with the emotional opening ceremonies. This year, we reflected on our past by having some very special guests join us – a number of Past-Presidents of not only the AMM, but the Union of Manitoba Municipalities (UMM) and the Manitoba Association of Urban Municipalities (MAUM) as well. Their presence reminded us that their hard work helped us to reach our goals of today, and their wisdom gave us strength to keep going even when obstacles were placed in our path.

## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



The rest of the opening ceremonies set the tone for a great deal of the rest of convention by focussing on the issue of alternate revenue. Mayor **Sam Katz** of the City of Winnipeg described why Winnipeg had joined with Brandon, Portage la Prairie, and the RMs of Alexander, Cameron, and Westbourne to ask for increased funding for infrastructure. President Bell was even more to the point when he stressed, “We should never apologize for trying to give our children a safe and sustainable community and province!”

President **Ernie Epp** of the Manitoba Municipal Administrators’ Association brought greetings as well, along with Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, **Steve Ashton**, who followed with his annual address to delegates.

The morning’s keynote speaker will not soon be forgotten by anyone in attendance, as it placed us firmly in the present.



**Stephen Lewis**, a humanitarian who has worked to improve the human condition both at home and abroad, held our audience captive with his description of beleaguered third world countries throughout Africa. “The struggle is infinite,” he stressed, in describing the conditions under which women and children suffer. “The strength in leadership lies in reorganizing the balance of priorities.” While Lewis expressed frustration in the situation, noting “It’s the first decade of the 21st century for God’s sake – why is this happening?” He did offer advice to municipalities looking for ways to make a difference. “If ever it is possible for a community to twin with a brother or sister municipality in one of these countries, you could have a profound impact on the lives of these people.” We were all moved and motivated by his words.

A variety of breakout sessions on timely topics both policy and profes-

sional development in nature took place in the afternoon. These sessions covered everything from building codes, treaty relations, fairness, health care, and even happiness.

The future of the AMM – at least for the next year – was set the minute nominations closed for the position of AMM President. Over the next year the AMM will be led by **Doug Dobrowolski**, Councillor for the RM of Macdonald. Dobrowolski was acclaimed by the delegate body and was clearly moved in his address to delegates, calling his acclamation “a remarkable achievement for me.”

The first resolution session of Convention followed, with equally remarkable results. Resolution #75, expected by many to be carried by the delegate body, was instead tabled. A number of other resolutions on the list were carried but the discussion on #75 did not abate, with a great many elected officials and CAO’s continuing their “debate” on this controversial resolution into the evening hours.

#### WEDNESDAY – THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED

Day three of Convention kicked off with our third and final keynote speaker – **Preston Manning**. His description of the differences between Canadians and Americans was tinged with humour, but based in firm reality at the same time. Manning’s joke “Why did the Canadian cross the road? To get to the middle,” really captured the message of his entire address. We’ll reconsider our

#### COMMENTS ON RESOLUTION #75 – BOTH FOR...

*“I’ve not heard an alternative idea.”*

Councillor Janet Shindle, City of Portage la Prairie

*“If we’re not willing to pass this resolution then we’d better get out of the infrastructure business because we’re not credible.”*

Councillor Harold Smith, City of Thompson

*“Our municipality would be described as a “have not” municipality. What I like about this is that our municipality would get an equal amount.”*

Reeve Wayne Drummond, RM of Cameron

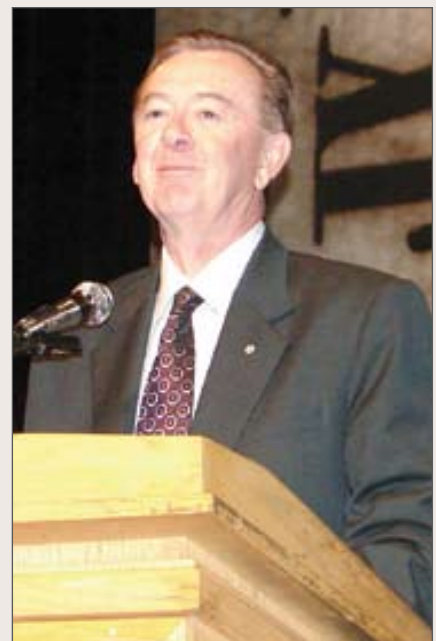
#### ...AND AGAINST:

*“We’re looking at an economic stimulus. That’s not on our agenda, increasing taxes.”*

Steve Ashton, Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs

*“To add a new tax on the backs of taxpayers now in these economic times would be just ludicrous.”*

Councillor Eldon Montgomery, Town of Russell



## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS



habit of saying “no problem” or describing our present state as “not too bad” whenever we think of Manning’s words.

