



## **2000s – BUILDING A MODERN-DAY CAMA – PART 1** **2000 to 2004**

Y2K. A new millennium.

The decade that catapulted us into the 21<sup>st</sup> century was a big one for the Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators. It was one with a renewed sense of purpose and a desire to build a stronger more resilient organization. There were so many changes in fact, that we decided to feature this part of CAMA's history in two parts – 2000 to 2004, and 2005 to 2009.

If you aren't already familiar with this chapter in our story, it was a pivotal part in the association's history. The 2000s saw the transformation of the organization into what it is today; a modern, responsive, and member-driven network, comprised of the best local government leaders in the country.

### **Membership**

CAMA began the decade out-of-debt and an impressive 4.5% increase in membership over 1997. A successful regional membership drive in Ontario resulted in a dozen new members in 2000, with efforts continuing in Western Canada in advance of the 2001 Conference in Banff, Alberta.

Further efforts to bolster membership included recruiting from FCM member communities where the managers were not yet CAMA members, and second-tier managers in existing CAMA member communities. The introduction of *Membership Renewal Notices* also encouraged the maintenance of membership from year to year.

### **Board of Directors**

Five long-time members held the presidency on the Board in the first half of the decade.

2000 Doug Lagore, Yellowknife, NWT  
2001 Ken Meech, Halifax, NS  
2002 Bruce Thom, Ottawa, ON  
2003 David Johnstone, Montreal, QC  
2004 Paul Stapleton, Fredericton, NB

Two of these men – Doug Lagore and Paul Stapleton – went on to become CAMA Honourary Members for Life. David Johnstone served as President of the International County Managers Association (ICMA) in 2017.

“The past year has been both an exciting and a challenging one for our organization, as we continue to re-tool in the new millennium and sharpen our focus on internal and external change. We are now fiscally stable and we continue to promote our organization as one committed to continuous learning and excellence in professional management in the local government sector.

Local governments in Canada continue to be challenged by the need to forge new municipal/provincial governance protocols; the need to improve the organizational structure of municipal administrators to be more responsive and effective in meeting change; the need to re-define the roles and responsibilities of local government to their customers; and the need to manage the growing challenges brought about by aggressive urban growth.”

**KEN MEECH**  
CAMA PRESIDENT, MAY 2001

CAMA ACAM



Building a modern-day CAMA meant engaging in a strategic planning process to better understand the core mission, vision, and values of the Association. The process began in 2001, and in 2003, CAMA adopted the following mission statement – “To preserve and advance excellence in municipal management.”

By 2004, the plan had been implemented and the following board priorities were established:

- advancement of professional development opportunities for members,
- ensuring financial stability of the organization,
- improving communications; and,
- building on partnerships with provincial, national, and international organizations.

### **Communications**

Advancements in technology also meant embracing new methods of communicating to members, partners and the public, and information management.

In 2001, the CAMA Membership Directory was still being printed and circulated in paper copy, but more and more focus was being placed on new virtual sharing tools, including using e-mail to connect to members.

The Board had decided that the website should be more resource versus news-based and instituted a ‘counter’ on the site to measure traffic. ‘Jobscene’ communications switched to e-mail, and in late 2001, a new bilingual website was being developed.

The CAMA Newsletter remained very popular, but visitors were increasing on the website, and a search engine was added to make it more user friendly. A new fully redesigned website was launched in May 2004.

### **Conferences**

In the graphic below, you can see the locations of our conferences for the entire decade, with numbers indicating the year that they took place. In the first half of the decade, conferences were held in Ontario (2), Alberta (2) and Manitoba (1).



In 2000, the Tradeshow Exhibitor Passport was introduced at the London, ON Conference. CAMA continued to use this initiative to encourage visits to various exhibitors until 2019, when we introduced a new app-based prize initiative.

At the 2001 Conference in Banff, AB, the first ever Awards of Excellence for Literacy were presented. There were five millennium projects honoured, in municipalities across the country: St. John's, NL, Bathurst, NB, Moncton, NB, Port Moody, ON, and Edmonton, AB. There was also a very interesting session offered at this conference, from the CAO spouse perspective, with the wife of a member offering some advice to partners of city administrators.

Both 2002 (Hamilton) and 2003 (Winnipeg) were average conference years, with the latter generating an unpredicted deficit. Thankfully, the Edmonton Conference in 2004 was the largest conference in CAMA's history at the time, with the theme of "Leadership Safari". 154 delegates and 26 partners attended and there were 58 sponsors and 22 exhibitors.

## **Highlights**

Here are some more highlights from 2000-2004:

- In 2001, an MOU was signed with Dalhousie University in Halifax, NS, and the University of Alberta in Calgary, AB to deliver a national education program on local government excellence. To this day, these programs still exist and have helped develop hundreds of local government leaders across Canada.
- In May 2002, changes were made to CAMA's Constitution and Bylaws.
- The pin exchange at the FCM Conferences was a big hit, and CAMA developed a lapel pin, which became a hot commodity at tradeshow during these years.
- In 2003, a subcommittee was created to develop the criteria for Honourary Life Membership.
- 2002-2003 – the Board of Directors agreed that CAMA needed to better 'brand' itself.
- The late John Robison, Fredericton, NB, became CAMA's first Honourary Member for Life.
- The Local Government Leadership Program, led by Gord McIntosh, was an ongoing valuable professional development opportunity for members.
- CAMA reviewed its Corporate Sponsorship Policy, which led to more formal agreements with Sponsors and Exhibitors.

And one last note. Interestingly, the September 2002 Board meeting was held in Gander, Newfoundland. Just a year earlier, on September 11, 2001, Gander became a safe haven for thousands of stranded passengers after the plane attacks on the World Trade Center in New York City, the Pentagon, and the downing of United Flight 93.

While not mentioned in the history documents, this was undoubtedly a sign of respect and admiration to the small Newfoundland town who showed such kindness and hospitality inherent of so many Canadian cities. The Canadian Association of Municipal Administrators offers its sincerest gratitude to those who offered support during those difficult days 20 years ago, as well as sympathy to the friends and families of the victims.