SPECIAL SECTION Building Bridges, Sparking Change: AMCTO's 87th Annual Conference

Municipal Management & Leadership

THE AMCTO-MITACS MUNICIPAL INNOVATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM

Developing the Next Generation of Municipal Innovators



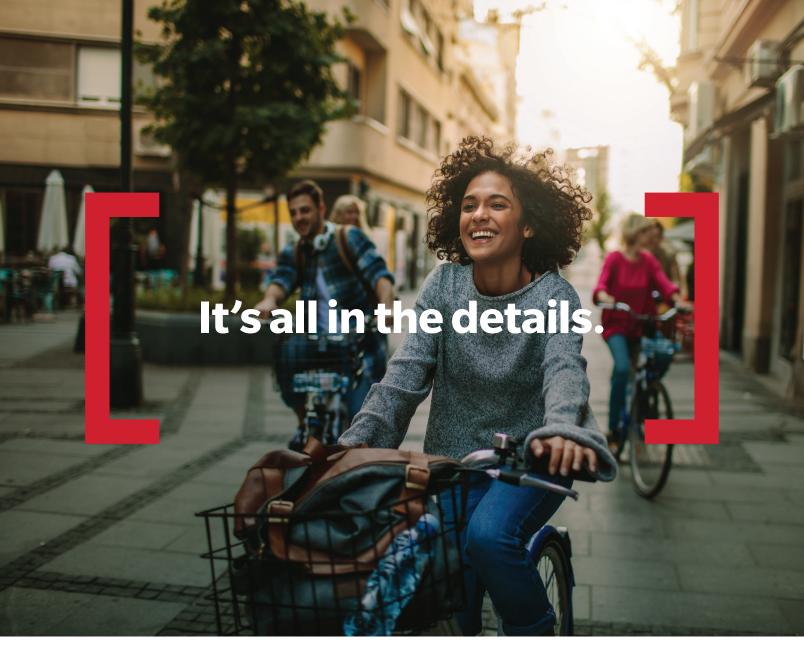
DOING RECONCILIATION RIGHT

Toronto's Action Plan is a Model for Municipalities

THE CHALLENGE OF INCIVILITY
A Call for Change



Q1 2025



Especially when we're talking municipal insurance – it's what we live and breathe.

A policy is a policy, except when it's not. We understand that your municipality requires so much more. With IPE in your corner, we can maximize risk mitigation and enhance the safety and resiliency of your community with our value-added services.

Our team of experts are here to deliver a sustainable and trusted insurance program that is as unique as your municipality.

To learn more visit us at intactpublicentities.ca





Enjoy *Municipal Monitor* with an All New Enhanced Digital Experience!

- Desktop edition in publication format with video content
- Exciting new mobile-responsive edition with scrolling articles
- Audio listening feature to enjoy our content while you multitask
- Easily share your favourite articles with colleagues

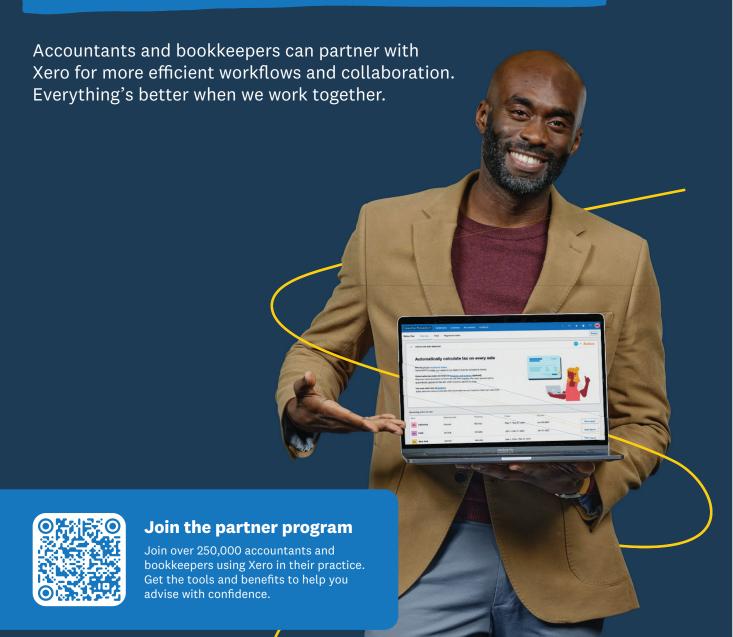




Empowering Professional Growth, Your Way – Read, Watch, Listen, Anywhere.



Accounting is better with Xero



Streamlined compliance and tax workflows

Xero's accounting software can automate your admin and compliance tasks so you have more time for supporting clients, marketing your firm, and growing your business.

MANAGE COMPLIANCE WORKFLOWS

Request, store and manage accounting working papers and workflows; plus receive and respond to queries.





<u>Centralized</u> working and practice management

Xero's practice software and data work seamlessly together to create an integrated accounting practice management solution.

MANAGE CLIENTS, STAFF AND QUERIES

Understand and support your clients. Work faster using Xero HQ in your bookkeeping practice.

Better collaboration

With shared access to Xero for invited users, you can collaborate within your team, with your clients, as well as with the experts at Xero. Xero's online accounting software and pricing plans are designed for small businesses, plus it's free for you to use to run your own practice.

ALL-IN-ONE ACCOUNTING SOFTWARE

Xero is accounting software for your business clients. And it's free to run your own practice on Xero.









Bel-Con are EXPERTS

IN NEW AND REPLACEMENT METAL ROOFS!

Bel-Con has been a **Butler Builder since** 1979 and utilizes Butler's tried and tested COMPLETE roof and re-roof systems.





Celebrating our 50th year of serving Municipal, Industrial, Commercial and Institutional clients

Contact us at

Phone: 613-968-6707

Email: tomg@bel-con.com



Experts in the law of the land.

Meet our municipal, planning and expropriation lawyers.

Go to trlaw.com



Thomson Rogers LLP

Real life counsel.

Municipal Monitor

Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO)



5090 Explorer Drive, Suite 510 Mississauga, ON L4W 4T9 Phone: 905-602-4294

www.amcto.com

Executive Director



President

Vice-President and Publisher Jay Cumming

Vice-President of Sales and Marketing

Managing Editor

Account Executive

Design & Layout

© 2025 The Davis Media Company All rights reserved. The contents of this any means, in whole or in part, without the prior written consent of the publisher.

are those of the respective parties and do not necessarily represent the opinion of the publisher.

of the claims made prior to the release of this or any sponsored content paid promotion.

Winnipeg, MB R3B 1G4
Printed in Canada.
Please recycle where facilities exist.



COVER STORY

The AMCTO-Mitacs **Municipal Innovation Internship Program** Developing the Next Generation of Municipal Innovators

FEATURES

Election Readiness A Game Plan for Success

Doing Reconciliation Right

> Toronto's Action Plan is a Model for Municipalities

The Ongoing Challenge of Incivility A Call for Change

DEPARTMENTS

President's Message A New Year? We've Got This! By Paul Shipway, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.A., President, AMCTO

Executive Director's Message

2025: AMCTO Hits the **Ground Running** By David Arbuckle, MPA, Executive Director, AMCTO

SPECIAL SECTION

Building Bridges, Sparking Change AMCTO's 87th Annual Conference





2024-25 AMCTO **Board of Directors**

Paul Shipway, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.A. President Middlesex County

Danielle Manton, AOMC, Dipl.M.M. Vice-President City of Cambridge

Stephen O'Brien, AOMC Immediate Past President City of Guelph

Joey Anderson, AMP Director at Large City of Ottawa

Annette Gilchrist, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.M. Director at Large

Township of Bonnechere Valley

Kyle Pratt, MPA, CMM III, CHRL, CMO, Dipl.M.A.

Director at Large Town of Tillsonburg

Madison S. Zuppa, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.A.

Director at Large City of Sault Ste. Marie

Amanda Gubbels, Dipl.M.M. Zone 1 Board Director Municipality of Southwest Middlesex

Dylan McMahon, AOMC **Zone 2 Board Director** City of Guelph

Amanda Fusco, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.A.

Zone 3 Board Director City of Kitchener

Todd Coles Zone 4 Board Director City of Vaughan

Kayla Thibeault, CMO, AOMC Zone 5 Board Director Town of Gravenhurst

Tyler Cox, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.A. Zone 6 Board Director City of Ottawa

Kathryn Scott Zone 7 Board Director Town of Blind River

Chantal Guillemette, AOMC Zone 8 Board Director Town of Kapuskasing

Jonathan Hall, AOMC **Zone 9 Board Director** Township of Terrace Bay

A New Year? We've Got This!



Paul Shipway CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.A., President, AMCTO

s we move into 2025, it's a good time to reflect on what we've accomplished in 2024 and focus on what's ahead. This past year highlighted the resilience and dedication of municipal professionals across Ontario. The year ahead brings new opportunities and challenges, and we're ready to face them together with the support of our members and partners.

At I wrote in my first Monitor article, I was blown away by International City/County Management Association (ICMA) 2024 conference. The scope and scale of ICMA is immense and the conference was extremely informative. Our new strategic alliance with ICMA will be incredibly valuable

to AMCTO members by providing access to global best practices, innovative solutions and a chance to learn from others tackling similar issues. In 2025, this partnership will also be an important resource for addressing global issues at the local level. This includes thinking about ways to strengthen our institutions, respond to climate change and evolving technologies and champion diversity, equity and inclusion. By learning from experiences around the world, we can better understand sector challenges and opportunities, and work together to keep making our local communities stronger and more resilient.