**The Honourable Jon Gerrard**, leader of the Manitoba Liberal Party, took the stage next and delivered his usual thoughtful and fiery address to delegates. **Hugh McFadyen**, Leader of the Official Opposition, followed and pledged his support for municipalities’ fight for alternate revenue.

Resolutions session number two was next and opened with a bang – the introduction of Resolution #75. Mayor **Steve Strang** of the RM of St. Clements, representing the capital region municipalities, brought forth the motion to re-open

debate. A lengthy discussion ensued and the end result was a majority vote to carry the resolution, albeit in an amended format. The amended version read:

***Therefore Be It Resolved That the AMM lobby the Province of Manitoba to allocate the equivalent of a one per cent provincial sales tax to municipalities for municipal infrastructure.***

***Be It Further Resolved That the distribution of the revenue be on a per capita basis in order to be fair and equitable to all municipalities.***

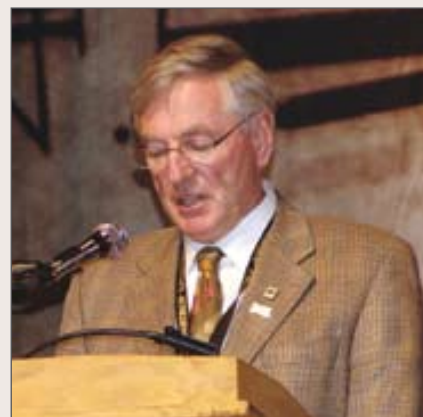
***Resolution #28-2008, a similar resolution, was withdrawn from the sponsoring municipality after the carrying of resolution #75. A third resolution session took place between AMM Vice-Presidential speeches and elections.***

Elections for AMM Vice-Presidents proved to be a much more exciting affair than the presidential election. With no incumbent, four contenders ran for the position of Rural Vice-President and three ballots later, Reeve **Roger Wilson** of the RM of Birtle emerged as the winner. It was a hard-fought victory that saw Reeve **William Danylchuk** of the RM of Tache and Councillor **Alan Ransom** of the RM of Morton be

dropped from the ballot before the final contest between Councillor **Ralph Groening** of the RM of Morris and Wilson.

The Urban Vice-President position was a more understated affair with incumbent Mayor **Shirley Kalyniuk**, Town of Rossburn being acclaimed by the delegate body to serve for a third one-year term. Congratulations to our new executive!

We then heard from the President of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, **Jean Perrault**, and then concluded our resolutions sessions with the fourth, and final, session. All told, eight resolutions were defeated, four were withdrawn, and 63 were carried during the 10th Annual Convention.



#### AMM MINISTERIAL FORUM - ISSUES RAISED

- Resolution 75
- Concern with PUB decisions related to Pembina Valley Water Coop
- Septic fields no longer allowed on small lots
- Community use of schools
- infrastructure problems
- Too many drainage license requirements
- When will the Communities Component of the BCF be implemented
- Healthy Child Coalition
- Funding for the Keystone Centre
- Concern with Province’s approach to agriculture
- The demise of the hog and cattle industries, and the hog moratorium
- Request to extend ALUS pilot project for riparian areas and wetlands
- Issues with PTH 3A and bridges being limited to heavy
- Thank you for funding 50% of Plan Winnipeg (\$3.2 million)
- Thank you to Minister Bjornson for Kenton School/daycare support
- Gravel leases
- Delays in receiving licenses for culvert replacements
- Veterinary Services Review
- Major problem with ERs closing and access to hospitals
- 1% issue – Provincial “think tank” suggestion
- Increase in immigration and an increasing demand for transitional housing
- Road restrictions causing a burden to municipal infrastructure
- Insufficient school capacity available to meet community growth demands
- Drainage enforcement
- Demand for emergency health care

#### CHALLENGE TO COMMUNITIES

Those AMM Delegates who heard keynote speaker Stephen Lewis’s words at the Convention were moved and motivated by his captivating message. The RM of Ste. Anne has since passed a resolution issuing a challenge to other municipalities to make a donation to the Stephen Lewis Foundation to assist in the great needs in Africa. The resolution reads as follows:

***BE IT RESOLVED that the AMM Board of Directors be requested to initiate a challenge to all municipalities in response to the Stephen Lewis address for the welfare of Sub-Sahara, Africa; FURTHERMORE BE IT RESOLVED that the RM of Ste. Anne challenge other jurisdictions to join at a minimum pledge of 50 cents per capita.***

If your municipality would like to accept this challenge, you can donate by visiting the Stephen Lewis Foundation website at: [www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/you\\_donate.htm](http://www.stephenlewisfoundation.org/you_donate.htm) Please notify the AMM office at 204-856-2366 or by emailing [amm@amm.mb.ca](mailto:amm@amm.mb.ca) if you accept this challenge! We will keep track and update our members with the results.

