



By Lynne Bereza, AMM Communications Coordinator

A PASSION for politics

If you asked anyone if they would like a job involving upwards of 200 days away from home each year, driving endless kilometers from meeting to meeting, on a continual quest for recognition, support and funding for your members, while at the same time continuing to serve your own council and keeping up with various community and family responsibilities, most of us would answer with a resounding “not a chance.”



(L-R) VPs Roger Wilson (Urban) and Shirley Kalyniuk (Rural) and President Doug Dobrowolski

But if you ask President **Doug Dobrowolski**, Urban Vice-President **Shirley Kalyniuk**, or Rural Vice-President **Roger Wilson** why they do all these things as members of the AMM Executive, they will inevitably give you the same answer – all are driven by a passion for municipal politics. And that is not the only thing they have in common – the three were all acclaimed to their positions on the AMM executive during the AMM 11th Annual Convention.

Although the AMM Board of Directors is made up of 18 members from across the province, it is the executive members, along with Executive Director Joe Masi, who typically are the “face” of the AMM. And invariably it is President Dobrowolski

who is on the road the most. In fact, Doug logged 228 days of travel last year – meaning almost a full third of his life was spent working on the AMM’s issues. He is quick to point out, however, “We all realized there was a big time commitment involved when we put our names forward, and there are so many positive aspects to the job. For me, I enjoy seeing Manitoba while getting to know our members better.”

A relative newcomer to the executive with just one year under his belt, Rural Vice-President Roger Wilson cites a fairly steep learning curve for his decision to run for another term. “In reality,” he says, “it’s going to take more than one year to really get up to speed on what is required of this job.” That is only one of the reasons, however. “It’s fun – it’s enjoyable getting to meet all the people that we get to meet and go the places we get to go,” he admits.

Shirley Kalyniuk, now in her fourth term as Urban Vice-President, also uses the “P” word in describing her desire to keep on going. “I am passionate about politics, I love a challenge, I love to meet people, I like seeing all parts of our province, and I enjoy the

camaraderie that goes with this job,” she explains. “And as Roger says, it takes more than one year or even two years – it’s my fourth year and I’m finally getting to know all the names that go with all the faces!”

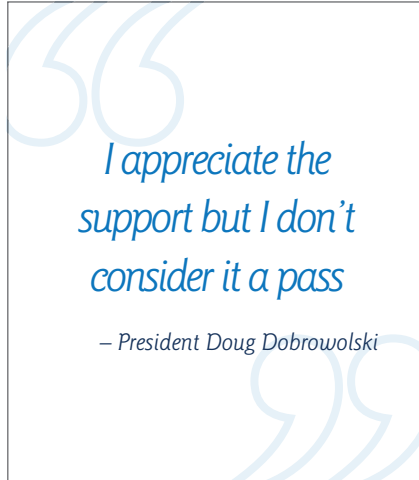
Much of the travelling the executive does is around municipal visits. Since its inception 11 years ago, the AMM has endeavored to visit every municipality at least once during each four year election cycle. With 198 member municipalities, that’s roughly 50 visits per year. Generally, the visits are divided into the seven districts and done over a 3-5 day period. The visits allow the executive to meet with local councils, hear their issues and concerns, and simply get to know them. As well, the face-to-face nature of the visits allows for more open communication than some of the larger events do. “We’re always out there talking to our members at municipal visits, and if they don’t like something, they’re going to tell us,” Doug says. “Our members are really good about that”.

When asked if there are any benefits of working with an established executive after a year, Doug points out the three all served

on the board as directors for a number of years prior to moving up to the executive level. "We have a comfort level that I think helps a lot when you're operating as a team." That comfort level helps when on the road as well. "You become almost like a family," says Shirley. She also points out the need to be able to take a joke. "You have to have a thick skin, and as municipal politicians we definitely have that!"

All three executive members stress the support of family is essential to anyone considering taking on such a time-consuming role. Shirley has the blessing of husband Nick along with her 5 children and 11 grandchildren. Doug's wife Kelly and their three grown daughters encourage him every step of the way. And in Roger's case "In my family I am the kid" he jokes.

The support of council is also paramount. "Without it I wouldn't be here," Doug says bluntly. "I'm working with seven other people who may have to adjust their schedules to accommodate mine and I really appreciate that." It also works both ways, with most councils recognizing the benefit of having one of their own on the AMM executive. "We



are exposed to so much good quality information at this table," explains Roger, "and we do get to take a lot of that back home to our councils."

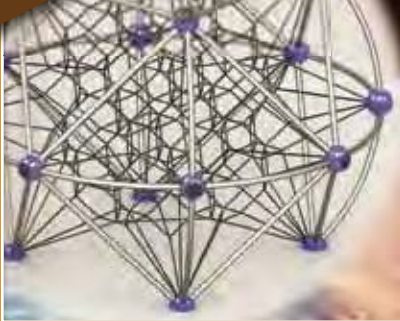
The biggest issue in the coming year is a need for a review of the roles, resources, and responsibilities of not just municipalities, but all orders of government. In a nutshell, municipalities need more funding. "We're looking at a

basket approach to the need for alternate revenue," explains Doug. "There is not one simple answer to this problem. But we're not going to give up - the need is there. We have to keep pushing away at this. Whether it's provincial or federal government, we just can't continue accepting more responsibility without proper financial compensation."

The knowledge and experience the group has gained over the past year is encouraging. For Executive Director Joe Masi, "It is gratifying to see the membership show confidence in their executive", he says, adding "for me, from a continuity perspective, it does make things a little easier, and we get along well. I look forward to working with them for another year."

As for being acclaimed, President Doug stresses "I appreciate the support but I don't consider it a pass", a sentiment echoed by both VPs. "We have to work hard on the issues and always represent this organization at a professional level." Of course, having a passion for the work helps a great deal too, and that is something this team has in abundance. **L**

Putting Children's Safety First



QUALITY CANADIAN PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT



SALES SERVICE & PLAYGROUND EQUIPMENT

Prelude
ENTERPRISES

Winnipeg, MB
997-5008
999-5904