Of course, the 2025 AMCTO conference - Building Bridges, Sparking Change – is also a chance





for us to do this by coming together to exchange ideas and find inspiration. Don't forget to mark this flagship professional development opportunity on your calendars: June 8-11, 2025, in Windsor, Ontario. Learn more about this year's event in the forthcoming pages or by visiting the AMCTO website.

At the 2025 Rural Ontario Municipal Association (ROMA) conference in January, we continued advocating for local government priorities such as modernizing the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act (MFIPPA), updating the Municipal Elections Act (MEA) and discussing other ways to strengthen municipal administration. These issues are at the core of enabling municipalities to operate effectively and deliver for their communities. Advocacy like this only works because of the dedication and expertise of our members, and we're committed to continuing to represent your interests.

In 2025, we'll keep focusing on initiatives that support you - from participating in the province's budget consultations, to continuing to expand our research efforts and monitoring the impacts of legislation like strong-mayor powers, to continuing to offer objective and principled common-sense recommendations. It is our mission to ensure municipal politicians and public servants maintain and acquire the resources and tools they need to do their jobs effectively.

2025 isn't just a new year; it's a chance to re-focus on what matters most: supporting you, our members and municipal professionals. Your hard work and expertise make a difference every day and drive meaningful growth and change in our communities. As always, I appreciate everything you do. And don't forget - AMCTO is here to support you every step of the way. Here's to another year of growth and progress!

CIBC

CIBC PRIVATE WEALTH THE GEOFFREY PENNAL **ADVISORY GROUP**

WE'RE PROUD TO HELP **BUILD AND STRENGTHEN** ONTARIO MUNICIPALITIES



- Traditional and non-traditional investment solutions
- In-depth knowledge of Municipal regulations
- Industry leading fixed income and economic research
- Assistance with Investment Policy creation and updates



The Geoffrey Pennal **Advisory Group**

Geoffrey Pennal, FCSI, FEA Senior Wealth Advisor 416 594-8686 geoffrey.pennal@cibc.ca geoffreypennal.com

CIBC Private Wealth consists of services provided by CIBC and certain of its subsidiaries, including CIBC Wood Gundy, a division of CIBC World Markets Inc. The CIBC logo and "CIBC Private Wealth" are trademarks of CIBC, used under license. "Wood Gundy" is a registered trademark of CIBC World Markets Inc. If you are currently a CIBC Wood Gundy client, please contact your Investment Advisor. Geoffrey Pennal is an Investment Advisor with CIBC Wood Gundy in Toronto. The views of Geoffrey Pennal do not necessarily reflect those of CIBC World Markets Inc



AMCTO Staff

David Arbuckle, MPA

Executive Director

Dan Nguyen, CPA, CGA

Manager,

Finance & Administration

Alana Del Greco, AMP, OCT, Dipl.M.A.

Manager,

Policy & Government Relations

Alex Gibson

Manager,

Professional Development

Ya-Yin Ko

Manager, Education

Jacquelyn Folville

Manager,

Communications & Marketing

Chetan Mehta

Specialist, IT and Process Improvement

Nathalie Plourde

Advisor,

Membership & Accreditation

Kathleen Barrett

Co-ordinator.

Membership & Accreditation

Charlotte Caza

Policy Advisor

Alexander Court

Co-ordinator,

Communications & Marketing

Manjit Badh

Co-ordinator, Programs & Services

Rosita Bourke

Co-ordinator, Programs & Services

leanne Moon

Co-ordinator, Programs & Services

Helen Morrison

Administrative Assistant

Celine Cheuna

Administrative Assistant

2025: AMCTO Hits the Ground Running



David Arbuckle, MPA Executive Director, **AMCTO**

year marks my fourth since joining the Association as executive director in early 2021. I saw the position as one that would represent so much opportunity both personally and professionally - and as a service that would contribute to the professional growth of AMCTO members and those in Ontario's broader municipal sector. I continue to see the value in all the work that our staff and the previous boards have accomplished over these last four years and through the growth of the Association. I am so proud of what we have done together, and I believe 2025 is going

to be an epic year for AMCTO - you only have to look at the first quarter to see why.

In January alone, we announced three amazing new initiatives: **AMCTO-Mitacs** Municipal Innovation Internship Program (MIIP), the International City/ County Management Association (ICMA) Strategic Alliance and our new Leadership Hub affinity program. Talk about hitting the ground running!

While each of these offerings is completely different, they have a few things in common. First, they took a long time to pull together. Conversations led to proposals





which led to agreements which led to program development and announcements, each stage requiring revision, refinement and perseverance. Which leads me to the second similarity: partnership. Each of these agreements (three separate agreements for the Leadership Hub alone) required the willing participation of partners who share common values with AMCTO. While the outcome and deliverables of agreements might be different, there is a common understanding of and appreciation for AMCTO and our members. Each of these partnerships add value to members' professional journey. This leads me to the final similarity - you!

Each of our new initiatives is orchestrated with you, the AMCTO member, in mind. The MIIP will provide a resource to tackle an existing challenge or project while creating more awareness of the municipal sector as a career. The strategic alliance with ICMA provides a new gateway of information and knowledge-sharing that can assist with your professional growth. Finally, the Leadership Hub provides three distinct offerings to assist you in your leadership development while providing some relief to your overall training budget.

I haven't even mentioned the launch of our 2025 conference in Windsor this June 8-11, our first-ever Inspiring Municipal Women's Forum in celebration of International Women's Day, new improvements to our accreditation programs, our ongoing advocacy and policy work - including the launch of our 2025 provincial election priorities and related member toolkit, new professional development workshops and webinars. As you can see, 2025 is shaping up to be one of our best vears ever as an Association!

We hope that we meet your expectations as members, and we are always interested in what we can do to support you.

Are your Employees Prepared for Retirement?



MROO Partners with OMERS Employers to Offer Retirement Planning Seminars to Municipalities across Ontario

"Having MROO host this session is easy and efficient for employers wanting to ensure their future retirees are as prepared as possible for this important milestone."

> — Vanessa Pension & Benefits Specialist City of Kitchener





THE AMCTO-MITACS **MUNICIPAL INNOVATION INTERNSHIP PROGRAM**

Developing the Next Generation of Municipal Innovators

By David Arbuckle, MPA, Executive Director, AMCTO

love the municipal government sector. I appreciate this might be a very odd way to start out an article about an internship program, but I think it is important for context, and here is

My first known exposure to local government came in Grade 5 at Applewood Public School in St. Catharines. During our civics class (or whatever they called it back in the mid-1980s), we were visited by then-mayor Joe McCaffery.

Mayor Joseph Lorne "Joe" McCaffery was in his mid- to late 50s at the time and newly elected to his post as mayor of the "fine, fine City of St. Catharines," as Joe would say. On that day, McCaffery was full of so much enthusiasm (primarily directed at his new role and the services his office provided) that even at my young, generally indifferent age, his exuberance grabbed my attention. Providing local services to my friends and family - this all sounded pretty interesting to me!

Now, fast forward several more years of schooling, public and private sector employment, marriage and children, etc., 35 years later, to arriving at AMCTO as the new executive director. In the first couple months of my new post, it became clear that I was surrounded by other people who also loved local government. This gave me a similar feeling to the excitement I felt in that Grade 5 class so long ago.

It also was clear that these people, my new colleagues, Board members and AMCTO members, wanted to really and sincerely make a difference. Not only in their communities and in their personal careers, but in the careers of others and in the municipal sector as a whole. Nowhere was this desire for impact more prominent than when they spoke about the AMCTO Municipal Management Internship Program.

Then: The AMCTO Municipal **Management Internship Program**

Beginning with a pilot year in 2007, AMCTO led the creation of the Municipal Management Internship Program (MMIP).

The MMIP's objectives were:

1. To support Ontario municipalities' talent management strategies.

- The strategies included succession planning by recruiting, training, developing and retaining competent municipal employees who could progress into leadership roles;
- 2. To encourage more young people to pursue careers in local government;
- 3. To provide recent graduates with practical experience and training in an Ontario municipal environment.

The MMIP showed amazing results in the interns' career development, giving them an estimated five-year professional head start on their municipal

AMCTO Internship Program Outcomes By 2015, applicant of communities funded interest increased by the program chose to self-fund an intern the following year and municipality of interns held leadership roles within rural and northern municipalities By 2015, interns covered over of interns were of Ontario's under 30 years of age 444 municipalities Source: AMCTO, Municipal Management Internship Program Evaluation Report, 2025

careers. The MMIP also spurred the careers of many now notable and established municipal leaders: Erin Britnell, Denny Timm, Isabel Leung, and future AMCTO Board members Jon Hall, Kyle Pratt and Stephen O'Brien (who would go on to become our 2023-2024 AMCTO president).

In all, 60 interns and municipalities benefited from the MMIP, and the sector clearly benefited from introducing these professionals to careers in municipal government.

MMIP's Demise

For seven years, the Ontario government, through the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing (MMAH), provided an annual grant of \$300,000 for the program, which paid for approximately 50 per cent of the internship funding, with the other half coming from host municipalities.

Unfortunately, despite the program's obvious benefits and successes, MMAH indicated in 2014 that they would be discontinuing funding for the MMIP. 2014-2015 was the final year of the fully funded program, with a scaled-down version offered the following year, before ending in 2016.

Since then, AMCTO has been advocating for the reinstatement of the funding. Our Association's calls for reinstatement – in policy and advocacy reports and submissions, meetings with ministers, parliamentary assistants and senior government officials – have been met with either indifference or flat-out rejection. The last such rejection came in 2022, during an Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) conference with then-minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing Steve Clark. Despite the well-documented challenges the municipal

sector faced and the evidence supporting the program's success, Clark clearly stated that the government was not interested in reinstating the funding.

While it was certainly a difficult message to hear, it did send a clear message to AMCTO staff and the Board that if we were interested in being in the municipal internship game, we were going to have to find another way to take part or develop our own solution.