# CELEBRATING 10 YEARS

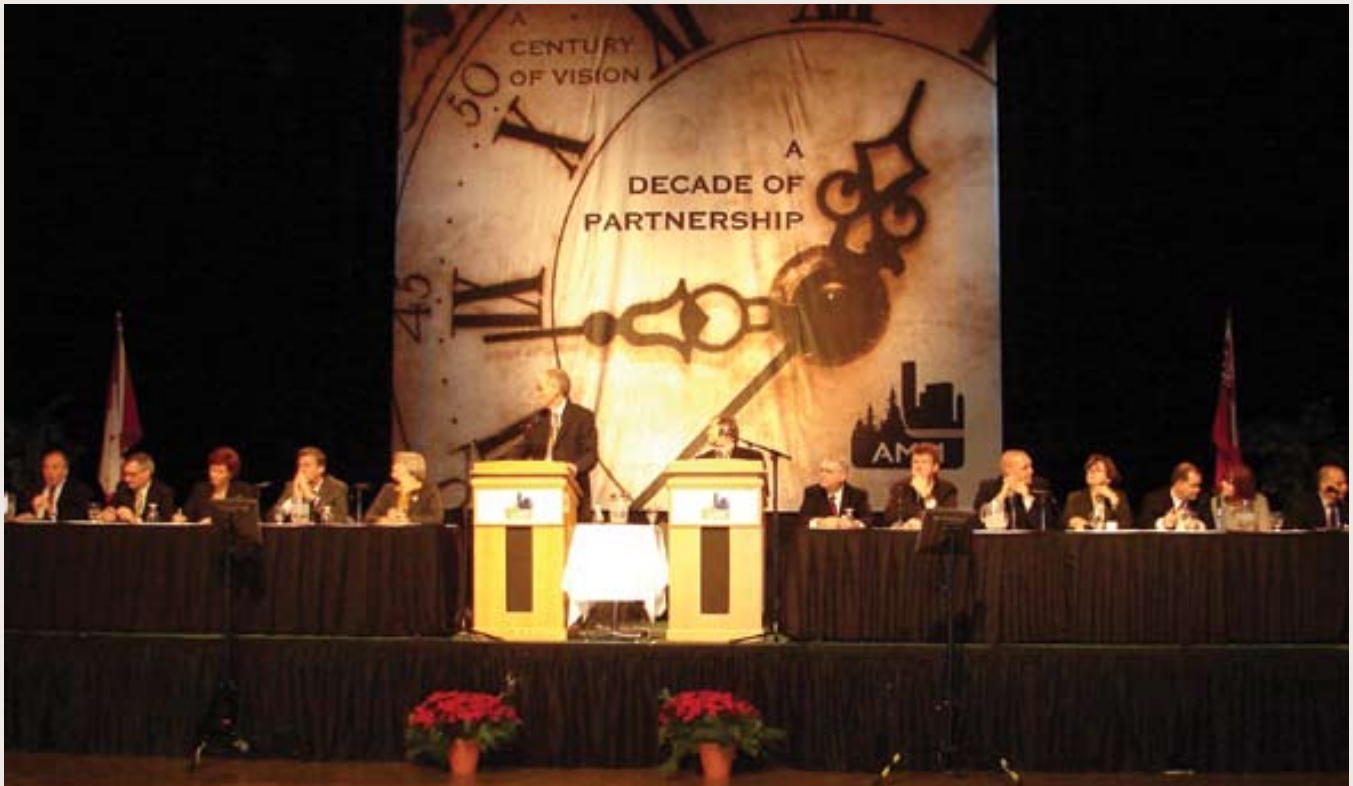


After such an eventful day, delegates were treated to a five-star meal, an address from our Premier, **Gary Doer**, and lavish entertainment in the form of the incomparable **Andre-Philippe Gagnon**. We also presented two honorary life memberships in the AMM to **Stuart Briese** and **Jae Eadie**, and celebrated the four year run of our President, Ron Bell, in a moving farewell ceremony. What a night!

#### THURSDAY – UNTIL NEXT YEAR

Our one and only plenary session of Convention occurred on Thursday morning, when **Scott MacKay**, President of Probe Research, walked us through the latest on infrastructure, the economy, and the Manitoba public opinion landscape.

The annual Ministerial Forum (a.k.a. the “Bearpit” session) enjoyed the



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participation of a record number of Ministers accompanying Premier Gary Doer this year. Those in attendance were Ministers Steve Ashton, Rosann Wowchuk, Peter Bjornson, David Chomiak, Ron Lemieux, Gord Mackintosh, Christine Melnick, Jim Rondeau, Stan Struthers, Andrew Swan, Kerri Irvin-Ross, Theresa Oswald, Eric Robinson and Greg Selinger. An extensive list of topics was

raised and even a few thank you's were offered to those Ministers taking part. As well, a delegate from Treherne offered condolences on behalf of the delegate body on the passing of the Honourable Oscar Lathlin.

