

# MMSA Monitor



MACKENZIE MUNICIPAL SERVICES AGENCY

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## NEW STAFF MEMBERS ARRIVE AT THE MMSA

Ali Taghavi was hired as the Senior GIS Technologist in October 2010. He made the trek from Ontario with his wife Ellie. Ali is working to expand the Geographic Information System (GIS) services as well as taking the lead role in building the GIS program for our members and clientele.

Ali received his GIS education at Ryerson University. He also has a Bachelor's Degree in Mathematics. Working in the GIS field for over 10 years, he brings expertise in database management and programming along with GIS.

Ali enjoys skiing and is learning to curl. Ali and wife Ellie plan to visit many of the ski hills in our region throughout this winter.

The most recent arrival is Howard Pinnock, Director of Planning. Howard joined our staff on January 7. With his wife Margaret, Howard has relocated to Peace River.

Howard obtained his Bachelor's degree in Urban and Regional Planning from Ryerson University and his Master's from Virginia Tech.

He brings a wealth of experi-

ence in the planning field having worked with national, provincial and local governments in Zambia, Jamaica and British Columbia. Over the last five years, Howard has been working as a planner in the private sector in Kamloops B.C. while learning about the "business" side of planning.

Howard and Margaret are looking forward to volunteering in the community. They also enjoy hiking and will be exploring the countryside in our region.



Howard Pinnock and Ali Taghavi

## A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR



By Ron Longtin

Firstly, I would personally like to welcome the new staff to the Agency. We are fortunate to have Howard and Ali join us as they both bring a great deal of experience and knowledge to the table and will certainly be of a benefit to our municipal members and private clients. This also

affords me the opportunity to thank the existing staff for all their efforts and hard work over the past year. A number of major projects have been completed together with ensuring that our Members receive the attention and service that is required on a daily basis.

Secondly, I would like to say thank you to the Members of the Board for, once again, allowing me to take on the

duties of Chair of the Agency. Over the past few years, the Agency has faced a number of challenges and I feel that we have met those and we are now in a positive position to move forward and tackle the business at hand.

In closing, I offer best wishes to everyone for good health and prosperity in the New Year!

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## TOWN OF PEACE RIVER: PARKS & TRAILS 10 - YEAR ACTION PLAN

By Natalie Shing



Whether you enjoy the outdoors or a simple walk around town, the Parks and Trails 10-Year Action Plan is for you. Parks and playgrounds contribute to the quality of life for both residents and visitors. Green spaces provide many benefits including recreation and socializing. Proximity to parks benefits landowners as the neighbourhood becomes more attractive and could contribute to increased property values. The development of the Parks and Trails 10-Year Action Plan for the Town will, consequently, be valuable to residents and sur-

rounding municipalities.

The objective of the study is to provide the Town with a workable document that will guide the upgrading and development of new and existing parks and trail systems within the Town. The MMSA and Town of Peace River staff are currently in the preliminary draft stages of the project with a target completion date of mid - 2011. To date, background reports have been reviewed, parks and trail inventories have been identified and parks and trails standards has been formulated. The next step is to prepare for the public consultation process.

Public consultation will play an important role in developing the Action Plan. The consultation approach includes an interactive workshop with the public. The public will be able to share their concerns and comments and will be included in the actual planning of trails and parks within the Town. Public input is important as residents will be the future users of the parks and trails.

MMSA and Town staff encourage all residents and non-residents alike to attend this Workshop (date to be determined). Share your creativity and use your imagination!

## TOWN OF FAIRVIEW: CUMMINGS LAKE RECREATION AREA LAYOUT MAP

By Audra Lindsey

One of the projects completed recently was the Campground and Facilities

Map for Cummings Lake Recreation Area for the Town of Fairview. The purpose of the project was to provide the Town with an up-to-date plan of Cummings Lake Recreation Area with all of the current campground and recreational facilities shown on it. The map is expected to be used for planning and development of the recreation area including the possible creation of new camp stalls and trails. As well, the map will facilitate more efficient maintenance of the area.

The base map showing the location of the lake and generalized vegetation types was created using air photographs and satellite imagery. Then,

during two days of site visits, the geographic extent of every 'man-made' facility (e.g. buildings, roads, trails, signs, utility/power poles, baseball bleacher pads) was accurately located using a hand-held GPS unit. All of this GPS data was transferred into the GIS (Geographic Information System) software where we created and symbolized the points, lines and polygons that are seen on the final map. Several drafts later a 36" X 46" map was created. Along with the map, MMSA also provided the Town with a photo album of the signs and trail markers that are posted in Cummings Lake Recreation Area and the locations of the photographs are labeled on the finished map.



## ELECTED OFFICIALS SEMINAR

On December 3, the MMSA hosted the Elected Officials Seminar featuring Land Use Planning and Regional Economic Development. 54 Councillors, CAO's and Municipal Staff representing municipalities from Rainbow Lake to Beaverlodge attended.

The morning sessions focused on how land use planning works in municipalities. Veronica Bliska, Reeve of the M.D. of Peace No. 135 presented Planning and the Role of the Elected Official. The MMSA Planning staff provided an introduction to Land Use Planning featuring Plan-

ning Authorities, Subdivision of Land, Municipal and Environmental Reserves and the Planner's Role and Public Input.