Enter Mitacs

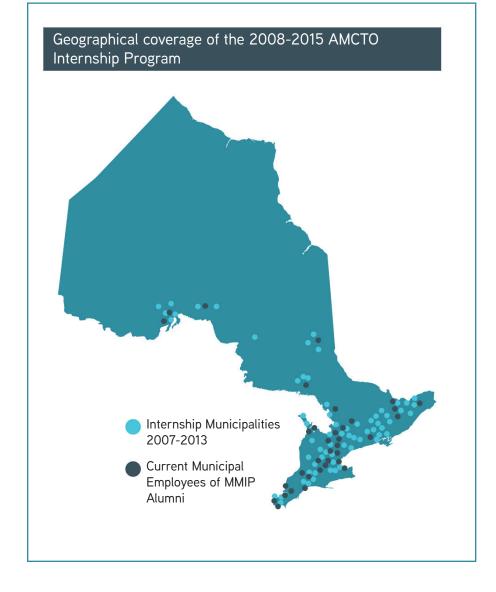
As a national innovation organization, Mitacs connects businesses and researchers with access to talent, financial support and the partnerships needed to turn ideas into impactful innovations. While we were aware of Mitacs and its involvement in the public sector space, we had little knowledge of how its programs worked. After further research and some exploratory conversations in the fall of 2022, we found common objectives between our organizations and started digging deeper.

Discussions with senior Mitacs staff, board members and inter-university advisors provided a lot of great information about the organization and its network but not a lot of tangible next steps and options to advance a program or partnership. However, where there's a will, there's a way, so the exploration continued.

Eventually, the door opened to Jean-Philippe Valois, senior advisor, major accounts, municipalities, with Mitacs Canada. In November 2023, Jean-Philippe and I began a conversation that would set us on a path towards a renewed AMCTO municipal internship program. Early on, we were joined by Sarah Fairlie, senior advisor, social innovation, with Mitacs Canada. Together, over the next year, Mitacs and AMCTO would test our collective boundaries and practise the art of the possible, resulting in the new AMCTO-Mitacs Municipal Innovation Internship Program (MIIP).

Now: The AMCTO-Mitacs Municipal Innovation Internship Program

On January 17, 2025, our organizations announced a Memorandum of Understanding had been signed to



Can a procedure by-law limit a person's right to freedom of expression?

Ask us, we can help.



Our Municipal & Land Use Planning Group provides trusted legal advice to administrators, clerks and treasurers across a broad range of municipal matters.

John Mascarin | Partner 416.865.7721 jmascarin@airdberlis.com



airdberlis.com

form a new internship program for Ontario post-secondary students and municipalities. With the plan to formally launch in March 2025, the AMCTO-Mitacs MIIP provides students interested in local government with immersive hands-on research experience, while supporting workforce development in the municipal sector. The MIIP also provides a cost-effective resource to assist research and innovation projects in advancing the modernization of municipal programs and services.

The MIIP varies from the Association's previous program in one major way: the new MIIP is more project-based. This allows students to gain more direct experience in a municipal setting and allows them to see tangible results in the community. The new program provides more focused learning and the ability for municipalities to advance specific community projects and organizational needs.



It's no exaggeration for me to say that I wouldn't be where I am today without the Municipal Management Internship Program.

- Karen Martin, **Director of Corporate Services, Township of Zorra**

Our Association will provide a large component of the learning part of the internship program. Each intern will be provided with an AMCTO student membership. This will allow them complimentary access to our professional development forums, opportunities to take part in one-on-one mentorship and an opportunity to take advantage of our other many great member benefits, tools and resources. Interns participating in the MIIP will also be provided with a future AMCTO conference scholarship to attend our annual hybrid event as a full registrant - including accommodation. All together, we estimate this package of benefits to be valued at over \$5,000 per intern - a great investment in the learning and development of the next generation of municipal professionals.

How It Works

The MIIP guide provides information related to program eligibility, the application process (for municipal organizations and post-secondary students) and other important details and key dates.

At a high level, here is a quick overview of how the MIIP will work with approximate timelines:

- 1. Municipal Project Expression of Interest: Municipalities submit innovation or research projects to AMCTO that would require internship assistance.
 - Timeline: Expressions of Interest open now until mid-May 2025.
- 2. Student/Academic Expression of **Interest:** AMCTO will post municipal projects for eligible students to apply to.
 - · Timeline: Late May to late July
- 3. **Application to Mitacs:** Following AMCTO review and approval, 20 projects, along with matching intern candidates, will be advanced for review and approval by Mitacs to confirm selection and funding.
 - · Timeline: August through early November 2025.
- **Final** 4. Mitacs Approval and **Selection:** Notification of final approval and selection of participating projects and interns by Mitacs.
 - Timeline: mid-November 2025
- 5. Interns Start: Following a brief onboarding, participating interns will start their placements with their corresponding municipality.
 - Timeline: January 2026

We encourage those interested in participating to review the full program guide and see the latest updates on our website for details.

Here are a few important things to consider when thinking about bringing on an intern:

- The formal MIIP placement will be eight months (January through August 2026) and will be part-time, approximately 10-15 hours per week;
- The expected total collective compensation for program interns is \$30,000, with 50 per cent being funded by the municipality and 50 per cent funded by Mitacs;
- AMCTO and Mitacs will provide funding to the municipality to compensate the intern during their placement; and
- MIIP interns will be under contract with their corresponding academic institution, not the municipality.

AMO's Municipal Workforce Development Priority Areas

- Increase awareness of what local government does and municipal career opportunities.
- Remove barriers and create opportunities for the next generation of municipal employees.
- Support the developement, career growth, and well-being of current municipal employees.
- Promote positive interactions between Council members, employees, and members of the public.
- Promote best practices and scale initiatives up and across the sector.

Implementing a program of this size and scope is no easy feat for a small sector association like AMCTO. That is why we are grateful to AMO for their contribution of \$15,000 to assist with the development, implementation and administration of the MIIP.

AMCTO is proud to serve as a member of AMO's Ontario Workforce Development Project, seeking to find solutions to the challenges municipalities face in attracting and retaining talent. The goals of AMO's work and this new internship program are strongly aligned.

Here's Looking at You, Kids

During my time with AMCTO, I have had the amazing opportunity to work with five presidents - Robert Tremblay, Sandra MacDonald, Elana Arthurs, Stephen O'Brien and Paul Shipway each of whom had different reasons for wanting to serve the Association on the Board and as president. One common denominator between them has been their overwhelming desire to make a difference in the municipal sector. Each of these individuals, as well as several before them, have played a part in making this new Municipal Innovation Internship Program a reality. Their commitment to the municipal sector and their love of public service has given our team the inspiration to find and develop innovative partnerships that would lead to the

new MIIP, among other programs and initiatives.

On behalf of the entire AMCTO Board and staff, it is our hope that this new program will serve the sector well and provide students the opportunity to experience what we all know to be true: Ontario municipalities are amazing places to make a career and a real difference. My Grade 5 and now 50-something-year-old self can't wait to see what this next generation of municipal professional innovators has in store!

For more information about the MIIP, please visit our website.



THREE REASONS TO NOMINATE YOUR PROJECT FOR THE MISA ONTARIO AWARDS

he Municipal Information Systems Association, Ontario (MISA Ontario) is an association of experts and practitioners that provides leadership, guidance and resources in using technology to make municipal services better through:

- · Networks and communities
- · Events and professional development
- · Shared knowledge

Every year, MISA Ontario holds its annual municipal technology awards, which recognize people and organizations for excellence in the use and delivery of technology. A panel of representatives from various municipalities selects award recipients from all the nominations received

Nominations for the MISA Ontario Awards are now open. If your organization has a municipal technology project with a success story, or if you know someone who has made significant contributions to MISA Ontario, we want to know about it

Here are three reasons for you to submit an award nomination:

Recognition: If your project is selected, you
and your municipality will have the opportunity to showcase your project in front of
your municipal peers and be honoured at the
MISA Ontario Awards Dinner.

Recognition Also Includes:

- A dedicated presentation session at the conference:
- · Notification to your council/mayor's office;
- A press release is issued and promoted on our social media; and
- Your project submission will be permanently added to the awards section of our website.
- 2. Unlock Invaluable Networking Opportunities: You can connect with other municipalities that want to learn more about your project, leading to invaluable partnerships and sharing best practices within the MISA community.
- Inspire Future Innovations: Sharing your story will help motivate other municipalities with their projects.



Previous Winners Include:

- Town of Newmarket Loop (Parksense+) Parking Pilot
- Regional Municipality of York Automated System-Wide Transit Facility Inspection with AI
- Town of Milton Digital Records Management Solution
- City of Greater Sudbury Digitizing Field Collection: Integrated Workflows for Service-Based Time Reporting

Here is the List of Awards You Can Apply For:

- Excellence in Municipal Systems This award recognizes an Ontario municipality and one or more individuals within the city who have successfully undertaken a significant initiative or set a new standard that other municipalities may follow.
- Regena Lerke Distinguished Service This award recognizes individual service to MISA. It exemplifies Regena's spirit of working "beyond the call" with humour and humanity, making a difference to the organization and its members.
- John Cushing Award of Merit This award recognizes long and exemplary service to

- MISA Ontario and outstanding and dedicated service to the association over the years.
- es a municipal member of MISA Ontario who is seen as a role model and mentor within the MISA organization. Roy Wiseman is one of the founders of MISA Ontario, which led to the formation of the other chapters and was instrumental in elevating the attention and value of municipalities to different levels of government across Canada. He is a recognized visionary and strategic leader who has worked tirelessly to transform governments into citizen-centric enterprises.
- Special Recognition This award recognizes a member who contributed most significantly to MISA and its members during the past year.