Following the Ministerial Forum the grand prize draw of a \$2000 Travel Certificate, sponsored by the AMM and HED Insurance, took place. The lucky winner was Councillor Leyah McFadyen of the RM of Roblin.

The final "official" event of the 10th Annual Convention took place with President Ron Bell officially becoming the Past-President by transferring his "presidential pin" to President-Elect Doug Dobrowolski. We now can look forward to seeing Past-President Bell paying the pipers at next year's Convention in Brandon!

THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO ATTENDED  
THE AMM 10TH ANNUAL CONVENTION.  
SEE YOU IN NOVEMBER IN BRANDON!

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## ROUNDTABLE Discussions

The 2008 Convention saw the return of the Monday afternoon roundtables that give the AMM an opportunity to hear from the membership on their key issues. The discussion was lively this year and below is a synopsis of the major discussion items. The AMM Board will be reviewing this information and incorporating it into upcoming lobbying activities.

### SYNOPSIS

There were a couple of themes that came out in the large urban, small urban and rural municipal tables:

### MUNICIPAL REVENUE SOURCES

All three groups discussed the lack of municipal revenue sources. The issue of a 1% municipal sales tax was also discussed with varying degrees of support. There was consensus on the need for additional revenues for municipalities, and the discussion was focused on what would be the best source. The allocation of funding was also highlighted in the three groups, varying from suggestions of the funding remaining in the source community to a per capita split to base funding for all communities.

### MUNICIPAL INFRASTRUCTURE

It was no surprise this was a major issue of discussion in all groups. The challenges include roads, including urban highways, bridges, airports, recreation centres, internet service and drainage among others. The need for a sustainable infrastructure program was echoed throughout the groups. The stagnant recreation centre funding was mentioned, as was the funding for operating groups. The high cost of bridge replacement was mentioned, as was their current decrepit state.

Some of the other issues discussed within the groups included:

### LARGE URBAN

- An Aboriginal employment strategy and the City of Winnipeg's work in this area
- Women in politics and how to make government more inclusive

- Role of AMM in ongoing local issues
- City of Thompson's four proposed taxes awaiting provincial approval – meal tax, accommodation tax, land transfer tax and liquor tax. These taxes would be dedicated to infrastructure, housing and policing<sup>1</sup>
- AMM's communication with its membership

### SMALL URBAN

- Water and wastewater operator training - there is a need to improve the examination process
- Recycling – high costs of recycling are making it cheaper to landfill items. A better provincial strategy is needed. Tire recycling was also discussed
- Health Care – municipalities are taking on greater roles, RHA system needs to be revised
- Policing - costs are unmanageable and rapidly increasing
- School closures – there is a need for a permanent moratorium on school closures
- Museums – greater funding is needed for museums
- Need more opportunities to meet with Ministers at Convention
- Compensation rates for municipal response to emergency calls is too low

### RURAL ROUNDTABLES:

- AMM Resolution Process – some questions about allowing June resolutions to move straight to Convention and why some resolutions are disallowed
- Agriculture issues – the need for crop assistance and CAIS money
- Education Tax – there is a need to remove education farm tax directly from tax bills
- Building Canada Fund – it is challenging for smaller communities to complete application process
- PUB – concerns with excess authority of PUB
- Health Care – concerns with the physician recruitment and retention

process, the size of RHAs, and whether RHAs are still relevant, and need to connect RHAs with the community

- First responders – the costs of training
- Ambulance service – option of training local people to respond in five minutes rather than having to wait for responders from the nearest regional centre
- Access to MLAs and Ministers at convention
- Recycling – too much packaging, transportation costs are high, also electronic waste and tires
- Drainage – more money is needed and licensing takes too long
- Beaver and other wildlife problems
- Conservation Districts – greater funding is required
- Population – the impact of declining populations on municipal revenues and infrastructure expectations
- Immigration - Provincial strategies are lacking and other issues like housing lot size are impeding the process
- Water operators – concerns with losing operators once certified to larger centres
- Education Tax – There is a need to remove education tax from the property tax base
- Seniors Housing – There is a need for more housing options for seniors in communities

Again this year the roundtables were an informative process for the AMM. We will be taking this information forward through our lobbying process and would like to thank all who took the time to actively participate in the process.

FOR THE ROUNDTABLE SESSIONS MUNICIPALITIES WERE SPLIT INTO THREE GROUPS – LARGE URBAN CENTRES (CITIES), SMALL URBAN CENTRES (TOWNS AND VILLAGES) AND RURAL MUNICIPALITIES. BECAUSE OF NUMBERS THE RURAL MUNICIPALITIES WERE SPLIT INTO 6 SMALLER GROUPS.

<sup>1</sup> Since the session, the Province has only accepted Thompson's accommodation by-law