



E-BRIEF

CAMA-ACAM

An Electronic update of news and events from the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators.

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March 12, 2007

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## 2007 CAMA Calgary Conference

The CAMA Conference will be taking place in Calgary, Alberta, May 28-30, 2007. If you have not yet done so, register by March 31, 2007, to be eligible for early bird prize draws.

For information on the Conference, visit our website: [http://www.camacam.ca/conference\\_2007.asp](http://www.camacam.ca/conference_2007.asp)

The host hotel for the 2007 Conference is the Fairmont Palliser in downtown Calgary. This hotel is now full. However, the host committee has made arrangements with the Hyatt Regency Calgary. To make arrangements for reservations, please call 1 (888) 591 1234, and use the meeting name "36th CAMA Conference".

## Board News

The next CAMA Board meeting will be held on Sunday, May 28<sup>th</sup>, 2007 at the Fairmont Palliser Hotel in Calgary. The September Board meeting will be held in St. Andrews, New Brunswick on September 5-8, 2007.



## Member Profile



### **Don Smeltzer, Town Manager Kensington, Prince Edward Island**

Don Smeltzer is no stranger to municipal government in Canada. He has worked in and around local government for more than 30 years - educator, trainer, chief administrative officer, management consultant, city alderman and author. Other than for a two-year hiatus, he has been a member of CAMA continuously since joining the fraternity in 1976, serving on the Board of Directors and in many other capacities.

He is a former President of the Association of Municipal Administrators, Nova Scotia, a life member of the Association of Municipal Administrators of New Brunswick and was a key player in the establishment of the PEI Municipal Administrators Association in the 1980's. He is the only non-Islander chosen to receive the Federation of PEI Municipalities *Bruce H. Yeo Memorial Award* recognizing outstanding contributions to municipal government in Prince Edward Island.

Don began his public service career as a municipal administrator in rural Nova Scotia. Following completion of graduate studies in Public Administration he was recruited in 1975 by Dalhousie University to head up the newly formed Maritime Municipal Training and Development Board (MMTDB). Early in its operation this organization acquired an international reputation as a model of cooperation and partnership - a Canadian success story on the cutting edge of municipal government education, training and professional development. Thousands of municipal elected officials and staff members benefited through MMTDB delivered or sponsored training; consulting services; internships; distant education programs; publications; research; assistance and counsel.

Throughout the 1990's the MMTDB (under Don's leadership), advocated the Internet's importance to municipal government as a vital educational medium and as a vehicle for improving service delivery; advertising economic development opportunities; promoting tourism; professional networking and for opening municipal government up to those it is intended to serve. Numerous municipal web sites in the Maritime Provinces first had their genesis through development by MMTDB staff. Although the agency ceased operation in 2001, Don Smeltzer's name remains synonymous with the story of the MMTDB's success and the many significant, positive changes in municipal government that were secured over its 27 year life span. Many in local government today are, unknowingly, beneficiaries of the work undertaken by this pioneering organization.

For the past three and one half years Don Smeltzer has served as the first Town Manager of Kensington, Prince Edward Island. Active as a management consultant, he was invited in 2003 to take on the work of establishing a modern Council-Manager system of governance for the municipality. Until then, the town operated under a committee structure with the Mayor, individual committees and Council providing overall management control of the Town Office, Public Works Department, Police Services and Recreation employees. Today, responsibility and authority for management in Kensington is vested in the office of Town Manager. The position reports to and operates under a Town Council that establishes broad policy and direction.

With unwavering support of the Mayor, now serving his second term, the Council-Manager system is now fully entrenched in the municipality's day-to-day workings and is also set out as policy in the Town's Official Plan. Additionally, staff resources and policies have been developed to a level that ensures effective operation in times of employee transition. Much in the way of organizational change throughout town departments has taken place. New bylaws have been developed; information quality and quantity has been improved resulting in Council being better able to judge the merit of particular courses of recommended action. An innovation just instituted allows all Council members access to the Town's



accounting system, for information only. Financial data available to senior management on all recorded expenditures, revenues, journal entries, and the like is now available to any Councilor through a computer set up in the Councilors' fully furnished Conference Room. The same financial reports that are generated by the Town's accounting personnel can now be generated by a Council member at any time he or she may choose.