Convinced? Please visit our Awards page at misa.on.ca for the complete criteria for submitting your nominations. **The deadline is April 18, 2025.**

If you have any questions, please get in touch with MISA Ontario community manager Jacqueline O'Hara at jacqueline@misa.on.ca.

About Municipal Information Systems Association, Ontario (MISA Ontario)

About: We are a community of experts and practitioners who provide leadership, guidance and resources for anyone interested in using technology to improve municipal services.

What: We provide technology-focused online resources, directories and events targeted to municipalities of all sizes.

Who: We represent 1,400+ dedicated professionals working towards a more effective government.

Learn More: Email: info@misa.on.ca | Website: misa.on.ca





Building Bridges, Sparking Change

On behalf of the Association of Municipal Managers, Clerks and Treasurers of Ontario (AMCTO), we cordially invite you to register for our 87th annual conference taking place June 8-11, 2025.

Join us in Windsor – the "City of Roses" – for the premier professional development and networking event for local government professionals. Our 2025 conference theme – *Building Bridges, Sparking Change* – celebrates the power of collaboration and innovation, providing a platform to connect with industry experts, exhibitors and thought leaders. An idea born out of the need to establish better municipal-provincial relations and inter-municipal partnerships, this year's conference is all about igniting positive change. Together, we're fostering a network that inspires growth, teamwork and adaptation in our ever-evolving sector.

2025 marks the first time the AMCTO conference is hosted in Windsor in nearly two decades. We're thrilled to be back in Zone 1, a region known for its dynamic community and innovation hubs, like the downtown art scene and groundbreaking NextStar battery plant. Taking place at the stunning Caesars Hotel & Casino with waterfront views of the Detroit skyline, the 2025 conference is the perfect opportunity to explore all that Windsor has to offer!

We're continually evolving our conference based on your feedback, and this year includes all-new activities to make the most out of your learning and networking: two community-centred Sunday Fun-Day activities, a nostalgic Monday evening excursion, elections-planning focused sessions, Zone breakout sessions and more. Reserve early, especially for our popular additional events and activities, as spots fill up fast!

We want to thank our 2025 Conference Planning Committee for their hard work in helping us put together an excellent conference program that includes sessions from local government professionals with knowledgeable, first-hand experience and subject matter expertise across a wide variety of topics. We also want to thank our on-site venue staff and accommodation teams for their support in helping us to deliver what will be a high-quality and memorable overall delegate experience.

For those who are unable to join us in-person in Windsor, we are proud to offer a virtual livestream option once again. This will allow you to take part in the event from the comfort of your own home or office and provide you with an opportunity to re-visit session recordings and materials following the event.

We encourage you to stay tuned on our <u>conference website</u> for the latest event news, announcements and most up-to-date schedule. For further information or questions, please do not hesitate to reach out to our conference planning team at **conference@amcto.com**.

On behalf of the AMCTO Board of Directors and staff, we thank you in advance for your ongoing support of our Association, for your continued commitment to professional development and municipal excellence.

See you at the conference!

Sincerely,



Paul Shipway, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.A. 2024-2025 President General Manager of Strategic Initiatives & Innovation, Middlesex County



David Arbuckle, MPAExecutive Director, AMCTO

Conference Core Values & Inclusivity Policy

Our core values guide every aspect of our conference planning, from selecting the venue to curating our speaker lineup and shaping each session's delivery. These values underpin our commitment to a conference experience that is welcoming, engaging and meaningful for everyone involved. Aligned with our Inclusivity Policy, we work to create an environment where every guest, speaker and delegate feels respected, empowered and able to contribute their best. Our team ensures that each detail supports these goals, and we invite you to learn more about our values and initiatives on our conference website.

Inclusivity Policy

AMCTO is committed to providing a safe and inclusive environment for our delegates, speakers, guests and staff where we treat everyone with respect and dignity. Aggressive, harassing or abusive behaviour of any kind will not be tolerated.

The Association strives to promote environments that are accepting and welcoming by creating safe spaces where participation from all registrants, members and those from underserved groups or marginalized communities is valued and encouraged.

AMCTO is committed to diversity, equity and inclusion and values the voices, lived experiences and perspectives of individuals of all backgrounds. It is important that our Association reflects the diverse communities we serve.

Zero Tolerance

The AMCTO conference is committed to providing a safe and harassment-free experience for all delegates, regardless of gender, gender identity and expression, age, sexual orientation, abilities, physical appearance, race, ethnicity or beliefs. The Association has a zero-tolerance policy when it comes to harassing or abusive behaviour this extends to any and all virtual or digital communications and social media or other engagements connected to the conference, other AMCTO programs, services and events. Specifically, at the conference, AMCTO staff are here to support you and provide assistance as needed when it comes to enforcing this zero tolerance policy. Within our sessions, staff have been instructed to intervene for specific situations where our inclusivity statement and general professionalism have not been upheld. Conference attendees violating these rules may be subject to further action, including possible expulsion from the event.



Keynote Speakers

Opening Keynote – The Hero Mindset: How to Drive Results & Embrace Change Kevin Rempel

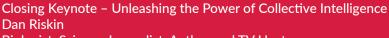
Paralympian & Peak Performance Strategist

Kevin Rempel has surmounted incredible challenges to reach the Olympic podium and now to bring his powerful message of hope and resilience to audiences through his speaking and writing. After a freestyle motocross accident left Kevin paraplegic at the age of 23, he was told by doctors he would likely never walk again.

Kevin willed himself to move one toe, then another, then another until – eventually – he not only walked again, but was able to become one of Canada's best Paralympic athletes, earning a bronze medal at the 2014 Paralympics in Sochi, Russia. Since then, he has travelled the world, inspiring thousands of people, and has been featured around the world in media such as CBC, TSN and BBC Sport.

Through his keynote, The Hero Mindset, Kevin shares his personal story inspiring others to believe that even when you have every reason to give up, you must keep going. By adopting The Hero Mindset and applying the principles inside The Hero Mindset Blueprint, you too can become the hero of your own story. Unlock the mindset that enables you and your organization to drive results and embrace change.





Biologist, Science Journalist, Author and TV Host

A renowned evolutionary biologist, award-winning television presenter and bestselling author, Dan Riskin has been making science accessible, engaging and fun for more than a decade. Whether he's inspiring viewers as the co-host of Discovery Canada's flagship science program, *Daily Planet*; terrifying them as the host of Animal Planet's docu-horror show, *Monsters Inside Me*; or covering the latest news as CTV's science and technology specialist, Riskin's passion and curiosity have made him an unparalleled source of science inspiration for all.

Renowned for his infectious humour and charismatic presence, Riskin has been interviewed about science by Anderson Cooper, Gayle King, Lisa LaFlamme, Don Lemon, Jay Leno, Charlie Rose, Peter Sagal and many others. Craig Ferguson, who has had Riskin as a guest on *The Late Late Show* eight times, once called him "my favourite scientist." Riskin is also the author of two bestselling books, *Mother Nature is Trying to Kill You* and the beloved children's book, *Fiona the Fruit Bat*.

By stoking a childlike passion, Riskin gives audiences so much more than scientific "wow" facts. His keynotes, like his television shows, help individuals see their own curiosity in a new light, pursue their interests with more vigour and tap into a deeper sense of inspiration.



Conference Agenda

Below is a high-level overview of the agenda for this year's event. A detailed event agenda will be available on our **conference website** and within our conference app (launching in May 2025). Please be sure to check our website or schedule within the conference app for the latest updates (agenda subject to change).

*For those who keep track of AMCTO Conference sessions year over year: if you created a profile within our app (SCHED) in the past, this information will be saved for you to log in again. The app allows you to keep track of your conference attendance all in one spot for each event you attend.

Sunday, June 8	
1:00pm - 9:30pm	Conference Registration Open
	Sunday Fun-Day Activities
3:50pm - 6:00pm	Ale-MCTO - Windsor Brewery Tour
	Scooters, Murals & Margaritas - Windsor Local Art Tour
5:50pm - 6:50pm	New Conference Attendees & Scholarship Recipients Networking Session
6:00pm - 6:55pm	AMCTO Board, Zone Executive & Volunteer Appreciation Mixer (Private Event)
6:45pm - 10:00pm	Exhibitor Tradeshow Reception & Opening Night Party
8:00pm - 8:15pm	Exhibitor Battleship Challenge - Winner Announcement
Monday, June 9	
7:00am - 7:30am	Morning Yoga
7:30am - 4:20pm	Exhibit Hall Open
8:00am - 4:00pm	Registration/Help Desk Open
8:00am - 9:00am	Sponsored Breakfast Workshop - Presented by Elections Ontario
9:00am - 9:30am	Break
9:30am - 10:45am	AMCTO 2025 Conference Opening Ceremonies
11:00am - 12:00pm	Opening Keynote Presentation - The Hero Mindset: How to Drive Results & Embrace Change - Kevin Rempel
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch Break & Exhibitor Challenge - Bingo
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Municipal Association Heads Meet & Greet (Private Event)





Ask the experts:

How controls unlock savings

Find out why Senior Energy Solutions Advisor Dana McCormack recommends this energy efficiency upgrade for affordable housing customers.

What are controls?

Controls are for managing, monitoring and optimizing the performance of building systems. This involves a combination of sensors, controllers and actuators to ensure that building performance is optimized through a single user-friendly interface. Some common examples include building automation systems (BAS), ventilation controls and boiler controls, to name a few.

Can you share any recent success stories?

There was a three-storey co-op that I worked with in the Greater Toronto Area. They had a 25-year-old control system that hadn't been functioning for years. When I did an on-site building assessment, all their boilers were switched to manual control.