John Simpson, Director of Planning with the County of Grande Prairie No. 1 delivered insight into Statutory Plans and their importance.

The Land Use Framework, what it is and how it will proceed was described by Elise Willison, MMSA Planner.

The morning was completed with the MMSA GIS staff showing how Geographic Information Systems work with Land Use Planning.

In the afternoon, Bob Hall from the Peace Region Economic Development Alliance, along with Holly Sorgen and Randy Hodgkinson from Community Futures provided an Introduction to Regional Economic Development. Key presentation points focused on why municipalities should engage in economic development and the role of Municipal Councillors in the process.

Councillors in attendance found value in the material presented and commented the information they received was like taking "Planning 101".



Presenters: John Simpson (County of Grande Prairie), Veronica Bliska (MD of Peace), Bob Hall (PREDA), Kemi Apanisile and Dolu Gonzalez (MMSA).

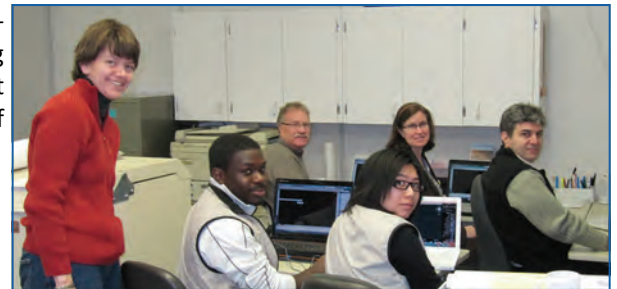
## IN HOUSE AUTOCAD TRAINING

By Ali Taghavi

AutoCAD is one of the leading drafting software packages of the last three decades. It has commonly been used by Municipal Planners to present their ideas and concept designs to the public. The recent "AutoCAD School" at

MMSA was designed to improve Planners' computerized drafting skills and to introduce new tools within AutoCAD 2011. In this course Staff learned about the most commonly used functions of the software in order to quickly and efficiently design and

draft subdivisions using the latest version of AutoCAD.



Back Row: Ron Rauckman, Elise Willison, Ali Taghavi  
Front Row: Audra Lindsey, Kemi Apanisile, Natalie Shing

## 2010 ALBERTA PROFESSIONAL PLANNERS INSTITUTE CONFERENCE - "THE SPOKEN HERD"

By Elise Willison & Kemi Apanisile

The 2010 Planning conference was held in beautiful Lake Louise from October 17-20. The format of the conference was very different from previous conferences in that there were limited formal presentations and the focus of the entire conference was on having conversations between fellow colleagues about issues important to us

at this time. The title "Spoken Herd" related to providing a forum for dialogue between planners.

There were several questions formulated by the "Design Team" who lead the delegates throughout the conference. The "Design Team" were the organizers of the conference. Instead of having speakers, delegates were invited to lead and facilitate

"burning" questions.

The topics included, "How do we more actively engage the public in the planning process?" and "How do we plan for conflicting interests?" Overall the conference format was interesting, engaging and worthwhile and provided planners opportunities to connect with others in a less conventional and more informal way.

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**Contact Us:**

The Mackenzie Municipal Services Agency provides land use planning and subdivision services for a large area in northwest Alberta. In a region stretching from Northern Sunrise County in the south and east to the Town of Rainbow Lake in the north, we provide municipal planning services to 12 member municipalities, pursuant to Section 625 of the Municipal Government Act. We also provide a full range of services on a contract fee-for-service basis.

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MUNICIPALITY	REPRESENTATIVE	MUNICIPALITY	REPRESENTATIVE
Village of Berwyn	Ron Longtin	M. D. of Fairview #136	Terri Wyness
Clear Hills County	Bonnie Bigam	M. D. of Peace #135	Veronica Bliska
Town of Fairview	Larry Chorney	Village of Nampa	Ed Skrlík
Town of Grimshaw	Brian Allen	Northern Sunrise County	Carolyn Kolebaba
Village of Hines Creek	Jim MacKenzie	Town of Peace River	North Darling
Town of Manning	Sunni Walker	Town of Rainbow Lake	Boyd Langford

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE & BOARD CHANGES**



Executive Committee: Brian Allen, Veronica Bliska, Sunni Walker, Carolyn Kolebaba and Ron Longtin

On December 2, the MMSA Board of Directors held their annual Organizational meeting.

**WELCOME** to New Board Members:

- Jim MacKenzie, Village of Hines Creek
- Ed Skrlík, Village of Nampa
- North Darling, Town of Peace River

Elected to the **EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE** for 2011 are:

- Ron Longtin, Chair (Village of Berwyn)
- Veronica Bliska, Vice-Chair (MD of Peace No. 135)
- Carolyn Kolebaba (Northern Sunrise County)
- Brian Allen (Town of Grimshaw)
- Sunni Walker (Town of Manning)

The **ROBERT E. WALTER MEMORIAL**

**SCHOLARSHIP** Review Panel members are:

- Terri Wyness (MD of Fairview)
- Bonnie Bigam (Clear Hills County)
- Jim MacKenzie (Hines Creek)

**GOOD-BYE** and **THANK YOU** to our outgoing Board Members. Your contributions and time are greatly appreciated.

- Bill Lister, Village of Nampa
- Geoff Milligan, Town of Peace River
- Camille Bjornson, Village of Hines Creek