



**HIGHLIGHTS OF BOARD OF DIRECTORS WORKSHOP AND MEETING
June 21 and 22, 2018, Holiday Inn, Barrie**

For AORS Update at Local Association Meetings

1. **Directors Workshop** – In response to rising costs and stagnant revenues, a workshop was held in the evening of Thursday June 21, to discuss strategies to ensure the financial sustainability of the Association. Some of the discussion and recommendations included:
 - In regard to Professional Development, AORS' philosophy is to use professional trainers and deliver training close to home, which results in higher costs compared to using volunteers and only offering courses in more populated regions. At the same time, AORS views its education program as a member service, not a source of profits. The Board is comfortable with the education program not being a money-maker; and within reason, being moderately subsidized by other more profitable business lines to ensure courses are affordable and accessible to our members.
 - The rates AORS charges suppliers to advertise in Spotlight or exhibit at the Trade Show are inexpensive compared to what the market charges for similar services. There is likely room for some modest increases in these fees, over time, provided we continue to demonstrate value.
 - While there has been reluctance in the past to solicit sponsorships from supplier members or other businesses to help offset the cost of certain events or activities, it was recognized that most non-profit associations rely heavily on sponsorships, and we may be overlooking a key source of revenue. The success of the trial sponsorship program launched with the 2018 Trade Show demonstrated its potential. The Board agreed that other sponsorship opportunities should be explored, in a measured fashion so as not to create "donation fatigue" among our supplier members; and provided they are purely voluntary with no expectations or pressure on our supplier members to participate.
 - Directors recognize that at \$40 per member, AORS annual membership dues are a fraction of what any other professional association charges. The fee has not been increased since 2010, and at the current level, falls well short of what it costs AORS to provide the most basic member services. And while an increase is inevitable, the Board also recognized that a significant jump could adversely impact membership among smaller Local Associations, and from municipalities that currently enroll multiple members. Again, modest increases over the next several years would be easier to absorb, rather than a significant increase at one time.
 - The Board also noted that our past practice of freezing fees for several years, then implementing significant increases to catch up, is precisely the opposite of what our members recommend to their councils when budgeting for their operations. So as not to fall behind and have to cut services or implement massive hikes, dues and fees should be increased on a regular basis in line with inflation, provided they remain affordable and competitively priced.
 - The Board also advised that for fiscal sustainability, efficiencies should be implemented to contain costs while not adversely impacting services; and new sources of revenue should be explored, such as government grants or affinity programs that generate a net return to AORS. Members are encouraged to identify opportunities and make recommendations to their AORS representative.
 - The Board will consider recommendations at its September meeting for future fee increases and other actions to ensure the financial health of the Association.

2. **2018 AORS Municipal Public Works Trade Show** – The 2018 Trade Show was a great success, with over 300 booths sold, 235 exhibitors, and over 1700 in attendance. The District 8 Road Supervisors Association did a stellar job, with exhibitors and visitors alike praising the excellent organization, the great venue and location, and the enjoyable events. As always, there were some lessons learned, and District 8 is sharing those with future trade show hosts in the interest of continuous improvement. Thanks to the organizing committee, the volunteers, all the exhibitors and visitors, and the City of Belleville for its warm welcome.
3. **2019 AORS Municipal Public Works Trade Show** – The [2019 AORS Municipal Public Works Trade Show](#) will be hosted by the Chatham-Kent Road Association. The organizing committee looks forward to welcoming everyone to the John D. Bradley Convention Centre in Chatham on June 5 and 6, 2019. Booth sales are off to a strong start, so supplier members are urged to book their spots early.
4. **Spotlight** – The Spotlight Committee has started working on the 2019 edition and encourages all members to refer any suppliers they deal with who aren't Spotlight advertisers. Sell an ad to a new supplier, and you could win a prize! With the ads now included in the [online Directory of Products and Services](#), advertisers get twice the exposure for one low price.
5. **Education Committee** – After a marked decline in training revenues in 2017, as of the second quarter of 2018 the number of sessions and students trained is on the upswing with a corresponding increase in training revenues. The revamp of the Public Works Leadership Development Program is progressing well, transitioning it from a contracted service to a fully AORS owned program. It will relaunch with newly hired instructors in the fall in several locations, including for the first time Walkerton and the Town of Perth.
6. **AORS Provincial Safety Truck Rodeo** – The Grey County Road Supervisors Association will be hosting the AORS Provincial Safety Truck Rodeo on September 12 in Owen Sound. All Local Associations that hold local Rodeos were invited to send 2 of their top drivers to compete for the provincial championship. Colleagues and family are also invited to cheer them on. There will be a small trade show and other activities to keep everyone entertained.
7. **Ontario Road Coalition** – Ewen MacDonald, the AORS representative on the Ontario Road Coalition (ORC), reported that the members had decided to take a hiatus since much of the work it had set out to do was complete, and there were no pressing issues on its docket. But it was also felt that it would be prudent for AORS to have a standing committee with a similar mandate available to address issues raised by members. Anyone interested in participating on such a committee should contact John Maheu.
8. **Minimum Maintenance Standards** – Ken Laupé, AORS Liaison on the MMS Review Committee, submitted a written report highlighting the key changes in the new version which went into effect May 3. Some training materials and other resources are available on the [OGRA website](#).
9. **Next Meeting**
The next meeting of the Board of Directors will be held in the City of Owen Sound on September 28, 2018, preceded by the annual Suppliers / Directors meeting and golf on September 27. All Suppliers are invited to participate. Contact the office for details.