I walked them through various options that were right for them and their budget. We were able to help them upgrade even though they had an existing system. They also had their make-up air units put on the BAS and were able to schedule them more efficiently.

The superintendent is much happier now, because he knows he doesn't have to react when the outdoor air temperatures drop suddenly.

What are the benefits of controls technology?

Controls improve comfort, lower your operating costs and have the potential of extending the lifetime of your equipment. Controls are also easy to implement, with minimal shutdown during commissioning.

Why participate in the program?

You can receive incentives up to \$200,000 for controls and other projects that reduce natural gas use and costs. Our Energy Solutions Advisors will work with you to identify and recommend energy-saving opportunities. The following building types can benefit:

- Social and municipal housing.
- Housing co-ops and shelters.
- Eligible private market-rate multi-residential buildings.[†]



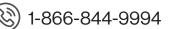
How to get started

Reach out to an Energy Solutions Advisor for upgrade recommendations to qualify your project for incentives.[‡]





Contact an Energy Solutions Advisor today.





energyservices@enbridge.com



enbridgegas.com/affordable

- * Any references to energy savings are based on the assumption the participant is reducing their natural gas consumption through participation in the Affordable Housing Multi-Residential Program.
- † Eligible market-rate multi-residential buildings will need to demonstrate either at least 30 percent of units are rented at less than 80 percent of the median market rent, determined by the Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation, based on the information gathered during rent roll review by Enbridge Gas, or the building has participated in a federal, provincial, or municipal affordable housing funding program in the last five years.
- * HST is not applicable and will not be added to incentive payments. Terms and conditions apply to specific offers. Please contact an Energy Solutions Advisor for details.
- © 2025 Enbridge Gas Inc. All rights reserved. ENB 2520 02/2025

Monday, June 9 (Cor	ntinued)
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Annual Update on Provincial-Municipal Affairs - Sabine Matheson, Stacy Hushion, Hannah Tobias-Murray
	Now Therefore: Drafting Municipal Bylaws that Work for Your Community - Laura Dean & John Pappas
	The Grey Tsunami Challenge: Plugging the Holes in the Finance Department - Colin MacDonald, Trevor Pinn, Christine Leon
	High School Halls to Town Halls: Building the Next Generation of Municipal Workers through Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) Programs - <i>Alex Denonville</i>
2:00pm - 2:15pm	Break
2:15pm - 3:00pm	AMCTO Zone Networking Sessions
3:00pm - 3:20pm	Break
	Exhibitor Challenge - Bingo Winner Announcement
	Navigating Privacy & Access in the Digital Age: Key Insights for Municipal Leaders - Patricia Kosseim
	Managing the Double Digits - Gloria Raybone
3:20pm - 4:20pm	Overview of Municipal Policy Governance: Distinguishing Council & Administrative Policies for Effective Governance - <i>Tara Stephens</i>
	Crowd Control: Combating Mobbing (Group Bullying) - Suhaib Ibrahim & Natasha Savoline
6:00pm - 8:00pm	Dinner with Friends & Colleagues
6:00pm - 10:00pm	Evening Excursion: Party Like it's 1999 Presented by the Hobson Chahal Advisory Group at CIBC Wood Gundy
Tuesday, June 10	
7:00am - 7:30am	Morning Yoga
7:30am - 1:00pm	Exhibit Hall Open
8:00am - 4:00pm	Registration/Help Desk Open
8:00am - 9:00am	Sponsored Breakfast Workshop - Implementing the Digital Governance Standards Institute's Online Voting Standards for Your 2026 Municipal Election - <i>Presented by Sequent</i>
	Sponsored Breakfast Workshop - Planning Powerful Communities: Working Collaboratively to Secure Ontario's Energy Future - <i>Presented by the Independent Electricity System Operator (IESO)</i>
8:15am - 9:15am	Professional Headshots Charity Photo Studio Open
9:00am - 9:10am	Break

Tuesday, June 10 (cor	ntinued)
9:10am - 10:10am	A Balancing Act: Crafting Effective Strategies to Manage Public Conduct - Joanna Bull, Lauren Chee-Hing
	Doctor Recruitment in a Small Municipality in Central Ontario - Allan Hewitt
	Enhanced Internal Customer Service - Jamie Boyle
	Municipal Asset Management: Funding the Infrastructure Gap - Brian Kavanagh
10:10am - 10:20am	Break
10:10am - 11:00am	Professional Headshots Charity Photo Studio Open
10:20am - 10:50am	AMCTO Session - Accreditation
	AMCTO Session - Career Development Packages
10:50am - 11:00am	Break
11:00am - 12:00pm	Municipal Case Law Update 2025 - John Mascarin & Tom Halinski
	The Secrets to Building a Positive & Attractive Culture - Rob Adams, Nina Lecic & Jennifer McPetrie
	The Clerk's Department as a Key Strategic Partner in Municipal Operations - Todd Coles & Isabel Leung
	Implementing a Vacant Homes Tax (VHT): Considerations for Ontario Municipalities - Anne Lindsay, Bruce Peever
12:00pm - 1:00pm	Lunch Break & Exhibitor Challenge - Scavenger Hunt
	Professional Headshots Charity Photo Studio Open
12:00pm - 2:00pm	AMCTO Past Presidents Luncheon & Social (Private Event)
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Sustaining Authentic Teams: Building Strong Support Networks to Combat Workplace Toxicity - Andrea Coyne, Amanda Fusco, Julie Kirkelos, Amanda Knight & Danielle Manton
	Accessibility Governance and Accountability - Tyler Cox & Megan Richards
	Surety Bonds: Setting Up Your Municipality for Success - Daryl Abbs, Gary Scandlan
	Automated Speed Enforcement Administrative Penalty: Our Experience One Year In - Sarah Corbett & Lisa Lehr
2:00pm - 2:10pm	Break

Tuesday, June 10 (continued)	
2:00pm - 3:00pm	Professional Headshots Charity Photo Studio Open
2:10pm - 2:45pm	AMCTO 2026 Municipal Elections Training Program Announcement & Breakout Sessions
2:55pm - 3:10pm	Break
	Exhibitor Challenge - Scavenger Hunt Winner Announcement
3:10pm - 4:10pm	Guess Who's Coming to Council: Delegations, Demagogues & Decorum - Rick O'Connor
	Pushing the Boundaries: Everything You Need to Know About Ward Boundary Reviews - Evan Read
	Keeping Public Spaces Open by Keeping Them Safe - Andrew Kirsch
6:00pm - 6:45pm	AMCTO Board of Directors & Past Presidents Pre-Gala Reception (Private Event)
6:30pm - 7:30pm	Pre-Gala Cocktail Reception
7:00pm - 7:15pm	Pre-Gala Walk-through Session (Private Event)
7:30pm - 12:00am	AMCTO 2025 Awards Gala Dinner

vvednesday, June 11	
8:00am - 10:00am	Registration/Help Desk Open
8:30am - 9:30am	Breakfast & AMCTO Annual General Meeting (AGM)
9:35am - 10:35am	Closing Keynote Presentation - Unleashing the Power of Collective Intelligence - Dan Riskin
10:35am - 10:40am	Social Media Challenge & Exhibitor Multi-Day Challenge Prize Announcements
10:40am - 10:50am	AMCTO 2025 Conference Closing Ceremonies

Party Like It's 1999 Evening Excursion

Presented by the Hobson Chahal Advisory Group at CIBC Wood Gundy

Monday, June 9, 2025 Time: 6:00pm - 10:00pm

Location: Surprise Venue (meet at the bus pick-up location at the hotel; a short 3-5 minute drive)

Event Capacity: 160

AMCTO is taking a journey back in time when frosted tips and butterfly clips were in, cellphones were bricks, emails were almost nonexistent, when our pets were Tamagotchis, MSN messenger was a regular activity and the Spice Girls were topping the charts! Join us to party like it's 1999! Dress to impress in your best '90s gear and take a pic in our mall-inspired photo booth! We promise this excursion will be "da bomb" with everyone "getting jiggy with it!"

What's Included:

- Round-trip transportation from hotel to our surprise venue (a short 3-5 minute drive)
- Appetizers, food stations, dessert, snacks in the evening and four drink tickets that can be used at the bar or for one of our signature cocktails
- Assorted prizes for best-dressed and other categories
- Live DJ

Member Price: \$105.00 + HST Non-Member Price: \$120.00 + HST

Space is limited and spots will be reserved on a first-come, first-served basis.



Awards Gala Dinner

Tuesday, June 10, 2025 Time: 6:30pm - 12:00am Location: Augustus I & II

Our annual Awards Gala Dinner celebrates our members' accomplishments during the year including our academic, Zone, E.A. Danby and Prestige Award recipients. Join us for a formal evening to recognize and honour your peers in the sector!

New this year....

- Extended Pre-Gala Reception from 6:30-7:30pm
- 360 camera will be available before and after dinner
- Reserved tables: Guests who purchase their tickets prior to May 1, 2025 will have the option to reserve their tables. To maintain the table reservation, all guests at the table must have purchased their tickets by May 1, 2025.
 - Please note: If all guests at the table have not purchased tickets by this deadline, the table reservation will be forfeited. To ensure your reserved table is secured, make sure all guests have their tickets by the cutoff date. AMCTO staff will not be making changes to guest lists for reserved tables following May 1.
 - Guests who purchase tickets following this date are welcome to sit wherever they choose. Please note that while there is a limited capacity for the Gala, there will always be enough seats for everyone while guests are encouraged to book early, there is no need to reserve a table and/or to leave the Pre-Reception early to "reserve" seats.



