



Ernie Epp, President, MMAA

## The WAY WE WERE

While taking in the MMAA district meetings, one of the topics that came up again and again was the increase in expectations of municipalities. I heard how much this is impacting people, and how they are dealing (or trying to deal) with it.

Since then, I've continued to ponder this. I started in local government administration as an assistant over 20 years ago. At the time, I remember the CAO of the day telling me how "things have changed so much over the years I have been in this profession." It was 1985, and he had been a CAO for over 20 years at that time.


Twenty years later, the same can be said about the profession – things have changed **so** much; especially in the past 5 to 10 years.

Residents rarely contacted the office back in the '80s, and then only when it was a major issue. Now they call, write, e-mail, and personally visit for whatever is on their mind. Many times, it may not even be a municipal issue, but we're expected to deal with it. The office has also become the place to call when you can't find a number in the phone book.

*Have you been hearing from your CAO that staffing levels need to increase?*

Regulatory changes from higher levels of government continue to escalate in all areas of operation. Whether it is the delivery of water, notice requirements for hearings, FIPPA, PSAB, or any of the other numerous regulations, the paper load has become a virtual forest.

Why am I writing to tell you what you may already know? As I get older I find myself doing what people normally do as they age. My mind refers back to the way things were. You know, like when corn flakes were \$2.00. Or you could buy two loaves of bread for a dollar. I sometimes wonder how much of an impact an outdated view can have on our lives.

And this leads me to the point of this article. As a member of council, have you been hearing from your CAO that staffing levels need to increase? Are you thinking back to the way things were and deciding this is not the case? The CAO is the senior administrator of an organization. He or she has the responsibility to ensure the day to day operations are properly carried out. If you're hearing from your CAO that help is needed to keep up, it's likely time to take a fresh look and realize things aren't the way they were. The future of your municipality may depend on it. 

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