

2022 PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

Fellow MEA Members:

I am honoured to serve as your 2021-2022 MEA President. With membership approaching 1,000 professional engineers from over 110 Ontario municipalities/provincial agencies, the MEA continues to demonstrate itself as a significant and vibrant organization in the sphere of local government services.

Since joining the MEA in 2010 and first sitting on our Board in 2017, I have had the opportunity to work alongside many exceptionally talented and dedicated colleagues. I can tell you that this tradition of excellence extends to your 2021-2022 MEA Board and staff, as they continue to focus on furthering our success as an organization. Joining our Board this year, I am pleased to welcome Penelope Palmer from the City of Toronto and Ben de Haan from the United Counties of Stormont, Dundas & Glengarry – two great additions to our leadership team!

For nearly two years, our members have worked to keep municipalities running while facing a global pandemic. Streets were plowed, bridges repaired, water flowed, and garbage disappeared from our curbsides, all seemingly magical to the outside world. We know better though; this normal part of life proceeded because of the tireless efforts of the civil servant teams of which we are all a part. We adapted to ever-changing health and safety conditions and ensured that our municipalities were functioning properly so that people could proceed with daily work and life, as best they could in the new reality.

The MEA similarly had to adjust our member services. Some of these changes will hopefully be temporary, like being unable to get together in-person at the annual conference. And some added value, like overcoming geographic challenges to reach our entire membership by providing on-line training opportunities.

This upcoming year offers a glimmer of hope to returning some of the social and networking events that play a significant role in our organization. We were once again able to enjoy an in-person 2021 President's Banquet after a hiatus during the previous year and are looking forward to attending the 2022 MEA Conference and AGM in the City of Toronto – what an exciting host for this event.

The Municipal Class Environmental Assessment (MCEA), Ontario Provincial Standards (OPS) and the important work of our various committees remain priorities for the MEA. We continue to liaison with the Ministry of the Environment, Conservation and Parks (MECP) to finalize MCEA amendments that will assist municipalities in the responsible delivery of municipal infrastructure. The timing of this work is critical, as we enter into the provincial election cycle.

To address the outcomes of the planned amendments, our MCEA team is already focused on rolling out quick and effective training programming that will detail how these changes impact you and your municipalities.

Beyond the demanding work that is put into updating and maintaining the OPS, we will continue promote and educate municipalities through the OPS 101 course, successfully launched in 2020. The resources dedicated to the OPS committees, as well as our other specialized MEA committees, is strongly supported by volunteered membership time. The continuous activity of our membership is the most important asset of the MEA and is demonstrated province wide. I strongly encourage anyone in our organization to seek out opportunities to engage as part of a committee, event, or Board.

Lastly, I want to highlight the quality of our staffing team. The work that Dan Cozzi, Executive Director, and Amin Mneina, Member Services Coordinator, put in to keep this organization running smoothly goes largely unseen, but is vital to our success. Please reach out to them, if you have questions about getting involved or need guidance on a particular resource; if they do not have what you are looking for firsthand, they will know who can best address your concern.

Thank you for allowing me to serve this term as your MEA President. I look forward to working with the current Board to engage and support you, our membership, throughout this upcoming year.

Sincerely,



Jason Cole, P.Eng.
President
Municipal Engineers Association
(General Manager, Infrastructure
& Development Services
County of Lambton)