What's Included:

- Access to our Pre-Gala cocktail reception beginning at 6:30pm (each gala ticket includes a complimentary drink)
- Formal, plated dinner with wine served at the tables
 - Guests will have a choice of meals to select from with their Awards Gala Dinner registration (available up until Monday, May 26, 2025)
 - Char-Grilled Beef Striploin
 - Herb Crusted Chicken Breast
 - Pan-Seared Eggplant Parmesan
- Live entertainment

Member Price: \$115.00 + HST Non-Member Price: \$135.00 + HST

Tickets can be purchased with your conference registration or separately*.

*All 2024-2025 award recipients will receive a free Gala ticket and plus one to the event and will be notified in advance of the conference.

Virtual Conference Livestream

Our virtual conference livestream provides an easy way to access all professional development workshops and special sessions in real-time, and provides access to all livestream recordings following the event. Take part in this year's conference from the comfort of your own home or office at a **reduced rate**. This package is ideal for those who may not be able to travel to Windsor to attend the event in-person.

What's Included:

- Livestream access to all conference professional development workshops and special sessions including two world-renowned keynote presentations (available through our AMCTO conference app)
- Registered participants can ask questions in real-time during each session's Q&A period
- Connect with colleagues and exhibitors via the AMCTO conference app and session chat features
- Access all livestream session recordings for several months following the event

Member Price: \$399.00 + HST Non-Member Price: \$420.00 + HST

Virtual Conference Lite

Attending the event in-person? Add on livestream access at a discounted rate.

For \$55.00 + HST, in-person conference delegates can add on a virtual conference livestream package. Re-watch your favourite sessions, see ones you might've missed and continue building connections online!

Multi-Key Registration

We are proud to offer a multi-key discounted small-group registration option to municipalities who want to access the virtual livestream conference for multiple staff to tune in. To purchase this registration option, the lead registrant must be an AMCTO member and will be asked to provide their member ID #.

Municipalities have the option of purchasing keys to provide access for three or five individuals. For those interested in purchasing more, please contact **Manjit Badh** to receive a custom quote.

*Note: This discounted offer is available for a limited time only up until Friday, May 23, 2025. This offer only applies to access the virtual conference livestream and does not apply to groups who wish to attend the event in-person. All other registrations must be completed individually via the AMCTO conference website.

REGISTER NOW FOR THE IN-PERSON CONFERENCE



REGISTER NOW FOR THE VIRTUAL CONFERENCE



Say it with me: empowered people empower people

As the bookkeeping industry transitions into cloud-based bookkeeping and begins adopting AI and automation, our roles start to change - for the better! We are the ones in the books and numbers more frequently and start to see trends that we can advise our clients on. Often, our clients come to us for clarity - sometimes just as a compliance measure - but we can start stepping into our roles as advisors.

Here are some ways that I use Xero to help me advise and collaborate - and ultimately empower - with clients.

By Erika Dowell, CEO of Signal Operations and Xero Ambassador



1 Streamlined Workflow and Automation

In order for bookkeepers to start exploring other revenue streams, we need to get our regular duties automated. By using tools like Xero and Hubdoc together, we can start getting our source documents in a more efficient way and then spend just a few minutes checking over everything and completing the bank reconciliation.

With a one-click reconciliation in Xero, we can take away the pain of duplicating work; when we match on the bank reconciliation, it will reconcile that statement line.

Hubdoc is super friendly and easy for you as well as your client to use. The automatic sorting of the receipts into folders is incredibly helpful and helps find receipts quickly. I even have clients that sort by year or expense type since it's easier for them. You can mass download receipts, sync to back up locations, and sync to Xero Files.

If you want to learn more about streamlined workflow and automation in the Xero ecosystem, be sure to check out their webinar on Tips and Tricks to Maximize your Capabilities with Xero on March 11, 2025.

2 Real-Time Financial Insights

These days, clients are asking more and more questions around cashflow, forecasting, and ongoing business concerns. Xero keeps reporting easy - with a litany of reports available, you can always find one that is good for your clients. Also, keep sales tax easy with the reporting that's available. For NFPs, create special GST/HST or provincial sales tax codes so that your filings are quick and accurate.

Whether it is the business insights report or a simple profit and loss, you'll be able to quickly find the information. You're not only able to see that in the client file, but also from your Xero HQ and see high-level financials.

Recently, Xero acquired Syft Analytics. With custom reporting, forecasting, as well as live dashboards this will be a game changer for us bookkeepers. Over time, I look forward to how Xero will embed Syft into its ecosystem. I'm most excited to work with my clients on the live dashboard with Syft so they can get easy access to their finances. They can save the password protected link and get up to date information which really compliments Xero's already beautiful reporting capabilities.

If you're looking to learn more about simplified reporting, check out Xero Business Edition: The Benefits for your Practice and Clients on March 4, 2025.

3 Enhanced Collaboration with Clients

When it comes to collaborating with clients and their team, having the right tools in place keeps it simple. Xero has an entire ecosystem that helps you with your work. Whether that is source documents, AR or AP, sales taxes, or even growing into advisory, there are tools available. With Xero, you can have unlimited users with a variety of levels of access. Whether they are full advisors or someone inputting AR or AP, you don't have to worry about extra costs of having someone access the books.

I also love that with the Xero reports, clients are able to pull them on their own, drill down, and find information - saving time for everyone on 'what's that' questions and giving more time to advising in a timely manner.

When it comes to having the numbers done, we can start to have larger discussions with our clients about their business, plans, and ultimately how to help them grow. Our clients should feel empowered with the work we complete for them to make better business decisions in a timely manner.

For more on collaboration and advising, check out the webinar on Enhancing your Advisory Services with Xero on March 26, 2025.

4 Integration with a Wide Range of Applications

One of my favorite things about Xero is the ability to integrate different software into the accounting system. Whether that is Hubdoc or Syft or TaxCycle, or maybe something else like Wagepoint, Shopify, Stripe or other systems, keep it simple and easy and don't do manual work where you can help it. With a push of a button or even automatically, inflows and outflows are getting entered accurately for bookkeeping purposes so we can focus on streamlining our processes.

The integration with TaxCycle can also save you a ton of time - specifically with the ability to export the T2, and the T1 - T2125 and T1 - T766 info from Xero directly into TaxCycle with custom GIFI mapping.

Mapping your T2 or T1 GIFI in Taxcycle takes little time and with the direct integration with TaxCycle you can make necessary changes in the bookkeeping and flow the information to TaxCycle with one click, as many times as you need.

For more information on the TaxCycle integration, check out the webinar Supercharge your T1 2125 Filing Process with Xero and TaxCycle on March 18, 2025.

Final Thoughts

Xero is more than just bookkeeping software—it's a tool that empowers bookkeepers to work more efficiently, provide deeper financial insights, and collaborate seamlessly with clients. By leveraging automation, real-time reporting, enhanced collaboration, and powerful integrations, bookkeepers can move beyond compliance and become true advisors. As the industry evolves, embracing technology like Xero allows us to focus on strategic growth, helping both our clients and our own businesses thrive.

If you're ready to take your practice to the next level, be sure to explore Xero's webinars and discover how you can maximize its capabilities.



Learn more with Xero



ELECTION READINESS

A Game Plan for Success

By Donald Benham

ick O'Connor will never forget the night he was forced to watch the Dancing Banana.

"You've been hacked! You've been hacked!" the Dancing Banana taunted him, as it pranced across the screen of the City of Ottawa website.

O'Connor, who was then the City of Ottawa's city clerk and city solicitor, learned about the felonious fruit in a phone call at home from staff at 7 p.m. on a Friday in 2014. While the security breach was quickly plugged, O'Connor, now the facilitator for AMCTO's 2026 Municipal Elections Training Program, says the experience has made him cautious about recommending internet voting because of security concerns.

"The largest question municipal clerks are going to have to put to their councils is: Do you want to have internet voting? Internet voting is easy, it's quick, but I have yet to find any experts in the IT field and in the municipal elections world (who will) tell you that's 100 per cent responsive, you can lock this down, you're not going to be interfered with at all," O'Connor says.

Becky Jamieson, town clerk and commissioner of corporate services for the Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville, agrees that ensuring the security of the voting system must be the top priority for every election official as they plan Election 2026.

"We want to have something that's going to be secure, safe and easy to use," says Jamieson.

While this will be the first election she has run, Jamieson believes internet voting is secure, based on her experience as returning officer for the townships of Scugog and Brock in two previous municipal elections.

Jamieson's report, adopted by council, recommended adoption of a hybrid system - introducing online voting, while maintaining the current system of paper ballots counted by an electronic tabulator. Emma Vokes, deputy clerk and manager of clerk services for the City of Brantford, says voting in person continues to appeal to many voters: "People like to go out to the polls together. You take your 18-year-old to the polls for the first time. It's symbolic." She says many of those voters still don't trust online voting.

Despite the nostalgic appeal, Brantford has seen the popularity of online voting surpass that of paper ballots in just three elections. Online voting increased from 15 per cent of all ballots in 2014 to 33 per cent in 2018 and jumped to 57 per cent in 2022.

"With online voting, as with everything, you have to analyze the risk versus benefit. With the increase of cyber-attacks, there's always a risk, but there's always a risk with any type of voting. It's a mitigated risk," Vokes says.

She recommends clerks work with their colleagues in neighbouring municipalities to set out clear security and service standards for potential internet service vendors.

Planning Ahead

As clerks across Ontario begin preparing for the 2026 municipal elections, O'Connor has been updating webinars offered by AMCTO on how to run elections. He will also make four trips across the province to answer questions from clerks in person.

"One of my favourite sayings is, 'Never renovate your house when it's on fire.' If you're responsible for running the municipal election in 2026, you need to do everything now and starting in September to get ahead of the game and be Boy Scout prepared," O'Connor says.

