

FCM Annual Conference 2019
Building Better Lives

I attended the FCM on behalf of the Strathcona Regional District a few weeks ago. The theme this year was Building Better Lives. There were 2094 delegates registered for the Convention, the largest ever. There were 1400 spouses and 177 trade show exhibits, grand total attendees was 3700.

I had the opportunity to listen to all four Political Leaders you sure could tell an election is coming. A quote from each of them;

Prime Minister Justin Trudeau - "Municipalities are essential for the well being of this country, and I will continue to be your partner in the future you want to build for your citizens"

Conservative Leader Andrew Scheer - "the Municipal level of government is the closest level to Canadians, and Canadians expect all of us to work together and get the job done."

NDP Leader Jagmeet Singh - "You have been constrained for too long by an inadequate system, I sincerely believe that we need a stronger partnership between the Federal Government and Municipalities."

Green Party Leader Elizabeth May - "We will continue to advance your agenda for predictable, long term, stable funding for infrastructure, public transit, sewer and waste water upgrades, housing, all the programs Canadians rely on."

During the Resolution portion of the Conference, seven important policy resolutions were passed, they were;

- Expand the Airports Capital Assistance Program,
- Gender-Based Violence,
- Federal Climate Change Adaptation Funding and Support for Regional Disaster Mitigation and Flood Planning,
- Municipal Engagement in the Canadian Broadband strategy,
- Prioritizing Housing Affordability,
- Rural Economic Development,
- Zero Emission Buses and Municipal Vehicles

Throughout the Conference I attended four workshops;

Asset Management - The topics of discussion included, climate change, Budget timeline 20-30 years, continue to monitor sensitive areas, be prepared for disasters. I found this workshop interesting, in hearing of issues from all across Canada. We really do have so much in common.

Rural Town Hall - Driving tomorrow's growth

MP Bernadette Jordan joined us for this workshop. Some of her key points were, rural communities make up 20% of Canada's population, and 30% of Economic impact. She stressed how important High Speed Internet/Broadband and Cell service throughout all rural areas within Canada. She also discussed the Rural Housing Strategy that you can look up at, sorc.cprf.ca. Infrastructure grants are at 180 million dollars this Budget, and the Gas Tax Fund has doubled.

Forestry solutions for urban and rural communities

Technology in northern and remote communities

The FCM new President is Bill Karsten, he is a Councillor from Halifax, and Elected to the position of Director is Edwin Grieve from Comox Valley Regional District.

I always find the Trade show very interesting showcasing new technologies, products for municipalities to see. I had a good conversation with Canada Post regarding banking facilities within the Post Offices in rural communities. I discussed this with representatives at the FCM meetings last year. The Government and Union continue to work on this very important issue for the small rural communities. I also really enjoy the networking with fellow Councillors, Mayors and Regional District Directors,

Thanks,

Brad Unger