In the area of public works, a significant level of infrastructure funding for sewer and water expansion, sidewalks, and historic property repair has been realized. A modernization of the Town's water distribution system was completed with three new wells and central chlorination being added to the system. Approximately 100 acres of deeded property has been acquired for well field protection as well as for passive recreation and for future residential development. Expansion of town boundaries achieved in 2004 and in 2005 has provided for new housing in the growing community. A further expansion application in 2007 is now before the Island Regulatory and Appeals Commission.

Kensington has also embarked on a number of beautification initiatives as well as arts and cultural development. In 2006 the Kensington Art Cooperative was established as a venue for the display and sale of works by local PEI artists. Operating out of the historic Kensington freight shed at the train station complex, this project was an outstanding success and will be expanded in 2007. A second art gallery has just been opened in the town privately by a local artist. These initiatives represent a few examples of the changing face of a vibrant PEI community that has allowed itself to be open to new ideas and changing ways - all aimed at the pursuit of excellence in public sector service delivery.

## Literacy

In this issue of E-brief, and for the subsequent two issues, we will be featuring an article that appeared in the Winter 2006 edition of Canadian CEO Magazine, Issue 3, on pages 23-26, entitled, *Making the business case: Management and labour find common ground to argue that workplace education would be a key focus in the modern business environment.*

This article was compiled as a round table discussion, with the following individuals taking part:

- Michael Bloom – Vice-President, Organizational Effectiveness and Learning, The Conference Board of Canada;
- Bryan Neath – Special Assistant, Training and Education Department, United Food and Commercial Workers Canada (UFCW);
- The Hon. Perrin Beatty – President and CEO, Canadian Manufacturers & Exporters; and,
- Simon Farbrother, President, Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators.

The first section of the article speaks to **Literacy and the Changing Work Environment**

### ***How is work changing and what relationship does that have with literacy development?***

**Hon. Perrin Beatty:** We're moving to a workforce that has to be more highly skilled, and our surveying tells us that basic survival skills – numeracy, literacy, the ability to work in teams and so on – is of critical importance. Our members certainly identify it as an area where we should be doing much more.

**Michael Bloom:** The trend towards more complex work, and more rapid change in the nature of tasks within work, continues unabated. The demand for skills increases has implications not only for advanced skills, but also for basic skills and literacy. That reality is going to continue for some time in Canada and North America.



Simon Farbrother: And to build on that, there is certainly in the public sector a strong demand to speak to people at all levels of our organization in real time. There is the public demand for immediate information, so it's very important that we support all of our employees to be skilled in that regard.

Bryan Neath: Even though this is not necessarily new, computer training is still progressing quite a bit. And we have this debate all the time in the labour movement – *What is literacy?* When you're asking a question directly about literacy, it can mean a whole pile of things, or mainly just reading and writing.

Bloom: We tend to like the more sophisticated definitions of literacy encompassed within the *International Adult Literacy and Skills Survey* [of Statistics Canada and the Organization of Economic Co-operation and Development], which shows literacy is a combination of skills related to language and numbers, but [used] within the context of the capacity of individuals to use language and numbers effectively in work. In this context, literacy can be measured along a continuum of capacity: it's how literate you are against [various] requirements of work.

Beatty: I agree. The other point that needs to be underscored here is that literacy affects a range of other basic employability skills employers are looking for. Each year, CMW does a survey of manufacturers and exporters across the country about the issues they see in the coming year. This year we surveyed them on, among other things, the whole issue of skills.

When we asked, *What are the least satisfactory skill sets that you are finding among employees?*, 46 per cent said problem solving; 25 per cent, technical skills; 19 per cent, team work; 16 per cent basic employability skills; 16 per cent, verbal communications; 15 per cent, supervisory and management skills; 14 per cent, reading and writing, and so on. Literacy affects almost all of these skills in one way or another. As a consequence, it's of great importance. We're finding that the soft skills are of growing importance to employers.