Based on his more than three decades running elections in Ottawa, O'Connor's favourite tool to recommend is the calendar - not the one everyone's got on their phone, but the old-fashioned printed type you can hang on a wall, so everyone can see the key dates and deadlines.

Anne Kantharajah, clerk of Loyalist Township, says the calendar of key election dates issued by AMCTO helps clerks plan ahead so they can meet their deadlines.

"The calendar, with a day-to-day planner for each month - that is the most helpful thing I have used. Usually, my calendar is not 12 months. It's 16 months from the start of election planning, which could start now, to the end of 2026," Kantharajah says.

She will post "a calendar that outlines all my notice deadlines. The communications team will have a very similar calendar that is in conjunction with all my deadlines, that will run parallel to our election planning."

Vokes says it's important to work with communications staff to get the message

"We're going to start our communications months and months in advance. We have a very big budget for communications. That's an important piece of a democratic election," Vokes says, adding that the communications budget will include spending on social media posts, newspaper ads, billboards and possibly bus wraps and bus station wraps.

However, Victoria Steele, director of legislative services and town clerk for the Town of Grimsby, says communications staff have fewer and fewer local media to connect with.

"It's harder and harder for people to find information about who is running for municipal election," she says.

Municipalities may have to start fulfilling the role formerly played by local media and chambers of commerce by publishing candidates' names, photos and answers to standard questions on the municipal website, Steele says.

Sault Ste. Marie was chosen as one of the four Local Democracy Accelerator municipalities to participate in the Healthy Democracy Project sponsored by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO).

The city's resolution confirming its support calls on staff to conduct their own research by asking current and former candidates to identify "barriers to democracy" they may have encountered.

Staff are also required to contact "diverse communities within Sault Ste Marie to identify if folks in those communities would consider engaging in local politics and to what degree. Should they choose not to, pursue reasons why they would not."

Rachel Tyczinski, city clerk for the City of Sault Ste. Marie, asks: "How can we assist in getting more diversity? It's a little bit tricky from the clerk's perspective, because we are impartial. I did find when we were talking to the folks AMO had brought together, there is that nuance: Candidates or other people in the community can encourage that diversity, but clerks must be neutral."

Tyczinski has also been talking with colleagues about encouraging voting among lower socioeconomic groups. For the 2022 election, Tyczinski considered parking a voting bus in a neighbourhood with a soup kitchen.

"There's a four-lane road they would need to cross to get to the location that serves that geographical area. People in wheelchairs, people with strollers, trying to



Rick O'Connor Facilitator, AMCTO 2026 Municipal **Elections Training Program**



Clerk. Loyalist Township



Emma Vokes Deputy Clerk, Manager of Clerk Services, City of Brantford



Victoria Steele Director, Legislative Services and Town Clerk. Town of Grimsby



City Clerk, City of Sault Ste. Marie



Becky Jamieson Town Clerk and Commissioner of Corporate Services, Town of Whitchurch-Stouffville

get across this major road," says Tyczinski. She couldn't make it work that year, but will consider it for 2026, if the community would welcome it.

Steele, of the Town of Grimsby, says voting by telephone, once the cutting edge of technology, has been falling out of favour, but council defeated a recommendation to end telephone voting for the 2022 election. She anticipates council will continue the practice in 2026.

Voters List

The electors list for 2026 will be provided by Elections Ontario instead of the Municipal Property Assessment Corporation (MPAC) as it was in the past.

Kantharajah, of Loyalist Township, says the switch may bring "unforeseen challenges. That's going to be a big question mark for all of Ontario: 'How accurate is that data going to be?"

She anticipates the Ontario election this year will help clean up the list before the 2026 municipal elections. "We have to work with Elections Ontario to make sure this voters list is as accurate as possible," she says. She hopes Elections Ontario will continue to allow voters to look up and update their information through a website portal.

Strength in Numbers and Support

Any clerk with a question or problem should pick up the phone and contact a clerk in a neighbouring municipality, all the clerks agreed. "There's strength in numbers," says Steele, who values her regular meetings with 12 colleagues in the Niagara region.

Jamieson says she has been able to "get through the elections I have been able to get through because of the support of others. The clerk world's an amazing world. I'm very grateful to be a part of it."



DOCUdavit Solutions has been the premier choice for **Digitization** and **Storage** solutions across Canada since 2003.

WHAT WE OFFER

- **Document Scanning**
- **Document Management**
- **Storage Solutions**
- Secure Data Archiving

CONTACT US

www.docudavit.com 1-888-781-9083 Lupe@docudavit.com

DOING RECONCILIATION RIGHT

Toronto's Action Plan is a Model for Municipalities

By Bryan Hansen

oronto is setting a new standard for municipal reconciliation through its Reconciliation Action Plan (RAP), which the city unanimously adopted in 2022. With 28 actions spanning five key themes, the RAP moves beyond symbolic gestures, embedding Indigenous perspectives into municipal governance and furthering meaningful relationships with Indigenous communities.

The City Clerk's Office Plays a Major Role

A crucial driver of reconciliation efforts within municipal governance is the city clerk's office, which has played an instrumental role in advancing Indigenous inclusion and engagement in Toronto's civic structures. The office has prioritized the integration of Indigenous ceremonies, practices and protocols into official city events, ensuring that Indigenous traditions are not just recognized but merged into municipal governance. It has also worked closely with Indigenous communities to honour significant days, reinforcing the importance of commemoration beyond symbolic gestures.

Indigenous representation has increased in municipal decision-making. The city clerk's office is identifying and addressing barriers in the public appointment process to ensure that more Indigenous voices are included on city boards, committees and tribunals. Beyond this, the office has strengthened collaboration between Indigenous governments, agencies, organizations and City divisions whose work impacts Indigenous peoples, lands and waters. By encouraging direct relationships and co-decision-making, the City is creating a governance structure that ensures Indigenous perspectives are embedded at every level.

Selina Young, director of the Indigenous Affairs Office, and Aretha Phillip, chief of protocol for the City of Toronto, emphasize the importance

of these actions in advancing reconciliation. "Incorporating Indigenous perspectives into civic governance is critical. It's not just about land acknowledgments, it's about ensuring that Indigenous voices shape policies and decisions that impact their communities," they said in a joint statement.

Concrete Steps for Municipalities

During the Indigenous Communities Municipalities Forum hosted by AMCTO in fall 2024, municipal leaders from across Ontario gathered to discuss reconciliation in their communities, sharing challenges, successes and strategies for meaningful engagement

with Indigenous communities. The forum highlighted a growing recognition among municipalities that reconciliation must extend beyond acknowledgments and symbolic gestures. It requires institutional change, dedicated resources and long-term commitment.

Toronto's RAP emerged as a leading example of how municipal governments can instil reconciliation into governance through practical, replicable actions that go beyond rhetoric. City officials shared insights on the RAP's implementation, detailing how Indigenous voices are being woven into municipal decision-making, from increasing Indigenous representation on committees and tribunals to removing colonial imagery from civic spaces. Discussions also highlighted how early engagement with Indigenous leaders, elders and knowledge keepers has helped Toronto shape its reconciliation efforts in culturally meaningful ways.



Selina Young Director, Indigenous Affairs Office, City of Toronto



Aretha Phillip Chief of Protocol, City of Toronto

For many municipalities, particularly smaller communities, the forum provided a roadmap for adapting Toronto's approach. While other cities may not have the same resources as Toronto, the principles of Indigenous inclusion, shared decision-making and longterm relationship-building are key takeaways for communities seeking to strengthen their own reconciliation initiatives.

One of the most impactful steps the city took was its early and sustained engagement with Indigenous elders and knowledge keepers, who provide essential cultural guidance. Their involvement is prioritized from the initial planning stages

of ceremonies and city-led initiatives, ensuring that Indigenous ways of knowing are respected at every stage. The city clerk's office has also institutionalized Indigenous ceremonial practices, including the introduction of Indigenous welcoming ceremonies at key municipal events.

For example, at the first meeting of Toronto city council on November 23, 2022, an Indigenous welcoming ceremony was held where Indigenous chiefs welcomed the newly elected mayor and council. A water blessing followed, led by a knowledge keeper, using a teapot that symbolized the relationship between the City and Indigenous peoples. The elder leading the ceremony explained that the vessel represented "the tarnished words given to the Indigenous community" and encouraged the council to continue shining it, to metaphorically remove the tarnish, so that future commitments would be made in good faith. Today,

the teapot is on display as a reminder of this commitment.

Beyond ceremony, Toronto has taken steps to remove colonial-era imagery from civic spaces. In 2024, the city removed the defunct Etobicoke coat of arms, which contained outdated and offensive depictions of Indigenous peoples. It has also embedded Indigenous representation in civic symbols, such as introducing an Ojibwe-language version of the national anthem at city council meetings in recognition of UNESCO's Decade of Indigenous Languages.

Toronto's commitment to increasing Indigenous representation extends into decision-making bodies as well. The city is actively recruiting Indigenous candidates for public appointments and is in the process of placing Indigenous flags at the new Etobicoke Civic Centre, a tangible representation of ongoing reconciliation efforts.

Young and Phillip stress that while increasing visibility is an important step, reconciliation must move beyond symbolic acts and lead to meaningful, systemic change. "What truly matters is ensuring Indigenous people are actively involved in shaping policies that impact them," they said in their statement.

This means creating pathways for Indigenous leadership, bringing Indigenous perspectives into municipal planning and ensuring reconciliation efforts extend into budgeting, governance and community planning.

Challenges and Lessons Learned

Implementing reconciliation at the municipal level is not without challenges. Shifting entrenched policies and breaking down colonial-era bureaucratic structures requires continuous effort, as well as a willingness to confront uncomfortable truths. Municipal governments often operate within rigid frameworks that were not designed to accommodate Indigenous governance models, making systemic change a slow and sometimes difficult process.

"We need to be willing to try new ways of working, to rethink existing policies and bylaws, and to sit in discomfort when confronting systemic



barriers," say Young and Phillip in their joint statement. "True reconciliation means learning, unlearning and being patient with the process." This requires not only policy adjustments but also a cultural shift in how municipal staff and leaders approach their relationships with Indigenous communities.

Another challenge is recognizing that Indigenous communities are not monolithic. First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities each have distinct governance structures, histories and relationships with municipal governments, meaning that a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective. Municipalities must take the time to develop tailored, localized approaches that reflect the specific priorities and concerns of the Indigenous communities they work with. Failing to do so risks tokenizing reconciliation efforts rather than ensuring genuine collaboration.

Young and Phillip also caution against treating reconciliation as a transactional process, where engagement occurs only when municipalities need input or approval on a project. "Municipalities have to put in the time to develop relationships that are unique and grounded in mutual respect," they say. "Reconciliation cannot be approached as a checklist or a short-term initiative, it has to be woven into the fabric of governance."

True reconciliation is built on long-term partnerships, meaningful dialogue and a commitment to ongoing relationship building. "It requires municipal leaders to listen, adapt and recognize that reconciliation is an evolving journey rather than a destination," Young and Phillip advise. "Municipalities that take this approach will not only strengthen their relationships with Indigenous communities but also create more inclusive and equitable governance structures that benefit everyone."

Toronto's experience offers lessons for Ontario municipalities, and one of the most critical takeaways is that reconciliation is a continuous commitment, not a one-time initiative. Too often, municipalities approach reconciliation as a line item rather than an ongoing responsibility. "Municipalities want to check off a box and move on, but reconciliation isn't a checklist, it's a long-term obligation," say Young and Phillip. The focus must shift from acknowledgment to sustained action, ensuring reconciliation efforts result in tangible, lasting change.

This message was central to discussions at the AMCTO forum, where municipal leaders emphasized the need to prioritize action over symbolism. Young and Philip say that "Municipalities need to shift from acknowledgment to implementation. It's about making meaningful policy changes and dedicating resources to Indigenous initiatives."

A proactive approach is crucial to long-term success. "Engagement cannot happen only when a municipality has a project, issue or idea," Young and Philip say. "To foster genuine reconciliation, municipalities must listen, understand and act in partnership with Indigenous communities, not just when it's convenient, but consistently over time."

The path forward demands courage, collaboration and a willingness to evolve. Most importantly, it requires action. The future of reconciliation in Ontario will be shaped by how municipal leaders choose to listen, learn and work alongside Indigenous communities in the years ahead.



THE ONGOING CHALLENGE **OF INCIVILITY**

A Call for Change

By Annette Gilchrist, CMO, AOMC, Dipl.M.M.

s it 1965 or 2025? Why do I feel like I am in the middle of a civil rights movement? Society's current climate is delicate. Incivility seems to be on the rise with immediate impact. The psychological and emotional effects on government workers and community members can erode trust in institutions and hinder effective governance. Martin Luther King said it best in his *I Have* a Dream speech, quoting from the Declaration of Independence: "... we hold these truths to be self-evident:

that all men are created equal." While society has come a long way since then, sometimes I wonder if this is still only a dream after 60 years.

My outgoing motto over the Christmas holidays was: 2024 was hardcore so let's all look alive for 2025! 2024 really was difficult for myself and many of my colleagues in the municipal sector. In my work as chief administrative officer/clerk/ treasurer, I have occasionally questioned others' values and intentions

as I've been berated and threatened for supporting a staff decision that required a great deal of thought and the balancing of conflicting needs such as community safety, liability and enjoyment. Each time this happens, it takes a toll. The impact of these actions on mental health and the impact of incivility on communities and government workers are rippling through the public sector. In 2025, the need for resilience to work in public service has never been higher.

Leading with Kindness

I have given up time with my family and friends to serve the municipality and the community in my role as a public servant. This has always given me immense pride and satisfaction. Don't get me wrong – 90 per cent of the people I deal with are amazing and work collaboratively with us as staff to accomplish community projects while offering support to each other. To those individuals, I say thank you. Together, we have made a real impact on people's lives. So, is it really too much to expect every interaction to go this way? As King asked the world in the 1960s, shouldn't every person on this Earth be treated as equals with dignity, decency and respect? I know life will never be fair and there will always be conflict in our personal and professional lives, but why is it so hard to incorporate empathy and decency into our daily lives?

I was recently asked to present a positive outlook on dealing with difficult individuals and reminded my staff to wear their "love goggles" when discussing difficult issues with complicated individuals. I try to contribute an attitude of hope and optimism to the world and hope that in turn, I am offered the same. However, even a resilient, positive person like me struggles to find the light sometimes.

In a recent Municipal World article, I read how incivility is toxic to local democracy. If you have a toxic spill in your community, the first thing you have to do is identify it. This is something I think we struggle with sometimes - it's not always easy to distinguish and identify toxic or harmful behaviours. However, at a macro level, this is the stage where we are as a sector, which is why we are hearing more about these incidents of incivility. We are starting to identify the toxic behaviours and we're slowly getting better at it. Sticking with the spill analogy, this is the only way to ensure it does not continue to spread. The next step is to stop it and contain it - or in the case of bad behaviour - absorb it through resiliency and then clean it up and decontaminate it.

As community leaders, we have a responsibility to model respectful behaviour and foster a positive environment. I write this in hopes that we can keep going - keep leading with kindness while identifying the toxicity that can spread in our communities and spill over to affect our mental health and daily lives.

Respect is the Best Medicine

Incivility is like a poison. Some of the antidotes I use to counteract its effects and stop the spread include:

- Regular exercise
- Writing and journaling



Municipal Law Practice Group



Kevin Thompson Municipal & Planning Law 519-837-2100 x 315 kthompson@sylaw.ca



Eric Davis Municipal & Planning Law 519-837-2100 x 304 edavis@svlaw.ca



Eva Lane **Employment Law** 519-837-2100 x 145 elane@svlaw.ca



Jamie Cockburn **Municipal Litigation** 519-837-2100 x 364 jcockburn@svlaw.ca



Jennifer Maas Municipal & Planning Law 519-837-2100 x 130 jmaas@svlaw.ca



Giovanni Giuga Municipal & Planning Law 519-837-2100 x 327 ggiuga@svlaw.ca



Municipal Litigation 519-837-2100 x 280

tjohnson@svlaw.ca

Trenton Johnson Kristopher Kinsinger **Municipal Litigation**

519-837-2100 x 338

kkinsinger@svlaw.ca



Robert Mullin Condominium Development

519-837-2100 x 255 rmullin@svlaw.ca

Fergus/Elora Office 294 East Mill Street **Unit 108**

Elora, ON NOB 1S0

Guelph Office

245 Hanlon Creek Blvd **Unit 102** Guelph, ON N1C 1C1

www.svlaw.ca



- Taking a break
- Speaking up
- Sharing experiences with others
- Positive self-talk
- Having a gratitude attitude
- Setting clear boundaries
- Prioritizing self-care
- Leading with kindness and empathy
- Trying my best to create a culture of respect, transparency and accountability

For more complicated individuals and for dealing with difficult or sensitive issues, I try to find a common ground for understanding, whether that's through providing space for ongoing conversations, education and training, opportunities for increased awareness or other resources. I try to remain calm and patient, avoiding gossip and ensuring I am careful and respectful with the language I use.

We need unicorns and rainbows now more than ever. As silly as that sounds, it's true. Having a positive outlook can go a long way. We need individuals who can positively be themselves and bring their best selves to work. Most people are good eggs (even if we are all a little cracked). This belief gives me hope and a purpose to keep going every day. People are worth it.

66

We need unicorns and rainbows now more than ever.

I live my life with purpose and two of my strongest personal values include contribution and kindness. While I don't have all the answers to solving our sector's incivility issue, I want to keep this conversation going. I want to keep learning and asking questions. I want to lead my community with kindness and contribute to building trust

and understanding. I encourage my fellow AMCTO members and municipal sector colleagues to look at ways we can promote kindness, civility and respect. I encourage you to look at how your organization can support local initiatives against incivility or ways you can advocate for policies that promote respect in public discourse. Creating a culture of respect is necessary for a healthy workplace and a healthy society. Together, we can make changes and take steps to foster and rebuild communities of trust.

Making Dreams a Reality

Human rights were first legislated in the 1960s and we are still fighting to uphold them today. The Canadian Human Rights Commission's website states: "Everyone in the world is entitled to the same fundamental human rights. These rights include the right to live free from torture, the right to live free from slavery, the right to own property, the right to equality and dignity, and the right to live free from all forms of discrimination." This, combined with King's words, leaves us with a powerful call to action to be better towards one another. We have an opportunity to make dreams of peace and equality a reality in our communities.

My motto going into 2025 is borrowed from author Laurie Buchanan: "Whatever you are not changing, you are choosing." Let's choose to change from ignoring bad behaviour that can lead to incivility, and let's choose to lead with kindness to help foster better environments for ourselves and our teams. My wish is that 2025 is a year of hope, love, understanding, peace and joy shared among us. For all of you coping with incidents of incivility, I see you. Please join me in my call for change.



Ontario Municipal Buyers' Guide

Discover the right solution for your municipality!



EXPLORE TODAY

municipalmonitor.ca



A Fresh Approach Reimagining Benefits for a Better Tomorrow

Mosey & Mosey Benefit Plan Consultants

We are here to guide you in finding the perfect benefits package that's not just a win for your team but a reflection of your company's vibe and goals. Let's make your benefits work as hard as your people do!

Start the Conversation Today

inquiries@mosey.on.ca moseyandmosey.com

f in @ X