Bloom: We produced in the '90s an *Employability Skills Profile*, which we updated in 2000 as *Employability Skills 2000 Plus*. Every year, for the past 15 years, that pamphlet is the most-popular and most-downloaded document from the Conference Board. I think that reflects the recognition by families and individuals, and by employers, that literacy is fundamental.

***From communications materials, it appears that unions use quite a broad definition of literacy, emphasizing the empowerment of the employee not only at work, but also in the community and at home. Is there a basic difference between the unions and management on what "literacy" really means?***

Farbrother:

I would suggest that it is probably about capacity building. It is one of a set of tools or skills. If we choose to hire somebody and they don't have the skills, part of our responsibility is to help them develop those skills to be successful as they grow and as our organization continues to grow. If you keep things really narrow, someone can be very skilled in one area, but not be very transferable.

Bloom: I think employers are increasingly taking a broader view of literacy. It may partly come out of the fact that our workplaces are becoming more diverse through immigration and other factors. At one time, I think, people thought literacy was just about being able to read and write in a binary way. More and more, it's about having not only the skills to work in the languages in which business is conducted, but also having the capacity to problem-solve and adapt to change. There is such a connection between that broader skill set of literacy and the actual outcomes of work that I think more employers are aware of its importance.

Neath: I think labour does have a broader view of literacy; it's broader than the work itself. One thing we don't like is the term "worker empowerment". We prefer to use "worker contribution". In the training centre we operate, we find that when you can bring in a family to learn together – especially those in which English is not the first language – the learning process is often much better for the individual. It involves more than just work. It is about family and it is definitely about lifelong learning, which is our model.



***Is the need for English as a Second Language (ESL) training, as a component of literacy, of greater importance today?***

Beatty: It is of critical importance. We've seen it grow dramatically in recent years as employers have increasingly looked to new Canadians and to recruiting from abroad to fill their skills needs.

Neath: We have programs in our training centers, one in Manitoba and one in Alberta, where, with the cooperation of the employer, we put on ESL training. That is definitely an area we are going to be growing more and more in the future.

Bloom: I think English as a Second Language or French, depending on where you are in the country will become more important as the absolute number of immigrants entering annually grows. We're seeing a steady increase – something over 250,000 this year.

It's important to observe that the language skills required to function effectively at work is significantly higher than that required to get along within the community. That's because the vocabulary around work is quite technical, and there is the need to communicate effectively in real time in order to function.

**Next week's issue will answer the question *Are Employers Investing Enough in Literacy Programs?***

## CAMA Awards Program

### 2007 CAMA Awards

The date for submissions is now closed. Thanks to all of the municipalities who sent in nominations. Winners will be announced at the upcoming conference in Calgary.

### 2006 CAMA Awards

Congratulations to the City of Winnipeg, Manitoba on their nomination for the 2006 Willis Award for Innovation, for municipalities with a population over 20,000 for their project entitled *Permits X-Press*.

In November 2003, the City of Winnipeg Planning Property & Development Department formally launched the *Permits X-Press*, a three-phase project aimed at making Winnipeg the best city in Canada when it comes to getting a building permit. From the outset, the Department Director, Harry Finnigan, and the Project team have been committed to consulting with their customers and engaging staff in identifying much-needed improvements to the City's permits process.

The Project, which initially spanned a two-year time period, is built around the principles of having a transparent and accountable process, and on measuring results.

The City has to recognize its responsibilities as a municipal authority ensuring public safety, but, at the same time, it must try to reduce the red tape and speed up the process for homeowner, builders and developers.

The City and Industry professionals worked closely through a formalized "Industry Advisory Group", and announced implementation of several "quick wins" in April of 2004, including:

- Separate customer service areas for homeowners and industry professionals
- Full-time staffing of an information counter
- An appointment system for industry professionals
- Enhanced staffing during peak construction periods
- New Web pages for homeowners and professionals



In December of 2004, contractors were surveyed to determine their response to the changes. In total, 70% noticed an improvement in the past six months. The survey also indicated:

- More than 80% were satisfied or very satisfied with service provided by phone, in office or online
- 100% of those who made appointments had their schedule and needs met
- 75% required 30 minutes or less for an office visit

Phase 2 of the project, which set out medium-term objectives, was completed at the end of 2004, and resulted in:

- A better application process for commercial projects, and better communication with applicants regarding the status of their applications
- New payment options – Visa or Mastercard can be used by registered contractors for permits taken out online
- Improved online services and information

At a press conference in January 2005 to announce what additional improvements have been made, Mayor Sam Katz said putting the customer first is exactly the kind of attitude needed to have a city that is “open for business”.

Improvements to the permits processed continued throughout 2005 and are ongoing. Recent accomplishments include:

- Implementation of codes training for industry, through Red Rive College
- A voluntary pilot program for a new document – the *Building Design Summary* - to improve the quality of applications and processing time for commercial projects involving new construction or additions
- Creation of a new position, the *Development Liaison Administrator*, responsible for facilitating and expediting the approval of major development and permit applications through the review and approval process, acting as the single point of contact and accountability for securing prompt and appropriate permit processing.

A Permits X-Press “Report Card” posted on the City’s website at <http://www.winnipeg.ca/ppd/permitxprs.stm> outlines the improvements that have been implemented to date, and provides accountability throughout the Project.

For more information on this project, please contact Jim Paterson, Acting Director, Planning, Property and Development Department at 204-986-5160.

## Membership Notes

- To have a job posting appear in CAMA’s job broadcast, and on our website, the cost is \$100 for members, and \$200 for non-members. For more information, or to have your job listed, please email [admin@camacam.ca](mailto:admin@camacam.ca)
- On behalf of the CAMA Board of Directors, we would like to welcome the following new members:
  - Alain Muise, Chief Administrative Officer, Municipality of the District of Argyle, Nova Scotia
  - Gerry Verran, Director of Finance, Town of Yarmouth, Nova Scotia
  - Dennis Y. Perlin, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Halton Hills
  - Garry McKay, City Manager, City of MooseJaw (Garry is a returning CAMA member)
  - Peter Smyl, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Whitecourt, Alberta
  - Jim Pine, Chief Administrative Officer, County of Hastings, Belleville, Ontario
  - Martin Houde, Directeur Général, Ville de Sainte-Anne-de-Bellevue, Québec
  - Andy Taylor, Commissioner - Corporate Services, Town of Markham, Ontario



- J. Wayne Jamieson, Chief Administrative Officer, Corporation of the County of Bruce, Ontario
- Garth Johns, Commissioner of Human Resources, Regional Municipality of Durham, Ontario
- Mark G. McDonald, Chief Administrative Officer, County of Elgin, Ontario
- John Baird, Chief Administrative Officer, Township of Greater Madawaska, Ontario
- John Rogers, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Aurora, Ontario
- Bryan Dimen, Assistant Director - Community Services, City of Regina, Saskatchewan
- Shari-Anne Doolaege, Assistant Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Morinville, Alberta
- Louise Bauder, Development & Regional Planning Coordinator, Town of Morinville, Alberta
- Colleen Nahernik, Finance Manager, Town of Morinville, Alberta
- Claude Yalcourt, Superintendent/Director of Operations, Town of Morinville, Alberta
- Ray Reid, Chief Administrative Officer, Town of Redwater, Alberta
- Milad Asdaghi, Director of Community Services, City of Cold Lake, Alberta
- Margaret Taylor, Manager - Community Operations, Community & Government Services, Nunavut
- Roy Main, Chief Administrative Officer, City of Charlottetown, Prince Edward Island
- Bob Lafleur, Chief Administrative Officer, Village of Nakusp, British Columbia

The next CAMA e-Brief will be issued on Monday, March 26<sup>th</sup>.  
 Look for the next Job Broadcast on Monday, March 19<sup>th</sup>.

To have an item included in e-Brief, please contact Alycia Morehouse, at [alycia.morehouse@fredericton.ca](mailto:alycia.morehouse@fredericton.ca).  
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